

Tips and Tricks for Online Learning

Handwriting notes

- Research tells us writing out our notes engages our brains better than typing.
- Also saves a step on your computer from having to go back and forth between the lecture and the document you have your notes on.
- Pause the video to listen (every 5-10 minutes), digest what is being said, and then summarize what it means—using your own words—to help focus on the main parts of the information.
- Can always go back and organize notes in an online document, especially if sharing with others.
- If available, print out the lecture slides or notes ahead of time. That way you can focus on the lecture and writing down any examples or other notes the professor makes.
- The information you've just read, heard or watched will still be fresh in your mind, giving you the opportunity to make the most of your notes. This would also be a great time to connect the new material to past experiences, previously reviewed information or background knowledge. The more connections you can make with the new information the better you will remember it.

Get rid of your distractions

- Most of us are used to using our computers for entertainment, so we must retrain our brains to enter “work mode” while on the computer screen. Use certain websites or apps to block time wasting websites if it helps.
 - Cold Turkey Application
 - Downloading a website blocker
 - Blacklist sites within browser apps
- **NOTE:** Always do your own research before downloading any software.
- Don't attend class or listen to a lecture in bed, where your brain is primed for sleeping and relaxing. Go to your desk, library, coffee shop, somewhere your brain can learn to recognize as a location where you work.
- Put your phone on do not disturb. This way if an emergency happens, the people you have set can still reach you, but you aren't getting distracted by social media notifications.

Do not be afraid to utilize office hours or a professor's email.

- It may feel uncomfortable to ask for a meeting instead of asking your question after class, or dropping by the professor's office, but asking questions in an online class is still important! Utilize the online office hours to ask questions over the material and receive additional resources the professor recommends. Most online professors are also very flexible with meeting times, so if their office hours do not work for you, ask for another time that does work.

Make a study schedule and review your notes.

- With all the flexible time you have, as a student you need to be more conscientious of dedicating a set schedule to work on each class. Think of this as the time you would have spent in the classroom listening to a lecture. You should dedicate 1-1.5 hours 2 or 3 days a week per class. Whatever the credit hour is for the class, that is how much time you should dedicate to taking notes, reading the chapters, and listening to lecture. Note: this DOES NOT include the time you may need to work on assignments or study for exams. If you have an exam coming up add 1-2 hours a day about 2 weeks before the exam date to review the information.
- REVIEW YOUR NOTES! The information you've just read, heard or watched will still be fresh in your mind, giving you the opportunity to make the most of your notes. This would also be a great time to connect the new material to past experiences, previously reviewed information, or background knowledge. The more connections you can make with the new information the better you will remember it.

This is an ongoing process

- With every class, you may need to change your style to better accommodate the teacher's lecture style. Be willing to be flexible, seek help and change how you take notes depending on the class or semester.

Sources:

Fuchigami, L. (2015, January 7). *How to Temporarily Block Distracting Websites*. Hack My Study. hackmystudy.com/how-to-temporarily-block-distracting-websites/

How to Study Effectively: 12 Secrets for Success. (2017, April 19). Oxford Learning. www.oxfordlearning.com/how-to-study-effectively/

Lundin, E. (2020, January 8). *How to Take Better Notes: The 6 Best Note-Taking Systems*. College Info Geek. collegeinfo geek.com/how-to-take-notes-in-college/

Strategies for Taking Effective Notes While Studying Online. (n.d.) Study.com. study.com/blog/strategies-for-taking-effective-notes-while-studying-online.html

Developed by Mary Catherine White, Graduate Assistant, Center for Academic Success and Transition, Missouri State University