

Top Ten Tips for Succeeding in Online Courses:

Now that you will be learning online, it is important to think about the ways in which online learning is different from a traditional in-person classroom setting as well as similar. This top ten list has been put together to help you think about your approach to being successful in the on-line learning environment.

1. While the mode for learning is different, it is still a class and you must treat it as such. Review the materials your faculty member has provided about how the course will now be taught, their expectations for your participation, and course requirements. Make sure you understand what is needed to be successful in the course. If you are unsure about something, ask your faculty member for help.
2. Be sure you are ready with what is needed in regards to technology for the start of online classes. Test out the internet access from where you will be participating in the online class ahead of your first class to be sure everything is working correctly. If you have challenges with regards to access to technology or the internet, please let your faculty member, the Center for Student Academic Success or the Student Life Office know right away so we can work with you.
3. Set a goal for each course and think of it as your job. Students have often heard us say that being a college student is your full time job and you must treat it as such. Be sure you are making the time for your coursework. You need to be preparing for class, keeping up with assignments and studying beyond the time you are online for class. Make a schedule and stick to it.
4. Identify a place to do your work. Find a space that is not full of distractions and gives you the ability to focus on your work. Assemble what you need at a table or desk. Resist the urge to lie on the couch or in bed while you are online for class as your body associates those comfy spaces with rest and relaxation and not with work and focus which is what is needed for class! Lastly, put away your phone or other devices that may distract you.
5. Participation is super important. Sometimes people think that when they are taking an online class that all that will be required of them is to sit back and listen. It is important to listen, but it is also important to be an engaged and active member of the class. You will need to participate- just in a different way. You can ask questions and add your opinions to class discussions. Just follow the instructor's instructions for how to do that.
6. Manage your time. This skill is critical no matter which way you are taking a class. Make a schedule for yourself each week and follow it. It is easier to stay on top of things than it is to play catch-up.
7. Take advantage of resources. While we might not be together on campus, the RWU support systems are still in place. Reach out for help when you need it. Your faculty advisors are available for consultation. The three offices in the Center for Student Academic Success are making adjustments to support you from afar. The Tutoring Center is offering online tutoring for (writing, math, science), the advisors in the Advising & Peer Mentorship Office are available to discuss academic plans and to make referrals for academic support, and Student Accessibility Services continues to work with faculty to ensure classes are accessible and academic accommodations can be made.
8. Set up study groups with classmates! This is a great way to learn material together, to work on projects and to stay in touch with other students. There are many ways to do this including Skype, Zoom, meetings in Bridges, Google Hangouts and social media.

9. Work with your faculty member. Don't be afraid to let your faculty know if you need help with something or if you need further explanation of a concept. Your faculty member will let you know their preference for contacting them. If they don't, ask them how you can set up some time with them.
10. Remember that moving to online courses is new for many of us- students and faculty alike. Have patience with yourself (and others) and give yourself the grace to make mistakes and to learn as you go. Think of the new skills you will develop as a result of this new learning experience and leverage that for your own academic and personal growth.

We are all in this experience together. While it may be a different way to learn, think of your own strengths as a learner, what you need to work on, and who can help you.

The Center for Student Academic Success at RWU

Advising & Peer Mentorship, Student Accessibility Services, and The Tutoring Center