

Characteristics of a Successful Distance Learner

Students who have the following characteristics will be most likely to succeed as distance learners:

- Basic writing and speaking skills (communication required with other students and adults)
- Access to a computer and are comfortable with technology (strongly recommend computer access at school and at home - this includes unlimited Internet time at home that does not interfere with family use of the phone line). Advisable for student to have access to a separate phone line while on Internet.
- Determination to succeed and strong motivation and commitment. Students who do not give up easily when faced with challenging materials and are able to prioritize their workload will more likely be successful distance learners.
- Strong school and adult support. Successful students have committed student coaches, parents, and instructors who are willing to spend time to make sure students are meeting deadlines and working on assignments.
- Assertiveness - don't be afraid to ask questions. Students who express they are experiencing difficulty on any level (either with the technology or with the course content) are more likely to be less frustrated and more able to make successful progress with the course.
- Log on to your course every single day. Read the online communication and make it a habit to log on to your course otherwise you will get behind and find it very difficult to catch up.

Ask yourself these questions to see if you will be a successful distance learner:

- I have ready access to a computer and, through it, the Internet.
- I know how to use the computer.
- Reading is a pleasure for me.
- Exploring new things has an appeal for me.
- I ask questions when I need clarification.
- Working at the computer is a task I enjoy.
- I think online course work will be as challenging or even more challenging than work in a "real" class.
- I can work independently.

To have success at online learning, you pretty much need to answer TRUE to these eight questions. Answering FALSE to some or all of the questions does not mean you will be unsuccessful, but you should reexamine your decision to take an online class.