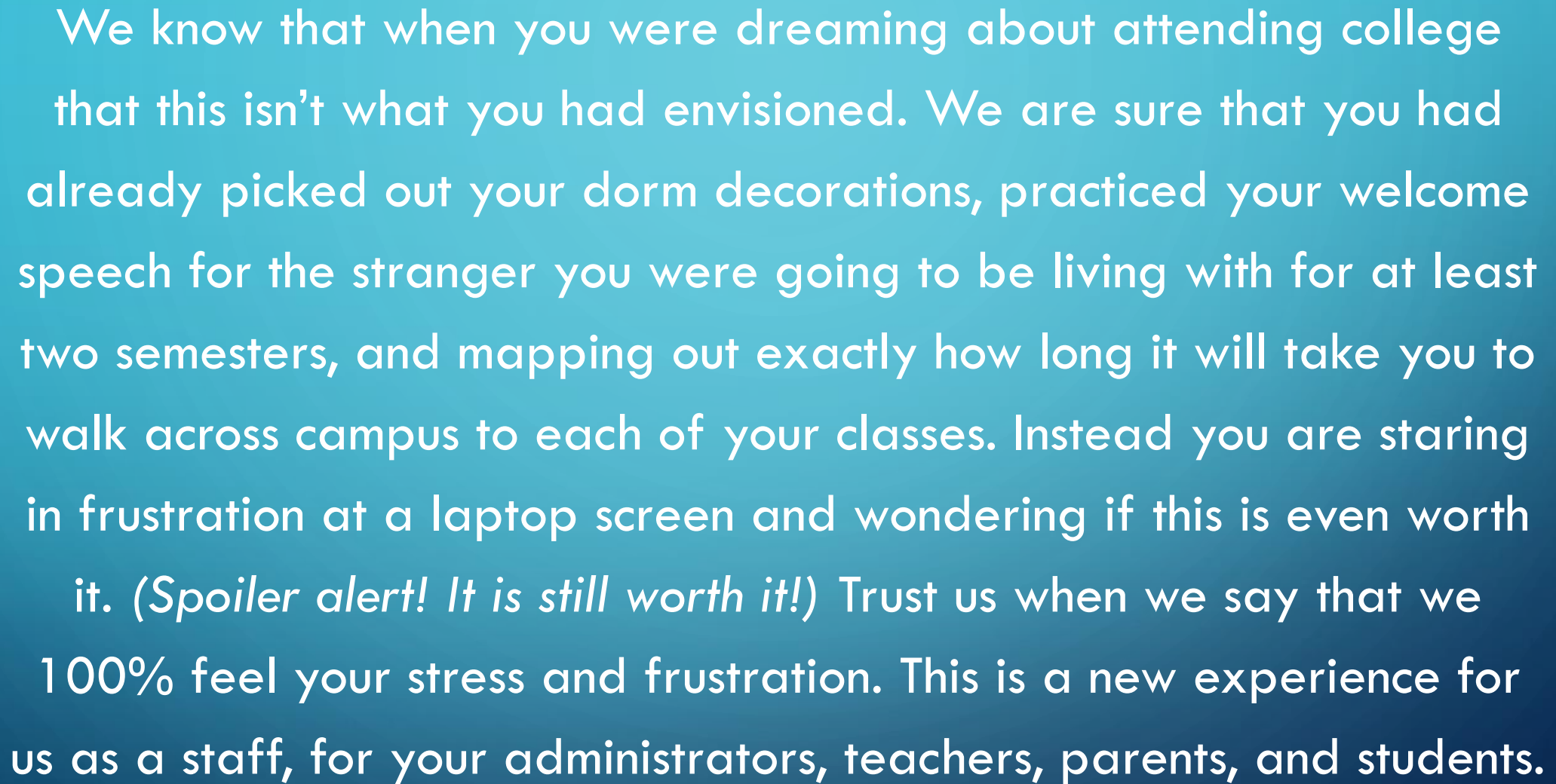




ONLINE EDUCATION TIPS

SEPTEMBER 2020 ALUMNI BLOG

The background is a dark blue gradient. In the corners, there are decorative white line art elements resembling circuit boards or neural networks, with lines and small circles connecting them.

