# 10 TIPS FOR e-LEARNING SUCCESS

1. **Start small.** Everyone who is now comfortable learning online had to start somewhere. The first couple of courses tend to be the hardest, so anticipate extra time as you become comfortable navigating in the new environment.

2. **Set up your email.** Select one email account as your home base for the course and check it regularly (also check junk mail, in case important messages get filtered out). For a new, free email account, try: mail.google.com/mail/signup

3. **Arrange Internet access.** You need reliable, ideally high speed, Internet service to access course materials and participate in the discussions. Consider arranging for back-up computer / Internet access in case of computer issues or power outages. Students have successfully completed e-learning courses from home, work, libraries, coffee shops with free Wi-Fi, and Internet cafés.

4. **Make time.** All learners have other important life roles and commitments. When learning online, it's tempting to try to fit learning into lives that are already full. Be realistic, however. Many courses require 10 or more hours per week. Make sure you fully understand the time requirements for your course and make space in your life to fit it in.

5. **Get organized.** Creating a schedule will help you to keep track of assignment due dates as well as other responsibilities. If you don't have a dedicated study space, set one up now. Decide how to make your readings easily accessible (e.g., printed, in a binder; bookmarked links on the Internet; saved on your personal computer).

6. **Practice.** Working online is a learned skill. If you're generally comfortable surfing the Web or using your office's Intranet system, learning online will come quite easily, even in your first online course. If you don't have much experience navigating online, before beginning your course take advantage of tutorials, course handbooks, and technical tips.

7. **Take notes.** If some of the technology is new to you, you may find it helpful to have some post-its beside your computer to remind you of unfamiliar steps.

8. **Participate actively.** In facilitated e-learning courses, students confirm that much of their learning occurs in the discussion forums. Participate daily, by reading others' posts and contributing your own thoughts on each topic. Avoid cheerleader posts that don't take the conversation deeper, drive-by posts that come in at the last minute when the discussion is scheduled to end, or over-posting (e.g., mini-essays or cluttering the forum with too many posts rather than clustering your responses).

9. **Write clearly.** Be concise, using "fat free" language (i.e., Plain English). Avoid acronyms, big words, and long sentences. Use spell-check; proofread your posts before hitting "send."

10. **Breathe.** As in all aspects of life, things will go wrong; don't panic. Learning is most effective when it's fun. Ask for support when you need it (e.g., student advising, technical trouble-shooting). Let your instructor know if you'll be offline dealing with an unexpected crisis. Your e-learning team knows how challenging it can be when things don't work out as planned.

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