

Mechanical Engineering

How to Take Charge of Learning

Every student will learn differently and have different techniques that suit them. It is important to your success to find the learning techniques that suit you and take charge of your learning.

Communicating with Professors

Communicating with professors will go a long way in your academic career, so learning how to communicate effectively with them is very important.

- Introduce yourself to your professors, this will start your relationship with them early and make you feel comfortable approaching them with questions later
- Go to office hours! Professors will set aside time each week dedicated to being available to students to answer questions about course content, homework, projects, labs, and anything else you may need to help you succeed in the class.
- Email effectively! When emailing your professors make sure you include all of the info required for them to answer your questions.
 - Include what class you are emailing them about
 - Be specific about your question! If you are stuck on a question, explain why, if you simply say you are stuck or confused it may take several emails back and forth before you get the help you need.
 - If you are emailing about missing class, reach out early and include specific dates.
 - Plan for time for the professor to respond. If you're emailing after 5 pm you may not get a response till the next morning. If you email during the day you may not get a response for a few hours.
 - If you do not get a response within a couple of days follow up! Professors get endless emails every day, there's a chance yours got lost!
 - If the question is urgent, try to catch them in their office, they may not have time to check their email by the time you need a response.

Making the Most of Classes

Every class is important to your academic success.

- Show up to every class and be on time. If you have to miss a class make sure to ask a classmate for notes so you can catch up.
- Pay attention! It's easy to lose focus during long lectures but it's important to pay close attention so you don't miss important information.

- Small, quiet fidget toys may help you if you struggle to sit still
- Having a bottle of water will also keep you hydrated, and the action of drinking can help you wake up and feel more alert
- Make sure you're well rested and fed will also keep you from feeling tired or hungry and breaking your focus
- Take notes! Notes are a very important study tool and make it easy for you to recall things discussed in class.

Taking Effective Notes

There are a lot of different ways to take notes. Not everyone will like to take notes the same way. It is important to find a way to take notes that makes sense to you.

- Cornell notes can be effective for keeping track of key concepts and easily finding them
- Some people prefer basic notes, making important headings on paper by underlining them, highlighting them, etc.
- Some people prefer using multiple colored pens on notes, using their own color code to separate important points by making them a different color
- Some people prefer to use a tablet to take notes for varying reasons, such as the ability to quickly change pen color, the ability to zoom in, annotating online documents, etc.
- Some people also prefer to type notes, this may not be beneficial for all classes, as a lot of STEM classes require drawing models and diagrams in your notes
- If your professor uses powerpoints you can also consider asking them to publish the powerpoints to Canvas so you can pull them up or print them ahead of time and annotate the slides, this will help you save time when taking notes.
- This video goes over one possible interpretation of how to take notes and what you should include in them. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7CwqNHn_Ns

Focus on You

College is fun, but remember you came to school for yourself and your goals!

- Stay on top of your work, falling behind is hard to recover from, so staying on top of your work is important!
- Take time for yourself, while you want to work hard, if you take no time to relax you may burn out and find it difficult to keep working.
- If you're struggling, evaluate why, talk to your advisor, and make a plan to improve!
- Make sure you are in a program that suits you and your goals, if you're not happy in your chosen program it may be hard to find the motivation to keep working towards your goals.
- Be proud of yourself and your accomplishments!