Preparing for an Online Course

moodle
A Student Guide to Moodle

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Our mission is to provide quality education and training opportunities that support student learning, enhance student advancement and success, and meet the workforce needs of our community.
**Aims and Objectives**

**Aim**
To provide an introduction to using an online learning environment

**Objectives**
*After reading this manual you will be able to:*

- Set up your Moodle and Webmail accounts
- Navigate around a course
- Identify the key elements of the course i.e. Topics, Blocks, Activities, Resources
- Identify the communication methods inside Moodle
- Recognize the general guidelines for online attendance
Student Guide

Introduction

We assume that:

- You have at least a basic knowledge of how to use a computer including using input devices like a mouse and a keyboard; and that
- You are familiar with your web browser and navigating between pages.

This guide introduces you to the basics of participating in an online course.

Listed below are the types of accounts you will be using:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Account</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Your Username</th>
<th>Your Password</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moodle Online</td>
<td>All online coursework and seated supplemental materials</td>
<td>Usually first initial underscore last name – number added if duplicates. Ex. John Doe: j_doe279</td>
<td>Your student ID number + your birthdate (mmdyyyy) ID number will have no leading zeros Get ID number from Web Advisor - What’s my User ID? Tutorials at Tutorial for Find My Username and ID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webmail</td>
<td>All official college and Moodle correspondence</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>Login 10 minutes AFTER changing your password in Moodle, and will be the same as Moodle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebAdvisor</td>
<td>School records, grades, transcripts, schedules, payments (NOT connected to Moodle). Get Username and ID # here</td>
<td>Same as above</td>
<td>DIFFERENT PASSWORD – Use the Main Menu page, scroll down to the bottom right of the page and click I'm New to WebAdvisor. Password will be e-mailed to you. This system is separate and not connected to your Blue Ridge Moodle and Webmail password. You will need to set this up separately!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Click the small Moodle icon \(\text{m}\) in the upper left of the Blue Ridge home page (http://www.blueridge.edu) or type in http://blueridge.mrooms.net/.

The actual appearance of the online learning system and this course on your monitor is governed by settings on your own computer, and as a result, what you see may be slightly different to that shown in the examples.

**Continuing Education** students will login at the same location *unless* you are taking an Ed2Go course. Ed2Go students will go to: http://www.ed2go.com/blueridge/

**To Begin:** On the top right of the Moodle home page, click (Login).

If you are a first time user, on the right of the next page, use the “Click this link to set your new password or reset a forgotten password”.

Your Username is typically in the following format: first initial underscore lastname (and possible numbers if there are duplicates).

**Example**

**Username:** j_doe279 (may have numbers at the end)

**Password:** your 7-digit Student ID (SID) number with your birthdate (drop any leading zeros from your ID number).

**EXAMPLE:** If your Student ID is 01234567, and your birthdate is 01/18/1972, your password would be 123456701181972

Check this tutorial page if you need help finding your Username and Student ID: http://www.blueridge.edu/academics/distance-learning/tutorials-distance-learners/find-my-username-and-id

**Returning students:** If you attempt the login instructions above and fail to login, please use your previous semester’s password. If you’ve forgotten your password and need it RESET, contact the Help Desk at (828) 694-1895. You will need to provide identifying information such as your Student ID number.
and one other identifying piece of information before we will reset your password. (NOTE: the 24/7 Help Desk cannot reset your password.)

**Step 2**

Once you have entered your BRCC Username and Password, you will be prompted to change your password. It must be at least 8 characters and include at least 2 numbers and 2 lowercase letters.

Once you have clicked “Save changes,” you will need to click Continue.

**Step 3**

There are some important settings on your Profile page that will make your Moodle experience more productive. We recommend you go ahead and **Edit your profile** now.

From the **My Home** page and the **Administration** block, click the link to **My profile settings** and then **Edit profile**. See suggested settings below.

**Email display**: The default is **Allow only other course members to see my email address**. We recommend you leave the default setting here.

