

## **Being an Online Student**

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The growing trend in education is the redefining of the classroom. The classroom in the past would consist of a teacher standing in front of a blackboard teaching a group of students within a given four walls. Now, the classroom still has an instructor, but that individual is not required to stand in front of the students but may be on the other side of the world facilitating the virtual classroom from a computer. The students can also be located around the entire world. The common working tool for these students is a computer connected to the internet, instead of paper and pen. Online education, is it for you? I hope by the end of this article you can determine if this is for you.

### **Convenience**

Most online classes allow the flexibility for students to log into the class site and complete the assignments at their convenience. However, not being obligated to a certain day and time can lead to procrastination, if you are not self-motivated and self disciplined. Time flies by quickly when you are trying to balance a home life, career and an education at the same time. You find yourself analyzing which one is more important? To be an effective online student, time-management skills and effective study habits are necessary.

### **Your Online Instructor**

Your online instructor should have the same qualifications as a regular face to face teacher. Since the internet is available all over the world, this allows for the possibility of the online instructor to be on the other side of the globe. As a result, there is a high probability you will never meet your online instructor in person. Therefore, if you are the type of student who needs personal contact, this will be a hindrance in your learning. I hope each online instructor endeavors to make a special effort to substitute personal contact with virtual contact. Good virtual contact from an online instructor could be as follows.

1. Flexibility to skills, needs and abilities for all online students
2. Answers emails sent by students in at least 24 hours
3. Has the ability to telephone students
4. Has virtual office hours when a student can speak to the teacher via phone, Skype, Msn or Yahoo chat, or video/audio web casting
5. Has the availability to be contacted within minutes if an emergency arises

Since each online class and instructor is not the same, the means of presenting the required learning varies as well. Some online instructors will have live or prerecorded lectures, others have no lectures and the student is required to read various notes or compile their own notes on various topics through suggested websites, books and or articles.

## **Social Interaction**

Social interaction with other online students may be difficult because everyone is on their own schedule and again, the classmates will vary throughout the world. Another contributing factor hindering social interaction is that many online students are working adults with children who keep them busy, and are taking an online class for the only reason of furthering their education. However, many online classes have 'coffee or tea talk' rooms where students can participate in small talk with other students within the class. Personally, I like what [www.avln.org](http://www.avln.org) has to offer in each of their classes. For their social interaction they have a special room with a similar concept entitled the Prayer room. This is a special place where both the teacher and student can have virtual prayers individually or as a group petitioning God's throne.

## **Equality**

Everyone who enters into an online class does so on the same footing regardless of age, personality or physical appearance. However, this is not the same for those who are technology challenged versus those who seem to be on a computer 24 hours day.

1. Everyone is on equal footing regardless of age, personality, physical appearance, etc. when you are studying in an online environment.
2. You generally have more time to consider a response when you're online versus when you are sitting in a classroom.