We know that when you were dreaming about attending college that this isn't what you had envisioned. We are sure that you had already picked out your dorm decorations, practiced your welcome speech for the stranger you were going to be living with for at least two semesters, and mapping out exactly how long it will take you to walk across campus to each of your classes. Instead you are staring in frustration at a laptop screen and wondering if this is even worth it. (*Spoiler alert! It is still worth it!*) Trust us when we say that we 100% feel your stress and frustration. This is a new experience for us as a staff, for your administrators, teachers, parents, and students.



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A LOT OF YOU ARE PROBABLY EXPERIENCING ONLINE EDUCATION FOR THE FIRST TIME. THERE WILL DEFINITELY BE THINGS THAT YOU WILL NEED TO GET USED TO. EVEN THOUGH WE ARE ALL LEARNING TOGETHER, WE HAVE PULLED TOGETHER A FEW TIPS TO HELP EASE YOUR TRANSITION INTO VIRTUAL LEARNING.

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LEARN HOW TO USE THE EQUIPMENT

Learning how to use your computer properly will be half the battle won. Get familiar with any video-conferencing software, file sharing programs, and chat boards that are required for your courses. Check into how to get stronger internet speed if possible. Freezing or lagging video screens can cause a hindrance to you getting the information needed from your classes. Make sure everything is working, up to date, and that you know how to use it all. Log in early and do a test run of all of your equipment before your classes even begin.



BE SELF-MOTIVATED

It is much easier to concentrate and stay motivated when you are physically in the classroom. Being at home lowers your ambitions and intensity. A major part of online education is managing your time effectively. You still need to put time aside every day to study, as well as complete your readings and assignments. If you have a live lecture or group meetings you must attend them. Nobody is going to stand over you and remind you to do these things, so prepare to hold your own self accountable.



MAKE A SCHEDULE AND STICK WITH IT

If you are present in your college class, it is assumed because you want to be there. Make it your priority to back that assumption up with your actions. Treat your online education the same way you would treat it if you were there in person. Wake up the same time every day, engage in your usual routine, eat breakfast and put on clean clothes. Don't just roll out of bed and open your laptop. Plan the rest of the day around your class time, study time, and if you have a job, work time. Prepare anything you may need ahead of time. This will help you not procrastinate.



