

Effective Strategies for Remote Learning

Advising & Learning Assistance Center (ALAC)

@

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Summer 2020



- Remote learning may have the advantages of flexibility & convenience, but it is a lot more challenging than what it seems.
- As a result, developing specific study skills & strategies for remote learning is crucial to a student's academic success.



10 Effective Strategies/Tips for Remote Learning

- 1) Persistence**
- 2) Efficient time-management skills**
- 3) Effective communication skills**
- 4) Active engagement with peers**
- 5) Efficient reading and writing skills**
- 6) Basic technical skills**
- 7) Motivation and Independence**
- 8) A Good Study Environment**
- 9) Knowing where to find help**
- 10) Ability to uphold academic integrity**

1) Persistence

- Persistence is perhaps the biggest key to success in remote learning. Students who succeed are those who are willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every class, and persist through challenges.
- When you run into a challenge, keep trying and ask for help.
- Set up a realistic manageable study schedule for yourself and stick to it. Students who succeed are those who log in and make progress every day. Remote learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity.



2) Efficient time-management skills

While *flexibility* is one of the great advantages of remote learning, it can also be a major hindrance for students who procrastinate, are unable to follow a routine study schedule or unable to complete assignments without daily reminders from the instructor, TA, and other peers. Like most good habits generally, time-management skills have to be learned. Once you do, they will also benefit you throughout your life. *Here are a few effective time-management tips:*

- ❑ **Tip 1: Review your syllabi for each course:** Write down all the due dates in a semester calendar or a planner. Knowing due dates is essential to effective time management & helps you complete assignments in a timely manner.
- ❑ **Tip 2: Make schedules:** In addition to the semester calendar that gives you an overview for the entire semester/session, making weekly assignment sheets ('To do list') & checking them off as you complete them can motivate you.
- ❑ **Tip 3: Know Instructor & TA office Hours:** Another item must be highlighted from the course syllabi is the office hours of the instructors and TAs. You can develop your homework and study plans around office hours to ensure you have ample time to ask for help from the TAs/Instructors before due times.
- ❑ **Tip 4: Stay organized:** If you have separate binders, notebooks, and folders, you will be able to locate assignments easier. Also, avoid clutter.
- ❑ **Tip 5: Stay healthy:** Practicing regular exercise keeps energy levels up, resulting in a more engaged mind. Getting adequate sleep and eating healthy also helps.



3) Effective communication skills

Instructors are willing to help students, but unlike in-person classroom experiences, it's impossible for them to pick up on non-verbal cues during remote learning. For students to be successful, it is vital to be proactive in communicating your concerns and seeking help when needed.

Here are a few tips:

- ✓ ***Use proper communication tools provided by the instructor in the syllabus.*** Even though WebEx and rpi.edu email are the primary communication channels the Institute uses during remote learning, your syllabi might specify other tools like personal e-mails, zoom groups, chat room office hours on Discord/Slack, cellphones, and even text messaging.
- ✓ ***Communicate regularly with your instructors.*** Opening and using all lines of communication will benefit you both during and beyond the course. Students who fail to get their questions answered and concerns addressed often fall behind quickly and significantly. Moreover, establishing a working relationship with your instructor is essential for expanding your professional network and developing a list of references you can use for career purposes.
- ✓ ***Use appropriate style and language for school.*** (continued...)



3) Effective communication skills (...continued)

✓ **Use appropriate style and language for school.** When communicating with instructors and other staff via official communication channels like email, you should write in full, grammatically correct sentences and with a respectful tone. Many students are used to a very informal style of writing in chat rooms, blogs, text messages, and so forth, but certain netiquette should be observed during formal communications:

- ❑ **Include a subject line.** Give a descriptive phrase pertaining to your message (not just “Hi!”)
- ❑ **Avoid sarcasm.** People who do not know you may misinterpret your meaning.
- ❑ **Acknowledge and return messages promptly.** Check your email and course messages for important information sent to you from your instructors.
- ❑ **Use appropriate language.** Avoid coarse, rough, or rude language. Observe good grammar and spelling.
- ❑ **Use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning.** Because of the distance, it's tempting for some students to say things out of anger or frustration that they would never say to an instructor or staff in person. We strongly encourage students to maintain professional etiquette; for example, avoid “flaming” (online screaming) or sentences typed in all caps. Use asterisks (*) or **bold**/underline to indicate emphasis.
- ❑ ***Avoid any derogatory or inappropriate comments** regarding race, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation which are unacceptable and subject to disciplinary action.

4) Actively engage with peers

- Like your instructor, you should consider your classmates to be part of your professional network, and you should cultivate relationships with them.
- Don't limit your discussion postings to responding to the prompts posted by the instructor. Add your own insights and questions to the discussion, be it a relevant news article or scholarly publication you've come across. These contributions help other students relate the course material to the real world and other areas of study.
- In addition, share appropriate information about yourself, such as your career interests and other courses you've enjoyed. These can help you build personal connections with your peers.



5) Efficient reading and writing skills

- Reading and writing are the main ways you'll communicate in remote learning classes. Although some hard copies of textbooks might be required, you should be comfortable reading a lot of documents on a computer screen and able to type efficiently.
- Some tests and quizzes have multiple choice questions, but many of your assignments will involve writing short or long answers.
- If you type less than 25-30 words per minute, it may be worth completing a typing software program before beginning remote classes.