**Email format**: You can choose to have emails sent from Moodle in **Plain text** format or **Pretty HTML format**.

**Email digest type**: The default is set to “No digest (single email per forum post)”. If you wish to reduce the number of emails you are receiving from all Moodle forums, change this setting to either “Complete” or “Subjects”.

**Forum auto-subscribe**: If you select “yes” for this it will mean that when you post to a forum in a course, you will be “subscribed” to that forum and receive email copies of all messages for that forum. We recommend you set this to “no”
to reduce the amount of email you receive. You may choose to subscribe to any particular forum inside of Moodle.

**Forum tracking:** This is a useful option to enable. If it is enabled on your Moodle site it will highlight unread forum messages so you can easily see what is new.

**Text editor:** This version of Moodle offers you a choice of text editor, we recommend the default editor.

**City/town:** The default for everyone is Flat Rock.

**Preferred language:** You have a choice of English or Spanish.

**Description:** You can share something about yourself here (program major, hobbies, etc.) remember that everyone can view this information in your **Profile**.

**User picture:** You can add or change a picture by clicking the page icon “+” and browse to upload your file. If you have it available on your desktop, you can drag and drop it in the dotted box.
When you are finished editing your Profile, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click “Update profile”. You are now viewing your completed profile. To return to the Moodle home page, Click the “Home” link on the far left of your screen.

**You must wait approximately 10 minutes after changing your password before trying to login to your student e-mail account.**

Do **NOT** go to webmail before changing your password.

**Webmail at Blue Ridge**

All of your online communication within Moodle (and with your teacher) will occur through Webmail. This is a “Google Apps for Education” account, and if you have an existing Gmail account (or two), you may see them all listed on a common login screen.

To access your Webmail account, click “Student Webmail” in the top blue navigation bar in Moodle, or on the green envelope icon on the top left of the Blue Ridge home page.

https://mail.google.com/a/webmail.blueridge.edu/.

Your email address will include the same Username as Moodle.

Be sure to use the whole email address (@webmail.blueridge.edu) the first time you login.

Your browser at home may save this login information for you, but **never** click “Stay signed in” if you are using a public computer.
**Finding Your Course(s) at Blue Ridge**

To see a listing of the courses you are currently enrolled in, look on the Moodle “Home” page and find the Navigation block on the left. Click on **My courses**.

If you do not see the course that you are looking for, it is possible that your instructor has not yet made it available (visible) to students – in general, courses will **NOT** be open until the **FIRST SCHEDULED** day of classes for any semester.

Second mini-semester 8 week courses will not open the 1st day of the semester, but will be available the 8th week of the semester. If you registered late (i.e. not during “early” registration), and do not see your course, please contact your instructor or the Office for Learning Technologies (828) 694-1646, 694-1852, 694-1890, or the Help Desk at 694-1895 for assistance.

**Entering the course**

Click on the name of the course on your **My courses** page to view the course.

If you do not find your course, you may search for it (see search box at the bottom of the login page). If you SEARCH for a course that is available, you should be able to see the instructor’s name. Search by course name and number (ex. ACA-115) and make sure the course name has the correct semester and year. Compare this to your printed schedule or your schedule in WebAdvisor.

If you would like to contact your instructor, click on the instructor’s name to view their **Profile**, and then click **Send a message**. In the message window, be sure to identify yourself and the course you are searching for. After you have done this, click the **Send message** button.

Remember that your instructor is likely teaching face-to-face courses and is not available to send messages 24/7. Please wait an appropriate amount of time for a reply. 24-48 hours is typical, but, you may get a response much sooner. However, if you get no answer and need assistance, please contact the BRCC **Help Desk** at 828-694-1895 or Learning Technologies (828) 694-1646, 694-1852 or 694-1890.

**In the Course**

**In this section we will take a quick tour of the course environment.** These features can be seen in your **MORIENT** (Moodle Orientation for Students). Check your **My courses** listing for this course. Please be aware that you may not see all of the following in future courses, as they are not all essential for every course.