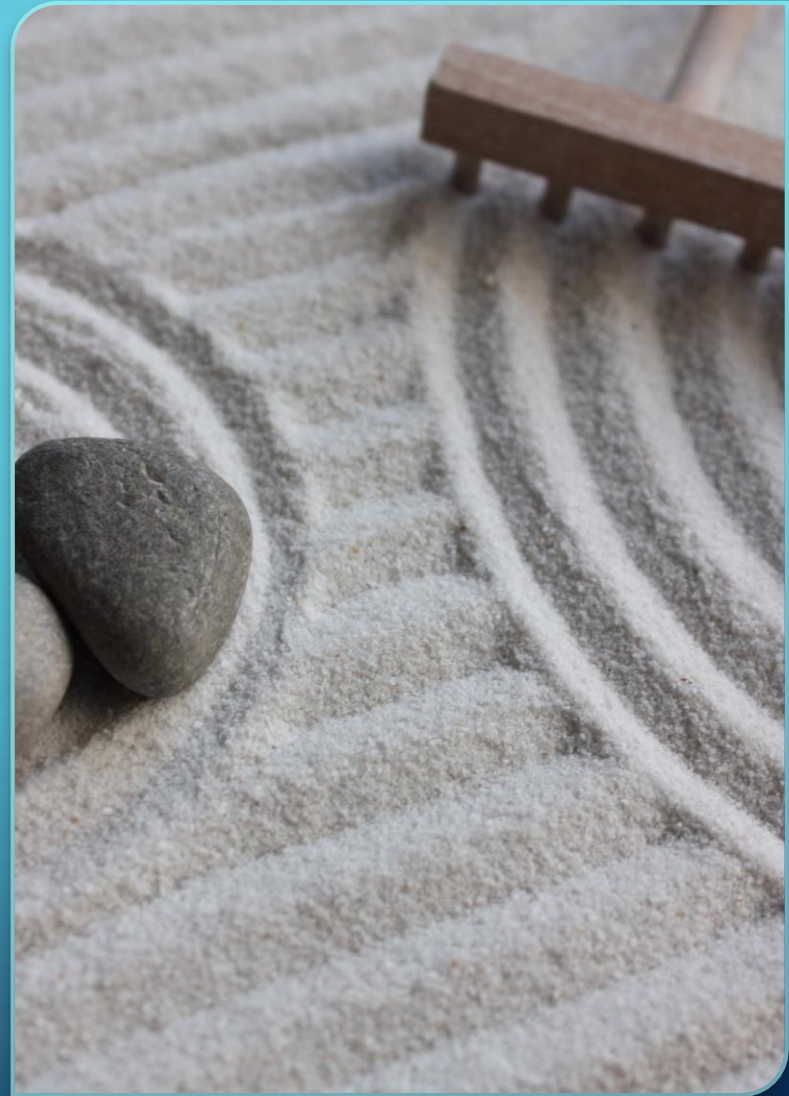
BREAK DOWN TASKS

College professors mean business about those deadlines and you being a virtual learner will be no different. Be very diligent about monitoring those due dates. At the beginning of class, read the syllabus and put all deadlines in your planner. From there, have a detailed calendar of what you need to get done each day. An easy way to study or complete assignments is to break them down into smaller amounts. If you can divide up something into sections, you don't feel so overwhelmed and you feel more in control. Don't overschedule yourself with school, work and extracurricular activities or you may face burn out.



CREATE A POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Even though online education gives you the chance to learn anywhere, that doesn't mean that you should. Everyone works differently. You may be a person who thrives in a quiet and calm environment or you may enjoy the constant hustle and noise. The point is, you need to find a space that both stimulates and motivates you without pulling attention away from your courses. Create a space in your home or room that makes you feel studious, calm and focused.



