10 Tips for Being a Successful Online Learner

1. Read the Syllabus.
The Syllabus should be the first item you read (and print out) on the first day that you are able to enter the online classroom for the course. The Syllabus includes important information about the course structure, topics, activities, and deadlines.

2. Print out the Faculty contact information.
You never know when you might need to contact Faculty by email or even by phone. If you are not able to access the course to retrieve this information, you will want to be sure you have it close by for reference.

3. Familiarize yourself with the online classroom.
Take some time to explore the online classroom and its features and functions. You will be more comfortable and efficient with online learning if you know where to locate items in the classroom.

4. Form relationships with your online classmates.
You are encouraged to form professional relationships with your online classmates so that you have a network of people to turn to for support or if you have questions about the course content. Make sure that you have your classmates’ contact information so that you may communicate during the course and after it has ended.

5. Remember that your online colleagues are not exactly like you.
The online classroom includes people from different countries and cultures who may speak different languages. Therefore, if a Discussion posting or email seems unclear or different from what you expect from a classmate, consider that the person’s approach to communication may be different from yours.

6. Contact someone when you need assistance.
In the online environment, no one will know if you have a question about an assignment or have a problem with your computer unless you say something. You will be expected to initiate contact with someone, often through email or by phone, to request assistance and seek answers.

7. Participate actively and regularly in the online Discussions.
Dialogue, discussion, and collaboration among students are highly valued. As a result, you are expected to participate in online Discussion regularly throughout the week (a 7-day timeframe).
8. Adhere to specific deadlines for activities.
Online learning is flexible in that you may participate and work on assignments at any hour convenient to you. However, your online courses will have specific deadlines each week for participating in Discussion and for submitting written assignments. For example, in one week (a 7-day timeframe) you may be required to participate in Discussion on Day 3 Day 5 and submit written assignments by Day 7. Check your course Syllabus for such details.

9. Behave with academic integrity and honesty.
Online learners are academic professionals and are expected to comport themselves as such when interacting with Faculty, classmates, or university personnel. This means adhering to the institution’s Code of Conduct, which includes expectations for behaving with academic integrity and honesty.

Integrating online learning into your already busy schedule can be difficult. Therefore, it is important that online learners plan their time carefully.