ECSU Academic Services Center Guide to Online Learning

As the university moves toward providing online instruction for the remainder of the semester, it might be helpful to dispel some myths about online learning.

MYTH #1: I CAN DO THE WORK ANYTIME

Most online classes are organized as weekly modules, and you should set up a schedule that allows you to complete reading and assignments within those timeframes. Get the work for the week completed in that week! This is particularly important if there is a discussion board to which you are required to contribute. You don't want to be responding to last week's discussion while the rest of the class has moved on.

Remember too, that while online classes provide some flexibility when it comes to *when* you complete the work, there are still deadlines. In particular, tests and quizzes are usually available for a limited time ... and then they disappear! Be mindful of deadlines and plan to get the work completed on time.

MYTH #2: ONLINE CLASSES ARE EASIER

The fact is online classes often take more time than traditional classes. There is usually more reading (as a substitute for class time and lectures).

Not only do online classes take more time, they require even greater discipline than traditional face-to-face classes. That's because it's easy to procrastinate when there isn't an instructor in front of you reminding you of deadlines and test dates. Creating a schedule that you stick to is essential for success in an online class.

MYTH #3: PERSONAL ATTENTION DOESN'T EXIST IN AN ONLINE CLASS

Online classes don't have to feel impersonal. Some easy steps can help bridge the distance in remote learning. First, stay engaged by logging on to the course daily. Take a few minutes to look for updates, responses to discussion board postings, and new announcements.

Secondly, get to know other students in the class. Share contact information (to the degree you are comfortable). If there is a discussion board or chat session, these can be other ways to stay engaged.

Finally, reach out to your instructors when you have questions. If they have provided contact information, you may be able to email or call them.

This information was adapted from Monroe Community College: https://www.monroecc.edu/depts/distlearn/information-for-students/mini-course-online-learning-is-it-for-me/summing-it-up/10-myths-about-online-education

BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE LEARNING

In addition to not buying into the myths surrounding online learning, there are also proactive measures you can take in order to get the most out of your classes.

1. *Practice good time management.* Yes, online classes offer flexibility when it comes to time. But that is all the more reason to establish set times for your work each week. Secondly, check the course syllabus for due dates for assignments and dates of quizzes and tests, and record these on your calendar or in your planner. Do this even if your class has always used Blackboard. Your syllabus may have been updated in light of the current situation. Remember, some things don't remain posted indefinitely. If you delay in completing an online quiz, it may not be there when you finally do log on.

2. *Hold yourself accountable.* You can do this by:
   • Making a habit of logging on to the course daily.
   • Teaming up with a classmate and agreeing to regularly check in with each other about getting the work done!
   • Setting goals to keep you motivated (and perhaps sharing them with a classmate so they can help you stay on track). Just make sure they aren't overly ambitious. Your goals should be manageable and specific.

3. *Create a regular study space and stay organized.* The motivation, initiative, and independence needed to succeed in an online class can be a challenge. But having a dedicated learning environment can help. Completing your work there regularly can help you establish a routine. You can further enhance this study space by making sure your have everything you need for a productive session.

4. *Eliminate distractions.* Studying online puts the distraction of the Internet literally at our fingertips. Be mindful of any temptations to surf the web, check social media, etc. If you aren't paying attention, you'll be looking at Netflix before you realize it! That doesn't mean you have to give up these distractions entirely; rather, use social media time or a streaming series as a

reward for getting your online work done. You'll enjoy your online time more once your online assignments are completed.

This information has been adapted from Northeastern University: https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/