

Qualities of Successful Distance Education Students

Are open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process. The online process requires students to utilize their experiences. Visual barriers that hinder some individuals in expressing themselves are eliminated.

Are able to communicate through writing. Students need to feel comfortable in expressing themselves in writing.

Are self-motivated and self-disciplined. Taking distance education courses requires a real commitment and self-discipline to keep up with the flow of the process. Effective distance learners become and stay responsible for themselves.

Are willing to speak up if problems arise. The instructor cannot see the student, so distance students must be willing to communicate. Otherwise the instructor will never know what is wrong.

Are willing and able to commit 9 to 15 hours per week per course. Distance education is not easier than the traditional educational process! Many students say that it requires much more time and commitment.

Have reading skills at an average college level or better.

Use available resources. Effective distance learners make maximum use of their library, class materials, and Learning Support Services. When confronted with a problem, they assume responsibility for defining their needs and identifying available resources.

Initiate coursework promptly after enrollment. Effective distance learners make it a habit to begin working on each new course as soon as course materials are received. Research shows that if you finish the first two lessons, you are likely to finish the entire course.

Maintain structured study routines. Successful distance students identify appropriate times and locations for studying. After estimating the amount of required study time, effective learners review their weekly activities and commit that time to their schedules. Study locations are free from interruptions and distractions.

Log on to their course every day--or a minimum of 5-6 days a week.

Establish and maintain a consistent schedule for submitting lessons. Successful students commit themselves to realistic goals for submitting lessons.

Apply what they have learned. Effective distance learners try to make connections between what they are learning and what they do or will do in their job. Contributing ideas about the real-world as it applies to the subject matter helps students to internalize what they are learning and provides valuable insight to classmates.

Are comfortable using reference books and dictionaries as needed to understand material?

Are able to stay on task without supervision.

Are good at handling multiple tasks

Can prioritize workloads.

Regularly consult the syllabus and assignment schedule to make sure they are prepared for the week ahead?

Are able to learn effectively by reading text assignments as opposed to requiring spoken words and visual presentations.

Enjoys learning new computer skills.

Are comfortable contacting the instructor via e-mail, voicemail, or in-person.

Are good at assessing their own progress.

Are highly self- motivated and a self-starter. Does not require classroom interaction, hearing what other students are doing and saying to be motivate.

Technical Considerations for Online Courses

- Can you run applications you need to use the computer? (This should include any specific applications unique to your course).
- Do you know how to install software and plug-ins on your computer?
- Are your keyboarding skills good enough to allow you to work efficiently? (An online class assumes you are already proficient).
- Can you create, save, and manage files on your computer?
- Do you know how to cut and paste?
- Do you have access to the Internet five times a week and up to two hours a day?
- If you do not have your own computer (highly recommended for online courses), can you regularly get to campus to use the computer lab or arrange to use another computer for your class work?
- Are you comfortable using your Internet Browser and URL?s?
- Do you know how to bookmark your favorite web sites?
- Do you know how to send and receive e-mail messages?
- Do you know how to attach a file to e-mail?
- Do you know how to open an attachment to an e-mail you have received?
- Do you know how to paste text to an e-mail message?
- Do you have a modem or cable Internet connection? What is your speed?
- Can your computer handle streaming video?

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