Online Learning: Tips for Students
From GCC Writing Tutors, May 2020

Below, GCC Writing Tutors share their suggestions, based on their experiences in online courses, as well as the experiences of students they’ve tutored.

Tips from GCC Tutors!

• Pay attention to how you learn best—what times of day are easiest or hardest for you to focus, where you prefer to work, and how much time you need to allow for completing assignments—is incredibly important.

• With everything online, so many things could go wrong: your internet could go out; your connection could be slow; your computer could need to charge; etc. Estimate how long a task is going to take you, and then double that time.

• Try multiple strategies for scheduling your time and completing assignments—having an open/flexible schedule, organizing your to-do list by priority, scheduling blocks to focus on one thing at a time, etc.

• Some students benefit from developing a schedule, with fixed time for doing the work for each course (almost as if you have a regular, face-to-face course).

• Write your schedule or to-do list on paper rather than on your phone.

• If it’s possible, establish a daily end time for schoolwork. This forces you to give your brain a break, and makes it easier to avoid feeling overwhelmed.

• Take a break to do something relatively mindless (laundry, exercise, cooking) whenever it starts getting hard to focus on an assignment. Taking a few minutes to do something else will allow your brain to process, so spending half an hour away from an assignment can often be more productive than spending three hours on it.

• Read every email twice. We are receiving so much written communication that it’s easy to just skim over an email and miss something important. Much like with class readings, skimming an email and then going back to read it more carefully is a useful strategy!

• Remember that emails can sometimes be interpreted as harsher than intended; try different modes of communication (phone, Zoom, etc.).

• Do NOT take too many classes at once!!! Online classes can take up FAR more hours of work than on-campus classes. (“The number of hours I spend on homework per week has nearly doubled since my classes moved online,” says one tutor!)

• If you think you might fall behind, reach out BEFORE you fall behind; contact your professor early, before the crisis commences, so that hopefully you are not left feeling stranded. And ask an instructor for extra time, if needed.

• Reach out to advisors, Wellness center, etc. for any specific needs, and don’t be afraid to reach out to faculty about those needs!!!!

• Be patient with yourself. Self-care is important!!!!!! If you aren’t feeling well mentally or physically, you won’t be able to give your full effort in class. Keep tabs on your own wellbeing, and take your own needs seriously.

• Schedule a standing appointment with a tutor (same tutor, same time, every week), and/or schedule regular meetings with your professor and/or classmates.