

Online Classes: What you need to know



Are you considering taking an online class? Online classes were developed to offer flexibility to students with commitments that block them from traditional college classroom experiences (i.e. work, distance, and/or families).

Often students are surprised by what it takes to succeed in online classes.

Before enrolling in an online class, be sure you understand what to expect!

ASSESS YOUR ONLINE READINESS!

Rank yourself from 1-5 (1 being "weak" and 5 being "strong") for each of the 10 traits. Use this guide to understand where you might need to put forth some extra effort to succeed in your online class.

1. Self-motivation and discipline: Are you a motivated, self-starter? It is up to you to make sure you know what your assignments are, how to complete them, and when and how to turn them in. The ability to work without supervision or reminders is critical to success in online courses.

2. Time management: Have you scheduled your time so that you know when you will work on your online courses? Set aside ample time each week for each online class. The time you would normally spend in the classroom, plus the time you would normally spend on homework for a classroom class is about the amount of time you will need to succeed in an online course.

3. Avoiding procrastination: Do you stay on top of things? Never wait until the last day to start an assignment. All assignments should be started early to allow plenty of time for completing them on time. (This is very important, especially to avert a crisis if/when your internet connection goes down!)

4. Making class connections: Are you willing to interact with your instructor and classmates online? The more you log into your class the more "connected" and comfortable you feel. Pay close attention to what's new on the discussion boards, and reply to the discussion responses of your classmates. Contact your instructor using the instructor's preferred method of contact (email, phone call, etc) when you have questions or concerns.

5. Asking questions: Are you comfortable asking questions? If instructions or assignments are unclear be sure to ask your instructor for clarification. **REMEMBER:** The only dumb question is the one that was not asked!

6. Adequate computer equipment, Internet connection, and software: Do you have an up-to-date operating system and a reliable, high speed internet connection, and current word processing and spreadsheet software? Start with the right equipment to avoid frustrations and delays!

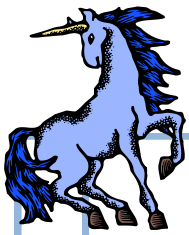
7. Computer skills: Do you know how to prepare and save computer documents, use email, and upload files?

8. Checking announcements/email daily: Will you be pro-active about staying informed? Check daily for announcements and emails from your instructor. Your instructor will typically give you any updates and/or clarified instructions through your course email or course announcements.

9. Completing all assignments thoroughly. Are you careful to understand all instructions given to you? Do you follow through with those instructions? Complete all of your assignments thoroughly per your instructor's guidelines.

10. GETTING HELP EARLY. Are you willing to ask for assistance before you get too far behind? Sometimes the hardest part is just finding all of your online assignments. If you are uncertain that you have the information you need to do well, come by the Student Success Center. Tutors are available to help you succeed!

(Adapted from Ozarka College STEPS to Success newsletter, Spring 2012, p 2. Article by Candace Jeffery accessed 7/2012 at <http://www.ozarka.edu/blogs/success/enclosures/Spring%202012%20STEP%20Newsletter-FINAL.pdf>)



Taking Classes Online: MYTHBUSTERS

*Some online course myths are just as imaginary as unicorns, fairies, and trolls!
Don't get caught believing in these!!*

MYTH #1: "ONLINE CLASSES ARE EASIER!"

TRUTH: Online classes are different, and some students may find that they match their learning styles, and therefore will thrive in them. But they are not easier, and they require much self-discipline. Typically **MORE** reading and writing are required to help you master the content.

MYTH #2: "I CAN DO MY ONLINE CLASSWORK LATER, AS LONG AS I GET IT DONE BEFORE THE SEMESTER ENDS."

TRUTH: You must complete assignments **by the due date and time**. Assignments, discussion boards, and tests cannot be accessed AFTER the due dates.

MYTH #3: "DISCUSSION BOARDS ARE JUST BUSY WORK. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT MY RESPONSE IS-THE INSTRUCTOR WILL GIVE ME CREDIT FOR ANY RESPONSE."

TRUTH: The discussion board is your "classroom discussion" experience. On it you interact with your instructor and classmates to express what you are learning about the material, ask questions about what you do not understand, and present your ideas for others to consider. Instructors typically place a significant point value on the quality of your discussion board participation!

MYTH #4: "I CAN FAKE MY WAY THROUGH AN ONLINE CLASS."

TRUTH: Instructors are well acquainted with all the "tricks." Also, they can access reports that show when and how often you log on to the class, how much time you spend logged on to the class, where you have spent your time, what you did while you were there, etc. Your online activity, along with the quality of your completed assignments and tests tell instructors whether or not you are mastering the material.

MYTH #5: "WOO-HOO! ALL OF THE TESTS ARE OPEN BOOK!"

TRUTH: Some tests are open book. Most tests are timed. If you are not already quite prepared, you will not have time to locate the information you need, and therefore will not do well on the test. **ALSO, some final exams must be taken at the school in the presence of a proctor, and ARE NOT open book.** Therefore, as with any class, master the material throughout the semester to be most successful on final exams.



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NOT!



OTHER TIPS FOR ONLINE SUCCESS:

- Attend the Online Class Orientation to learn how to navigate the online system. See your campus schedule for days and times.
- The following equipment specifications are recommended for successful access to course materials: High speed DSL connection, Microsoft Office Professional/Academic 2010
- **FREQUENTLY SAVE ALL OF YOUR WORK ON YOUR COMPUTER!**
- For further information on success in online classes visit:
http://www.ozarka.edu/disted/student_assessment.cfm;
<http://www.svcc.edu/students/success/workshops-pdf/Tips%20for%20Taking%20Online%20Classes.pdf>;
<http://dl.odu.edu/social-media/blog-detail/six-tips-for-taking-online-classes>
- Visit the Student Success Center for help with any trouble spots!

Ozarka College Student Success Center

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Our goal is to help you achieve YOUR goal!