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INSTRUCTOR TIPS FOR ONLINE COURSES

Once an anomaly online classes are now widely popular across the United States. Over the last ten years, more and more K-12 districts are offering some form of online classes and instruction for students.

According to Casey Evans (2020), online instructors need to ensure they understand the need for creating a space and a structure for learning. In order for online learning to be successful, instructors must have not only the necessary skills and expertise required to teach a particular course but also a dedicated space, appropriate technologies and other requirements.

Tips to Succeed in an Online Course

1. **Create a Schedule and Manage Your Time Wisely:** quality online instructors should create courses that are easy to navigate and have clear expectations – Condense content into manageable chunks. Plan out the term’s tasks early on. Key: This reduces stress as students juggle multiple deadline across various online courses.
2. **Stay Organized and have a Resistant Workspace:** workspaces should be free from distractions, have minimal identifying items on the wall or surrounding areas. Teachers should test out their devices before the start of sessions. Key: limit distractions.
3. **Plan Your Classes:** your students are not physically in front of you; therefore, planning is essential for online classroom environment. Be sure to place your syllabus and materials before class starts. Example: Giving a “surprise quiz” in a physical classroom is entirely different from posting “surprise pop quiz due by 10:00AM” in an online classroom. Key: Avoid surprises at all costs.
4. **Prepare and Monitor Technology:** teaching online requires a certain level of expertise and comfort with technology. Tech support is no longer down the hall. You need a reliable computer, strong internet connection and the best platform to meet your need. Key: Do your research and play around with your final choice – know your online classroom.
5. **Set Up an Adequate Working Environment:** working remotely is a challenge and requires a good amount of self-discipline. With a bit of planning, many of the pitfalls can be avoided. Set up a dedicated workspace. This space should be for work only. Keep this space free of distractions like television, other family members, or household chores. Natural lighting and an ergonomic chair can be helpful. Key: Minimize distractions

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6. **Innovate and Stimulate Discussions:** online classrooms have the potential to feel cold and mechanical; therefore, teachers should find different entry points to initiate and encourage discussions. There are varieties of ways you can encourage participation during an online class. Example: Pre-plan lectures, assign pre-readings, plan in advance for discussions. Key: Lead your students to get more out of class; more than just a grade.
7. **Communicate Regularly:** communication is essential in the online classroom environment. Not having a teacher physically in front of them can make students nervous. Try answering questions in a timely manner. Provide plenty of feedback. Bring a little warmth and laughter into the session. Key: Maintain a consistent online presence.
8. **Motivate Your Students:** everyone learns differently – online is no exception. While some students are self-motivated, many students are not. Think of ways to motivate all of your online students. Example: give extra points for online discussions and optional assignments your class set deadlines. Key: Find ways to help your students get the most out of
9. **Ask for help and feedback:** encourage your students to give you feedback about their experiences in your online class. What is working or not? Seek out and connect with other online educators.

Conclusion: Online learning is a wonderful opportunity and has the potential to reach students you may have never reached in a physical classroom. At first, it can be intimidating but do your research, plan your methods, and take the leap.