

Are You Ready for Online Learning?

Ten questions to ask yourself before taking an online course.

Taking courses over the Internet is an exciting way to learn. It can save you hours of drive time and challenge your thinking in new ways.

Online education is not for everyone. Before you enroll in any of JCC's online courses, answer the following questions to see how well this style of learning suits your talents and circumstances.

1. Do you have regular access to a computer with an Internet connection?

Distance education courses, such as online or web-enhanced classes, require regular access to a computer with an Internet connection. If one is not readily available, you might have a difficult time completing the course requirements.

2. Do you know how to use email and word processing software?

These software applications play a major role in communicating at a distance. If you are unfamiliar with these applications, we recommend you take some basic training in these areas to facilitate your learning process.

3. Can you type?

Distance education courses involve a lot of typing – papers, emails, and online discussion. If you cannot type, we recommend you take a keyboarding class first and possibly hire someone to type your papers.

4. Are you self-motivated and self-disciplined or do you procrastinate?

Distance education gives you a lot of freedom, but requires that you effectively manage your time. When no one is watching or class attendance is not required, it is easy to put off schoolwork and get behind. You need to be able to plan and schedule consistent time to participate in and work on class activities.

5. Does the thought of doing a lot of reading terrify you?

Distance education courses are reading intensive and require you to work from written directions. If you are uncomfortable with this, face-to-face classroom instruction may be a better approach for you.

6. Are you comfortable communicating in writing?

The majority of communication in distance education courses is done in writing. You need to be comfortable communicating your thoughts in writing, rather than verbally, if you are to be successful.

7. Do you have an average of 9 to 12 hours to study each week?

Online courses require a considerable amount of time. If your schedule does not allow sufficient time each week to devote to the course, you may want to consider holding off on this method of study until you have the time to devote to it.

8. Do you think a distance education course is less work than a face-to-face class?

Distance education requires as much, if not more, time than a traditional class. The responsibility for learning is on you. The reading and online components require that you be dedicated and conscientious in order to be successful.

9. Do your family and friends support your decision to take classes?

If the answer is no or you are unsure, you need to consider the level of commitment involved in taking a distance education course and discuss it with your family. Developing a support network is important. Family and friends can sabotage the best-laid study plans if you do not know how to respond to demands and distractions.

10. Do you feel face-to-face interaction is necessary for high quality learning?

Some people prefer face-to-face interaction during the learning process. They like being part of a class and learn best when interacting directly with the instructor or other students. Distance education is much more independent. If you feel the lack of face-to-face contact diminishes the quality of education, then distance education is not for you.

Think about how you responded to these questions and how you will work through these aspects of online learning if you choose to proceed. You may also want to consider whether online learning is a good choice for you right now.

Our best advice if you are not sure if online learning is for you: call or email the instructor of the online course or contact Denise Burbey, Director of Distance Learning, at 1-800-388-8557 or 716-338-1250.

**This is an informal and unofficial questionnaire to help you decide if online courses are right for you.*