Thriving in an online learning environment – tips from students

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What is the student experience of online learning?
Comments are from 2nd year students during a recent online discussion:

1. Learning from recorded lectures
   - Listen at your ‘own’ speed (slow, fast, pause)
   - Make notes, mind maps
   - Go back over anything that’s unclear
   - Use captions
   - Discuss ‘difficult’ topics with peers
   - e-mail the lecturer for clarification
   - Consult additional sources

2. Writing up lab reports
   - Start, don’t procrastinate
   - Use available resources
   - Follow grading criteria
   - Use feedback from previous reports
   - Complete sections one by one
   - Get a peer to proofread

3. Participating in discussions
   - Come prepared
   - Don’t be afraid to be wrong
   - Ask questions, be curious
   - Be respectful, polite; compromise your views
   - Use mics for engagement
   - Encourage others to participate

4. Managing the workload
   - Make a to-do list
   - Spread the workload
   - Get things done sooner rather than later
   - Make breaks enjoyable, rewarding
   - Ask for help if you are struggling
   - Look after yourself, know your limits

5. Online group work
   - Communicate regularly
   - Ensure that all have a chance to contribute
   - Assign tasks to each member; delegate
   - Cooperate and collaborate
   - Motivate each other; provide encouragement

6. Group presentations
   - Construct a plan
   - Minimise text; use bullet points
   - Set regular, achievable group deadlines
   - Make a script (but don’t read from it)
   - Practice timing; listen before submitting

7. Conclusions: learning from students

   Important take-home* messages: students to students:
   - “Don’t worry – you are not alone”
   - “If you are stressed/behind remember to reach out to classmates/lecturers”
   - Enjoy – you are learning something

   Important take-home* messages: students to staff:
   - We are learning to learn in the online environment
   - We care for each other
   - We care for ourselves

*well, OK, you do not need to take the message anywhere because you are already at home 😊