

SUSLA

ONLINE LEARNING



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PART I: ORIENTATION INTRODUCTION

1. SUSLA Online Learning Orientation

Welcome to the Online Learning Orientation for SUSLA students!

The goal of this orientation is to increase your knowledge and prepare you for your online, hybrid and web enhance courses.

By completing this orientation, you will know how to:

- prepare for online learning
- manage your time while learning online
- be a successful online student
- use the online technologies
- check your computer to use with online technologies
- get help when something goes wrong

You can use the topic list to choose which area you'd like to learn, or you can click through all of the orientation topics from start to finish.

5. What Technologies are used?

Online learning utilizes many types of technologies. At SUSLA, instructors are able to use any of the following in their courses:

- Moodle (Learning Management System)
- Turnitin (Originality Checking & Plagiarism Prevention Service)
- Respondus LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor (Online Test Security)
- Virtual Classroom & Video Assignments (Zoom – Web Conferencing & Video-based, Objective Driven Assignments for Oral and Visual Assessments)
- Microsoft Office 365 (Student Portal & Email)

Depending on the instructor, the course, or the program, you may or may not use all of these. Most likely, you will use at least two of these (Microsoft 365 and Moodle) if you are taking an online or hybrid course at TTC.

When taking an online course, you will be asked to submit an evaluation of the course and instructor.

6. What is a typical online course like?

For students who have never taken an online course before, the concept can be somewhat foreign.

Students must be prepared and manage their time well in online courses. In face-to-face classrooms, there are reminders for you to finish projects or assignments, or you get graded for simply showing up and participating. In an online course, you should log into the course every day to see what has changed or been updated, or who has replied to your posts.

You have reached the end of Part 1: Introduction. The next part of this orientation will address how you can succeed in an online course.

PART 2: SUCCEEDING ONLINE

1. Succeeding Online Overview

If you have never taken an online course before, this section is specifically for you. The following will help you understand the difference between online and face-to-face classes.

This part of the orientation will provide more information about:

- preparing for your online class
- managing your time
- managing your own learning

2. Preparing for Your Online Class

Online courses are a convenient way to advance your education. Online courses are much like face-to-face courses because they have to cover the same objectives, but are different from traditional classes because they are delivered via the Internet. The major difference is that online courses are presented using online tools and interaction occurs via discussion boards and virtual classroom tools.

How to prepare for your online class:

- make sure you have everything you need to start
- find a physical space for you to work
- know the online landscape
- learn your course's layout

Make sure you have everything you need to start.

Make sure your computer meets the [requirements](#) and that you have the peripherals (speakers, microphone, webcam, etc.) and any software you need.

Most likely, you will be buying books and completing research in your courses. Look at the [bookstore](#) and [library](#) websites so you can get acquainted with what is available online. If you order your books online, sometimes it can take up to 10 days to get the book delivered, so plan ahead.

Find a physical space to work.

Create an area where you can do your online course work. If you like to work in a quiet place with no distractions, take this into account. If you have a desk, clean it up, designate it as your "course space," and make it comfortable. Stock it with items you will need: paper, pens, printer, stapler, etc.

If you have a library near you, visit it to see if it would be a good place to work. You can also find out if they have Wi-Fi or computers with Internet access that you can use. A strong Internet connection will be needed for online testing. Public Wi-Fi or hotspots may not guarantee a strong connection.

Know the online landscape.

Just like walking around campus to get an understanding of where things are physically located, you can visit the [E-Learning page](#) to learn what is available online. When you get your assigned username and password, log into [Microsoft Office 365](#) to get an idea of what is available through the student portal. You will find a wealth of information that will help you as an online learner.

Find contact information for offices you might need, such as [E-Learning](#), [Financial Aid](#), and [Student Services](#).

Learn your course's layout.

As soon as you get access to your course, click around to familiarize yourself with all the information available to you. Read the syllabus at least twice and get familiar with the grading guidelines and expectations of the instructor. Copy all deadlines into your calendar and make reminders if needed. You'll be amazed at how much easier assignments are if you understand what is expected and when it is due.

