

The Success (or not) of the Unprepared Student in a Blended Learning Environment in Higher Education

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Abstract

This paper is the third of a trilogy of papers analyzing the success of the unprepared student in the online environment. The first paper drew the conclusion that the learning characteristics of the unprepared student were not conducive to succeeding in an online environment. The second paper analyzed how the unprepared student succeeded in an online course when compared to the exact course being taught face-to-face with non-unprepared students. This paper concluded that the unprepared student was not a good enough independent learner to be successful in an online environment, however, could possibly become successful in a blended learning and/or hybrid environment. It concluded that blended learning classes would allow the unprepared student to use their technology ability, combined with face-to-face assistance, to create an atmosphere of academic success. This study takes on the challenge of teaching the unprepared student in a blended learning environment. It will further analyze the success (or not) of the unprepared student enrolled in a blended learning course in the spring of 2014 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP).

Keywords: unprepared student; at-risk student; blended learning; hybrid; computer literacy

1. BACKGROUND

This study took place in the spring 2014 semester at the Punxsutawney campus of Indiana University of Pennsylvania. This campus is a first-year experience campus with minimum SAT scores of 720 and grade point average minimum of 2.5 as acceptance criteria. (Terry Appolonia, Dean of the Punxsutawney campus, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, personal communication, May 30, 2014) Consequently, the undergraduate students in this study are academically unprepared for college. The spring semester was chosen, as these students were second-semester freshmen and therefore more familiar with the university's computer system.

Students voluntarily enrolled in the blended learning course. An Institutional Review Board for Protection for Human Subjects voluntary consent form was provided to all students by the co-investigator. There were originally twenty-eight

students registered; two withdrew, leaving twenty-six. All students signed the consent form. The course taught was Computer Science (COSC) 101 Computer Literacy, a three-credit undergraduate liberal studies elective. It is an introductory to computer literacy course designed to provide students with a fundamental understanding of computers covering concepts and Microsoft Office applications. The course management environment used was Moodle and the assessment software used was Cengage Publishing's Student Assessment Manager (SAM). The most common way to create a blended learning system is to design part of the course for the classroom and part for the internet. (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003 p. 229) The course was a one-hour fifteen minute Tuesday/Thursday session. We met on Tuesdays in the classroom, and the online environment was the Thursday class. From this point on, at-risk will be used in place of unprepared.

2. INTRODUCTION

Blending learning extends learning beyond the classroom and beyond the school day. Online time will replace some classroom time. Successful online instructors realize that building a sense of "community" in the online classroom is necessary for successful learning outcomes. (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, p. 30). This "community", in a blended learning environment, will extend into the classroom as well. Pregot (2013) discusses whether blended instruction is suited for all students, does one size fit all? He cited that the Baby Boomer generation as well as Matures were more significantly attracted to blended learning. The students used in this study would be categorized as Generation Y.

According to López-Pérez et al, (2011) the implementation of blended learning has a positive effect on reducing dropout rates and in raising exam pass rates in the subject. Moreover, it is shown that the joint effect of the blended learning activities has a positive influence on the students' final marks. According to their study, a high degree of utility, motivation and satisfaction is perceived from blended learning, which could lead students to have a positive attitude towards learning. Moreover, this conclusion indicates that blended learning reinforces students' understanding of the subject in question, enhancing and supporting the learning process.

3. CHALLENGES

Gerbic (2011) states that teaching using a blended approach is a complex undertaking, where teachers have to address varied discipline and professional learning outcomes, different student capabilities and institutional conditions as well as creating an effective pedagogy by using the strengths of face-to-face and online settings in an integrated fashion.

Preparing faculty is probably the hardest part of implementing a blended learning model, especially if the instructors have taught a course for many years. (Schaffhauser, 2012, p. 19) He states that "unity" is important, the connection between having things online that connect to things that happen face-to-face, is important if students are to see the class as one. In addition to the pedagogy of teaching a blended learning class, the next challenge is that teaching the unprepared student requires a different academic approach.

Scagnoli (as cited in Schaffhauser, 2012, p. 21) states that the challenge of blended learning for students is to "learn how to manage their learning." In general, upper-level students tend to be more focused and do not need the instructor to tell them what needs to be done for class. For first and second-year students, though, the "humanizing touch" of the blended approach can help them gain a sense of scheduling that is sometimes missing in fully online courses.

