Getting The Most out Of Your eLearning Course: 10 Study Tips for Online Learners

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You have just enrolled in your first online course, but are you ready to study for it? Does it need more, less or the same level of commitment with the traditional instructor-led class you are used to? What are the best strategies for studying in online learning? In this article, I'll share 10 study tips for online learners that will help you succeed while studying for your online courses.

10 Study Tips For Online Learners

Taking online courses can be very convenient for many people. However, online learning requires time management skills, self-discipline, willpower, and strong motivation, as it may be challenging for online learners to successfully complete their eLearning courses. In this article, I'll share 10 key study tips for online learners, in order to help you stay focused and motivated when taking courses online.

1. **Understand online learning practices and expectations.**
   The first thing you need to realize is that online courses are not an easier way to learn, but rather a more convenient one. To successfully learn online, you need to dedicate a significant amount of your time, consistently attend the program, be concentrated while studying, and fully commit to your learning process, just as you would do for a regular course. You should also have in mind that when you take an online course, you may be expected to:

   o Fully commit yourself and participate in the virtual classroom as required.

   o Be, or be willing to become, tech-savvy.

   o Work with others effectively.

   o Complete your learning tasks and assignments on time.

- o Be self-disciplined. If you are not able or willing to do all of the above, you will probably not be a very happy online learner.

2. **Make sure that you have reliable internet access.**
Technology glitches happen all the time. Imagine you are working in the middle of the night and your computer crashes. To avoid mishaps, ensure that you save your work repeatedly and backup regularly using cloud storage, for example Dropbox or Google Documents, in order to be able to access your previous work from your smart phone or tablet, if needed. Furthermore, ensure that you not only have a backup of your online course material and assignments, but also you have saved your instructor's or trainer's contact information in your cell phone or in your email. A reliable internet access will also give you the opportunity to check in, stay current with your eLearning course, and deal with sudden schedule changes.

3. **Have a dedicated study space.**
Whether you decide to study in your office or in your living room, ensure that this place is quiet, organized, distraction-free, and available for use at any time. Your study environment should be one of your main concerns when you are an online learner, so make sure that it enables your study routine. Furthermore, ask your friends, relatives, and colleagues to respect your "work mode" and consider turning off your phone and logging off of all social networks when studying; you will want to be neither interrupted nor distracted.

4. **Identify your learning objectives and goals.**
To stay on track with your online course, make sure that you always keep in mind what you hope to accomplish by the end of it. The learning objectives and goals of the eLearning course can be an excellent road map during online learning; read carefully your online course requirements, create notes that are closely related to your objectives, and make sure that you review them thoroughly every time you start an assignment, so that you stay focused on your goals. Finally, consider starting with the most difficult tasks, as this will improve both the effectiveness of your study and your performance.

5. **Build a study plan.**
An study plan is critical to online learning. Here are some tips to help you build it:

a. **Plan ahead.**
Never wait until the day before an assignment due date to start working on it. It will stress you and stress will prevent you from effectively completing the online task. Furthermore, knowing when all of your assignments are due until the end of the eLearning course will facilitate your time management; for instance, if you are going on vacation in the middle of the eLearning course, you can study ahead.

b. **Have an effective calendar system.**
Online learning needs structure; create a study calendar that will help you remember all important dates, like exams, or deadlines for submitting your assignments. You can save your calendar in your computer or in your mobile device, or you can even create a wall planner, which you can mark up and check every time you study.

c. **Create to-do lists.**
At the start of each week, make a to-do list of the tasks you need to complete by the end of the week. This is an excellent way to prioritize your study plan and stay on track with your studying.

d. **Set time limits.**
Before you start studying, estimate how much time each task will take to complete, whether it is a specific assignment or simply reading a chapter. Try to stick to your time limits, as this will help you develop your self-discipline. Furthermore, when you realize that despite your best efforts you cannot concentrate, consider stopping for an hour or for the night; it is better to wait until you are able to start afresh than to waste your time trying to focus.

e. **Stay on schedule.**
Finally, stick to your study plan. Procrastination is the worst enemy of online learners, so make sure that you stay organized and you are not falling behind in your online class. If you are having difficulties submitting your assignments on time, contact your online course instructor and let them know, so that they can help you create a consistent study routine.

f. **Ask for help when you need it.**
While it may be constructive to look for answers to your online

course-related questions independently, hesitating to contact your online instructor when you are stuck may be problematic. If you don't ask for help when necessary, you may end up falling behind, which may lower your self-esteem, as you may not be able to keep up with the online course. Build a relationship with your online instructor and avoid misunderstandings by contacting them regularly and informing them who you are, and how you could use their help. By asking your online instructors to clarify problems, you will also help them not only to evaluate learners' level of understanding of the online material, but also to get an idea of the overall effectiveness of the online course. Finally, due to the open nature of online courses, by asking a question, you also help at the same time your virtual classmates, in case they are having similar difficulties. Keep in mind that if you don't ask for help when you need it, your online instructor may never know that something is wrong.

6. **Review, revise, repeat.**
Regular revisions of the things you have already studied will not only improve your memory, but they will also help you better understand what you are learning. Create your own flash cards for your key notes and quiz yourself on the key concepts of the online course. Furthermore, consider having one or more study partners; working in groups will offer you alternative views of difficult concepts, motivation to achieve better results, and help in completing your online assignments more quickly by reviewing what you have learned. Share your study notes and habits with your virtual classmates and support each other throughout the online learning process.

7. **Take study breaks.**
Your performance will decrease if you are feeling tired or frustrated while studying. Integrate some personal time into your study routine and you will be able to work more effectively on your online course goals. When taking a break, make sure that you get away from your study space; you need to have a change of scenery. A mild physical activity, such as a walk around the block, will help you maintain balance, renew energy, and go back to studying with a clear mind.

8. **Participate in online discussions.**
Online learning doesn't necessarily mean learning in isolation. Connecting with your virtual classmates on work chat, social media or your online

course's forum will enhance tremendously your eLearning experience, especially if you are an introvert and visual barriers hinder you in expressing yourself. Participate actively in online discussions and group activities, suggest study tricks, offer your input on the eLearning course, and engage in new ideas. Just ensure that you are mindful of your online tone; be respectful when you disagree with other members of your online group, and always write in complete and clear sentences to avoid misunderstandings and tone mishaps.

9. **Stay motivated.**
   Finally, don't underestimate the effort needed to fully commit to your online course. To make sure that you stay motivated and engaged in your online learning experience, consider following these tips:

   a. Feel free to create your study routine at your own comfortable pace.

   b. Decorate your study space with inspirational quotes and pictures.

   c. Never forget the reason why you took this online course.

   d. Accept that you will have productive and less productive days.

   e. Have healthy snacks nearby to boost your energy.

   f. Reward yourself every time you complete a challenging task.

   g. Make sure that you take some time for yourself from time to time.

   h. Stay positive and keep your chin up.

Follow these study tips for online learners and you will be able to make your online learning a fun and enjoyable eLearning experience. If you are not sure about how an online course can fit into your busy schedule, read the article The Top 7 eLearning Benefits For Busy Adult Learners and discover a few of the many benefits of eLearning for busy adult learners who are always on the run.