



WHAT MAKES A  
SUCCESSFUL  
ONLINE LEARNER?

# What Makes a Successful Online Learner?

- Two key advantages of online learning are flexibility and convenience.
- But online learning is a lot more challenging than it may seem.
- Make sure you're ready to succeed.



# Persistence

- Persistence is perhaps the biggest key to success in online learning. Students who succeed are those who are willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every class, and persist through challenges.
- When you run into a challenge, keep trying and ask for help.
- Set up a manageable study schedule for yourself and stick to it. Students who succeed are those who log in and make progress every day. This is especially important after the novelty of going to school online starts to wear off!



# Effective Time-Management Skills

- You must be able to manage your time well. Most courses are not taught in real time. There are no set times for classes.
- This flexibility is one of the great benefits of online learning. It can also be a drawback for a student who procrastinates, is unable to stick to a routine study schedule, or is not able to complete assignments without daily reminders from a teacher.
- Effective time-management skills don't just happen. They have to be learned. Once you do, they will benefit you throughout your life. Follow the tips below to develop yours:
- Review the syllabus for each of your courses. Develop a long-term plan for completing your major assignments.
- Make a daily "To Do" list. Have fun checking things off the list as you complete them.
- It takes time to develop good habits, but you'll gain satisfaction from being well-organized and accomplishing your tasks.



# Effective and Appropriate Communication Skills

- Communication skills are vital in online learning because students must seek help when they need it. Teachers are willing to help students, but they are unable to pick up on non-verbal cues, such as a look of confusion on a student's face. Follow these tips:
- **Use the tools provided by the school to communicate with your teachers.** Many online schools and programs provide several ways for students to communicate with teachers and staff. These might include e-mail, discussion groups, chat room office hours, cell phones, and even text messaging. Teachers and staff want to help you to succeed in your classes and will answer your questions. It may feel awkward to talk with your teachers this way, but don't worry. If your teacher has chat room or cell phone office hours, don't be shy about using those tools to communicate with your teacher.
- **Use appropriate style and language for school.** When communicating with teachers and other staff, you should write in full, grammatically correct sentences and with a respectful tone. Many students are used to a very informal style of writing in chat rooms, blogs, text messages, and so forth.
- Because of the distance, it's tempting for some students to say things out of anger or frustration that they would never say to a teacher in person.



# Basic Technical Skills

- Online learners need basic technical skills to succeed. These include the ability to create new documents, use a word processing program, navigate the Internet, and download software.
- You'll also want to check the online school's main website for their hardware and software requirements. Make sure your own computer meets those requirements.



# Reading and Writing Skills

- Reading and writing are the main ways you'll communicate in an online class. Although some hard copies of textbooks might be required, you should be comfortable reading a lot of documents on a computer screen.
- Some tests and quizzes have multiple choice questions, but many of your assignments will involve writing short or long answers.



# Motivation and Independence

- To be successful, an online student has to want to succeed. Online learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity.
- Have you given some thought to your own personal reasons for attending school?
- Are you determined and self-motivated to succeed in school?



# A Good Study Environment

- **Get some peace and quiet.** You will need a quiet place to work without distractions from things like television, family, or roommates.
- **Avoid games.** Consider uninstalling any computer games to avoid temptation. Or keep the games on a different computer in the house.
- **Turn off your cell phone.** Let friends and family members know the hours that you will be "at" school.
- **Beware surfing** the black hole of the Internet. It is easy to lose track of the time as you wander from site to site.
- **Consider ergonomics.** Adjust the height of your chair, keyboard, and screen so that you are comfortable. Forearms and thighs should be level and parallel to the floor. Wrists should not be bent while typing.
- **Set up good lighting and comfortable seating.** Lighting in the room should be at least as bright as the computer screen to avoid eye strain.



# Good Luck

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