4. DESIGNING THE COURSE

Dzakiria (2012) indicates that when designing a blended learning program, the needs of the students must be balanced with the outcomes expected by the institution. Shibley (2014) indicates that more than anything else in 2014, the teacher has to be a designer of learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. He also mentioned that blending gives us the flexibility in the design to do more outside of class. This course was redesigned; re-examining the course goals and objectives, and designing online learning activities to meet these goals and objectives, and effectively integrate the online activities with the face-to-face meetings, creating that 'connection' referred to by Schaffhauser (2012). Organization is essential in a blended learning environment. If you do not list specific due dates, students will not understand what they are expected to do. This course had all due dates listed in Moodle and the syllabus.

Strategies for teaching the at-risk student

When teaching the at-risk student, the instructor must first inform the students of what is expected of them; second, identify the types of students that are going to struggle and the types of students that are going to do well. And third, be available to the student. (Griffin, 2013, p. 4) This is why a blending learning class is perceived to be beneficial as the instructor, in the face-to-face setting, will be available to them and can reiterate the above methods. The first step in this study was to identify the at-risk students.

5. RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

There was a mixture of at-risk and non-at-risk students in the course. At-risk students were identified by his/her incoming (fall, 2013) grade point average (2.5 or below). As such, fourteen of the twenty-six were identified as at risk. All

were first-year freshmen except one student, a sophomore. Ages were in the 17 to 19 years of age range. The blended learning environment was new to all of them. There were fourteen female and twelve male students. Three had a class standing of 'dismissed', two were on probation, all others had a standing of 'good'. All of the dismissed students were at-risk, both probationary students were at risk and nine students who were at risk had a class standing of 'good'.

6. EXPECTATIONS

The course syllabus included contact information and a list of what the instructor expected from the student as well as what the student can expect from the instructor.

7. PRELIMINARIES

On the first day, the instructor explained the design of the blended learning course. The students were given a common understanding of what an online learning community (OLC) entails. During the first week, the students had the responsibility of completing three tasks. These tasks are all in the appendices. The first was a self-assessment survey created by our university. Seventy-one percent of the at-risk students did 'not' take the survey, and forty-two percent of the non-at-risk did 'not' take it.

The next task was a link to a learning style inventory to get the student thinking about how they learn. They were encouraged to follow the link and see what learning style they exhibited. They would be Auditory, Visual or Tactile. Eighty-six percent of the at-risk students did 'not' take the inventory, with fifty-eight percent of the non-at-risk who did 'not' take the inventory.

According to Alford & Griffin, (2013), we want to help the students early on, up front, to be able to identify, help these at-risk students self-identify. Here are the types of students that are going to struggle; here are the types of students that are going to do well. To do that, a link was available that led to a file entitled 'Characteristics of a Successful Online Learner'. This was to give them a model in which to follow to assure his/her success in the online portion of the course. Only fourteen percent of the at-risk students bothered to click the link, while forty-two percent of the non-at-risk students clicked the link.

All handouts, links, files, forums, and directions were in Moodle. The structure was conducive toward the learning characteristics of the at-risk learner. As stated by Alford & Griffin (2013) p. 10, this generation struggles with deadlines. Therefore, clearly communicate fixed expectations; provide firm consequences early in the course. The syllabus stated clearly when all work was due, and Moodle had dates and times of all assignments. In addition, email reminders went out to remind students of deadlines. Deadlines were also announced in the F2F.

Gabriel (2008) states that "Students find evaluation the most stressful aspect of college life...we need to reduce the stress, but not eliminate it. To accomplish this, have a variety of activities or projects that allow students with different types of learning styles and strengths to demonstrate what they are learning." Evaluations were in the form of discussion forums, projects, written assignments, exams and quizzes. Rubrics for all evaluations were listed in detail in the syllabus. At-risk students should avoid classes where exams (including quizzes, midterms and final tests) are the only way they are graded. (Gabriel, 2008, p. 70)

Blended learning did not occur until week two, as week one was a drop/add week. The first six weeks of the course were devoted to computer concepts. Evaluations were weekly discussion forums and written assignments. Up to week six there were at-risk students doing the wrong assignments. Even after explicit directions in class, in the syllabus and in Moodle, the at-risk student was not able to complete the correct assignment. Tuesdays were used to speak with those students who missed assignments over the week and answer any questions to clear up any confusion that may have occurred.