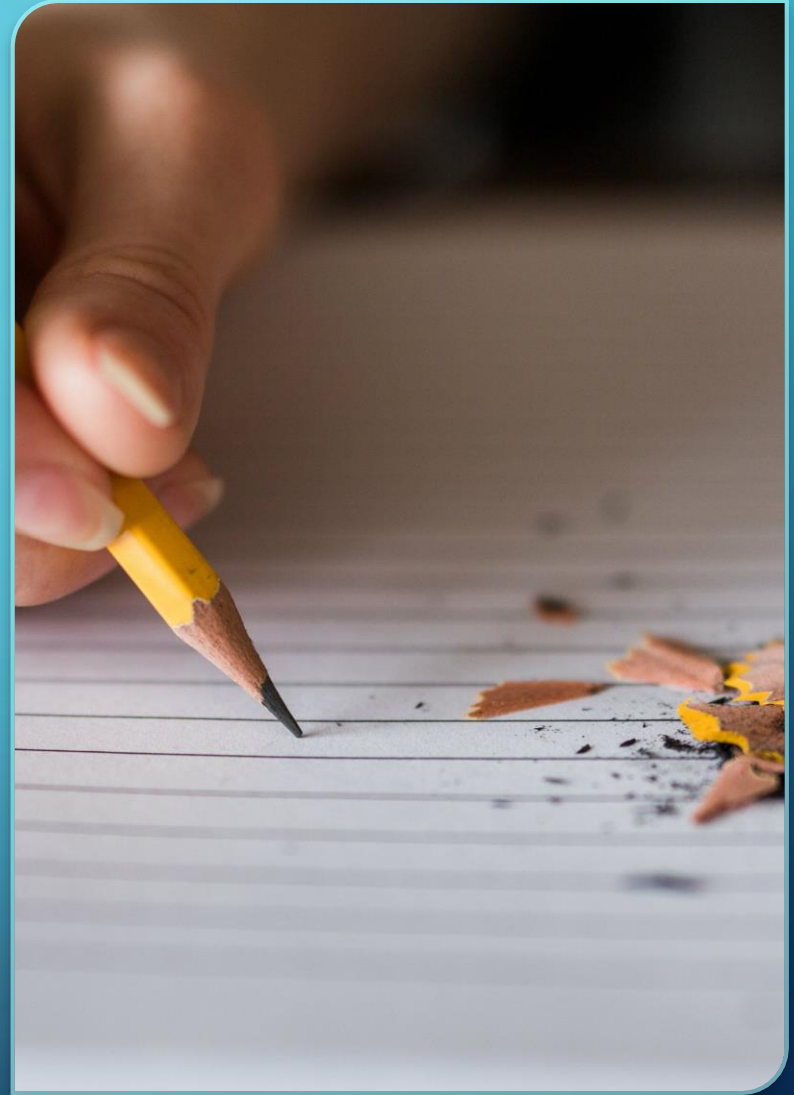
DON'T ASSUME IT WILL BE EASIER

A common misconception is that online learning will be a breeze. That's not at all the case. The challenges of time management and self-motivation can make online college even more difficult. Even the curriculum that will be covered will be different. Gear up for a challenge and prepare to work hard like you would in any class.



TAKE NOTES

While having the class information online can be helpful for reviewing material, you should still take notes. The main value in taking notes is that it helps you engage with the material and put it in your own words. It will help boost your understanding and retention.



KNOW THE RULES OF PLAGIARISM

When it comes to working exclusively online, it is easy to pull up Google and get any answer you are looking for instantly. Avoid this at all costs. Know the rules when it comes to cheating, plagiarism, and academic integrity. It's as simple as this: if you came up with it and wrote it, it's yours. If you copied, borrowed, quoted, or even paraphrased the information or idea from somewhere else, it belongs to someone else. Credit the person, publication or website. Become familiar with your school's guidelines to avoid any future problems.




ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE

Participation will help you learn and understand the course better. You may want to comment on a classmate's discussion board or post a question of your own for everyone to see. Read what other students and your professor are saying. If you feel yourself falling behind, speak up. Don't wait until the assignment is almost due to ask a question or report issues. Email your professor and be proactive in asking for help.

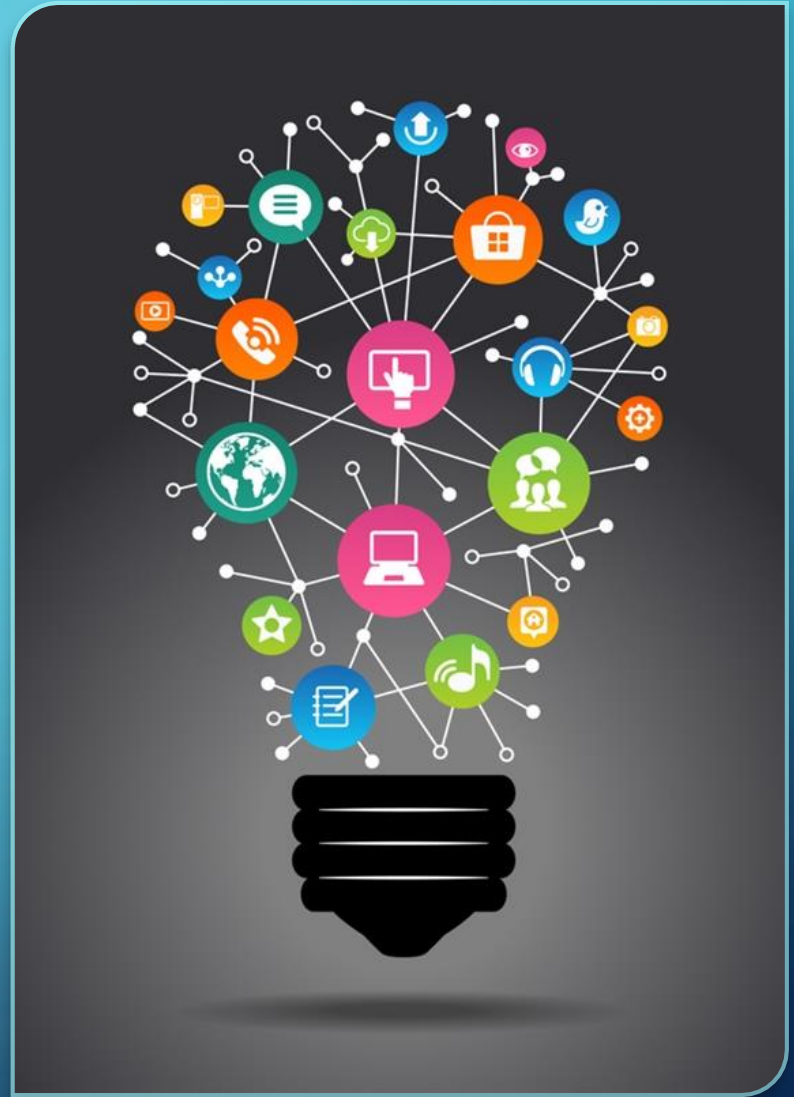


USE THE RESOURCES GIVEN TO YOU

Just like with in-person classes, academic success is about more than attending class and reading the book. Take full advantage of all of the resources available to you. If your professor offer virtual office hours, be sure to attend them. Bring any questions you may have about the class or assignments. If your professor provides additional resources to practice and stretch the understanding of the material, use them.

