Top Tips for Getting the Most out of Excellence in Education Online Courses

Studying online through Excellence in Education’s online learning platform has many advantages – you can study at your own pace, it’s free, and there is no real pressure. However, these advantages can also be disadvantages – you may struggle to get going or to find the time to dedicate to the course...and before long you are ignoring the reminder emails and telling yourself you’ll complete the work tomorrow! But it doesn’t have to be this way. Here are some tips to get the most out of this online course and make sure you complete it successfully.

1. Identify the best time of the day for you to study

Are you a morning person? Get up an hour early and use this time to study before you start the day. You’re a night owl? Schedule an hour every day in the evening to go over the materials and complete the tasks. Choose the time of day when you are performing at your peak so you maximise your study time!

2. Book in the time

Don’t just say to yourself “I’ll do it today” – set a concrete time every day when you are going to sit down and log in ... and stick to it. Block out the time on your phone calendar and set an alarm, write it down in your diary, ask friends or family to remind you. If you have a definite time to participate on the course booked in, you’re much more likely to stick to it.

3. Make online learning part of your daily routine

The Excellence in Education courses ask for just a few hours of work each week (usually about 5-6 hours), and it can be easy to think “I’ll do it all at the weekend”. But then you are faced with having to work for a longer period of time, concentration may fade, and it can become a chore rather than an enjoyable learning experience. Instead, do ‘little and often’ and block out an hour a day to dedicate to the course. You’ll stay on top of the work, it’s not overwhelming, and you’ll have time to interact with the other participants as you return each day.
4. Understand what is required and how to use the platform

Now that you have been admitted to the course, spend some time finding out what is required and how things are done. Look at the Course Content to get an overview of what will be covered; read the Course Overview and FAQs to find out about dates and common issues; introduce yourself on the Welcome Forum to try out participating on a forum...It’s best to get familiar with the platform as soon as possible so you can maximise your learning time once the materials become available. Remember that you can always message the tutor if you have any problems.

5. Interact with others

Moodle is designed to be an interactive learning experience – knowledge is constructed through the discussion and sharing of ideas and opinions with others. If you simply read the contributions of others on the Forums, without sharing your own beliefs and teaching tips, you won’t receive feedback on your ideas and you will miss out on valuable learning experiences. Share your experiences, comment on other’s ideas and interact with the other participants! The Forums can provide lots of practical ideas for you to use in your classroom with your learners!

6. Don’t leave everything to the last minute – keep up with the course!

It’s easy to let things slide and suddenly it’s the day before the end of the course and you still have more than half the activities to finish. Finishing everything on the last day may get you the certificate...but you will have missed out on so many learning opportunities. As mentioned above, a major part of the course is interacting with others and getting feedback on your ideas, both from the tutor and the other participants. When you submit everything on the last day, the tutor may not have the time to provide detailed feedback, and other participants will have moved on from previous modules and may not go back to read your contributions. So keep up with the course and submit your contributions at the same time as other participants so you can join in the discussion.
7. Reward yourself!

Online study requires discipline and self-motivation, so reward yourself when you achieve a learning goal! This will motivate you to keep going and reach the next objective. It can be as simple as enjoying a piece of cake when you've finished a module!

8. Enjoy the experience!

Above all, enjoy the learning experience. Connecting with other similar teachers around Spain and Portugal (and the world!) is an amazing opportunity. We can all learn so much from each other, and it's often reassuring to hear that other teachers are experiencing many of the same issues as you are...and perhaps they have some solutions to share! Fully participating in an Excellence in Education online course is a rewarding experience which can provide you with new ideas and a renewed drive for excellence in the classroom!