

Critical Tips for Successful Online Learning

Diversity in the Workplace

NUMBER 1

Decide if Online Learning is For You

Online learning isn't for everyone. However, most students find that this venue can provide a very powerful and positive learning experience.

The School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) offers students a resource to help them decide if they are appropriate candidates for successfully completing an online course. **If you have not done so already, it is in your best interest to review the contents of the SMLR Online Learning webpage** - <http://smlr.rutgers.edu/information-for/online-learners>

The webpage will increase your knowledge about what to expect when engaged in online learning, the competencies that are needed to be a successful online student, and the technical requirements necessary to take an online course.

In addition, the eLearning webpage offers specific and highly valuable information in the section **"What to Expect."** All online students are responsible for being prepared to begin class the first day of the semester.

The most successful students are:

- self-motivated
- organized in their approach to learning
- comfortable with following basic technical instructions
- have a personal and reliable computer/Internet system to use throughout the semester
- are both comfortable and competent when communicating online

Have I described you?

NUMBER 2

Learn how to use the tools in the course shell

Mastery of working within the course shell is right around the corner. You will be surprised how quickly you become a MOL (Master Online Learner.)

There are technical aspects to an online course. **Take the time to learn how to use the standard course tools that are used in this course.** Throughout the semester you'll be using, document sharing (download course material), dropbox (to upload your Peer Introduction Survey, GKY writing assignments, and Course Project) and forums (to create an academically focused online community through peer-to-peer discussions).

If you have not taken a course offered through the eCollege platform, begin the semester by reviewing the Technical FAQs document and watching the video presentations on course tools. You'll find a link to the Tech FAQs documents videos on the page that opens after you log into the course (the course home page). Tech FAQs is also available through document sharing.

The first time you use one of the course functions you may feel a little apprehensive. Be bold! Feel confident! Anything you do in the course shell can be undone - and done again correctly.

Best advice - don't wait until the last minute to upload a document or enter the forums. Not knowing how to utilize the course tools is not an excuse for a late assignment.

I can't solve your technical problems - with hardware, software, or with using a RutgersOnline course tools (such as dropbox.) **You can contact RutgersOnline help desk 24/7 if you need technical support:** help@ecollege.rutgers.edu or toll free phone 1-877-7RUTGER (1-877-778-8437). A help program is also available in the course shell.

NUMBER 3

Dedicate the time and attention to course content, preparation, and threaded discussions (forums)

Diversity in the Workplace is neither an independent study nor a self-paced tutorial. You're required to interact with your peers regularly in our asynchronous forums (there are 7 of them this semester) and submit your work according to established deadlines.

Time and Effort Reality Check

If you're new to the online course venue, one of the online course realities - time commitment - will occur to you very quickly. Here's the reality check ... **online learning takes as much - if not more of your time and attention - as learning that is organized around a face-to-face course venue.**

Time & Work Comparison

1. If we were meeting in a face-to-face classroom situation, you'd be in class 3 hours per week (plus commuting time). Consider these 3 hours the time you'll be reading my weekly messages/viewing the instructor created videos, participating in the forums, and interacting with me via email correspondence.

2. If you were enrolled in a face-to-face course you would also be required to engage in readings and written assignments outside of the classroom each week. Regarding course assignments - here there is little difference between on-the-ground and online learning.

You'll spend *at least* 3 hours a week engaged in assignment completion beyond what I have described in #1 above. In other words, you'll need to dedicate between 5 - 6 hours per week to this course. However, you'll have the opportunity to use this time at your discretion. You can log into the course anytime - 3 o'clock in the afternoon or 3 o'clock in the morning. In addition, you can submit an assignment anytime before 11:59 PM ET on the date an assignment is due.

Remember to use the calendar provided in the course shell to get organized and meet assignment deadlines.

Online Learning is Ongoing

Plan the time you'll dedicate to this course wisely. This course isn't meant to fit into the cracks of the semester - to be tended too off and on whenever you get a chance. This course is part of your regular academic life for 14 weeks.

NUMBER 4

Recognize Your Support

You have time commitments and course responsibilities. I have responsibilities as well. The topics we'll address in this course have the potential to affect you every day.

One of my responsibilities is to provide a complete and current investigation of course topics. I'm also responsible for helping each student see the connection between the theory we'll be unveiling and real life.

Interact with me on a regular basis. Use me to help you succeed in the course. I take my responsibilities to you very seriously. **If you choose to apply yourself to this course - I will do everything possible to support you in getting the most out of the course. That is a promise.**

Finally, my responsibility is to look beyond your opinions and experiences - which I encourage you to share with me in your GKY writing assignments and with your peers in the forums. However, **I do not grade your opinions or experiences. I grade the depth of your understanding of course material.** It is critical that you communicate a high level of knowledge in course topics and critical thinking about the topics if you expect to earn a high number of assignment points. If you communicate only/primarily your opinion you will earn few points.

I can help you understand course material and/or organize your thoughts about a topic. Please contact me at anytime if you would like assistance.

You may feel that it is important for you to share sensitive information when discussing a concept with me. **Personal opinions and experiences shared with me are kept confidential.** The only time I would share anything a student shared with me is if I thought that the student or those who surround the student were in danger.