Best Practices for Online Learning

The online learning experience offers many positive aspects that are unique to the online learning mode. Some of the benefits students in online courses have identified are:

- asynchronous learning better fits their schedule
- the inquiry learning method and case study applications are "real world" learning tools applicable to their work settings
- the communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, and technology skills developed better prepare them for 21st Century learning and work settings

At the same time, online courses are quite different from the traditional face to face (F2F) courses you have taken in the past and it may take some time to adjust to the new learning environment. Online learning is student-centered. There are few times, if any, when the whole class meets together virtually, at the same time. The learning is more active and directly engaging, but also requires more motivation and self-reflection on the part of the student. Some students are surprised by how much personal initiative and self-management is required to successfully complete a course. Please know that there are many resources available to you for support: your course instructor, classmates with whom to collaborate, and written online resources.

Use the discussion board and email functions to discuss any concerns you have with the instructor and fellow students during the course. Your concerns will probably be shared by others who may be able to offer ideas, solutions, or at least a sympathetic ear. Remember, everyone wants you to be successful!

1. Check the course homepage, week lessons and assignment page, your email, and discussion boards several times a week.

2. **We strongly advise you to compose your posts and writing assignments in a word doc and save it, then copy-paste it into Canvas.** This will ensure you retain a backup of your work in case of technical difficulties.

3. Post substantive comments and responses. Post early and check back to respond to posts later in the week.

4. Participate actively in online discussions.

5. Keep up with your reading assignments and assignment activities. For most course activities, students are given a week to complete and submit assignments. After an additional week grace period (total of 2 weeks), access to links and dropboxes is closed.

Remember, "Incomplete" is not a final grade option for online classes.

6. Practice Netiquette: Be polite and respectful in your postings (no "Flaming" or posting / sending negative, hurtful comments to others); use good grammar and correct spelling; don't write in all caps (it feels like you're shouting) or exotic fonts (they may not show up on everyone's computer). In short, present your best self!

Additional Keys to Success

• Set aside a specific time during the day for this course- the best time that fits your schedule. Use this time for preparation (reading, watching assigned narrated powerpoints or video clips) and for participation (posting and responding to messages, completing assignments).

• Don't put off the work. You need to keep up so you can more effectively participate in group and class discussions.

• Don't be afraid to ask questions. Similar to a F2F class, there are probably several others who are wondering the same thing.

• Check in and contribute to the class several times a week. This will keep you engaged, on-track, and moving steadily toward your goal!

• Let your instructor know about any problems you are having right away it can be resolved quickly.

Have a Successful Semester!