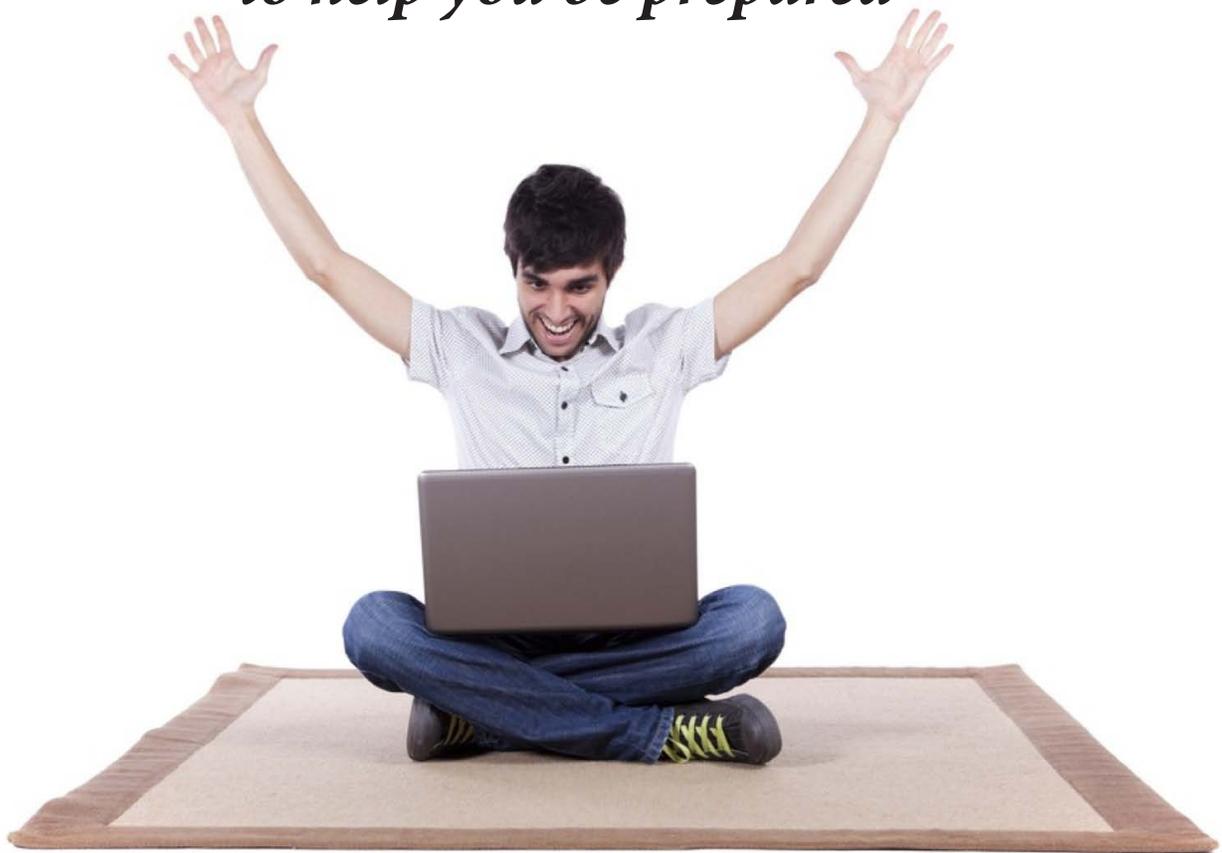


Being a Successful Online Student

A PRODUCTION OF ADVISING & NEW STUDENT SERVICES

A Resource Guide
to help you be prepared



Notes & Other Things to Remember

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

What is an online course? What do I need?

Why do I want to take an online course? Are my reasons likely to lead to success?

Am I prepared? What skills and strategies will lead to success?

What is my primetime? Where is my best study location?

Do I need to work on my organization? Can I access my email & student calendar?

Am I familiar with Netiquette? Can I draft an acceptable email?

What resources are available to me? Do I know how to access those resources?

Do I have other questions?

Choices of Successful Students

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

Successful Students....

...accept **personal responsibility**, seeing themselves as the primary cause of their outcomes and experiences.

...discover **self-motivation**, finding purpose in their lives with personally meaningful goals.

...master **self-management**, consistently planning on taking purposeful actions in pursuit of their goals and dreams.

...employ **interdependence**, building mutually supportive relationships that help them achieve their goals and dreams, while helping others do the same.

...gain **self-awareness**, consciously employing behaviors, beliefs, and attitudes that keep them on course.