8. CLASS PARTICIPATION

It was explained to the students that meeting once a week meant attending class was paramount to his/her success in the class. Points were allotted per day for class participation. This grade was not just absenteeism, however. As outlined in the syllabus, points were only allotted if the students were in his/her seat and logged into the computer at the start of the class. No cell phones, or smartphones were to be visible and sleeping was not permitted. Any distraction to the civility of the class would be deduction in points. The mean score for the at-risk student's

class participation grade was an 81%. The mean score for the non-at-risk student was a 95%.

9. CLASS STRUCTURE

Since the first six chapters of the textbook were on computer concepts, the F2F class was used to present the new chapter and its corresponding topics. PowerPoint lectures were used, and class discussion was encouraged. There were many good discussions in class. The online class had discussion forums that extended the content of the F2F class to get that 'connection' to which Schaffhauser (2012) spoke. It took six weeks before many at-risk students started to converse more than one sentence in the forum, and on time. They definitely improved by listening to feedback during the F2F session. In week six, there was a group project. The goal was to use collaborative software; the software used was Google Docs. The syllabus had a rubric and directions were explained explicitly in the F2F class. The research topic was 'Black History Month', since it was February. It was a scavenger hunt with the dual objective of searching strategies and using collaborative software. In the instructions in the syllabus, it stated "Each group member will choose one question from the list given in which to research", going over this several times in class. One student (at-risk) emails a question: "Do we have to answer all the questions, or just one?" That student was in class during my demonstration but clearly did not comprehend the instructions or the demonstration.

Discussion Topics for the Week

There is a substantial difference in the mean score when comparing the at-risk to the non-at-risk student when working online in discussion forums. The at-risk student had difficulty with this assignment. They could not comprehend the chapter concepts and verbalize them onto paper. They did not read the instructions to meet the criteria of quantity or quality of his/her work. They did not even meet deadlines. Tuesdays were used to provide feedback and by week six, there was some improvement. The good discussions from the F2F session did not transfer to the online environment.

Exams

The first two exams were from chapters one through six, and dealt with computer concepts. The exam was in the F2F classroom, each consisting of fifty multiple-choice questions,

given in the SAM assessment website. Exam 1 had a practice exam, to get them use to taking an online exam, and to assist in mastering the concepts of the chapters.

Neither group seemed to take advantage of the practice questions. The non-at-risk student had a mean of six points above the at-risk student. It was interesting that one at-risk student received a 78% on the practice exam but a 63% on the actual exam. Transference did not occur from the practice to the actual exam.

Microsoft Office Products

The next part of the course dealt with the hands-on products of Microsoft Windows, Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint. The shift of the F2F session was now demonstrating the use of these products. The online portion was the student completing tasks with each piece of software based upon the demonstration given in the F2F class. This is where class attendance played an important role. If a student missed the F2F class on 'how' to complete a task in any of the products, they did not know how to complete the online assignment. This happened numerous times.

The Microsoft Windows unit began on Tuesday; the online assignment was to complete the task from the textbook. Since the project was to be completed using the network drive, the instructor checked on the Monday after class to see who had completed the assignment to date; and not many of the students had it completed. An email went out to all students reminding them of the assignment due. Some students were given the opportunity to re-do the project because they were confused. Two of the at-risk students and one non-at-risk student did not even bother to do the project. One non-at-risk student was a borderline at-risk and showed more tendencies toward at-risk than not.

Microsoft Word was next. There were five students absent, four of them at-risk. One student (the one who is borderline at-risk) left half way through and then came back. This student missed the entire presentation of building a tabulation project. The online assignment was to create a tabulation project on his/her own, using the skills learned in the F2F class. Consequently, the students that missed the class had no clue how to do tabs in Word and through several emails; the instructor was unsuccessful in relaying the instructions. All

students were instructed to come in during office hours to catch up, but none of them did.

