

# Online Courses... are they for me?

Online (web-based) courses are as rigorous as classroom-based courses. In addition to the scholarly requirements, taking an online course requires basic computer literacy, motivation, and self-discipline. Consider your learning style and computer literacy by honestly asking yourself the following questions:

## Learning Styles Considerations

1. Do you stay on task without direct supervision?
2. Can you prioritize your own workload?
3. Are you good at assessing your own progress?
4. Do you enjoy working and learning on your own, rather than as a part of a group?
5. Do you usually understand written instructions?
6. Do you learn best from reading text and assignments?
7. Are you planning to allocate as much time in your schedule for your online course as you would for a more "traditional" classroom course?
8. Are you willing to initiate calls or e-mails to instructors for assistance?

## Technical Considerations

1. Do you have a computer with Internet access? If you do not have your own computer, can you get to campus to use the computer lab or arrange to use some other computer?
2. Are you comfortable using computers?
3. Do you have basic navigation skills such as minimizing and maximizing windows?

## Evaluating Your Answers

If you hesitated to answer "Yes" to any of the "Learning Styles Considerations" questions, you may find the distance learning environment more challenging. Online courses make use of a classroom discussion area which allows interaction between students and instructors as well as among students. However, online-based interaction can be less satisfying than face-to-face communication for some learners. The online classroom requires you to structure your own schedule, balancing your time around the assignments/requirements of the class. Without the need to show up in a particular place at a designated time each week, some learners find it all too easy to put work off until the last minute. Much of the material covered in a typical online class will require you to learn from reading. This may include textbooks, Internet-based materials and written "lectures" or notes from your instructor.

If you answered "No" to any of the "Technical Consideration" questions, you may want to consider improving your technical skills before taking a course online. At the very least, you will have some technology to learn in addition to the curriculum of the course(s) you take, and you should make extra time in your schedule accordingly. All of the skills mentioned above are used in most of our online courses.