The course title is shown in the top navigation bar; in the top right hand corner you will see your name, a placeholder for a profile photo, and the word logout. If you click on your name or your photo it will take you to your profile.
Be sure to always click the (Logout) link when you are finished using Moodle especially on public computers such as in BRCC labs. To prevent anyone from accessing your courses, ALWAYS LOGOUT when finished.

**Basic Navigation**

Moodle uses a 3-column format, with “blocks” on either side that provide access to helpful links.

A new feature in Moodle is the ability to **DOCK** your blocks, thus giving you more “real estate” in your course(s).

Here is an example of an **undocked course** page.

To dock a block, simply click the docking icon in each block (circled in red).

If the docking icon is not visible, then that block cannot be docked. You will need to dock all the blocks on one side of the screen to receive any real benefit from docking.
Here is an example of a docked course page, with the **Administration** and **Navigation** blocks now visible in tabs on the left side of your course page. Mouse over the tabs to expand the block into a pop-out menu.

**There are a number of ways to move around the course**

“**Breadcrumbs**” – this is a menu positioned below the Main Navigation which shows your position in the course. The breadcrumb trail shows the pages you have passed through to get to your current location. They are shown in the top left corner of the page and clicking on them will take you to that point in the course. The example below identifies the path you followed to get to “Practice posting in a Discussion Forum!”

![Example of a docked course page with Administration and Navigation blocks](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home</th>
<th>My courses</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Moodle Online Orientation for Students</th>
<th>Forums</th>
<th>Practice posting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Home**: Clicking on this would take you to the front of Moodle. You can see the Main Menu on the top left.

**My courses**: This is not a link, but shows that you are accessing one of your courses.

**Training**: This course is in a category called Training, but you may see Business and Service Careers, or Arts and Sciences, depending on which category your course is in.

**Moodle Online Orientation for Students**: This example is from the orientation, but you may see a shortened version of any course ID. Clicking on this would take you to the main course page.

**Forums**: If your course has a topic format, you may see the word “Topic”, or if a weekly format a date range. In this case you are inside a Forum, so you see the word Forums in the breadcrumb trail.

**Practice posting . . .**: this is the name of the Forum where you are currently located.

This is only one example of many possible examples of the breadcrumbs menu. Keep your eye on this as you navigate around the course, and you will notice that it changes to reflect your current position.

Note that if you click on “Home” or the course name links to navigate to another area of the course **your input may not be saved**. To avoid this always ensure that you complete what you are doing within the activity first e.g. post to a forum, **save changes (nothing you do is retained unless you save your changes!)**.

Throughout the website and course you will encounter text which changes color and becomes underlined when you move your on screen cursor over it. These are text links which, when clicked, will take you whatever is described in the link text (IF it has not been HIDDEN for later viewing by the instructor).
The **Navigation** block (or tab) also allows you to navigate directly to any topic area indented below the name of your course.

It is also possible to navigate between pages by using the navigation buttons on your web browser. This is not recommended, and you will obtain more consistent results by using the navigation options within Moodle and course pages. **NOTE:** Be careful NOT to use your browser back and forward links when taking an online quiz or you may get bumped out and lose your work.

The main course page is divided into a number of specific areas which you will encounter often (although not necessarily always as mentioned above). An overview of these is given in the following sections.

**Topics**

Topics reside in the center of the course main page (if you do not “dock” the menus). It is in the topics that your teacher will place the activities etc., which make up the online elements of your course. The column of topics may vary in appearance depending on how your teacher has designed the course. Topics may be identified by a number, a number and date range or simply by a descriptive name.

**Blocks**

Blocks are areas on the left and right of your main course page. They fulfill a range of functions as described below.

**People block:**

The **People** block provides links to a list of all participants in the course by clicking “Participants”.

