



How to Do Well in an Online Course Transcript Chapman Learning Commons

Online learning has become an integral part of post-secondary education. Distance education allows students to take courses from all over the world, complete learning modules asynchronously and participate in synchronous lectures and discussions while supporting a variety of accessibility and personal needs. However, they come with their unique set of challenges. Here are our top 5 strategies to help you ace your online courses!

1. Time Management

When taking an online course, it can be easy to lose track of the material and fall behind. The flexibility of choosing when to complete assignments can encourage procrastination; that's why it's crucial to cultivate time management. A great way to manage your time effectively is to schedule lectures and study time as if taking an in-person course. Schedule in reading, practice and study time on a weekly basis. Go through the syllabus at the start of the course and schedule all assignments, exams and due dates in your calendar. Estimate their time requirements and plan ahead for each one of them to avoid late completion and exam stress.

2. Self-Motivation

It's one thing to make a plan, but it's another to follow it through. One tool that can help with the latter is self-motivation. Hold yourself accountable for following your study plan by having weekly check-ins with yourself. Reflect on your strengths and areas of growth and devise a plan to maintain the discipline required to stay up to date with the course materials. Additionally, be engaged during lecture time by taking notes and paying attention to each learning objective.

3. Instructor Communication and Taking Advantage of Office Hours

An important aspect of online courses is communication with the instructor. Unlike in-person courses, there is no opportunity to go up to the professor after lectures to ask any questions directly. It is therefore crucial to inquire early on about your professor and TAs preferred contact methods. Additionally, office hours may be the only time for direct feedback, so it's important to take advantage of them!

4. Communication with peers and group work

Building a learning community is amongst the most important avenues for academic success. Just because you aren't meeting physically doesn't mean you can't take advantage of collaborative learning. For example, if you recognize someone from a previous course, feel free to reach out and ask to study together. If your course has a discussion or a Q&A platform, don't hesitate to post your questions or answer others' questions. This might even help to consolidate your learning. If you're using zoom, introduce yourself in group discussions and propose to create a study group for the course; more often than not, you'll find someone to study with and keep each other accountable. Another strategy to meet peers online is to join online study groups through unofficial communication channels such as Messenger or Whatsapp

5. Eliminating Distractions

Last but not least, learning online can make it easier to be distracted. One way to reduce distractions is to turn off all notifications on your phone and laptop when watching lectures or studying to ensure you are not easily distracted. Attend lectures in a quiet place so you can concentrate fully on understanding the course material.

Taking an online course is a rewarding but potentially challenging experience. Ensure you get the most out of your online courses: practice self-discipline and time-management, communicate with your instructor, take advantage of group learning and eliminate distractions while completing coursework.

This video is one of many student toolkits created by the Chapman Learning Commons at the University of British Columbia. To learn more about ways to excel at university take a look through the Learning Commons website at learningcommons.ubc.ca or come visit our Chapman Learning Commons Help Desk on the third floor of the Irving K. Barber Learning Center.