3. Managing Your Time

Schedule Weekly Study Times

The amount of time you spend per week online for class and preparing for class varies by the student and by the course.

- A common guideline is that 1-credit hour of coursework is often equal to approximately 2 clock hours per week of preparation time. A 3-credit hour course would take approximately 6 hours per week of preparation time.

- Successful students often schedule a regular study time each week.
- Schedule your most demanding study times during your optimal alert time of the day (i.e., if you are a morning person then spend that time studying your most challenging subjects.)
- Make sure you schedule recreation for yourself and don't feel guilty about it. It will only help you perform better when you get back to the books.

Plan Ahead

- Schedule time to complete online course work.
- Make sure to plan for online exams. Make sure you know and optimize your online exam timeframe.
- Balance your studying so that no subject is left behind.
- Avoid cramming for tests by studying a small amount each day. Even just 15 minutes every night before going to sleep will help you retain material.
- If your instructor requires you to use new technology, such as the Respondus LockDown Browser and Respondus Monitor, test it out before the scheduled time to ensure your equipment is working.
- Break down large tasks into small ones.

Log Into the Course a **Minimum of Three Times per Week**

- It's a good habit to consistently check course materials and communications.
- The more you interact with your classmates, the more you will feel part of the online community.
- There are many ways to connect with online classmates. You can send an email to ask a question, create a study group, or use social media to collaborate.

Communicate with Your Instructor

- You can email your instructor through Moodle or often instructors have a discussion topic dedicated to student questions and ideas.
- If you send an email, try adding your course number in the subject line. Instructors often teach multiple courses so this helps them sort through the plethora of emails they receive during the day.
- Before you ask a question be sure you know what you are asking and why. Be clear and concise in your communication.

4. Study Skills and Learning Styles

In most respects, your expectations of online learning should be similar to those of a traditional course. You should expect quality education delivered by qualified, concerned instructors, but you should also expect to assume responsibility for your own learning. Here are some tips to help you.

Study Skills

Through study you discover new and important information. Online classes require students to be self-motivated and to have strong study skills to be successful.

Your Personal Learning Style

There are many types of learning styles; auditory, visual, and kinesthetic, to name a few. Identifying your preferred style may help you assess which learning environment is best for you. Students who benefit most from an online learning experience are independent learners who are highly motivated and possess strong time management skills. You can visit the Education Planner website for a [learning style survey](#).

Why Should You Study?

- Studying helps you remember. For most of us, our memory needs constant review to retain what's there.
- On average 50% of what we learn is forgotten within 20 minutes.
- The next 25% is forgotten within 24 hours.
- The next 13% is forgotten within one week. And most of what little remains is forgotten within a month.
- Effective study has many benefits:
 - You can improve your memory, your knowledge, and your grades.
 - You can spend your time more productively and efficiently.
 - You can increase your success in school and future endeavors.
 - You can feel positive about yourself and your abilities.
 - You can improve your attitude towards school and life.

Study Skill Strategies

Like all skills, study skills are perfected over time through consistent effort. There are, however, some common tips that will help you develop good study habits.

- Turn breaks and snacks into a reward system for studying well.
- Join a study group: divide up work, share ideas and test each other.
- Use flash cards: use 3" x 5" cards to put questions or equations on. Put a question on one side and the answer or data on the other. Go through the stack discarding the cards you know, until you know the material on every card. Carry the cards with you as a portable "notebook" and review them in spare moments.
- Use lists, charts, and diagrams: after reading your notes or textbook, see if you can rewrite the information in a new way; now reproduce these ideas without looking at your notes.
- Listening to music seems to help some students; however, studies show that slow, soothing instrumental music works best. Save more intense types of music for a reward.

Reading Strategies

- Examine the book. Develop a "feel" for the book before studying it. Read through the table of contents, the preface, introduction and/or forward. Glance through the index, bibliography, glossary, and any illustrations and diagrams the book may contain.
- Ask questions. Frame questions about the text to help you better understand the subject. Consider the questions given either at the beginning or the end of the chapter before reading the chapter.

