Your Success Guide to Online Classes

Online courses come with strengths and challenges, just like a traditional face-to-face class. This handout is intended to help you discover online success strategies, improve academic performance, develop effective academic skills, and find resources.

Technical Preparation for your online class checklist

1. Do you have access to a computer? *	Y	N
2. Do you have access to a stable internet connection? *	Y	N
3. Do you have a comfortable area you can watch your lecture and study?	Y	N
4. Can you access Canvas regularly to get the announcements and check when assignments are due?	Y	N
5. Do you know when your online lectures will take place? Will the lecture be a live conference video or a recording? Will there be a weekly assignment due?	Y	N
6. Do you have all your instructor email addresses saved in a document (in case you are unable to connect to Canvas)?	Y	N

*If you don't have access to a computer or an internet connection, refer to the Technology Resources tab on the CSU Keep Learning page for information and resources.

Tips for successfully managing online classes

- *Stay committed*
  - **Don't assume online classes will be easy** and neglect your successful habits. An online class requires you to have the same commitment as your regular class.
  - **Some lectures will take you longer to understand than you expected it and that is OKAY!** Difficult and new concepts are hard for the brain to grasp quickly. Learning is always messy and THAT IS OKAY!
  - Be patient, your online classes will take more than 3 hours (the amount of time you spend in class) to go through. For 3-4 weeks, keep a record of how long each class takes you to complete. This should give you a good estimation when you plan your weekly schedule.

- *Manage your time*
  - **Keep a regular weekly class schedule**. Ex: if you have CO150 on MWF from 10 am – 10:50 am, consider doing that class in a similar time/similar structure. Building on an existing habit helps us make a successful transition.
  - Always remember the **8x8x8 rule** – everyday TRY dedicating ~8 hours doing schoolwork, ~8 hours completing other commitments (e.g.: work, internship, cleaning, etc.) and lastly try getting ~8 hours rest. Life doesn't work out as we plan it but try to create a balance in your schedule to eliminate a sense of overwhelming, exhaustion or stress.
  - **Have a planner** (paper or online) and stay organized with your daily/weekly tasks. With having so much free time, it is easy to lose track of deadlines. Write down everything so you don't forget.

- *Master your note-taking skills*
  - **Always take notes** going through the lecture, watching videos or doing outside reading. Keep it in one notebook or folder document, to help you organized.
  - **Always look at your notes as a study guide**. Stay organized by writing date, title and step-by-step organization that can help you distinguish key points, definitions, questions, etc.
  - **Don't write everything down**. Identify what is the main point and try to summarize it in your own words. Writing everything down overwhelms your brain when you go back to study. It is better to go back and read your own words rather than someone else's explanation.

- *Keep up with your reading*
  - **Too much reading and not enough time?** Try the scanning reading technique. Pull up your lecture PowerPoint slide and have it next to you as you do your textbook reading. The scanning reading strategy is a speed-reading technique where you skim some section, however, for every section that is mentioned in your lecture slides you do an in-depth comprehensive reading.
  - **Reading difficulties students encounter:**
    - Can't stay focused? – Check if there are too many distractions around you, if you tired or if your mind thinking of something else.
    - Too much reading/poor short-term memory? Break down your readings into sections and don't forget to take notes.
    - Don't understand the material? Maybe watch a quick video about what the topic is about, learn the vocabulary, google definitions before doing your reading

- *Identify your distraction*
    - o Feeling like you might get distracted and procrastinate with class going online? Identify what are your biggest distractions are on daily bases and create a disciplinary goal.
        - ▪ **Phone & social media** – Schedule short breaks throughout your day where you get to check your phone. For the time you are doing work, keep your phone at a distance or in a different location where you don't see it.
        - ▪ **Watching TV/Netflix, etc.** – When you start your day, try to do your hardest TASKS first before opening TV/Netflix/etc. Be mindful it is very hard for us to walk away from doing things we love. Set watching TV/Netflix, etc. as a reward for finishing your daily to-do list.
        - ▪ **Spending time with others** – if studying with others motivates you, consider studying with a classmate instead of your friends or folks that will distract you.
    - o Distraction shows up differently for every person. Identify what is your biggest distraction and have two strategies to navigate that.