...adopt **lifelong learning**, finding valuable lessons and wisdom in nearly every experience they have.

...develop **emotional intelligence**, effectively managing their emotions in support of their goals and dreams.

...**believe in themselves**, seeing themselves as capable, lovable, and unconditionally worthy human beings.

Struggling Students....

...see themselves as victims, believing that what happens to them is determined primarily by external forces.

...have difficulty sustaining motivation, often feeling depressed, frustrated, or resentful about lack of direction.

...seldom identify specific actions needed to accomplish a desired outcome, and when they do, they tend to procrastinate.

...are solitary, seldom requesting, even rejecting, offers of assistance from those who could help them work towards their goals.

...make important choices unconsciously, being directed by self-sabotaging habits and outdated life scripts.

...resist learning new ideas and skills, viewing learning as fearful or boring rather than as mental play.

...live at the mercy of strong emotions such as anger, depression, anxiety, or a need for instant gratification.

...doubt their competence and personal value, feeling inadequate to create their desired outcomes and experiences.

Primetime Questionnaire

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

Part of *Being a Successful Online Student* is knowing yourself. You probably recognized aspects of your personality in both the successful and struggling students categories in *Choices of Successful Students*. This is OK, recognition is the first steps to being a successful student.

Every journey starts with the first step, our first step is to determine some aspects about ourselves, such as when and where you will most effectively complete your homework.

Circle one option on each line below, find the side (left or right) with the most selected answers, & then review your results.

Time of Day

I get up with my alarm **-or-** I hit the snooze button
I make time for breakfast **-or-** I skip breakfast most days
I get ready and fall asleep in bed **-or-** I often fall asleep watching TV
I'm ready after my morning shower **-or-** I don't function without coffee
I get home early **-or-** I stay out late

I should complete homework in the:
Morning or Early Afternoon **-or-** Late Afternoon or Evening

Place of Study

I live on my own **-or-** I have a spouse/children/roommate
I have a home office space **-or-** I don't have any private space
My space is free of distractions **-or-** My workspace has a TV or other device
I have a desktop computer **-or-** I have a laptop/access to a public computer
I get my work done early **-or-** I procrastinate until the last day

I'll do best when I complete:
Work from home **-or-** Work on campus/quiet public space

Other Considerations

I make to-do lists and organize my tasks **-or-** I complete tasks as I think of them
I work well with urgent tasks **-or-** I don't perform well under pressure
I can manage many tasks at once **-or-** I get overwhelmed easily
I give myself plenty of time to complete tasks **-or-** I am always rushing at the last minute
I have plenty of free time **-or-** I don't know where the time goes

You should consider:
Helping other students get organized **-or-** Taking the Time/Stress Management Workshops

Drafting an E-mail

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

All or most of your communication in online courses will be electronic via Blackboard or email. It is important when drafting an email to an instructor or to other students that you consider how you will come across to those reading your email. Remember that others reading your email can't hear your tone, or take cues from your body language, so it is important that you write clearly and concisely. Also consider that your electronic communication is the only way that your instructor or peers will get to know you, so you want to write in a manner that will reflect well upon you. Remember what you learn from *Basic Netiquette for Online Classes*.

Below you will find a few examples of an email that you might send to an instructor, one is a good example, the other not-so-good:

EXAMPLE 1

From: Bob McBobberson
Sent: Saturday, August 31, 2013 3:22 AM
To: Biology Teacher
Subject: Add me to your class

yo teach, your class is full and you have to let me in your class cuz this is the only online biology class and i have to take this class to graduate.

EXAMPLE 2

From: Bob McBobberson
Sent: Monday, August 26, 2013 9:05 AM
To: Biology Teacher
Subject: BIOL 100 001W

Dear Mr. Perkins,

Hello, my name is Bob McBobberson and I'm a new student at the College of Western Idaho. I am trying to register for your online Biology 100 class, section 001W. I know that the class is full, but I would greatly appreciate it if you would allow me to register for your class. I am a very hard working student and have always been very interested in Biology. Please let me know at your earliest convenience.

Kind Regards,
Bob McBobberson

Basic Netiquette for Online Classes

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

By Deana L. Molinari

Postings to the discussion boards require a polite behavior or the learning process breaks down, people's feelings are hurt, and your grade may be impacted. Polite online behavior is called "netiquette". The following guidelines are basic to this class.

