



Managing Your Time

Reportedly, the most significant factor causing students to succeed in Online classes has been their ability to manage time.

The more successful Online students report regularly spending 2 to 3 hours each week for each hour of credit for a class. A 4-hour credit class, for example, required a minimum of 8 to 12 hours of work **per week** of the semester to complete all requirements.

Without class lectures to spur that quick burst of activity to complete the project or to bone up for a test, some Online students procrastinate through weeks of the semester - only to find themselves hopelessly far behind.

Setting up a Study Schedule

Former students who successfully completed Online courses developed the following information:

- Work out your typical weekly schedule on paper so you will have a general guide for fitting your time to study into your other activities. A typical plan for scheduling:
 - Set up a grid with 1/2 hour times down the side, from waking to closing the mind for the night, and with all 7 days of the week across the top.
 - Fill in your non-flexible times (work hours, scheduled classes, etc) with specific information.
 - Fill in your flexible times related to those non-flexible ones (travel time to work or school, lunch, break, etc).
 - Fill in your other activities - clubs, choir, meetings, etc - which happen less than once a week.
 - List special must-do for family etc. (pick up the kids, etc) that occur regularly. Some find that taking a book along can help the time spent waiting and can help accomplish study time needs at the same time.
 - List **dedicated study time**. This will be time that you will reserve for study - and nothing less than a major emergency will be allowed to disturb it. One student suggested that this be set in 1/2 hour segments - 1 segment per credit hour - and before or after this segment a 1/2 hour or hour of **try to study time** be scheduled.

- List **try to study time**. This will be time that you are planning nothing but study, but recognize that it may be interrupted. If interrupted, remember to grab some catch-up time.
- Use a semester calendar to lay out your deadlines. If your instructor did not provide specific deadlines, set your own and meet them.
- Arrive a bit earlier to work and use that 20 minutes for study.
- Have your lunch hour away from the "gang" with the textbook and syllabus.
- Review the syllabus, study guide, or notes while waiting for the kids at the dentist (school, dance lesson, etc).
- Find a corner at school to work on a project between (before/after) other classes.
- Get up a half hour before the kids and use that time for the "heavy" or new stuff.
- Set mind to work solidly for 1/2 hour - and keeping to that 1/2 hour limit as close as a reasonable stopping point happens. Using a timer with a bell or tone alarm set to the time to stop can be very useful and productive (you don't have to guess or keep looking at the clock but can totally concentrate on the work).
- Do not puzzle for days on a problem. Get with a fellow student in the class or with instructor for help early in a problem.
- "Setting a particular piece of study material or project work aside the first time, or a second time and returning was fine - but when it reached 3 to 8 times I was just stuck and frustrated." Lay aside a problem piece of work and go back with a fresh look later. However, if that does not work after a second try, get help from somewhere reasonably early in the game.

Tips on Participation and Time Management

- What we know from experience is there is usually an adjustment period for most students as they learn the rhythm and patterns of online communication. Here are some tips for getting comfortable with the Online learning environment:
- Take time to review all the help files LCC and your instructor make available.
- If you are very new to the Internet spend some time surfing and getting comfortable with it.
- Spend time just navigating your way through Angel.
- Figure out what tools are being used and what the buttons do.
- Get to know your Internet browser.
- Manage your time. You'll find that your time management skills will be critical in an online class. Why? Because it's very easy to spend either far too little time or far too much time on the class. Set designated blocks of time to work on the class. This will help you stay up with the assignments and with the interaction required in most online classes.
- Download or print out pages for reference and review when you're offline.
- Set priorities and pay close attention to what your instructor says about priorities.
- Ask right away for help if something isn't going right, whether it's a technical issue or something to do with the class environment. If you are unsure about something, communicate it! It is very important that you be proactive in communicating with your instructor and classmates.
- Be persistent.

- Keep the contact information you get from your instructor handy and use it. If you have trouble with the technology, use the phone.
- Learn the terminology of the Internet and emoticons, such as ☺.
- Read what you are going to send before you click on the send button. In online communication it is important to say things carefully, since you can not use body language as you do with verbal communication. Be thoughtful! We will not be able to see the grin on your face if you make a sarcastic comment, so it could be misinterpreted!
- Once you click the send button, you can not get a message back.
- Typing in ALL CAPS is the equivalent of YELLING! Please do not yell at people.
- Share information, tips and questions with your classmates and instructor. You may have the answer someone needs.
- Become part of the online community by participating. Join in and let your thoughts and ideas be heard.
- Enjoy your time in this new learning environment!