Tips for a Successful Semester of Online Learning

Overview:
To support academic success during the upcoming semester, which will primarily take place online, all students have been enrolled in a valuable Blackboard course called *Are You Ready?.* You are invited to take the course to help you before and during online learning. It takes approximately 45 minutes to complete, and you can save it to finish at your convenience. As an option, review and use the tips below, taken from the course, to develop your plan for online learning success. Also, visit the Distance Learning Resources web page for a comprehensive list of tools and support that will help you this semester.

Preparing for Online Learning:
As you prepare for online learning, remember that it may feel challenging at first. This is normal! Here are some things to keep in mind as you transition from in-person to online learning.

1. **Interact with your professors and classmates online and by phone.**
   Online learning can be **synchronous** - meeting with your class in real time at a scheduled time, or **asynchronous** - meeting in real time and completing classwork at your own pace.

Tips	- Look for opportunities to interact with faculty and students by attending virtual office hours or starting an online study group. - Participate regularly in your synchronous classes. - Be sure to communicate often and check into your online courses regularly. - Check your LaGuardia email several times each day.

2. **Maintain good organizational skills.**
   In an online class, you will need to be self-directed and committed.

Tips	- Get organized by creating a daily schedule that includes time for each of your classes and is in line with each course syllabus. - Use your syllabus as a roadmap for the semester.

3. **Manage your workspace.**
   Being able to work in a comfortable, tidy and quiet space makes a big difference.

Tips	- Find a distraction-free place where you can do your work and log into class. - Be prepared to appear on video in synchronous classes by having an appropriate background. (Consider using a LaGuardia background image.)

4. **Understand assignments.**
   This can be challenging in asynchronous classes since questions may not be answered right away.

Tips	- List your questions and visit your professor in virtual office hours or create a study group with classmates. - Consult with students in the same class to better understand what you need to do. - Use Q&A forums to ask questions and get answers**.**

5. **Track your progress**.
   In online classes, instructor feedback is sometimes not as immediate or frequent.

Tip	Check each course syllabus to find out how you will be able to communicate with the instructor.

6. **Stay motivated.**
   You probably didn't plan on your college experience taking place online! However, remember you have decided to complete a college degree so stay motivated.

Tip	Use this motivation to attend class and complete assignments promptly.

7. **Manage your time for success.**
   While you save time by not traveling to class, spend the same amount of time on course activities.

Tips	- Build enough time into your schedule for each class. If it's a 3-credit course, you should spend approximately 9 hours on that class each week. - Use a particular time each day to complete certain tasks, e.g. checking the *Announcements* section on Blackboard every morning at 9 a.m.

8. **Master CUNY's digital tools and the Internet.**
   - ➢ **CUNYfirst** allows you to see grades, register for classes, and see financial information.
   - ➢ **My LaGuardia** allows single sign-on access to all your LaGuardia applications.
   - ➢ **Blackboard** is used to deliver online courses.
   - ➢ **ePortfolio** is a personal website where you will track your learning.
   - ➢ Your **College email** is used as a primary method of communication with your instructor.

Tips	- Take the time to get comfortable with technology you are not familiar with. - Be sure to ask for tech help when you have a problem so that you can complete your class successfully. - Keep track of the two usernames and passwords needed to access CUNY's online tools. To log in, type in your CUNYfirst username, followed by @login.cuny.edu, then your CUNYfirst password. - Contact your campus support team for help with setting up or accessing your email, or go to https://apps.laguardia.edu/lookupID/. - Improve your Internet search by using quotation marks around your search term. For example, if you need help with Blackboard use the search term "Blackboard Help".

9. **Use your reading and writing skills.**
   Online learning courses rely on written communication, in the form of class information, assigned readings, written discussions and communication with instructors and classmates.

Tips	- Take every opportunity to practice your reading and writing skills by participating and completing all assignments. - Use LaGuardia's Writing Center for extra support. - Strengthen your communication with instructors by going to virtual office hours.

10. **Understand netiquette.**
    Netiquette is how to behave appropriately in an online environment. View the Netiquette Guide.

Tips	- Treat everyone with the same respect you would like to receive. - Be open to feedback and differences of opinion. - Respond to messages that are difficult to understand or offensive by asking for clarification instead of reacting negatively. - Write formally, avoiding all capital letters which could be interpreted as shouting, all lowercase letters, and emojis. - Respect privacy by not posting personal matters on a discussion or by sending social media friend invites.

11. **Address problems with tests, assignments and finding your course.**
    If you encounter problems when taking a test, contact the instructor immediately. Instructors will provide instructions for submitting assignments.