



Distance learning

How to succeed with distance learning

by **Gen and Kelly Tanabe**

Imagine sitting in the comfort of your living room in pajamas and slippers while participating in a classroom discussion of English literature. Seem impossible? Through distance learning, you can do exactly this. Distance learning provides courses over the Internet, allowing you to



sounds attractive, it may not be for everyone. Some students just don't learn as well when not in the presence of a professor and roomful of students. In fact, some students find that it is the classroom setting with the interactions, debate and discussions continued after class in hallways and student centers that is the real benefit of going to college. Plus, there's less guilt from skipping a distance learning class than in-person classes. This means that you must be extremely self-motivated to attend the online sessions and complete your assignments.

Yet, despite these drawbacks, distance learning is still a viable option for many adult students. Here, we outline how distance learning programs work, how to figure out if they are right for you, how to select the best ones and how to succeed in a program.

1. Understand how distance learning works.

learn without leaving your home or stepping on a college campus. It can provide the flexibility that you need to do school-work around your existing schedule.

However, while distance learning

As its name suggests, distance learning basically means that you will receive instruction from a distance, typically via the Internet. Through distance learning, you may take individual courses to learn

specific skills or even complete an entire degree.

Typically, instead of going to a physical

classroom, your meeting place is the Internet. Work is similar to that of regular courses. You will still have reading assignments, homework, quizzes and exams. What's different is you do not need to meet

in a classroom at a specific time for discussions, and you can work independently. Professors give assignments online or via email, and students are often expected to participate in discussions through online

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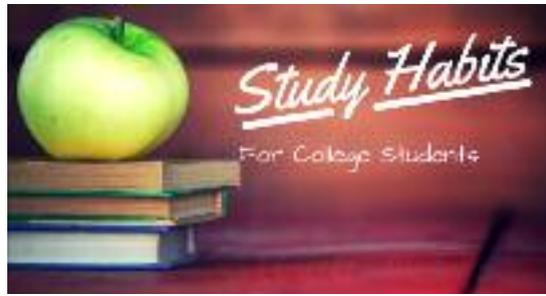
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Top 10 effective study habits for college students

1. Take & review thorough notes while in class

Whether you're sitting through a lecture or doing an assigned reading, always take notes. You'll absorb key terms and ideas more quickly

by writing them down immediately. Don't be afraid to ask classmates for a refresher if you miss a lecture.

2. Eliminate lifestyle distractions

Technology offers unprecedented ways to access new information. However, it also creates distractions that prevent you from concentrating on your research. Stick to academic websites, silence your phone, and turn off your wireless connection as soon as you have enough information to write.

3. Schedule your study time

Instead of squeezing study sessions in

between classes, naps, and other responsibilities, treat studying like any other class or commitment. Pick a specific location that's quiet, peaceful, and will give you plenty of room to work. Then set a specific appointment with yourself each week, and stick to it.

4. Organize your class materials

Instead of keeping one bulky binder of loose paper, organize your notes and handouts into separate folders. This makes it easier to find what you need for each exam, keep your homework together, and prevent overwhelming clutter. Color-coding can also help you keep different topics separate.

5. Take every extra opportunity to study

If a professor or TA offers an after-class study session or extra credit opportunity, try to fit it into your schedule. This doesn't just give you a stronger safety net in case

you make a mistake in the future; it also shows your initiative as a student.

6. Take care of yourself first - Get plenty of rest!

Your brain needs to recharge regularly in order to process and absorb new information. Sometimes all-nighters are inevitable, but don't let it become a habit, because sleep-deprivation can prevent you from learning or thinking critically. Give yourself permission to make up for lost sleep, too. This applies to traditional college as well as distance learning.

7. Study with a group or partner

Study groups usually meet before big tests. You can exchange notes, quiz each other, and most importantly, hold each other responsible for showing up to each session.

8. Exercise to release stress

Instead of succumbing to anxiety or pressure until studying seems impossible,

find a productive outlet to express your frustration. Physical activity releases endorphins that reduce stress and depression, and it's completely free.

9. Take care of yourself first - Eat well

Nutrition plays a huge role in your ability to learn. Instead of depending on sugar and caffeine -- and weathering the crashes that follow -- drink plenty of water and make sure you get enough fruits and vegetables. A well-rested, well-nourished, hydrated body is capable of staying awake and alert without help from chemicals.

10. Don't be afraid to ask for help

Don't be afraid to reach out to tutors, professors, and classmates if you think you're falling behind. Whether you have trouble understanding a new concept or just need help managing your time, college is full of people who know exactly what you're going through.

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message boards. You email assignments into your professor, and he or she grades them and provides feedback through email as well. You can fit the course to your schedule—such as after 10 p.m. when your kids go to sleep.

2. Know how to tell if you are a distance learner.

To determine if distance learning is right for you, see how many times you answer "yes" to the following questions. The more often you do, the more likely it is that distance learning may work for you.

Are you disciplined enough to complete your coursework including homework on your own schedule while still meeting the course's deadlines?

Do you like to work independently with minimal in person interaction with others?

Are you proficient at using a computer to visit websites, send email and participate in online discussion groups?

