

Is Online Learning Right for You? Find Out if You Have the Five Qualities of Successful Online Learners

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<http://distancelearn.about.com/od/isitforyou/a/considering.htm>*

Before you apply to take classes through an online school, check to make sure online learning is really right for you. Taking a course online can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, but online education is not for everyone. Below is a list of some of the qualities that many successful online learners tend to share. Compare yourself to the following list to see whether taking classes online may be a good fit for your personality and habits. ***Please note: It is expected that these qualities will continue to mature and develop over time. Accordingly, our enrichment courses for students in grades 3-8 offer more instructional support and guidance, while our Honors and AP® courses for students in grades 6-12 increasingly assume more student independence.***

1. **Successful online learners do just as well, if not better, without people looking over their shoulders.** While some people need teachers to keep them motivated and on-task, online learners are able to motivate themselves. They realize that they will never be face-to-face with the people who give them assignments and grade their work, but they don't need others to encourage them. The most successful students are **self-motivated** and **set their own goals**. They have a **passion for learning**, are **focused**, and **enjoy working independently**.
2. **Successful online learners are self-disciplined and have developed time management skills.** The most successful online learners never (or almost never) procrastinate. You'll rarely find them putting off assignments or waiting until the last moment to write their papers. These students **enjoy the freedom of working at their own pace** and appreciate the ability to complete their work in as much time as it takes them, instead of waiting for an entire class. They are **dedicated learners**, who understand the importance of **persistence**, have a **strong commitment to completing tasks**, and know how to **establish a regular study/learning schedule**.
3. **Successful online learners have good reading comprehension skills.** While most people learn by listening to lectures and taking notes, the majority of online learners are expected to master material through reading alone. Although some online learning courses offer video recordings and audio clips, most programs require that students understand a large amount of information that is only available through written text. These students are able to comprehend sometimes-difficult texts without the direct guidance of a teacher.
4. **Successful online learners feel all right about missing the social elements of traditional schools.** Sure, they realize that they'll miss out on the chit-chat and impromptu discussions that may occur in the hallways before or after class, but they're convinced that the independence and ability to work at their own pace is

absolutely worth it. In place of classroom discussion, they explore the issues with their peers through email and message boards and/or discuss what they're learning with their parents and siblings.

5. **Successful online learners are strong self-advocates, who are comfortable asking questions when they don't understand something.** They seek out and avail themselves of all the resources available to them for addressing technology- and content-related questions.

If, after comparing your personality and learning style to the characteristics of successful online education students mentioned above, you've discovered many commonalities, online classes may be the perfect option for you.