



Tips to be a Successful SPC Distance Learning Student

Is the course a subject in which you are strong?

If you are contemplating taking a class that you dislike or do not have a strong foundation already, you would be more successful taking the class in a traditional format as opposed to an internet class.

Do you ask questions immediately if you don't understand something, or do you get frustrated before asking for help?

In a distance education course (ITV or internet), you must take the initiative to contact your instructor to ask a question. Answers to questions may not be immediate from the instructor and if it is done in an email format, additional follow-up may be required to obtain a complete answer to your question.

Will you miss the interaction with your teacher and peers?

Some students may feel isolated in a distance education course due to the lack on interaction with classmates or the instructor. If that is the case, a traditional face to face class would be a better option.

Do you have sufficient time to complete the course?

If you are trying to add this course to an already crowded schedule, the tendency to give distance education courses a lower priority can result in lack of success in the class. A campus course (ITV) that meets three times a week will take an average of six hours of preparation per week. For those courses (internet courses), not meeting a traditional schedule students can expect to spend an average of nine hours per week on the course work. Look at your schedule to insure that you are able to allow the necessary time to be successful in the course.

Do you communicate with your instructor?

When taking a distance education course (ITV or internet), you must take the initiative to ask your instructor questions if you do not understand the material. Responses from the instructor may not be instantaneous; and you must learn to move on to other material while waiting for your instructor to respond.

General Requirements:

Most internet courses require strong learning and technical skills for a student to be able to be successful in the class. A student must also have strong reading and writing skills, as well as being able to understand material without direct teaching. Most of the internet courses will require at least 9 to 12 hours per week for the student to be able to complete the required work. It is imperative that the student have regular access to a computer with internet access in order to complete the assignments. Most online courses will require weekly online assignments, bulletin board postings, and interaction with the professor and/or classmates.

Are you a student who is ...

A self-starter with strong study skills who can self-direct your learning?

A person who works independently, without procrastinating, and is able to follow deadlines?

A person with a strong reading background where comprehension of material read is enjoyable?

A person with adequate computer skills to allow for completing assignments online?

A person with strong writing skills who can adequately express your thoughts to another person through your writing of essays, papers, or other written tasks?

A person who is able to recognize the need for outside assistance from the professor and who is willing to make the necessary contacts to gain assistance?

A person who can spend the required hours each week to working on the class assignments?

If your answer to all of the questions was “YES”, then you are a person who may benefit from taking an online course. If you answered any of the questions with “NO”, then you may want to do some further investigating before deciding to take online courses. You may want to talk with others who have previously taken the online courses or to the professor to see if the course would be appropriate for you.

Netiquette

Keep your posts short unless given a specific assignment by your instructor.

Make sure all language is appropriate. Show respect for your fellow students and your instructor.

Always sign your name to your messages. Some email addresses don't include the person's name and you have no clue who is sending you a message.

When sending messages to your instructor, include the course number in the subject. That helps the instructor identify what class you're in with just a glance.

Don't use all capital letters when writing messages. It is the equivalent of shouting on the internet.

Don't forward anyone's email unless you have permission.

Communicating with Professors

Use professional language. This is your professor so stay away from texting lingo.

Give your professor time to respond. Follow their communication policy and remember that just because you are up late doesn't mean they will be.

If you don't understand some of the material, ask for help! Professors can't see your face to know if you are confused; so you must communicate when you don't understand something.

Let your professor know if you will be unable to check-in to class. They can tell when and how often you check-in to the class and some calculate that into your participation grade.

Organization

Keep your notes and assignments well organized both on your computer and with anything you print off. Since you essentially have one “classroom” it can be easy to get course materials mixed up.

Keep one calendar that has assignment deadlines written on it so that you can plan ahead and allow plenty of time to complete assignments.

Have a designated area in your home where you can study and not be bothered. Keep this area organized so that you know at all times where material for each of your classes is located.

Give yourself plenty of time to get online, do the work and submit assignments before the deadline. Don't lose track of time on the internet.

Online classes are not easier, so allow plenty of time during the week to study and complete assignments.