Becoming a Great Online Learner in the Time of COVID-19

Online learning will give you flexibility and convenience. However, it is true that being a great online learner is a bit different from being a great face-to-face learner. So, here are some hints.

Louise Lutze-Mann, Jacky Cranney and Beth Beckmann

1. Be kind to yourself
- For most of us, fully online is a new experience.
- We will do some things well, and struggle to make other things work – so be as kind to yourself as you would be to another person.
- If you find yourself becoming anxious, please reach out – to your lecturer, friends (call one every day), or a counsellor. CAPS is available online.

2. Relax
- Even though you won’t be seeing your lecturer, everything you need for your course will be on your Moodle course site.
- Ask if you can’t find it.

3. Be realistic
- Online learning requires just as much time and energy as a traditional classroom course, even if you can do it in your pyjamas!

4. Be prepared
- Set your alarm to wake and get up each morning, get dressed, exercise and eat, as if you were going to uni (wherever your ‘uni’ space is).
- You don’t need a whole room for study — just a small corner will do (but not your bed!).
- If at home, let friends and family know when you will be “at” uni, so they know not to disturb you.
- Plan mini-exercise and drink breaks (Google the “Pomodoro technique”).

5. Think about your time management
- Set yourself a manageable ‘at uni’ schedule that reflects your previous time commitment to your courses.
- Make sure you participate in any scheduled online activities — these will help you remain connected with your lecturers and the other students.
- Flexibility is one of the great benefits of online learning, but it can also be a drawback, especially if you procrastinate. Make a daily “to-do” study list, and tick things off as you complete them (because research shows this feeling of accomplishment is a great boost).
6. Think carefully before you write or post anything

- Communicate with your lecturers, who now can’t ‘see’ when something isn’t clear. Tell them (politely) both what you need, and what is working well.
- It may feel awkward to talk with your lecturers this way (and it may be awkward for some of them too!), but don’t be shy about using Moodle tools to communicate.
- Remember to think before you post - words can be misunderstood unless used carefully. How you write in chat rooms, blogs, etc may not be appropriate for university.
- Also, never to be tempted to say things out of anger or frustration—if you wouldn’t say it directly to your lecturer or fellow student, never say it in writing or in a virtual class. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy.

7. Stay motivated!

- Learning online is just like learning face-to-face: to be successful, you must want to succeed.
- Keep reminding yourself of what you are gaining by studying your courses.

8. Be persistent.

- Persistence is probably the biggest key to success.
- You will succeed in online learning if you are willing to tolerate minor technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every course, and persist through challenges.
- Try not to lose your sense of humour!

Finally………

If any of your course Moodle sites have the Self-Management for Effective Learning section, have a look at that now, for time- and stress-management tips etc.

……….and Good Luck!!!