

5 Tips for Successful Online Learning

In the last decade, online learning has allowed an additional 48 million people worldwide to receive a college education who could not attend traditional brick and mortar campuses. Advantages of learning online include learning when, where, and how according to your schedule – not a schedule of set classrooms and class times. However, online learning is not without its own challenges. Below are 5 tips to help you be successful while studying online.

1. **Set goals for studying.** Long term goals such as what grade you want to earn in the class are useful but more helpful are short term daily goals such as completing all the reading for your English class or completing all the homework for your math class. [SMART](#) is one acronym to help you set, well, smart goals. It is a good idea to reward yourself when you have met your goal. This could be a chocolate chip cookie or perhaps 15 minutes of social media but set a timer (see tip #3).
2. **Create a regular study area.** Find a quiet area free from distractions (see tip #8). Create or find a space conducive to study. Make your study time and space routine so when you are in your study space physically, you are there mentally as well (see tip #3). If you sleep in your bed, your body knows the routine of bed=sleep so your bed is not a great study space. Setting up a regular study area will also aid in organization. Knowing exactly where all your necessary materials (textbook, laptop, etc) are stored will save time trying to hunt down everything you need to start studying.
3. **Establish a regular study time.** When are you most alert; morning, noon, or night? Use this to guide when you set up your study time. 30 minutes at the end of the day, after a full day of work, meals, and putting the kids to bed may be quiet but might be when you are least engaged. 30 minutes in the morning before your regular day starts might be a smarter study time. Make your study time and space (see tip #2) routine so when you are in your study space physically, you are there mentally as well. For some people, studying on their lunch hour is a dedicated time away from all other commitments. Setting up a routine time to study will also help ensure studying is not last on your to-do list.
4. **Eliminate distractions.** The list is endless for what could count as a distraction and your cell phone may be #1 on the list. Don't be fooled, listening to music does [NOT](#) help you study. When you are in your study time (see tip #3) do not check your cell phone, email, social media accounts, texts, nor the dozen other things which could take you away from studying. If your study time (see tip #3) is 30 minutes, set a timer and until the timer goes off you are not allowed to deviate from studying. When the timer goes off, give yourself a reward. I bet it is not too long before you start to think, wow 30 minutes goes by quick AND look how much I got done.
5. **[Take action](#) and actively Participate.** This does not mean to just post and reply on discussion boards. This means to read actively (read out loud, summarize, ask questions), take notes ([handwritten](#) is better than typed), create flashcards, write your own test questions, form a study group, or choose from one of the two dozen other ideas at the bottom of this document. You did not learn to talk or ride a bike by passively listening to someone else. You learned by doing. Learning content is no different. You need to be actively engaged in your own learning.

3 important items to remember

1. **You can not multitask.** If you think you can multitask, dozens of researchers proved you are less productive than when focused on a single task. Researchers at Stanford University reported, “People who are regularly bombarded with several streams of electronic information cannot pay attention, recall information, or switch from one job to another as well as those who complete one task at a time.”
2. **Your mind needs a break.** The rewards mentioned in tips #1 and #4 are for your brain. Your brain is a muscle and needs a workout (studying) but it also needs a mental break. Take a walk, get a drink, hug your kids, or do anything else which brings you joy. If you find yourself working on a challenging problem without progress, take a break or take a nap. Dale Carnegie, in his book “How to Stop Worrying and Start Living” explains in great detail the benefits of naps (even as adults).
3. **Invite the spirit.** True teaching, in the classroom or online, is done by and with the Holy Ghost.

Study Strategy Tips

The list below is by no means the only study strategies, but it is enough of a list to get you started. If you would like more ideas, check out the Academic Support Center’s Website at:

<https://www.byui.edu/academic-support-centers>

- Create maps, charts, graphs, and diagrams.
- Use videos and PowerPoint presentations
- Make and use flashcards.
- Take notes (handwritten and detailed).
 - Reword the notes in different ways of saying the same thing.
 - Create and use bulleted lists.
- Translate diagrams or charts into a verbal or written summary.
- Write questions based on the material and answer those questions
- Record lectures and lessons and listen to them again.
- Read material aloud.
- Record yourself reading notes and replay it later (while making dinner or walking or driving to work.)
- Explain concepts aloud in your own words.
- Use word associations or mnemonic devices to help remember important facts.