Be an Active Reader

- Highlight important or key phrases and words.
- Use margins for writing questions or comments.
- Make notes on major concepts or points.
- Read it aloud. When you've finished reading the chapter, go back once more and read out loud the material you highlighted, along with the notes you made in the margins and the notes made on major concepts.
- Review. Give the highlighted material and your notes one final read.

5. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value at Southern University at Shreveport. Any incident of academic dishonesty (such as cheating, plagiarizing, fabrication, multiple submissions, abuse of academic materials, deception, misrepresentation, electronic dishonesty, including production of materials for other students) may result in a failed assignment or a failing grade for the class.

6. Title IX

[Title IX](#) of the Education Amendments of 1972 provides that no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. 20 U.S.C. §1681

Title IX prohibits:

- Gender Discrimination
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Stalking
- Intimate Partner/Relationship Violence
- Bullying and Cyberbullying
- Pregnancy Discrimination
- Retaliation

You have reached the end of Part 2: Succeeding Online. The next part of this orientation will address the different technologies you will use as an online learner at TTC.

PART 3: TECHNOLOGY OVERVIEW

1. Learn the Technologies

Whether you are taking a fully online course or a hybrid course, you will most likely use some or all of the following technologies:

- Moodle (Learning Management System)
- Turnitin (Originality Checking & Plagiarism Prevention Service)
- Respondus LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor (Online Test Security)
- Virtual Classroom & Video Assignments (Zoom – Web Conferencing & Video-based, Objective Driven Assignments for Oral and Visual Assessments)
- Microsoft Office 365 (Student Portal & Email)
- Grammarly

2. Moodle

Moodle is the learning management system used at SUSLA for online, hybrid, and traditional courses. This is where students can access course materials, submit assignments, participate in discussions, take assessments, and access grades for their courses.

More information on Moodle can be found in the [Student manual](#).

All students have access to their Moodle courses at least one week before the first day of class.

When taking an online course, it is expected that you will log into Moodle daily to check for course updates. Since many instructors post announcements within their Moodle courses, it is important that you check your courses frequently.

How to Access Moodle

Moodle may be accessed:

1. Via the SUSLA website www.susla.edu, LOG INTO MOODLE
(Please click here to access the [student login instructions](#))
2. Via the direct link, <https://moodle.sus.edu/>

Navigating Moodle

If you have previously used Moodle, you should find navigating SUSLA's instance of Moodle to be very similar. If you are not familiar with the system, you can view the video playlists below to get a general overview of how to navigate the system.

[Moodle video manual](#)

Things to Note

- **Browser Compatibility:** Firefox is our recommended browser for accessing Moodle, but there are other browsers that are compatible with the system. Here is the list of [SUSLA's recommended desktop browsers](#).
- **Internet Connection:** When submitting assignments or taking assessments it is vital to have a strong Internet connection. Public Wi-Fi or hotspots may not guarantee a strong connection.
- **Moodle Student Help:** There are Moodle resources located in our student manual that will provide you with additional instructions and video tutorials on how to use Moodle. You can access these resources by clicking [here](#).

3. Turnitin

Turnitin is the leading originality checking and plagiarism prevention service used by millions of students and faculty, and thousands of institutions worldwide. Turnitin encourages best practices for using and citing other people's written material.

Turnitin can be added through SUSLA's Assignments tool. When you submit assignment files, you normally receive the Originality or [Similarity Report](#) and many instructors use Turnitin's electronic [GradeMark](#) feature for their online grading purposes.

4. Respondus LockDown Browser & Respondus Monitor

Respondus LockDown Browser (RLDB) is a customized browser that increases the security of test delivery in Moodle. When students use Respondus LockDown Browser to access an online quiz, they are unable to print, copy, go to another URL, or access other applications.

Respondus Monitor is a companion application for Respondus LockDown Browser that uses webcam and video technology to prevent cheating during online quizzes. Respondus Monitor is often required for non-proctored testing environments.

If your instructor requires Respondus LockDown Browser, you will need to download and install the free plug-in so you can take the online quiz, and possibly to review your results.

