ONLINE LEARNING: TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Communication Tips
Writing is the primary mode of communication for online courses. The written communications you share with your classmates and instructor can actually lead to better relationships and higher quality learning. You have the opportunity to not only revisit your ideas and modify them, but also to spend the time to make sure your communications express exactly what you want to say.

Discussion Boards
Many online courses utilize a communication tool known as a Discussion Board. This tool allows you to participate with multiple people at one time. You can post and reply to messages at your convenience. Discussion boards group together messages that relate to the same topic in a "threaded discussion". Everyone's response is displayed for everyone else to see. You can post a message that relates to what another student has written and in that way engage in a dialogue.

Email
Email is normally is used to communicate with individuals rather than groups. It is almost a certainty that you will be using email to communicate with your instructor and classmates. Here are some things to keep in mind about email:

- Double check to whom you're sending email. It can be embarrassing when an email that you meant for one person ends up being read by others. It goes without saying that you will want to avoid this mistake.
- Using all capital letters in email is equivalent to SHOUTING. Avoid it whenever possible.
- Make sure that you use a meaningful subject line so that your readers will have a clear idea of what your message contains.
- Messages should be short and to the point (although there are exceptions to this rule, such as assignments that are submitted by email).
- Do not forward others' messages without asking first. While you should always write your email messages assuming others whom you don't know may see them, it is considered very rude to forward someone else's message without asking their permission.

Chat Sessions
The advantage of chats is that they allow people in separate locations to "talk" to one another in real time. You will be given complete instructions on what to do if your class will be participating in a schedule chat session. A chat session is like a classroom discussion because the instructor and students are all participating at the same time. Type quickly to express your thoughts. Chats can be hard to follow; it is easy for conversations to be out of order.

Netiquette
Netiquette is a combination of internet/network etiquette. Guidelines are recommended for personal conduct that applies to all online communications. Good online manners lead to productive and supportive learning environments.

- Be polite and respectful
- Be tolerant of views expressed by others
- Address the idea, not the person
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor
- Do not spam your classmates
- Do not write anything that you do not want broadcast to the entire class.

Study Tips

- Read the entire course syllabus before starting the class
- Keep to a calendar on dates assignments are due
- Keep in touch with your instructor
- Find a private space where you can study
- Schedule regular study times
- Set a specific goal for each study session
- Do not fall behind in your coursework
- Plan study times you will actually be able to meet. Be realistic!
- Start assignments as soon as they are given
- Review your notes, assignments and discussion board on a regular basis

Success will be yours if you can…

- Take as much time with an online class as you would with an on-campus class
- Contribute actively and regularly to discussions
- Logon at least 4 times a week
- Do not fall behind in class assignments
- Ask for help
- Be prepared for some technical failure along the way
- Create a personal support system
- Take time to review and think through your responses
- Be polite and respectful