How to Be Successful in Online Courses

There are many reasons why students choose to enroll in online classes. Whatever the reason, we've met with many students who've claimed that they felt unprepared once the online class began. It is possible to be successful in an online class. Here are a few tips for you:

- **Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.**
  Online classes have less structure than classes on campus. You'll have more freedom and flexibility, which will require more responsibility. It will be up to you to regularly check-in or login to keep up with your coursework.

- **Be able to commit the necessary time for an online class.**
  Many instructors suggest that you dedicate 5-15 hours per week for each course. This allows ample time for studying and completing assignments for the course.

- **Make sure you have the required technology for the course.**
  Obviously, you'll need to have access to a computer. You'll more than likely need Internet access. Check the requirements for the course. Do you need additional software?

- **Connect with your instructor early.**
  Get to know them and familiarize yourself with their expectations for the course.

- **Have a consistent workspace.**
  Find a study environment that is comfortable and has minimal distractions. This will promote productivity.

College Success. "Communicating with Instructors". http://open.lib.umn.edu/collegesuccess/chapter/7-3-communicating-with-instructors/
Vicky Phillips. "7 Tips for Success in Online Courses". https://www.geteducated.com/elearning-education-blog/7-tips-for-success-in-online-courses/
Ryan Lytle. U.S. News and World Report. "5 Tips to Succeed in an Online Course". https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2013/01/14/5-tips-to-succeed-in-an-online-course
Hawkeye Community College. "Being Successful in an Online Course". http://www.hawkeyecollege.edu/academics/courses/distance-learning/online/course-success.aspx

- **Use effective time management and organization skills.**
  Use a planner to create and commit to a daily/weekly schedule. Plan ahead for upcoming deadlines and due dates. For more ideas, check out *Time Management Resources and Tips* on our website http://www.cpcc.edu/star.

- **You will need good writing skills!**
  Most, if not all, of your communication will be written. It will be important that you feel comfortable communicating with your instructors and other classmates through writing. For more ideas, check out *How to Contact your Instructor* on our website http://www.cpcc.edu/star.

- **Be familiar with Blackboard.**
  Most CPCC classes, online or face to face, will require you to use Blackboard. Here are some videos that might help familiarize you with what your classes will require.
    - https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student
    - https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLontYaReEU1seUE3ACG3sEc3zR7Br7URU

- **You'll also need good critical thinking skills!**
  Many online classes require consistent contribution to discussions posts. You'll need to reply with well-thought out reasoning and input. Also, be prepared to defend your responses.

- **Be comfortable asking for help.**
  Your instructor will have no way of knowing if you have any concerns, unless you speak up as soon as possible.

If you have additional questions, feel free to call a STAR coach at 704-330-6754 or email at star.success@cpcc.edu. Check out the rest of our tip sheets on our website http://www.cpcc.edu/star.

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