You can choose the course and whether you want to see All Participants, just the Teacher(s), or just the Students. Remember, when you click a user’s name, you will go to their Profile and you can send them a message.

**Online Users block:**

This block displays who is (or has been online) in the course within the last 5 minutes.
Activities block:
This block displays all of the available activity types in the course and will vary in each course depending on how the instructor sets it up. Clicking on the text to the right of the activity icon will display a list of all of the available activities of that type. These are considered “shortcuts”. Be careful to navigate ALL activities for each week or module down the CENTER of your course in the “topics” area. For example, “Assignments” will not include required “Discussion Forums”, or “Quizzes” that may be due during the week. Your Orientation course contains specific tutorials for these assignments/activities.

Search block:
This block can be used to search for text among the forum entries in the course (if activated by the instructor). To search simply enter the text sought in the field and click the “Search forums” button.

Calendar block:
As the name suggests this block provides a calendar function for all your courses. 

NOTE: Your assignments and quizzes with due dates appear automatically in your calendar, however, due dates for FORUMS do not generally appear. Remember to navigate down the center column for all readings and assignments.

Upcoming events block:
This block displays upcoming events together with links to view the calendar and to create a new event in the calendar. The number of upcoming events and the period covered is set by the teacher and may vary between courses.

Recent activity block:
This block displays recent activity within the course together with links to the activity itself and a full report of recent activity. The number and nature of the items will depend on the amount and type of activity in the course. Some instructors do not use this block.

Latest news block:
This block displays brief details of news added to the course News & Announcements Forum including who posted the news, the title of the news item and the date and time. Clicking on the word “more…” will take you directly to the full news item.
Administration block:

This block contains a link to the Grade book where you can monitor your achievement against each graded activity, and a link to your Profile settings.

Messages block:

Messages sent through Moodle are “almost” instant. This block is updated about every 5 minutes. If you do not pick up the message within 10 minutes, it will be forwarded to your webmail account.

Topic 1 - Course Resources

As the title of this section suggests, a course can contain various resources which you will need to assist you in your study. These can take various forms e.g. text, images, video, web pages, Microsoft Office documents, Acrobat pdf files to name a few.

Resources are accessed by clicking the text link to the right of the resource icon (an example is shown below).

![Net-Etiquette (Netiquette)]

Open the resources to see what they contain, returning to the following section “Topic 2 – Forums and the Text Editor” in this guide when you have done so.

Topic 2 - Forums and the Text Editor

Forums are used by many instructors to build community and enhance communication. When posting to a forum always assume that all other students in the class can view your posts. To add your comments to any Forum, click the “Add a New Discussion” button which will open up a text editing box. You may type and edit just as you would in any word processing program. BE SURE to click the button at the bottom of your screen that says POST to FORUM. If you don’t, nothing will show up. After posting, you will see a message saying you have 30 minutes to EDIT the post; however, your remarks will be immediately visible.

To read someone’s comments, click the topic click in the area under “Discussion”. To reply, simply click the Reply link (bottom right) and type your comments as just described. If you are “subscribed” to a forum, you will get an e-mail (or multiple e-mails) from that post. Sometimes, depending on the setup, you can “unsubscribe” from Forums which will prevent those e-mails from going out. You can also
selectively “subscribe” to any forum if you wish to get the e-mails. Keep an eye on your BRCC Webmail inbox, as your teacher will likely send you some instructions (you may have received them already) about what to do next. A new feature of Moodle 2.8 is the option to “Reply” to a subscribed forum post by clicking the provided link (see below) in the e-mail. You will be prompted to login to Moodle first (if you are not currently logged in), and it will take you directly to that forum post to continue your discussion.

You will be encouraged to post “thoughtful comments” and, of course, you may disagree with the opinions of others. However, never attack an individual or disrespect their opinions. Simply post your opinions based on facts you can document (links to credible websites can back up your position), and follow the rules of good online “netiquette”.

