ONLINE TIPS, STRATEGIES, & CHALLENGES

Online classes can be challenging, and the current environment can be isolating. Tutoring Center Tutors and Peer Advisors are working through these issues – just like you. They shared some of the advice they have as well as some of the challenges they've faced. We hope this information is helpful for you as you work through this quarter!

Time management:

- Create and keep a consistent schedule
  - Routine is helpful when things are uncertain
    - e.g. wake up, check email, eat breakfast, complete reading assignment, etc.
  - Schedules help you to stay on track for due dates
  - Having structure to the day is helpful
    - Try to get up at the same time every day
    - Do school work in the same place during set hours
    - Try to set good hours for work so you are not trying to do all your work late at night
    - Keep yourself accountable!
- Block off chunks of time
  - Figure out what time of the day you can be most productive
  - Divide up lectures, studying, work (if applicable) and other obligations
  - Keep track of how long it takes to study for each class
- Set aside time to check emails and Canvas regularly
  - We are getting a lot of emails and news updates during this time
  - Looking at these platforms during specific times can reduce some anxiety that comes with a constant flow of notifications
- Try using a planner or calendar of your classes and assignments
  - It can be easy to get confused and behind when you don't attend in-person classes and so it remains important that you write down all your assignments and due dates and make a clear schedule you can follow
- Try to find separate places for your work and play
  - For example: working in your kitchen and living room and keeping your bedroom free of studying
  - Doing all your homework/studying/exam or quiz taking in one place will put yourself physically and mentally in a position where you feel comfortable and familiar
  - This also helps create a routine and increase concentration so you can be more effective
- Online classes can also be quite isolating – plan social time into your calendar
  - If you live with others it might be a good idea to try and plan lunches together or work together at a table to encourage productivity
- Take time for self-care so you do not get overwhelmed when it is time to work

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Note-taking:

- o Dual windows
    - ▪ Allow you to write down things as lecture progresses
- o Designate a notebook and take hand-written notes to simulate the feeling of being in a lecture environment
- o Color code your notes as you take them
- o Google Drive can help organize notes into designated folders
    - ▪ Having notes in outline format is helpful because it makes things easy to read
    - ▪ Different sections could be highlighted more so it's obvious that you are looking at a different section
    - ▪ A more visual graphic would be helpful for displaying the links
- o OneNote is available through Office 365 for typed notes

Active Learning:

- o Reading the textbook/assigned readings before class to better prepare for lecture
- o Try as much as possible to set distractions aside and focus all your attention on the lecture at hand
    - ▪ Consider using 'studying music'
    - ▪ Have snacks and water nearby
    - ▪ Close unneeded programs
- o Take active breaks – like walks around the neighborhood – between classes
- o Ask questions during lecture! (e.g. use the hand raise feature on zoom)
- o If you can't ask during the lecture (or while doing homework), write down questions as they come up and then email your professor with those questions
    - ▪ Now is not the time to be shy! It can be difficult to learn material through online courses, so make sure to ask questions
    - ▪ If enough students have the same question, the professor may post a video explaining the topic
- o Listen to LIVE lectures if possible
- o Stay engaged – ask YOURSELF questions as the lecture is going
- o Review/Reread notes and later test yourself without notes, even if the test is open-note
    - ▪ Go back and highlight very important information, so you know what to put on your study sheet or note cards
    - ▪ Turn your notes into flashcards
- o Talk out loud! Process what you're learning by describing it to your roommate, cat, or even your mirror
- o Consider organizing study groups over zoom
    - ▪ Even during this time, we can still rely on each other to learn!
    - ▪ If Zoom or MS Teams doesn't work for your study group, try using Google Hangouts, Skype, or FaceTime

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Test Taking:

- o Find a distraction free time and place
- o Set the time in advance
- o Tell those that you are living with that you are taking a test

Technological Challenges:

- o Having multiple professors give information on multiple platforms can be overwhelming for some.
    - ▪ Write down each class, and the technology that they are utilizing - where information is given (homework, exams etc). This way confusion between classes is minimized, and everything is organized.
    - ▪ Add all important resources & online homework tabs to your bookmarks bar so they're a lot more convenient to access/ all in one place.
- o Nuances of getting used to a video conference or even just staying organized on an online platform. (For instance, learning how to work around zoom and the different features that are offered.)
    - ▪ Allow yourself to have a bit of time to get used to the platform before lecture or an anticipated call starts, that way you won't be super confused during lecture or that important call.
    - ▪ ATUS's Keep Learning website has relevant and applicable Zoom tutorials
- o Check with SMATE or ATUS if you need a loaner computer or device
- o Access to reliable internet and devices is important
    - ▪ ATUS is offering full quarter laptop rentals
- o One challenge I encountered was technical issues with zoom. The professor had to send out three links before it worked
    - ▪ This requires patience on everyone's part, as we are all trying to get used to this new system
- o Keep your audio muted unless you are asking/answering a question or participating in discussion
- o Internet disruptions are frustrating!
    - ▪ Try disconnecting and reconnecting, run Windows troubleshooter, connect to phone-based wifi network
- o ALWAYS save files. Save very frequently and then when your computer crashes or Canvas doesn't work, you don't lose any data
- o One technological challenge I have encountered is not being aware of all the programs that are available to students through ATUS
    - ▪ For example, I was unaware of all the apps available for download on the Creative Cloud

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Other Challenges:

- The counseling center and Opportunity Council are a great support during this overwhelming time
- Emailing questions can be harder than asking questions in person
    - I've had to make sure that emails with professors are very well thought out and clear, so I receive clear instruction back
- Be kind to yourself – this situation can be emotional (it is for me)
    - Try not to feel bad if you don't accomplish everything you'd hoped
- Although the shift to online courses/resources is a large one, I have seen an incredible organized effort from library staff, professors and students to make it work, and work well. The resources I have been given already as a student are wonderful!
- I think organization can be challenging with everything online and not having reminders for assignments/tests in person, so keeping a planner is still very helpful

Resources:

Western Student Services

- [Disability Access Center](#)
- [Student Outreach Services](#)
- [Veteran Services Center](#)
- [Fall 2020 Guide](#)

Tutoring Support for Other Subjects

- [Hacherl Research Writing Studio](#)
- [Math Center](#)
- [Language Media Center](#)
- [Accounting Tutoring](#)

Mental Health Support

- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Prevention and Wellness Services](#)

Technological Support

- [Student Technology Center](#)
- [ATUS](#)
- [Keep Learning](#)

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