6) Basic technical skills

- Remote learners need basic technical skills to succeed. These include the ability to use a word processing program, navigating the Internet, and proficiency in WebEx, LMS, and other Institute specific software.
- You'll also want to check the [Institute's IT website](#) for their hardware and software requirements. Make sure your own computer meets those requirements.



7) Motivation and Independence

- To be successful, a student has to want to succeed. Remote learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity.
- There are many worthwhile reasons to work hard in school. You might want a greater level of personal satisfaction with your future career. Or perhaps it's personal pride in your accomplishments. Or maybe you are seeking a wider range of opportunities available to you with higher education or a higher income.

8) A Good Study Environment

Another critical component of academic success is a good study environment. A few tips:

- ❑ *Get some peace and quiet.* You will need a quiet place to work without distractions from things like television, family, or roommates.
- ❑ *Avoid games.* Consider uninstalling any computer games to avoid temptation. Or keep the games on a different computer in the house.
- ❑ *Turn off your cell phone.* Let friends and family members know the hours that you will be "at" school.
- ❑ *Beware surfing the black hole of the Internet.* It is easy to lose track of the time as you wander from site to site.
- ❑ *Consider ergonomics.* Adjust the height of your chair, keyboard, and screen so that you are comfortable. Forearms and thighs should be level and parallel to the floor. Wrists should not be bent while typing.
- ❑ *Set up good lighting and comfortable seating.* Lighting in the room should be at least as bright as the computer screen to avoid eye strain.

9) Knowing where to find help

A significant aspect of student success in college often depends also on developing proactive help seeking behaviors. The types of help you need of course differ from student to student, but here are some of the main resources that students should utilize to be more effective during Remote Learning:

- ❑ ALAC: Advising & Learning Assistance Center continues to offer [Drop-in Tutoring](#), study skills and general advising, academic plans for financial aid (SAP) eligibility, and other services.
- ❑ [Counseling Center](#): Counseling consultations for students are conducted via phone. To schedule an appointment, email counseling@rpi.edu or call 518-276-6287
- ❑ Class Dean: Dean Katelyn Newsham newshk@rpi.edu
- ❑ [Disability Services](#): dss@rpi.edu or Jaqualyn Iardella at iardej@rpi.edu
- ❑ Office of Student Success: success@rpi.edu or Dean Louis Trzepacz at trzepj@rpi.edu
- ❑ International Student & Scholars Services: ISSS@rpi.edu or Mary Nellis at nellim@rpi.edu

10) Ability to uphold academic integrity

Students enrolled at Rensselaer are expected to uphold standards of academic integrity. Any act of dishonesty in academic work constitutes academic misconduct and is subject to disciplinary action. Acts of dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism and cheating.

- ❑ Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intention of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent manner. Students must not permit others to complete course assignments and then submit these assignments as their own work. Students must not use any information (class notes, textbook, outlines) that the instructor has not authorized to complete examinations. Only the student enrolled in the course can take examinations.
- ❑ Plagiarism is the act of taking and/or using the ideas, work, and/or writings of another person as one's own. Students must not use material from other sources without clear and specific acknowledgement of the source. Students must conduct their own research and write their own projects. They cannot purchase papers, projects, and all other class assignments from individuals or companies.

The instructor will set and impose the penalties upon students who have engaged in academic misconduct. An expanded description of the university policy on academic integrity as well as penalties can be found in the Undergraduate Catalog. Students are urged to review this policy.

Advising and Learning Assistance Center

ALAC counselors will have open office hours for students to seek advice on course planning, academic preparation, balancing your time, building your academic networks, etc. Below are the staff members and their roles:

- ❖ **David Milford**, Academic Counselor, David specializes in advising students on their curricular planning and financial aid agreements as well as pre-health advising. milfod@rpi.edu : Office Hours:
- ❖ **Nam Caihua**, Academic Counselor, Nam specializes in advising students on time management, academic preparation, financial aid agreements and sophomore advising. caihun@rpi.edu Office hours: Thursday, 4-5PM
- ❖ **Arielle Roberts**: Academic Counselor, Arielle specializes in helping students learn more efficiently and effectively. She individualizes time management plans to fit the needs of each student. robera6@rpi.edu Office Hours:
- ❖ **Sharon McGrath**: Student Tutor Coordinator, Sharon assist students in finding tutors for classes as well as trains and oversees ALAC tutors. She also advises Undeclared General Studies Students- mcgras@rpi.edu Office hours:
- ❖ **Jeannie Steigler**: Associate Director, Academic counselor and advising planner for students reviewing their academic plans for financial aid and graduation. Steigj2@rpi.edu Office hours: Monday 4-5 PM
- ❖ **Mike Hanna**: Director of ALAC, Dr. Hanna splits his time between the Biology Department and ALAC. Those roles inform his current interests in scientific teaching methodologies and academic advising.
- ❖ **Patricia Tedesco**, Administrative Specialist, in addition to her administrative and budgetary responsibilities, Patty provides a high level of student support, answering a multitude of student questions and assisting with everything from completing forms to directing students to other resources. tedesp@rpi.edu