Topic 3 - Quizzes

The online quizzes can present these potential problems, so be prepared before taking an exam. NOTE: Be aware that even if the quiz is untimed, your internet service provider may boot you from the quiz in THREE hours.

1. Enabling Pop-Ups in Moodle
   In order to take some tests, (and to make full use of the Moodle Messaging system) you should enable Pop-Ups for the BRCC Moodle site (allow pop-ups at http://blueridge.mrooms.net/ ). Most browsers will have an automatic pop-up blocker, and there may be additional ones built into add-ons like the Google or Yahoo toolbars. You may need to enable popups in more than one place to ensure you can open the quizzes.

2. Dial-up
   If students dial in from home using an ISP such as AOL, the ISP may kick them off for inactivity. The problem is that when taking a quiz or exam, the students are simply viewing one web page, so it appears that they are inactive. The student can also have another browser window open with a long download or another site on which she selects a link every so often. Moodle itself can time out in a little over two hours, so watch your time carefully.

3. Quitting by Accident
   Most quizzes are designed for one attempt ONLY -- unless the instructor clears the attempt (see below). For example, if the student closes the quiz window, then they cannot take that exam again. This feature has unfortunate consequences for some students who make an honest mistake. For example,
a student loses the right to retake an exam if they accidentally close the window or if the browser crashes or if the electricity to the computer is shut off for any reason. Consequently, students should be warned to take quizzes carefully. To avoid losing a quiz, they should first close down the other programs running on the computer. Avoiding distraction, they should focus only on the quiz until it is finished. They should be careful not to close or resize, or even click the browser’s back button. **Resizing May Erase Data.**

4. **Retaking a Quiz**
   Instructors can choose to let a quiz be taken multiple times; however, this is not a student “right”. Students should be aware that when they retake a quiz, all of the previous answers will be wiped out. The score for the first attempt in your Online Grade book will be erased, as well.

5. **Clearing an Attempt**
   If a student runs into technical difficulties and is prevented from finishing a quiz, it is possible, IF ALLOWED, for the instructor to clear the student’s attempt, so that the quiz can be taken again. NOTE: The 24/7 Online Help desk, and the BRCC Help Desk will NOT reset your quizzes. You must immediately e-mail your instructor to request a reset.

6. **Timed Quizzes**
   If there is a timer (located in the Quiz Navigation under the question numbers), you will be warned when time is almost up. When time is up, the quiz will automatically save and submit what you have done up to that point **AND CLOSE**. Do not let it run out before saving and submitting! If that happens, you will likely see a zero for the quiz.

7. **Other Recommended Instructions**
   When taking a quiz, you need to focus your attention on the quiz. Before you clicking the link to take the quiz, exit any other applications on your computer. Size the window comfortably, then, click the link to the quiz. For the best results you should also restart your computer before beginning the quiz to help minimize complications. If you are using Norton anti-virus, you may need to turn it off while taking the quiz, or make sure it will allow pop-ups for [http://blueridge.mrooms.net/](http://blueridge.mrooms.net/).

8. **New Format for Taking the Quiz**
   The student interface for quizzes has undergone a lot of improvement in this version of Moodle. It is now easy for students to keep up with where they are on the quiz and to flag questions they want to come back to. Take note of the new Quiz Navigation block at the top, left side of the screen when in the Quiz. Each number represents a question. The question with the dark border is the one you are...
currently working with. To move to a new question simply click the number, or click the next box.

Also notice that for each question you can choose to “Flag Question”. This allows a student to mark a question so that they remember to come back to it later. The Quiz navigation block will tell you a lot of information about your status in a quiz. When a question has been flagged, its corresponding number in the Quiz navigation block will now have the upper, right corner colored in red. As you move through a quiz, questions will be shaded gray as they’re answered.

Notice in the image below questions 2 and 5 have been flagged. Questions 1, 3 and 4 have been answered and the user is currently on question 6.

