

Are you new to distance learning?
Curious about what to expect from an online course?
Then read these...

Tips for Being a Successful online Learner

Adapted with permission from the Illinois Online Network (<http://illinois.online.uillinois.edu>)

In general, online learners should strive to possess the following qualities:

1. Be open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.

Introverts as well as extroverts find that online learning requires them to utilize their experiences. This forum for communication **eliminates the visual barriers** that hinder some individuals in expressing themselves. In addition, the student is given time to reflect on the information before responding.

2. Be able to communicate through writing.

In the virtual classroom, nearly all communication is written, so it is critical that students feel comfortable in expressing themselves in writing.

3. Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.

With the freedom and flexibility of the online environment comes responsibility. The online process takes a real commitment and discipline to keep up with the flow of the process.

4. Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.

Many of the non-verbal communication mechanisms that instructors use in determining whether students are having problems (confusion, frustration, boredom, absence, etc.) are not possible in the online paradigm. If a student is experiencing difficulty on any level (either with the technology or with the course content), s/he must communicate this immediately. Otherwise the instructor will never know what is wrong.

5. Be willing and able to login 5 to 7 days per week per course.

Online is not easier than the traditional educational process. In fact, many students will say it requires much more time and commitment.

6. Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.

The requirements for online are no less than that of any other quality educational program. The successful student will view online as a convenient way to receive their education, not an easier way.

Successful eLearners

- continued -

7. Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.

The learning process requires the student to make decisions based on facts as well as experience. Assimilating information and executing the right decisions requires critical thought.

8. Have access to a computer and an internet connection.

The student must have access to the necessary equipment. As with any other course offered within the regular day school program, students will work both during and after school hours.

9. Be able to think ideas through before responding.

Meaningful and quality input into the virtual classroom is an essential part of the learning process. Time is given in the process to allow for the careful consideration of responses.

10. Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.

If the learner feels that a traditional classroom is a prerequisite to learning, s/he may be more comfortable in the traditional classroom. Online learning is not necessarily for everybody. An online learner should expect to:

- Participate in the virtual classroom 5-7 days a week
- Respond to classmates' ideas and questions
- Be able to work with others in completing projects
- Be able to use the technology properly
- Be able to complete assignments on time
- Be able to meet the minimum standards as determined by the teacher
- Enjoy communicating in writing

The online learning process requires commitment on the part of the student. Staying up with the class and completing all work on time is vital.