

Guidelines for Success with Online Classes

Take Responsibility

There will not be regular class attendance with an online class. The student must take the responsibility of learning on their own. The student must make a real commitment to the course and discipline themselves in studying. They should log on to the website at least once a day.

Time Management

The student should read the course syllabus completely before starting the course. This way the student will see exactly what will be required and when the deadlines are during the semester which will help them set realistic study goals to complete the course assignments and tests on time. It is important to set aside a specific time each day to devote to the course. It is a good idea to set up a calendar, mark off the days when projects are due and when you would probably take a test.

Communicate with the Instructor

The student should contact their instructor on a regular basis, especially if they have any questions or run into any problems. Also at various times during the semester it would be a good idea to discuss your progress with the instructor, perhaps pointing out areas that you think are difficult or unclear.

Have Good Writing Skills

With an online course almost all communication is done through writing. The student should be able to express themselves clearly and succinctly. If this is not the case, the student should get some help to improve their writing skills.

Use Good Communication Skills

When preparing projects and/or papers, the student should pay careful attention to the instructions and be sure they completely understand what the assignment is asking before submitting it. One way to handle this is to develop an outline before writing the assignment.

Speak Up If Problems Arise

With an online class the usual nonverbal communication mechanisms that show a student is frustrated, is having problems, is confused, etc., are not possible. The student must communicate immediately in a succinct manner with the instructor otherwise the instructor will not know that anything is wrong.

Prepare for Assignments and Tests

When studying the course material, take notes. From the different sources of material that you are studying, try to imagine what questions will be on the tests. Before taking a test, the student should make sure they understand what the information was trying to convey that had been covered for that particular test.

Evaluate Your Own Progress Periodically

Review the course objectives and standards often to determine if the student is following them accurately.

Discussion Groups

Participating in online discussion groups will give the student access to other students taking the same course. This will help them not feel so isolated. Contribute any ideas, comments, etc. that you might have about the course material and read those of your classmates. This will give the student different perspectives than their own and the instructor's.

Be Polite and Respectful

Even though the student is anonymous in an online course, the participants are real people. There is no reason not to be polite and show a productive and supportive online environment.