

Is Online Learning Right for Me?

Online courses offer students educational opportunities that they may not otherwise have at their local schools. These courses offer students the flexibility of when and where they access their courses. For many students the online learning environment may provide better support for their learning styles.

While online courses have proven successful for students with a variety of academic backgrounds and needs, it is important to recognize that just as a traditional classroom setting may not be the best fit for all students in all courses, it is also true that online courses may not be the best fit for all students.

Below are some factors to consider when enrolling in an online course.

Online Learning – Best Interest

When is it in the best interest of a student to consider online courses, in addition to taking courses at their local high school? When the course:

- Resolves scheduling.
- Allows students flexibility in use of time to meet other commitments.
- Offers subjects not available at the student's home school.
- Provides students with the experience of taking a distance education course.
- Meets the needs of transferring students.
- Allows homebound students to continue their education.

Online Learning – Not Best Interest

When is it perhaps not in the best interest of the student to enroll in an online course?

- Student does not meet the profile of a successful online student (see Attributes for Student Success).
- Student will not have reliable access to the appropriate computer hardware for remote access.
- Student did not request the course or was placed in the course without being provided information on online learning.

Attributes for Student Success

Students who may be considering an online course should take time to examine their personal skills and aptitudes for taking a class online. The following attributes will greatly contribute to a student's success:

Student Responsibilities

- Self-motivation
- Ability to learn independently
- Strong personal commitment
- Effective communication skills

- Time management skills
- Successful completion of required assignments
- Willingness to ask for help and be vocal when there are problems, conflicts, or questions.
- Basic Word processing and internet skills
- Positive recommendation of teachers and/or counselors
- Good attendance record

Self –motivation

Students can direct their own learning environment and methods to fulfill course requirements and achieve individual academic success. It is the student’s responsibility to maintain self-motivation to:

- Build a relationship for communicating effectively and consistently with the instructor.
- Organize and stay ahead on assignments
 - Plan for deadlines.

Technical Skill Set

Although it is not necessary to have advanced computer skills, students should possess a working knowledge of electronic email, the Internet, as well as basic keyboarding skills.

The following computer skills are needed in order to successfully participate in an online course. If students do not possess these skills, they might find it very frustrating to participate in an online course.

NOTE: Please be aware that the online instructor will **not** be teaching these skills as part of the course(s).

<p>BASIC SKILLS Locate a file on a hard drive or server. Save a file to a specific drive or folder. Change drives. Connect to the Internet. Navigate between two or more applications without closing and re-opening.</p>	<p>WEB BROWSER SKILLS Go to a specific URL Print a page. Follow a hypertext link. Conduct a basic search using a search engine. Re-trace a hypertext path</p>
<p>EMAIL SKILLS Forward a message Create a folder Save a message to a specific folder Delete a file Add a name to the address book Retrieve a name from the address book Paste text from a word processor Send an attachment Open and save an attachment</p>	<p>WORD PROCESSOR SKILLS Open an existing file Open a new file Save a file Rename a file Save a file as a different format or with a different name (Use “Save As”) Copy or cut text Paste text Format text Change line spacing Print a document</p>