

Is online learning right for me?

Successful online learners exhibit the following *Personal Habits and Preferences*. They...

- **...are able and often prefer to self-organize.** These students have shown an ability to manage their own schedules and prioritize tasks. They are able to organize their own coursework, and don't necessarily need a weekly, face-to-face class meeting to keep them on track. They are able to develop their own work plans for complex projects and follow through on them.
- **...are able to take initiative with relationships and processes.** When relationships (with advisors, instructors, fellow students, etc.) or processes need to be clarified, these students don't need to wait for others to provide that clarity. Instead, they are willing to take steps to find their own answers.
- **...are comfortable developing relationships at a distance.** These students are able to maintain positive relationships using email, discussion forums, chat, and other Internet-based text tools. They are comfortable communicating with others in writing. They are also comfortable using the telephone. They are familiar with the appropriate etiquette for all of those tools or willing to become familiar with it.
- **...are prepared to contribute significant effort to their own education.** These students engage in online learning because its typical characteristics (increased scheduling flexibility, emphasis on written communication, availability at a distance, etc.) fit their natural preferences. They understand and accept that online learning usually takes at least as much (if not more) time as more traditional face-to-face learning.

Successful online learners exhibit the following *Academic Qualities*. They...

- **...possess good reading and writing skills.** These students are comfortable getting large amounts of their course content through reading, and habitually read to learn. Their writing exhibits sound mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and grammar).
- **...have a track record of scholastic competence.** These students tend to complete the projects they begin with quality, including papers, courses, and degree programs. They understand and follow through on their academic commitments.
- **...view online learning as a high-quality experience.** These students do not view online learning as a lower-quality alternative to traditional face-to-face learning, but instead look forward to the unique learning experiences they will have as online students.

Successful online learners exhibit the following *Technology-related Qualities*. They...

- **...are comfortable with modern computer technology.** These students are able to productively use the software currently installed on their chosen computer. They will install new software when needed, and they have confidence that they will be able to quickly learn to use new software. They readily use the Internet as a communication tool (email, discussion forums, chat, etc.). When things don't work correctly, they take initiative to find a remedy.
- **...have access to modern computer technology.** Instead of relying on public library computers or a work computer, these students own an up-to-date computer and software, and they subscribe to their own high-speed (at least DSL) Internet connection.