When the student has completed the quiz, they will click the Finish attempt link to be taken to a summary page prior to submitting the quiz for grading. Again, this is new in Moodle. The last step is to click “Submit all & finish”.

The Summary page clearly shows the student which questions were flagged and which questions have been answered. From this screen they can click any question to return to it. When they’re completely finished with the quiz they will click the Submit all and finish button to submit the quiz for grading.

Most test questions are graded as soon as you click submit. Your instructor decides how much information you’ll see next. You may only see your score or you may see each question and the correct answer. For each question, note how many points you were awarded. Your score will appear in the gray box at the top of the page. You may miss a fill in the blank question due to spelling. If so, contact your instructor. They may or may not give you credit for the question.
If your test includes essay or short answer questions those must be graded individually by your instructor. You are not awarded any points for those questions until the instructor has graded them.

To come back later and review your tests, simply click on the name of the test from your course page, then click your grade. Note that sometimes the instructor will not allow the review until the quiz closes for all students.

**Topic 4 – Activities – or Things to DO**

Activities are how you interact with your instructor and classmates. Often in a particular week or topic you will see **READ & REVIEW these RESOURCES:** (things to **READ**) and **PERFORM these ACTIVITIES:** (things you **DO** or perform). This is how you will complete assignments: by uploading a document, typing into a text box, discussing in a forum, text based chats (in real time), writing in a private Journal or Wiki, inputting terms in a Glossary, taking a quiz, completing a lesson, etc.. Complete instructions will be given for each activity by your teacher. Generally these activities will be graded and to see that grade, go **BACK** into the particular activity to see comments and grades from your instructor. You should also be able to view your grade from the Administration block and Grades area. Refer to your **Moodle Orientation for Students** course for detailed tutorials on assignments and other learning activities.

**Topic 5 New in Moodle 2 - Tracking Your Progress**

Your instructor has the option to enable Activity Completion in your course. If they have chosen to do so, this will help you keep track of which items you have completed in the course. In the image below, notice the check boxes to the right of the items in the course.

Note that the first 3 check boxes in the image above are not greyed out. They can actually be checked just by clicking them. This gives you the ability to keep a checklist of your activities. Typically these check boxes are used only to help you track your progress.

If a checkbox is greyed out, and you are unable to mark it, your teacher may require that certain criteria be met prior to marking as complete. Once you complete the activity as required, Moodle will put a check in the box to let you know you've completed that item. You may need to provide additional replies in a forum, or grading of the item may be required prior to marking as complete. Be sure to read the directions of the activity to ensure that you have met all the criteria for completion.
Since this is a new feature, you may or may not see these checkboxes in your course(s). However, some instructors may choose to use them to help determine your participation in the course. As a general rule, if you see the check boxes, be sure to use them.

If you need help – Contact Information

- Contact your instructor during their office hours which are posted in the course, syllabus, and under the **My Links (on the top of the BRCC webpage)** Faculty Locater Cards. If your instructor is not a full-time employee, they should give you alternate methods of contacting them.

- The 24/7 Online Help Call Center is available nights, weekends: (866) 833-2415. **Remember, they cannot reset a quiz for you, or reset your password.**

- For Webmail assistance, call the **BRCC Help Desk** at (828) 694-1895

- **For other technical assistance with Moodle, call:**
  (828) 694-1646, 694-1852 or 694-1890
  Monday – Thursday 8:00am-5:00pm
  Friday 8:00am – 4:30pm *(The campus is closed on Friday during summer hours).* You may leave a voice message regarding “Moodle problems” if no one answers immediately.

Student Services for Distance Learners

How to Sign Up for Counselling and Placement Testing

Contact Marcia Stoneman, Vice President Student Services, (828-694-1804) for specific questions regarding placement testing if you live too far from campus to take it with us. If you are located near another Community College in North Carolina, you will need to coordinate testing between the remote college’s Testing personnel and Mrs. Stoneman. There may be a testing charge at a remote location. Transcripts showing prior credits need to be official sealed copies mailed to the Registrar’s office at 180 West Campus Drive, Flat Rock, NC 28731.