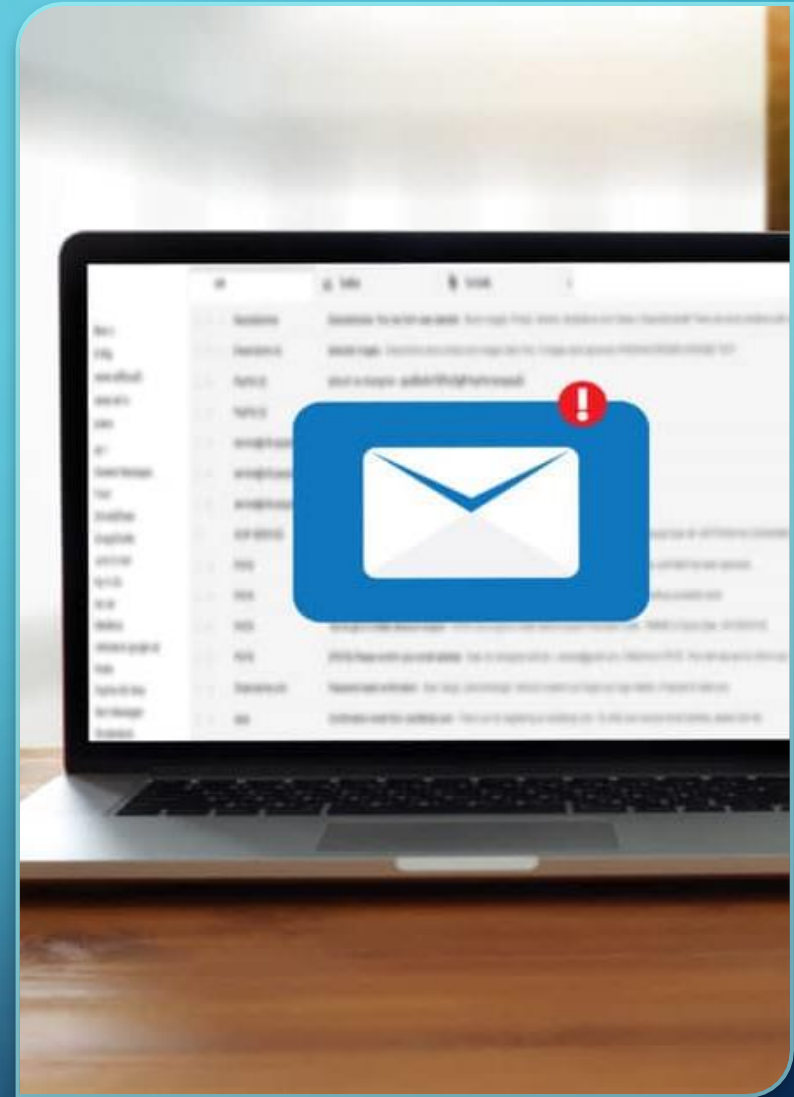
A graphic of a lightbulb where the glass part is a dark grey rectangle. Inside this rectangle, a network of white lines connects various colorful circular icons. The icons include a laptop, a globe, a shopping bag, a speech bubble, a Wi-Fi symbol, a camera, a star, a document with a checkmark, a musical note, a group of people, a headset, a gear, a magnifying glass, a smartphone, and a social media bird. The base of the lightbulb is a black, multi-segmented screw-in base. The entire graphic is set against a dark blue background with faint white circuit-like lines.

