

Tips for Success

Here are some tips for being more successful in college courses.

1. Do the reading assignments as they come due. Don't put it off: it gets overwhelming. Don't forget to do your reading questions by the deadlines and take advantage of all additional chances to earn more points.
2. Attend and participate in every class. That means do all necessary prep work and have your ABCD card and Lecture Tutorial or Activities workbook out and ready to go. Don't be late, don't leave early, and definitely don't use electronic devices in class – even if you think you're using them appropriately. It actually lowers your grades. ([evidence](#))
3. Get a study buddy from this class – someone you can contact for clarification, assistance, and to bring you up to speed on the rare occasion you miss class. Make sure to get his/her email address and/or phone number. Visit [Blackboard](#) often.
4. Form and join one or more study groups. Get together regularly (whether virtually or in person) to go over material, rework Lecture Tutorials, Activities, and Ranking Tasks, practice explaining concepts to each other, etc. Research shows that students who meet with a study group regularly typically earn better grades.
5. Get a good night's sleep! The number one reason average healthy people in the U.S. have trouble concentrating, listening, and performing well is sleep deprivation. Plus, the brain is like a muscle – it requires down time in order to process and recover. It can only build and fortify new neural pathways for learning when there are no conscious tasks interfering.
6. Don't sit with your friends. You're more often distracted by them than not. Sit in a different part of the room and with different people as often as you like (yes, even every class period). The more you interact with others and the more diverse interactions you have, the more likely you are to develop deep, conceptual understanding of the material. Let me know if you are repeatedly being distracted by the same person(s)!
7. Finish and review your LTs, Activities, RTs, homework, etc. soon after every class and before the next class. Do not wait until time for the test – it's too late. Learning requires multiple interactions with the same material or concept: the more separate interactions, the more likely you'll develop a deep understanding. Besides, the next material likely builds on the previous material so don't let it pile up – it becomes overwhelming.
8. Don't procrastinate. Make a schedule and go to great lengths to stick to it. Blocking out regular time for studying, homework, etc. means you're less likely to wait until the last second to try and be productive. It also means you have more time to attend help sessions, study groups, get your work checked, etc. thus improving your scores in several areas.
9. Find a good place to study and work on assignments. It should have a reasonably comfortable desk/table and chair, have good lighting, and a comfortable temperature so that you are less likely to be distracted. Do not listen to music, watch TV, etc. It should be quiet. The human brain is horrible at conscious multitasking! ([evidence](#))
10. Review the syllabus, schedule, calendar, and all other important documents often to refresh yourself on the policies, upcoming due dates, helpful tips you've already forgotten, etc.
11. Be open-minded. Our universe is full of weird, awesome, overwhelming, and wondrous astronomical phenomena – including some that may really surprise you. Leave your prejudices, cynicism, and bad attitudes at home and come ready to engage in discussions about things you might never otherwise have imagined!