How to Buy Books

Online students may purchase their textbooks at the Flat Rock (828-694-1720) or Transylvania (828-694-1911) book stores or online. Look for the **Bookstore** link at: [http://www.blueridge.edu/bookstore](http://www.blueridge.edu/bookstore). Click the menu link for “College Bookstore Online” and select the “Textbook” menu and “Find Textbooks”. Use the drop-down menus to find your textbooks. If for some reason the information does not load, simply call the Bookstore and place your order over the telephone.
How to Apply for Financial Aid

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) may be completed online at https://fafsa.ed.gov/. The Blue Ridge Community College Federal School code number is 009684. Additional information, application forms, and assistance in applying for aid are available from BRCC’s Financial Aid Office (828-694-1806 or 1815).

How to Access the Library

Check this link for Library Support for e-learning students: http://blueridge.libguides.com/distance. If you have NO classes on campus, you may request your library card online.

General Guidelines for Online “Attendance”

Refer to the Syllabus Book in your Moodle course for the most recent BRCC policies for Online Learning.

Just as in a face-to-face course, regular attendance in your online course is important. In fact, it may be even more important. In a face-to-face course, sometimes a student is physically there, but mentally "somewhere else." In an online course, there is little social pressure to be there or pretend to be there, but if you don't visit the course site regularly, you won't get much from the course and will find it difficult to get a good grade. The College operates under the Attendance Policy listed in the current catalog or Student Handbook. For online classes, you may receive more specific instructions regarding expectations. Many instructors expect you to show up in the online class and submit assignments WEEKLY which is how they determine "attendance". Here are some ideas to keep in mind.

1. Check the course site regularly.
   Even if you don't have specific assignments to complete, check the course site and your email regularly. Your instructor will make announcements, new postings will appear in discussion forums, and other plans may undergo subtle changes. Regular checks will help you remember all that you need to get done.

2. Plan on spending at least two hours of study for every credit hour that the course receives.
   As a general rule of thumb, a course assumes that you will attend for as many hours are listed in the credit hours, then do homework and prepare in an equivalent number of hours during each week. In an online course, the distinction between attendance and study hours is removed, but the same amount of time is necessary. This is a minimum amount of time. In actual practice, many courses will take many more hours of study. Be particularly aware of this if taking 8 week courses.

3. Your instructor can tell if you are visiting the course site.
   There are tools in the e-learning platform that allow your instructor to get statistics about how often you visit the course site. Sometimes, they can even tell when you have visited specific parts of the course and how much time you spent in that part.
4. **You will have to show your instructor the quality of your participation.**
Statistical tools in the e-learning platform won't let your instructor know if you understand what you read, if you enjoy or dislike aspects of the course, or if you are succeeding as a student. That is up to you. Your assignments, postings, and instructor communication will show the quality of your work.

5. **You are expected to communicate with both the instructor and your classmates.**
Don't wait to be asked to communicate. Send your instructor questions. Post messages to other students. Ask questions and share your ideas.

6. **Let your instructor know if you will be away.**
Just as if you were not going to attend a face-to-face course, you should let your instructor know if you will not be accessing the online course for several days. Your instructor can remind you of deadlines you might miss or announcements or changes that might occur in the course while you are gone. They will understand why you don't participate in interactive parts of the course or log any hits on the course site. Most online instructors understand that those who take online courses need time flexibility, and will probably offer you alternatives to activities that you may need to miss.

**Near the end of each semester, you will receive an email (in your BRCC Webmail account) with a link to a course evaluation survey.** Your response will be anonymous, and reported in an aggregated format to both your instructor and the Learning Technologies office. We take them very seriously and hope you will make positive suggestions for improvements of any of our processes. Thank you in advance for both reading this document and for giving your input at the end of the semester. We are here because of you and want your learning experience to be the very best!