Can you learn the material you want to study primarily through written instructions without much interaction from the professor?

Will you be willing to dedicate as much time to your distance learning program as you would to a traditional classroom program?

Does your schedule allow you to focus

on your coursework every day?

Will you be motivated enough to complete the program even if you never speak to another student or professor aside from email and message boards?

If you answered "yes" to most of the questions above, then you should consider the benefits of distance learning.

3. Select the right distance learning program by understanding accreditation.

Unlike choosing a traditional college or university program, you don't necessarily have to choose a distance learning program within driving distance. In fact, you can choose one out of town or out of state. However, there is more to choosing a program than simply pointing and clicking on the first one that you find.

First, make sure that the program is fully accredited, especially if you plan to pursue a degree. Employers as well as other colleges and universities place a high value on programs that are fully accredited.

4. Know the difference between certificates and degrees.

Some distance learning programs are aimed at providing certificates while others award degrees. Make sure that the program meets your academic goals.

5. Consider course selection.

Make sure that there are enough courses offered to meet your needs and interests. Also, investigate how large the classes are to

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their place and sets them down. It is God that has the answers to social and economic problems. It is God who sets the standards for society.

In math, students will see that it is the infinite mind of God that put the universe in order in all it's mathematical accuracy.

Subject after subject, seeds of truth are sown. God gives knowledge and understanding. Wisdom comes by applying God's truth to that understanding.

In other words, GOD is significant in every area of study. To segregate God out of education is to present Him as insignificant and irrelevant.

In a Christian school the students are taught by Christian teachers

For seven hours a day, five days a week, 36 weeks per year, a child is in school. The most significant role model a child has besides his parents is his teacher. The Bible states in Luke 4, that a student shall become as his teacher. It does not say they will learn from what

the teacher says as much as they will learn from who they are. To raise godly children, it is imperative they have godly parents and teachers as role models. A Christian teacher will pray for and with a student. When a student comes to a difficult situation, they will be taught to bring that problem to God. Bad attitudes or problem behaviors are dealt with and discussed according to Biblical standards of right and wrong.

In a Christian school, the students are taught to honor their parents

A three-cord strand is not easily broken. When parents bind themselves to their church and a Christian school, there is strength. The child sees agreement in all areas of his life and those in authority over him. The child is taught to respect his parents not just because he is directly told to do so, but also because what his parents are saying at home is backed up by the teacher at school. They are speaking the same thing.

Your child will be around other Christian students and be in a Christian atmosphere

No child or adult is perfect. Your

child will be exposed to the world. He will have to endure temptation, even in a Christian school. The difference is the ability of a Christian school to deal with bad behaviors and influences. High standards of behavior and the disciplined atmosphere encourages growth in righteousness and respect for themselves and others.

Your child will meditate on the Word of God

To be eternally successful, a Christian must study and meditate on the Word of God. Through monthly Scripture memorization, Bible class, student chapel, and the full integration of the Bible into all subject areas, each student learns to hide God's Word in his heart. Why? So he might not sin against God (Psalms 119:11) and so in whatever he does he prospers (Psalms 1:3).

So why send your child to a Christian school?

Because it will give your child the best foundation for life! And if we can give an advantage like this to our children, shouldn't we make that a priority?

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is the Son of God."

Jesus said in Luke 9:26, "If anyone is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

My daughter's favorite verse is Psalm 27:1, which says, "The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?"

Christians are conquerors, not losers - we have the gifts of eternal life (famously expressed in John 3:16) and salvation. We should be neither ashamed, nor afraid.

As someone who did survive high school while being a Christian, I would offer the following advice to those who aspire to do likewise:

■ First of all, make sure your faith is your own and that you're not just going along with your parents/church. You're not a Christian if you haven't

made it personal, no matter what your heritage/tradition.

■ Know what you believe and why you believe it. If you don't know these basic things, how can you be strong or defend your faith if necessary? Books like Know What You Believe and Know Why You Believe by Paul Little, and The Case for Christ (teen version) by Lee Strobel are resources that explain Christianity well.

■ Try to find like-minded friends who can support you and hold you accountable. Your school might have a club for Christian students, or you may know some of your classmates from church or youth group. Meeting together weekly for Bible study, prayer, discussion, and fellowship can be life-saving and life-giving.

■ Just say no - no to smoking, drinking, drugs, and any other activity that doesn't fit with your Christian values. You aren't obligated to explain yourself, but you can choose to tell people that you don't think those pursuits are "cool," that they don't sit well with you, that you're unique and don't follow the crowd, or that you have boundaries

that stem from being a Christ-follower. You don't want to soil your temple, His dwelling place.

■ Part of the human problem, not just the teenage problem, is that we want to be liked. We want our peers to accept us and not reject us. Unfortunately, this is the life we are called to if we are to be true Christ-followers. In the Beatitudes Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Matthew 5:11-12)

■ It may not be easy, but remember this: "your reward in heaven is great." Alone, it isn't possible to survive high school as a Christian. But with God, all things are possible. Not only can you survive the high school years, but you can thrive in them. May God bless you as you stay true to Him and His Word.

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