Slide one: Welcome to the Julia N. Visor Academic Center virtual workshop. The topic of this workshop is How to Succeed in Online Courses.

Slide 2: In this presentation we will discuss

The differences between online and traditional classes

How to prepare for an online course

How to manage an online course

Netiquette

As well as tips and tricks to ensure your success.

Slide 3: Silent

Slide 4: Online courses will be different than what you may have experienced in a traditional course.

Traditional courses generally all have the same format. You register, get a time and day, and show up on that day and time for the whole semester. Online courses can have many formats. Your assignments might have set deadlines or they might all be due at the end of the semester. You may have to logon at a specific time every day or you may be able to logon whenever is convenient for you. It is important to determine what type of online course you are taking.

In a traditional course, the pace is largely set by the instructor. In an online course, you will have deadlines, but the pace is largely up to you. Either way, you will still determine when you complete assignments.

Class discussions also differ in an online course. In a classroom, you can immediately respond to someone's argument or idea. In an online course, you may respond after several other people have input and you in turn may not be responded to until several days after your original post. However, since the discussion takes place over time, you can be more thoughtful about your responses. The online environment also gives some anonymity. While your name will be in the course, it is unlikely that your classmates will recognize you on the street so some people might feel more comfortable responding to others in an online environment.

Technology is essential to an online course, but with a dependence on technology comes the possibilities of technological problems. Problems can arise in a traditional course but since your entire grade is dependent on technology in an online course, make sure your computer is functioning well and that you have a reliable internet connection you can use.

Slide 5:

However, some things will be similar between the two.

You will still be expected to participate. Participation is critical in both formats so make sure you understand your instructors expectations for participation when you begin the course.

You will still have assignments and readings so be sure to complete ALL the necessary readings and assignments.

It is important to be respectful to other students, online or in a classroom. If you are unsure of what you are writing online (say, in response to another student's answer), a good rule of thumb is to ask yourself: "Would I say this to him/her if we were sitting face to face?" If the answer is no, you might want to rethink what you are typing.

You will still need to develop a relationship with the professor in the online course, so be sure to get their contact information. You might not be able to stop by the office if you have questions like you would in a traditional course but you will still need to keep the lines of communication open.

Slide 6: Silence

Slide 7: Before your class begins you will need to complete a few steps:

Choose your environment- An ideal study environment is just that – ideal. Some students need absolute silence while others can't seem to concentrate without noise in the background. No matter what your preference is, a well-lit place that is free from distractions is recommended. Note that you'll make much better use of thirty minutes of disruption-free study than an hour's worth of commotion-filled learning. If you can't escape in-home interruptions, try the library or a coffee shop. Schedule your designated study time when you can be in a distraction-free environment and your chances for success will increase and the time you need to devote to your course will decrease.

Become familiar with your syllabus-Your syllabus will not only tell you what type of online class you are taking, but will give you the guidelines for posting as well as any deadlines you may have. Print out a hard copy of your syllabus. It is easier to have a hard copy of a syllabus, even though there is one that is available on-line 24/7, because you can highlight or make notations about an assignment or due date. If your professor has uploaded a syllabus, print out a hard copy syllabus and read over it, making notations of any questions or concerns you have regarding due dates or assignment requirements.   Having a hardcopy of the syllabus also allows you to check off assignments as you complete them and keep track of your assignment grades.

Find an emergency backup- in the event that your primary access fails (your computer crashes) you may want to plan ahead and have a back up. Whether it is the public library or you parent's house - find a place you can resort to in emergencies. This will be crucial when you may have to finish your paper or complete an assignment online. And, as with any college courses, it is a good idea to back up your papers or conference work on external storage media (like a portable USB flash drive). This ensures your work will not get lost in the case of a computer failure or other accidental reason.

Create a schedule- One of the most challenging tasks for students in online classes is completing assignments. To succeed in your online class you must first make sure that you complete every task and assignment on the date that it is due. If you set aside a certain time during the day or week that you can work on your homework or assignments, you are more likely to complete them in a timely manner. Think of it like attending class at a certain time each week!

Use an Agenda or Planner: Make sure one of the first things you do after receiving printing off your syllabus is to write all the upcoming assignments you have for your course. This is a great tool to help you remember what you have and also to point out any other assignments that may conflict or fall within the same time period, which will better enable you to plan your time affectively.

Review help files-These will help you navigate some of the basics of online classes as well as clarify any expectations the instructor has regarding format.

Slide 8- Silence

Slide 9- Discussion Boards
> Make sure that you **always** post on discussion board when required. Look over your syllabus to see if posting on discussion board counts as part of your participation grade, because more often than not it is included in it. (The Participation grade percentage may not seem like much, but when it comes down to whether or not you get an A or B, posting on discussions almost always tip the scales) Please note: 1. Not only do you need to post –but- 2. You must also do it **on time!!!!** (Think of it this way…. Posting on discussion board is like attending class… make sure you do it on time or else you will have points deducted)

Remember the 4 P's of posting:
- Participation - Posting on a discussion board may be the main form of participation points – always post!
- Punctuality - And always post ON TIME!
- Point - Reread posts before you submit them to be sure that you are getting your point across and have thoroughly added everything you need to support your points. Don't be too succinct, but don't ramble.
- Posts - Be sure to read other people's posts as well to understand material better or get a sense of what other people are getting out of readings and class assignments. It can help clarify things for you and help you learn.

Slide 10:

Prepare your notes/book- Tab or post-it main points in the chapter for open book online testing

Environment- Always take online tests on a *reliable* computer in an area free of distractions or heavy traffic

Format- Make sure you know how as much about how the test "works" as possible before you take it to avoid spending too much time with the logistics of the test:
> Is there a password to get in?
> Do you know the time allotted and how many questions there are?
> Can you review the instructions before the test to save time?
> Can you save and return if interrupted?
> Do you have to answer the questions in sequence?
> Can you change answers?
> Is there a "review" feature that lets you check your work, or check for unanswered questions?

Completion- After you have finished the test and are ready to submit make sure you know the submission process. Is there a separate sequence from saving to "turn in the test?"

Slide 11: Silence

Slide 12:
It is important to remember the rules of netiquette-short for internet etiquette.
First, remember that what goes for offline also goes online. Treat people with respect. Don't plagiarize. Respect the confidentiality of the class. Avoid unprofessional language.

Think before you type-Are you using all caps? That might look like yelling. Are you being sarcastic? Sometimes that can be difficult to pick up online. Are you using an emoticon? Has the professor noted that informal things such as emoticons are ok? Once you click the send button, you cannot get a message back.

Finally, here are some general tips to make sure you stay successful in your online course.
- Don't Wait to ask- And ask right away for help if something isn't going right, whether it's a technical issue or something to do with the class environment. Don't waste time trying to solve a problem; just call or send an email to your instructor.
- Share what you know- Share information, tips and questions with your classmates and instructor. You may have the answer someone needs.
- Back it up! You never know what might happen so keep a copy of all the assignments you submit.
- Do some work offline- Download or print out pages for reference and review when you're offline. Not all your work has to be done will connected to the class.
- Enjoy! Online classes take Self Discipline, Time and Commitment. But if you put in the effort it should be a unique and enjoyable experience!