Microsoft Word had three projects. SAM had two projects per chapter. One project was completed in the F2F class, and was instructor-led. Their assignment was to complete the other project on their own online. The F2F sessions were very successful. The online projects in Word that were completed were successful for both groups. This is attributed to the fact, most certainly, that the most familiar product to them is Microsoft Word. The one-day a week class was not enough, however, to explain the Word concepts to them. The syllabus was adjusted to include a take-home Word exam so no F2F time was used for evaluation, just instruction.

Even with a take-home exam, the non-at-risk student had a better score.

The next unit was Microsoft Excel. This was the most difficult unit of the semester. We began with an instructor-led creation of a worksheet, with a bar graph and pie chart. Their online assignment was to complete the project for the first chapter, but first they were to complete the file within the chapter, which gives a systematic explanation of how to do the worksheet. The rest of the F2F classes had the students working individually, completing the files inside the chapter, and then the corresponding project in SAM.

It was discovered during the F2F class that students were 'not' completing the in-chapter files before going into SAM and completing the projects. It was explained to them that it was like taking the final exam when they never took the class. A note from the journal of the instructor for April 15: *'Terrible day. No one is working from the textbook; no one is reading the chapter. I even blanked out all screens to announce not to do any project in SAM without first working through the textbook'*. The at-risk students did very poorly in Excel as a result of not doing any work between Tuesdays. They did no individual-based online activity. . Instructor notes from journal dated April 23: *"As long as I am there, we have good classes, attended well. But Excel was a disaster; no one did any work from Tuesday to Tuesday"*. The F2F classes were even well attended by the second half of the semester. The at-risk student, however, could not work without guidance. One student chose to do nothing. That student had no understanding of excel and did not have the

ability to complete a worksheet even with instructor-led. He was encouraged to come into the office hours of the instructor. He was told the instructor would stay after class, but the student did not take advantage of any extra assistance. Again, the syllabus had to be adjusted to take out the Excel exam as F2F time was needed for individual assistance. In the spirit of collaboration, cooperation and community, the students were told to meet with his/her learning community and work through the projects. Again trying to explain to them that when students collaborate with one another they create knowledge and meaning. That did not seem to happen

Microsoft Access was the next unit. The students came into the class with the least amount of knowledge of this program. The instructor went 'off textbook' for this unit. A database was prepared by the instructor using the current class list as the fields. The first day of Access the instructor led the class in the creation of the design of three tables and three reports. Only one student was absent (an at-risk student). The online assignment was to input all data into the three tables from source documents given. The database was built on a network drive, so the instructor could keep track of who was keeping up with the assignment. By Monday of the next week, seven of the twenty-six had bothered to put in any data into his/her tables. By the deadline, that did not change, as nineteen of the twenty-six students did not do the online assignment. An email reminder went out to the class to be sure to have the database ready to go at the beginning of class the next day. The F2F class was filled with the instructor leading them into queries. They were then 'supposed' to be finished with the database and we were to go on to PowerPoint. Another day was wasted because they had not completed the online portion of the assignments. The at-risk student scored considerably lower than the non-at risk student. Two of the at-risk students never even completed the database. Instructor notes from journal on April 29: *"The unprepared student cannot comprehend when I demonstrate something. They cannot see it on the screen, and replicate it on his/her screen. Much time was lost waiting for students to 'catch up', some very behind."* There was another database the students were to do on his/her own as the online assignment, but we ran out of time and that database was not assigned.

The last unit covered was in Microsoft PowerPoint. There were two chapters in PowerPoint. It was a one-week unit. The mean scores for this unit were disappointing, as it was perceived that students would have come in with more PowerPoint knowledge than they showed. The mean scores are very low for the at-risk student. Seven of the at-risk students did not even bother to complete the PowerPoint project. Other low scores are just due to poor preparation. Again, the at-risk student was repeatedly not completing the online assignments.

There was one more chapter in the text that was on integrating the Office products. Since there was no more course time to complete that chapter, it was assigned as extra credit. The instructor sent out an email explaining the entire unit. Two days later a student (the borderline at-risk student) emailed back and asked, 'Is there any extra credit?' It is obvious that students were not checking his/her email from the instructor. One non-at-risk student did the extra credit; none of the at-risk students did the extra credit.

Final exam

The final exam was cumulative, covering all chapters in the textbook. The exam consisted of 100 multiple-choice questions using the SAM software. A practice final exam was available, also with 100 multiple-choice questions.

