Provide suggestions and participate in online forums and discussions

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At the start of the semester, I offer ways for students to stay engaged in an online classroom environment, and I explain the importance of remaining on camera and on audio. Without a proper explanation, students mistakenly think that they can multitask during live class sessions. Among the tips I offer them:

- Refrain from opening email, texting, or browsing the web during class.
- Choose a space where you don't encounter distractions, which could include family members, laundry, dirty dishes, or a busy street outside your window.
- Avoid sitting on a comfortable couch or bed.
- Pay close attention to peers' comments and ask yourself if you agree or disagree, and why. Add to the dialogue by sharing your thoughts.
- Avoid taking class from coffee shops or other public spaces. The background noise can create a distraction both for you and for the entire class.
- Also, internet connections may be inconsistent in public spaces.

Also, don't leave the learning for the students to do independently without your help. Make sure you and your students are participating in discussion threads. When a discussion is dying down, inject your thoughts into it to give it a boost. Many instructors avoid actively teaching how to be independent and assume that because the student is online, they must know how already. False. So be sure to give scaffolds and strategies to help students become more independent.