- *Be an active participant in the class*
    - o **Stay engaged with your instructor and classmate.** One way to lose motivation in an online class is to find yourself feeling like you are all alone taking the class. Email your instructor your questions and reach out to your classmates if they would like to study together via Skype, Google Hangout or other online formats.
    - o If your instructor is doing a live lecture, answer questions and stay engaged.
    - o Put your best work in your online classes and create the community you need to succeed.

- *Know what resources you need*
    - o If you don't understand a topic, utilize your instructors and TA's. Send them a list of questions you have. Your instructors are here to support you and help you succeed. It is also important to recognize; instructors & TA might be busy at times and be patient waiting for their response.
    - o Create holistic learning for yourself by using Google, YouTube, academic websites, CSU tutoring programs, TILT study groups, etc. to help you learn the material you don't understand.
    - o Identify, what campus resources you need to help you with your online classes.

Do's and Don'ts for Online Learning

Do's	Don'ts
Use online tool to communicate with your instructors and classmates.	Avoid communication until you need help
Check canvas regularly to check announcements and upcoming assignments	Check canvas randomly and hope for the best you didn't miss deadlines.
Treat online classes seriously. Review all uploaded teaching materials.	Be discouraged when frustration arises and give up quickly.
Manage your time effectively and realistically.	Procrastinate because you don't feel like it.
Schedule a set times to do schoolwork with breaks	Complete assignments last minute and ignore other tasks.
Communicate regularly with instructor/ TA when you have questions and need clarification	Wait until exam weeks or deadline to communicate with your instructor/TA.
Utilize multiple learning resources and create the learning community you need	Only rely on your instructor and textbook to learn the material
Maintain academic integrity	Commit academic misconduct

How to talk with your advisor over the phone:

Are you having a phone appointment with your advisor? Here are some things to do:

- Run your DARS on your RAMweb account
  - o Find instructions on how to run your DARS here.
  - o Do you see a red X by a course on your DARS? That means you still have to take the course!
  - o Create a tentative list of courses that you think you still need to go over with your advisor.
- Let your advisor know whether you want to take summer courses or not.
- Remind your advisor about your career interests so that you are picking any electives or courses with flexible options according to what best will fit your future.
- Ask questions about Canvas or taking courses online – your advisor can help!
- Let your professor know if you are struggling with a specific course, studying for exams, reading lectures on Canvas, or any other concerns.

How to talk with your course professor:

- It is always ok to email your professor with questions or comments about the course.
- The professor doesn't know where you are stuck, so provide as much information in the email about your question as possible. You don't need to write an essay in your email – just provide the information you need so that your professor can understand where you need help.
- Remember email etiquette:
  - Address all emails professionally – start an email with "Hi Professor"
  - Email from your CSU email
  - Include your first and last name and CSU ID number
  - End the email professionally
- Proofread the email before sending it

Tips for taking notes while watching recorded lectures:

- You may want to timestamp (mark) your place in the video in case you get distracted, areas that may be of difficulty, or to create an index of the video.
  - You can make a note to yourself, for instance,
    - START video at 15 mins and 2 secs when I watch again.
    - REVIEW mitochondria at 30mins and 18seconds. I don't quite understand the process.
- You can also try the **Index Method** (if videos don't already have this noted).
  - For example:
    - INDEX: Video 1, 3/13/2020
      - 1 min – Cells
      - 2 min 15 secs - Cell Division
      - 4 mins, 28 sec - Mitosis

Resource Citation:

Claudio, L., & Strempek, R. (2019, April 21). How to Excel in Online Learning: Student Guide to Digital Classrooms. Retrieved March 17, 2020, from https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/career-resource-center/student-success-online-college/

STUDENT GUIDE TO ONLINE LEARNING DURING SUSPENSION OF FACE ... (n.d.). Retrieved March 17, 2020, from https://edc.polyu.edu.hk/Student_Guide_to_Online_Learning_during_f2f_Lesson_Suspension.pdf

Additional Resources:

- Online Student's Manual For Success
  - Website Link: https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/career-resource-center/student-success-online-college/
- Adjusting Your Study Habits During COVID
  - Website Link: https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/rll-assets/rll-docs/Study%20Habits.pdf
- Purdue Toolkit For Online Students
  - Website Link: https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/supporting-instruction/instructional-development/toolkit/