

Learning Resource Center Online Study Skills Handout

How to Stay Focused and Pay Attention in Distance Learning?

As a student you will be responsible for learning on your own and for getting the most out of your online classes, connecting with your teachers, doing research, and studying. An important factor in getting good grades will be your ability to stay on task. One of the biggest challenges associated with online studies is *staying focused* and being disciplined. Conventional classrooms require you to be accountable to your professors, and to sit in place for the duration of the class. However, if you are studying in the comfort of your own home, it is relatively easy to be distracted, and take regular breaks. To combat this temptation, online students must develop a sense of urgency to complete their task on time, and more important, to continually refer to the syllabus to ensure that they have completed every assigned task.

Here are some pointers to help you **stay focused** during online studies.

- **Establish a dedicated study area.** Establishing a study area is a big step in avoiding distractions. Study where you won't be distracted by any commotion in your household. An established work area is a big step in getting and staying focused for an online class.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Take the extra step to make sure TVs and radios are turned off, and that your class work is the only item pulled up on your web browser.
- **Reward yourself.** When you have completed your online study goal, take a break. For instance, you might study for 30 minutes, then take a five-minute Facebook break. Or study for an hour and reward yourself with a snack or quick phone call.
- **Form a study group.** Navigating an online class can be overwhelming, especially if you feel alone. Studying in groups helps ensure that you are all keeping each other in check as far as work goes. A study group can hold each other accountable.
- **Take hand written notes.** This may help you keep track of where you are, and what assignments you have completed or have to start. Plus, when you write notes you are giving your eyes a break from the computer screen.
- **Jot down questions.** As you cruise through your online assignments, you may want to jot down questions as they occur to you. Then, when you log into the student café on your blackboard, you may want to post the questions there. Remember, both your peers and the professor can access your questions and add clarity to any of your uncertainties.

Moreover, students should try to pay attention and stay motivated while studying online. Whenever in doubt about a class assignment or project, log in to BMCC Upswing and ask an online tutor.

References:

<https://www.ccu.edu/blogs/cags/2014/02/how-to-stay-focused-while-studying-for-online-classes/>