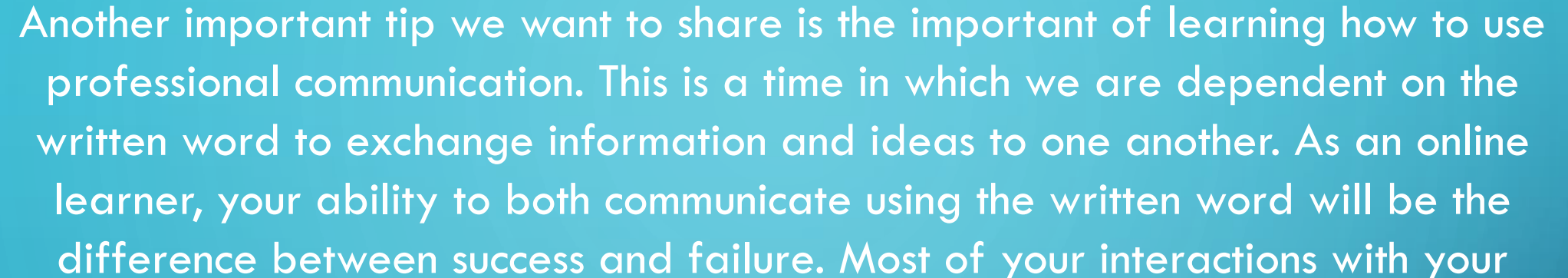
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CHECK YOUR EMAIL REGULARLY

This is crucial with online classes.
Checking your email will help you
become aware of changes to the due
dates, new guidelines, new assignments,
updated study resources and
announcements.







Another important tip we want to share is the importance of learning how to use professional communication. This is a time in which we are dependent on the written word to exchange information and ideas with one another. As an online learner, your ability to both communicate using the written word will be the difference between success and failure. Most of your interactions with your instructors and classmates will require you to write emails, feedback, and chat board messages in complete, coherent, and informative sentences. Who doesn't love the use of a good abbreviation, emoji, and a GIF or two? But remember that your professor is not your friend, even if they are really cool. So when you send your instructor a message, don't use abbreviations and emoji's. Compose an email as if you're speaking to a future employer, each and every time. Follow the link below to an article that gives tips and examples of how to write an email to a professor.

<https://collegesofdistinction.com/advice/how-to-write-an-email-to-a-professor-college-freshman-guide/>








OUR FINAL PIECE OF ADVICE TO ALL OF OUR ALUMNI STUDENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY DEALING WITH THIS “NEW NORMAL” WOULD BE TO HAVE PATIENCE, GRACE AND MERCY FOR EVERYONE YOU COME INTO CONTACT WITH DURING THIS SEASON.



JUST KNOW THAT YOUR INSTRUCTORS ARE NERVOUS AND STRESSED TOO. THIS MAY BE THE FIRST TIME YOUR PROFESSOR HAS HAD TO TEACH ONLINE. BE PATIENT AND EXPECT SOME HICCUPS. NO ONE KNEW THAT WE WOULD BE THRUST INTO A WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC. THERE HASN'T BEEN A LOT OF TIME FOR TRAINING OR LAYING DOWN GROUNDWORK FOR THE ONLINE LEARNING BEFOREHAND. THINGS ARE CHANGING MINUTE BY MINUTE AND EVERYONE IS TRYING TO ADJUST ACCORDINGLY.



DON'T PANIC WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG. YOUR INTERNET MAY GO OUT OR YOU HAVE A COMPUTER GLITCH. BREATHE, SHUT DOWN THE COMPUTER, AND THEN CALMLY LOG BACK IN. AND ALTHOUGH IT'S NOT IDEAL, YOU COULD USE YOUR SMARTPHONE AS BACK UP. IF THE TECH REFUSES TO COOPERATE, STAY CALM AND ONCE IT STARTS WORKING, EMAIL YOUR PROFESSOR TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.



WE KNOW THAT THIS YEAR WILL HAVE ITS CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME BUT ONLINE CLASSES CAN BE AN OPPORTUNITY. IT'S A CHANCE TO BE MORE PRODUCTIVE! THIS EXPERIENCE CAN BE REWARDING AND EDUCATIONAL. IT CAN ALSO BE SOMETHING YOU CAN AND WILL CARRY OVER INTO YOUR CAREER FIELDS. IT'S ALL ABOUT YOUR APPROACH TO THIS NEW EXPERIENCE.