ONLINE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Online learning has some advantages: the flexibility of learning in your own time, spending more time outside of a classroom, and developing life-long skills such as time management and being proactive. But sometimes, online learning can seem intimidating to students who have never tried it. Because the setup is not as rigid as that found in the classroom, online learners tend to get distracted and mismanage their time. They find themselves cramming as deadlines loom closer. Students tend to procrastinate, or worse fail to engage in the learning process at all. In reality, learning online requires just as much, if not more, time and energy as traditional classroom courses. A key factor to student success in the online environment is **self-direction**. Self-directed learning requires a specific skills set:

- **ORGANIZATION**
- **MOTIVATION**
- **SENSE OF CONFIDENCE**

Online students, more so than traditional students, need to be independent and take responsibility for their learning. By using a few essential strategies, any student can learn to succeed in an online learning environment. If you’re taking online courses the tips and advice that follow can help you adopt some simple habits that will make your online academic life easier.

### STRATEGIES FOR ONLINE SUCCESS

#### PRACTICE TIME MANAGEMENT
Treat an online course like a “real” course: Devote consistent chunks of time to the class. Online courses are attractive to students because they offer flexibility in learning. However, this flexibility can cause students to delay working through the course material, thinking they’ll find time later in the week. Online coursework requires you to make the time for it.

- Review the syllabus for each of your courses. Using a calendar or term planner, create mini-deadlines for completing your assignments to avoid last minute rushes.
- Using a weekly schedule, plan consistent blocks of time during the week that you can devote to coursework and stick to this schedule. Don’t fall for the temptation to procrastinate. It is important to establish a consistent routine for yourself.
- Make daily “to do” lists to assign priorities to each of your tasks.

#### HOLD YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE
To be successful, online learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity. Set goals at the beginning of your term. In a traditional classroom setting, you’ll often receive visual and verbal reminders of an assignment’s due date. By working remotely, it will be up to you to make sure you complete assignments on time. If you’re having trouble holding yourself responsible, sometimes it is important to reward yourself for achievements to help keep you motivated to complete your assigned work.

#### BEGIN YOUR WORK EARLY
In an online class, there may be technical difficulties to overcome. Give yourself time to get used to the platform where you will be completing and submitting your work. Leave yourself time to overcome any hurdles you may face.

#### COMMUNICATE REGULARLY WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR
Using and opening proper lines of communication will benefit you during the course. It’s important to ask questions when the material or assignments are unclear. Use the mode of communication preferred by your instructor (i.e. email, phone, discussion groups, chat room, etc.) Students who fail to get their questions answered and concerns addressed often fall behind quickly and significantly. It’s never going to hurt to ask questions, clarify or confirm. Don’t be shy about communication, but be sure to be courteous and respectful, even when you may be frustrated or angry. Write in full, grammatically correct sentences and with a respectful tone.

#### CREATE A GOOD STUDY ENVIRONMENT
An important component of academic success is a good study environment. Improve your concentration and work space by removing and managing common distractions (i.e. TV, cell phone, social media, etc.) Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying. By completing your work in the designated space repeatedly, you’ll begin to establish a routine. It will also help you to stay organized with access to appropriate materials. Ensure you have adequate internet access so you’re not trying to take an online course over a lagging connection.