Although the mean scores were very close for the final exam, the preparation was better for the non-at-risk group. The practice exam was also set for unlimited amount of attempts. The frequency of attempts per student was interesting. Seven at-risk students took the practice exam and six of the non-at-risk students took the practice exam. Here is the surprise ending. The practice exam WAS the same as the final exam. That was deliberately arranged to test the ability of the students to properly prepare. The scores are disappointing. Only two of the non-at-risk students achieved an A grade on the final exam. There was a direct correlation to completing the practice exam to performing well on the final exam.

Liberal Studies Elective Requirement Forum

There was one more criteria of evaluation. As a liberal studies course, students are required to read a supplemental reading and are evaluated on this reading. The novel chosen was Kevin Mitnick's 'The Art of Deception'. It is an

excellent introduction of the social engineer. This book has fourteen chapters. They were to choose one story from each chapter and do two things: Summarize the story, and then give his/her reaction to that story. All instructions were in the syllabus for formats and content. The first seven chapters were worse in most all students. Four of the at-risk students did not even complete the assignment. One non-at-risk student did not complete the assignment. This was not a very demanding assignment. Poor grades were the direct result of not following formats and instructions in the syllabus.

Final course grade

The first part of the course was computer concepts and the second half of the course was more hands-on assignments, requiring much more of his/her time, completing Microsoft Office projects. The at-risk group had seven students going down one letter grade from the midterm, one stayed the same and six improved. Two at-risk students repeated the course from an F grade and received Ds the second time around. The non-at-risk group had six students dropping down a grade from the midterm, one stayed the same and five improved.

Student evaluations:

Unprepared students are going to have the worst things to say about you, and they're going to hurt your teaching evaluations. (Griffin, teaching unprepared students, 2014) Here are some of the comments from the student evaluations:

I did NOT like coming in class only once a week.

The split learning environment was difficult because if you had a question you could only ask through email.

I don't think we should be assigned 'groups'

All in all I learned a lot from the course. If you do the work, it's an easy A. (the only positive comment)

The disappointing part about the evaluations is that out of twenty-six students only four made comments, with three negative and one positive. Eighty-six percent of the students felt they learned valuable skills. The rating for instruction of the course: Seventy-three percent rated the course average or above average.

Absenteeism

Upon analyzing the frequency of missed online classes from the data, one can see that the at-risk student by far missed more online assignments than did the non-at-risk. The high number of online absences directly correlates to the final grades. Students who go to class regularly not only earn higher grades, but they are also more likely to stay enrolled in school. (Gabriel, 2008, page 41)

10. CONCLUSION

This course was taught using the best practices of designing a blended learning course coupled with the best strategies of teaching the at-risk student. Absences became a problem in this blended learning environment, whether in the F2F class or the online environment. Study after study indicates that students must take responsibility for his/her own learning. Students were gleefully signing the consent form for this course, but perhaps the 'one class a week' part of the course was the selling point. Notes from journal, week 1: "I think the students initially signed up for this course because we are not meeting on Thursdays". However, based upon the comment in the student evaluations, some students determined they needed that F2F instruction more than the day off. Perhaps it is as Pregot (2013) stated and the Generation Y age group is not as attracted toward blended learning. The fact that most students chose not to complete the first weeks' online assignments that tested his/her ability to be successful online contributed to his/her failure. This study determined that blending learning is not suited to just 'anyone'. A student must still have enough independence in his/her learning to become successful in the online portion of such a class. Lopez-Perez et al, (2011) stated a high degree of motivation and satisfaction is perceived from blended learning, which could lead students to have a positive attitude towards learning. It was difficult to motivate the at-risk student in this course thus contributing to the final course grade of many of the at-risk students. As Shilby (2014) noted, blended learning allows more assignments outside the class; however, this was the very area the at-risk student was most unsuccessful. It is concluded, in this paper, in this class, that the at-risk student was not successful in this academic endeavor.

