



# ENGINEERING LEARNING STRATEGIES

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## GET REAL ONLINE

### Treat an online course like a “real” course

Commit to making online coursework part of your daily routine. Just like an in-person class, get up in time, get dressed and move to your work space as if you are going to class. There are times when online coursework requires **MORE** time than an in-person class. Doing well in all courses requires **organization, motivation, focus** and **connection**.

## ORGANIZATION

### Review your syllabi

Identify assignments, projects, and exams for each class to ensure that you are adhering to course expectations and deadlines. Identify each instructor’s office hours. Transfer important dates and tasks – for the entire semester - to your planner (see below). Tip: use pencil as dates and tasks can change! Check your email regularly (**get it on your phone**) and turn on Canvas notifications for any updates or reminders.

### Use a planner and create a schedule

A **planner** can provide “the big picture” for the semester and help you anticipate next steps. Research shows that writing down what you need to accomplish will help hold you accountable. Try a physical planner – or make your own. It does not need to be expensive!

**Outline specific times** on your planner to review course material, engage in class sessions, complete assignments, collaborate virtually and/or in-person with peers, and practice self-care. Include time to review online postings and your AU EMAIL for changes and updates. As instructors perfect their online teaching strategies, it is common to encounter changes and adjustments!

Plot start dates as well as due dates for assignments and projects in your planner/calendar. What is the first step for completing your goal and when will you start this process? **Backward plan** from the due date to schedule enough time for the full preparation process.

**Set study goals** by breaking up your time in a strategic way on your planner – try **time blocking**. Decide when you will study for each class and topic. Consider what you want to accomplish each week and identify tangible actions that will help you achieve those goals. See “**Setting S.M.A.R.T Goals**”.

## MOTIVATION

### Track your progress

At the end of each day, take a few minutes to reflect on your study goals and all that you accomplished. Celebrate successes! Accomplishing small steps will help you get closer and closer to achieving your goals.

### Practice self-care

Remember to schedule time for yourself to decompress and relax. Get away from all devices - go outside and take a walk, talk to friends, or do something that helps you relax. What helps you decompress?

### Allow Mistakes

Learning is a process. Finding the best schedule and learning strategies for you may take some trial and error. Be patient with yourself as you work to find the right approach. Learning from mistakes can become some of your most valuable lessons – mistakes can be positive!

### Take breaks – use “The Study Cycle”

Motivation fading? Take a few minutes to step away and stretch. Use a routine like spending 20-30 minutes studying followed by a limited break of 5-10 minutes. Return to your study space, recap what you just learned and begin the cycle again.

## FOCUS

### Find your prime time

When are you most alert and feeling your best? Try to use that time to your advantage by tackling your most difficult material or project during your best time!

### Find and prepare your work space

Identify a space that you can dedicate to academics—preferably one that you do not associate with sleep. Having a dedicated area such as a desk or a table will keep you more focused.

Gather everything you need before diving into your studies: a water bottle, a healthy snack, your textbooks and notes, any required technology and a copy of “**The Study Cycle**”. Test your internet connection and access to materials to ensure you are connected.

Ensure your background is devoid of personally-identifying objects (photos of family, your address on bills, etc.) A plain background is best so that when “zooming” others viewing your spaces cannot identify where you live, etc. Your personal safety is paramount!

### Set boundaries

If you are interacting with family, friends, or roommates throughout the day, have a conversation with them about the times that you need to be fully focused on your studies. Consider posting your daily schedule where everyone can see it.

### Reduce distractions

Do your best to remove elements in your study space that may be distracting: social media, TV, Netflix, video games, etc. Focus on one thing at a time instead of attempting to multi-task. Research proves that none of us actually multi-task very well, even though we think we do!

## CONNECTION

### Leverage your network

Online classes may sometimes make you feel like you are learning on your own, but this is not true! Use professional communication to stay in touch with instructors. Ask questions, and make sure instructors are aware of your accommodation needs, if any.

Be proactive. Know your instructor’s office hours and communication preferences (email, zoom, canvas messaging, etc.) and use their preferred method!

Build a community with your peers by introducing yourself and engaging in discussions. Your peers can be a valuable resource when preparing for exams or asking for feedback on assignments.

Explore online tools and apps such as Box, Teams, Group Me, and Zoom to make it easier to collaborate with peers. Chances are your peers will want to engage as much as you do! Connect with a peer tutor who has taken and passed the courses in which you are now enrolled.

### Find and use resources

Take advantage of various campus resources and programs:

**Engineering Student Tutoring (in-person & online through ZOOM)**, your Academic Advisor, the Alabama Excellence Program (AEP), the Office of Accessibility, Office of International Programs, Office of Veteran’s Resources, Student Counseling and Psychological Services, Study Partners (for tutoring in most University Core Courses), Academic Coaching, the Miller Writing Center, AU Involve, Auburn Cares, Safe Harbor, and Engineering Tech Resources:  
<https://imapssl.eng.auburn.edu/covid>