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Tips for Success in your Virtual Class

Learning in a virtual environment requires different skills than an in-person class. Success is possible with some additional preparation and steps. Here are some tips and strategies to help you thrive in your virtual class.

Scheduling

Create a routine: Establishing a routine will help you get into "class mode." To create a routine, schedule your time and physically get ready for class just like you would if you were going to class.

Schedule your classes: Your class may be synchronous where you and your classmates meet at specific times, or it may be asynchronous where you work through assigned modules on your own schedule. With either format, it is important to dedicate time on your schedule. With synchronous classes, schedule when the class is set to meet. Schedule asynchronous classes with enough time to complete the assigned work.

Schedule your homework time: You will also need to schedule time to complete your homework, assignments, and to study for quizzes and exams. This should be time that you dedicate in addition to your scheduled class time. Plan to schedule 2-3 hours for every hour you spend in class.

Schedule your breaks: It is important to plan breaks to keep your mind sharp. It's a good idea to schedule a 15 minute break every 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Use the time interval that works best for you. Set a timer to avoid going over your break time!

Technology Tools

Electronic Calendar: Using a calendar is key to success. Consider an electronic calendar to make your schedule, keep track of virtual class links, and record important dates like appointments, due dates, quizzes, and exams. Your school's virtual learning platform may have an integrated calendar. Some other suggestions are *Google Calendar, Cozi,* and *Apple Calendar.*

Speech to text and reading apps: Look for apps that can help you maximize your time. Speech to text and reading apps can help you take notes or listen to assigned readings. Some apps to investigate are *Google Read and Write extension, Voice Aloud Reader, and Dragon Anywhere.*

Organization: Create a system to help you keep track of class notes, presentations, and homework assignments. Investigate some online organizational tools like *Google Drive, Trello,* and *myHomework app, Evernote, and iStudiez Life.*

Study apps: Create flashcards and study guides. *Quizlet* and *Flashcards+* are great apps to help you study.

Productivity apps: If you have a hard time staying focused during class or study time, download *Cold Turkey* or *PromoDone.* With these apps you can block websites and set timers for specific amounts of time.

Environment

Set up your learning environment: Make a dedicated space for virtual learning. You should have access to power outlets and a space for your computer and notetaking. Avoid working on your bed.

Be distraction free: If possible, set your workspace up in a room away from televisions, and put your phone away. If you are sharing your space, you might want to make a sign so others know when class is in session.

Check your connection: When selecting a learning environment, be sure to check the internet connection and strength. You will need a strong and consistent signal.

Self-Advocacy

Maintain communication: In a virtual classroom, your instructor may not notice you need help until it's too late. Reach out to them early on if you are not getting the grades on assignments that you want.

Communicate accommodations needs: Share your accommodations requests early with instructors. If you need additional accommodations, request them from your school's disability services.

Get some tutoring: Check to see if your school has tutoring services available. These are often free peer services.

Virginia Department of Education