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Appendices

Anonymous Qualtrix Self-Assessment Survey

1 I believe that high quality learning can take place online.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

2 I understand that online learning will require as much time and effort as learning in a face to face classroom.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

3 I accept critical thinking as part of learning.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

4 I have access to a computer and/or the required equipment for an online learning experience.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

5 I am not intimidated by using technology applications for learning.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

6 I feel comfortable using a computer for basic word-processing, accessing the Internet, and sending/receiving e-mail.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

7 I understand that participating in online chats and discussions is an important part of online learning.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

8 I can easily express my ideas, comments, and questions in writing.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

9 I can think ideas through before responding.

- Mostly
- Sometimes

- Rarely

10 I am able to communicate professionally if problems arise.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

11 I have strong time management skills, and I am able to meet deadlines and keep track of assignments.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

12 I am self-motivated and do not need outside prodding to complete assignments.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

13 I am able to learn independently without face to face interaction with others.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

14 I am able to effectively work in teams.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

15 I am generally flexible and can easily adjust to changing my schedule.

- Mostly
- Sometimes
- Rarely

Learning Style Inventory

To gain a better understanding of yourself as a learner, you need to evaluate the way you prefer to learn or process information. By doing so, you will be able to develop strategies which will enhance your learning potential. The following evaluation is a short, quick way of assessing your learning style. No studies have validated this inventory. Its main benefit is to get you to think about yourself, to consider learning alternatives; not to rigidly classify you.

Answer each question honestly.

Instructions: Click on the appropriate button after each statement. After answering all questions, click on the **Determine Style** button below.

Learning Styles Inventory			
Questions	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
1. I can remember more about a subject through the lecture method with information, explanations and discussion.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
2. I prefer information to be presented the use of visual aids.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
3. I like to write things down or to take notes for visual review.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
4. I prefer to make posters, physical models, or actual practice and some activities in class.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
5. I require explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
6. I enjoy working with my hands or making things.	<input type="radio"/> Seldom	<input type="radio"/> Sometimes	<input type="radio"/> Often
7. I am skillful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

charts.

Seldom Sometimes Often

8. I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.

Seldom Sometimes Often

9. I remember best by writing things down several times.

Seldom Sometimes Often

10. I can understand and follow directions on maps.

Seldom Sometimes Often

11. I do better at academic subjects by listening to lectures and tapes as opposed to reading a textbook.

Seldom Sometimes Often

12. I play with coins or keys in pockets.

Seldom Sometimes Often

13. I learn to spell better by repeating the words out loud than by writing the word on papers.

Seldom Sometimes Often

14. I can better understand a news article by reading about it in the paper than by listening to the radio.

Seldom Sometimes Often

15. I chew gum, smoke, or snack during studies.

Seldom Sometimes Often

16. I feel the best way to remember is to picture it in your head.

Seldom Sometimes Often

17. I learn spelling by tracing the letters with my fingers.

Seldom Sometimes Often

18. I would rather listen to a good lecture or speech than read about the same material in a textbook.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

19. I am good at working and solving jigsaw puzzles and mazes.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

20. I play with objects in hands during learning period.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

21. I remember more by listening to the news on the radio rather than reading about it in the newspaper.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

22. I obtain information on an interesting subject by reading relevant materials.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

23. I feel very comfortable touching others, hugging, handshaking, etc.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

24. I follow oral directions better than written ones.

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

After answering each question, click on the button below.

Your survey results will appear here.

About the Three Styles

If you are an AUDITORY learner, you may wish to use tapes. Tape lectures to help you fill in the gaps in your notes. But do listen and take notes, reviewing notes frequently. Sit in the lecture hall or classroom where you can hear well. After you have read something, summarize it and recite it aloud.

If you are a VISUAL learner, then by all means be sure that you look at all study materials. Use charts, maps, filmstrips, notes and flashcards. Practice visualizing or picturing words/concepts in your head. Write out everything for frequent and quick visual review.

If you are a TACTILE learner, trace words as you are saying them. Facts that must be learned should be written several times. Keep a supply of scratch paper for this purpose. Taking and keeping lecture notes will be very important. Make study sheets.



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Characteristics of successful students in distance education programs

- Open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process
- Able to communicate through writing
- Self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Willing to “speak-up” if problems arise
- Able and willing to commit four to fifteen hours per week per course (*Sidebar: you won't do that many hours in this course*)
- Able to meet the minimum requirements for the course
- Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process
- Have access to a computer
- Able to think ideas through before responding
- Feel that high-quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom

Illinois Online Network. (2006)“What Makes a Successful Online Student?” *Online Education Resources, Pedagogy and Learning*.