Student Success Skills
for Polar Bears

Tips to Focus your Attention in Class

1. Prepare before class. Preparing before class can help you understand the material better and will make it easier to concentrate during class. Read and take notes on the material that will be covered in class. Review, rewrite, summarize your notes from the previous class. Make a list of questions you can ask in class.

2. Get a minimum of 8 hours sleep. Fatigue makes it really hard to concentrate in class.

3. Eat a snack before class. Hunger can be a distraction and can make it hard to focus in class. Grab some brain food before you head to class such as fruit or nuts.

4. Get moving. If you are an antsy person, make sure you have gotten your energy out before class (e.g. take the stairs or ride your bike to class, go to the gym).

5. Sit near the front. Sitting close to the professor will minimize distractions (whisperers, texters, etc.) in front of you. You could also consider sitting away from your friends or other distractions (e.g. window).

6. Turn off your phone. Turn off your phone completely. Don't set it too vibrate as this can still distract you.

7. Participate. Express your ideas, ask questions, or start a discussion. Raise your hand. Use time after class to talk to your professor and ask about concepts you did not understand. This will also help you focus in later classes.

8. Take notes. If possible, take notes by hand instead of typing them. Make your notes easier to remember by using diagrams, visuals, colored pens and markers.

9. Review, rewrite, summarize your notes from the previous class either 5 minutes after class ends, that night or the next day.

10. Reward yourself. Motivate yourself by rewarding yourself at the end of class for paying attention (e.g. your favorite latte, $ to your "saving for shoes" account).

Inspired by an article by Kelly Roell and studywithkiki.

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Academic Coaching

Want to meet with an Academic Coach?
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