



10 Most Important Things *You Can Do During Your First Week in an Online Class*

Adapted from Jamie Littlefield, About.com Guide

The first week in an online class can be challenging. New students must learn to navigate the virtual “classroom,” interact with their peers and teachers without actually “seeing” them face-to-face, and balance their assignments with their everyday lives. These ten tips can help you succeed in your Greenville County Virtual class.

1. Determine if you’re in over your head. Take a look at the class requirements and your personal schedule – then, decide if you can really handle the workload. Can you balance the class work load with your school and personal obligations? Are the required assignments at your level? Are you really dedicated to finishing the online class? Too many distance learning students enroll in online classes and drop out after a month or so. Don’t blemish your academic record with an “F” or a “W.”

2. Make sure you have any required texts. If the online class requires copies of textbooks or other materials, make sure you have access to them early so you won’t fall behind on your assignments. Most Greenville County Virtual School classes utilize an online textbook, but many of the supplementary materials can be found in your school’s media center or your local public library.

3. Update your computer. Does your computer have the necessary hardware and software you will need? You may need to install programs (such as Acrobat Reader or Real Player) in order to access the multimedia components of your class, or Open Office if you do not have a word processing program. Using this week to make sure your computer can run the necessary programs will save you from being surprised when you’re under a deadline.

4. Introduce yourself to the teacher. If you’re in an online class with a lot of students, the teacher may never get to know you unless you take the initiative. Use your class discussion forum or email your teacher with a brief introduction.

5. Participate. Sometimes it’s difficult to jump in and participate in online class discussions. Don’t hesitate. Speaking up early will help you establish yourself as an active member of the class. You’ll start to make new friends and will end up with a better grasp of the material.

6. Trade email addresses with your peers. Work with the other students in your class. They can help you study, answer your questions, and remind you of any upcoming deadlines. Best of all, they can act as a sort of support group. Online classes can be grueling, especially if you’re involved in extra-curricular activities or have other school or personal commitments.

7. Acquaint yourself with the class structure. Each online class has its own structure. Spend a few minutes exploring the class webpage before jumping into the lessons. Make sure you understand how you can access all of the necessary online class components (lessons, resources, forums, presentations, assignment submission, quizzes, etc.)

8. Record tests and assignments on your calendar. You are responsible for keeping up with the assignments. As soon as you receive a syllabus, record all of the assignments, tests, essays, and projects on your personal calendar.

9. Establish a regular study time. Figure out how much study time you will need each week and set a regular schedule. Let your friends and family members know that you’ll be unavailable during that time. If you establish this routine early on, you’ll be more likely to stick to it.

10. Get a head start on the assigned work. Start your online class by beginning upcoming assignments and papers during your first week as a student. When the assignment deadlines draw near, you’ll feel confident knowing much of the work is already completed.