Top Tips for Success in Online Courses

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According to Hanna, Glowacki-Dudka, & Conceicao-Runlee (2000) "online learning emphasizes learner responsibility…. Learners must be able to set a schedule and stick to it; organize their time effectively…and complete assignments within the suggested timeframes set for the course" (p. 17).

Here are some tips and tricks you can follow to be the best online student you can be!

- Allocate 1.5 to 2 hours to click on every single tab in the course, as the very first thing you do once you have access to the course.
- During this 1.5 to 2 hour time slot, locate the course schedule and diarize every due date shown on the course calendar.
- Communicate respectfully with your instructor. Treat an email to your instructor almost as if you are writing a formal letter. Initially, use Mr. or Ms. If the instructor replies using his/her first name, then address them in the future with their first name.

According to Rebecca Wardlow (2011):
- Read everything thoroughly. Orient yourself to the online classroom.
- Visit the classroom every day. Even if it's for just five to 10 minutes, look for changes, new information, advice and available resources.
- Figure out how to submit your work.
- Embrace time management. Become efficient and plan well. Set specific dates and blocks of time to work, just as you would have done with a live classroom schedule. Just because the classes are online doesn't mean you don't have to be there. Establish the disciplines for success.
- Establish a relationship with the instructor. Ask questions well in advance of need. Take the time to read input from the instructors.
- Actively participate and complete every assignment. There is no credit for simply sitting in the seat.
- Be diligent in your editing and proofreading, your work should be perfect. Students who are active in social media can get lazy in their writing and may not demonstrate good grammar. When writing, use spell check, compose off line, then cut and paste into the classroom if the right editing tools are not available. Avoid social media abbreviations and slang that are inappropriate in any learning environment.

In addition to the above, other strategies include:

- Set realistic, specific and measureable goals.
- Have a stated start and completion date.
- Form a buddy system with other(s) for brainstorming, discussion of problems.
- Be prepared to work independently.

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