[Respondus LockDown Browser Free Plug-in](#)

After you download the plug-in, you will need to install or run the application file. Please see the Resources for Moodle Users and the Student Quick Start Guide below if your instructor requires Respondus LockDown Browser and/or Respondus Monitor to take online quizzes.

[Resources for Moodle Users](#)

[Student Quick Start Guide](#)

5. Virtual Classroom & Video Assignments

Virtual Classroom is an integrated web conferencing tool by Zoom. It helps instructors engage students in two-way video conversations. Virtual Classroom allows live video sessions to run inside of Moodle. Instructors can schedule live discussions, office hours, or video-based teaching. Video sessions can be automatically recorded and seamlessly embedded alongside other learning materials.

Video Assignments are structured workflows that students complete asynchronously. Instructors leverage these workflows to create experiential exercises where students demonstrate skills and apply knowledge within a real-world context. After a student completes a Video Assignment, they submit their recording for personalized coaching and feedback from their instructor and peers.

6. SUSLA's Skymail

SUSLA uses Skymail to communicate college information with students. It is highly important that you check your Skymail at least once a day, as this is the first line of communication that is used by the college.

If you are taking a course that uses Moodle (SUSLA's learning management system), an online or hybrid course, it is very important that you check your SKYMAIL every day for any course information or announcements.

[SUSLA's Skymail login page](#)

You will be able to access your Moodle and Skymail from SUSLA's website www.susla.edu.

You have reached the end of Part 3: Learn the Technologies. The next part of this orientation will provide you with resources for technical help and support.

PART 4: TECHNICAL SUPPORT

1. Technical Support Overview

When interacting with various technologies, students need to know where to go for help should they encounter computer or course issues.

This part of the orientation will provide more information about:

- whom to contact for help
- system check
- using Windows versus Mac
- resources for online students

2. Whom to Contact for Help

As an online learner, sometimes it is difficult to know whom to contact when issues or problems arise.

When a problem arises, ask yourself if this is a technical problem or a course issue. [SUSLA's IT Helpdesk](#) can assist you with technical problems, but may not be able to assist you with a course problem. Your instructor should be contacted with these types of issues.

Students may phone the IT Helpdesk at 318-670-9900 for assistance with technical problems.

3. Using Windows versus Mac

Most SUSLA's faculty will be using a Microsoft Windows computer, but there has been an increase of Mac use among students. Sometimes, issues occur between using a Mac versus using a Windows computer in online and hybrid courses.

If you are a student who will be primarily using an Apple computer, here are some common issues to watch for when working on your Mac to make your online or hybrid course experience smoother.

Submitting Assignments

- Most of your instructors will ask you to submit a Microsoft Word or PowerPoint file for your assignments.
- If you are using Microsoft Word/PowerPoint for the Mac, be sure the file you submit has an extension.
 - .doc / .docx / .ppt / .pptx
 - Use only letters, numbers, dashes, or hyphens for the file name. (e.g. File1-Name2.doc)
- If you are using a program other than Microsoft Office, be sure to export to the file type your instructor wants. Keynote will export as a PowerPoint file, and Pages will export as a Word file. Remember to also add an extension.
 - .doc / .docx / .ppt / .pptx
 - When naming your files, use only letters, numbers, dashes, or hyphens for the file name.

Watching Videos

- Many videos (streaming video or video lectures) are being converted from a Windows Media format (.wmv) to an .mp4 format.

4. Resources for Online Learners

As an online learner, it's sometimes difficult to find exactly what you are looking for.

Here's a list of possible resources you may need:

- [Library](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Testing Services](#)
- [Tutoring Services](#)
- [Student Support](#)
- [Current Students](#)
- [Computer Lab Information](#)
- [Online College](#)
- [Programs Offered Online](#)
- [Online Courses](#)
- [College Catalog](#)
- [Pay for College](#)
- [Military Programs and Services](#)
- [Student Complaints](#)
- [Financial Aid Documents](#)

You have reached the end of Part 4: Technical Support. Congratulations! You have completed the Online Learning Orientation.