Emotions

Research with online groups indicates that emotions are strongly felt in cyberspace. People take a long time to mull over messages they feel are rude, inflammatory, or even questionable. People may interpret messages as hurtful and react to them in a defensive manner. Watch how you express your emotions and humor within the mail. Due to the lack of vocal and nonverbal clues to our speech here, we often need something extra to read into a message what was intended. Cultural and ability differences impact the online group. Don't get involved in flame wars. Neither post nor respond to incendiary material.

Spelling and Punctuation

College level communication skills are expected in all messages. Use correct punctuation and spelling. Use the spell check for messages. Longer messages are best constructed in a word processor, spell checked, and then pasted into the discussion board. Some students have experienced the loss of long messages and find the practice of building their arguments offline first allows more creativity, less online time, and safety. Break messages down into short paragraphs for easier electronic reading.

Manners

When joining a group politely listen to others. See if there are any Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that pertain to communications, read these before contributing. Follow all guidelines given. Do not assume that others are interested in the same TV, geographical jokes, etc. Keep postings to the point. Keep your comments relevant to the topic of discussion. Validate other members' ideas and efforts. Research indicates that groups that validate more have better outcome products (Molinari, 1999). Use critical thinking skills while validating. Messages that contain "Way to go" "Right on" or a simple "Wow!" require a lot of time to download and do not contribute to the group process. Comments mentioning why something is appreciated are more valuable. Do not use acronyms unless they are common to the class.

Strategies to promote problem solving

The ignoring strategy: The ignoring strategy is used in conjunction with the democratic decision-making process. The ignoring strategy states that students need not feel compelled to reply to every message. Sometimes ignoring a statement you disagree with while producing your own thesis and supporting statement is more useful to a group. This strategy saves time by avoiding arguments. This saves hurt feelings by avoiding inflammatory talk. Alternative ideas are appreciated online,

Basic Netiquette for Online Classes, continued

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

differences of opinion produce growth, but anger and hostility block learning (Martinez, 1999). Putting another's ideas down is considered unprofessional. In other words, professionals disagree by showing why they disagree, not by picking fights. Netiquette requires individuals to respond sensitively to others.

The democratic decision-making process: You may want to structure your ideas using the following strategy found in successful groups. Begin your message with a thesis statement and follow up with supporting statements. Then ask for other's feedback. Be willing to listen to the replies. Provide clarifications and expansions.

Build a supporting culture: Consider the larger group whenever communicating. Watch your speech that it does not belittle or inflame. Many habits used in face-to-face speech hurt online. Address individuals at times as well as the group. Consider each other's feelings and life experiences. Show respect by agreeing to disagree. Do not feel inclined to beat down ideas. A person is attached to that idea somewhere. Remember that people may not read the message until the middle of the night, or at their most vulnerable time and may not possess tolerance. The essence of successful group culture is validation while problem solving

Keep the discussion to the discussion board: Discuss class issues on the discussion board. Individual messages can be sent via e-mail when they do not pertain to the group, but the temptation is to problem solve outside the online group. When this occurs, the instructor cannot give you credit for your participation, and someone in the group may be left out of the conversation. Information sharing about issues outside the group can enhance the community of scholarship if the learning environment is maintained on the discussion board.

Quotes: Report your sources. Watch out for copyright infringement. It is professional behavior as well as the law.

Subject Line: Use the subject line to organize or file discussion topics.

Replies: Give a short indication of what you are replying to. Otherwise a person may not know how your remarks fit into the discussion. Often learners read several messages and reply with one message. Summarize the topics you are replying to and then reply.

Reading and Posting: Read messages from the first to the last in a thread before responding to them. If everyone does this then a common development of the discussion can be traced. Each person reading and responding using different messages produces cross effort, confusion, and duplication of effort. Find authoritative resources and use them in your replies and initial postings. This is professional behavior, the learning culture, and netiquette.

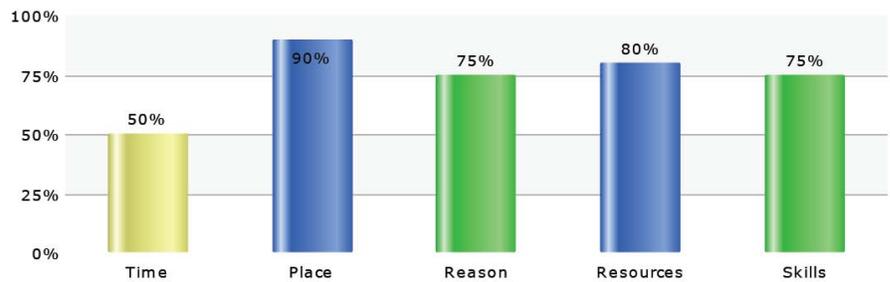
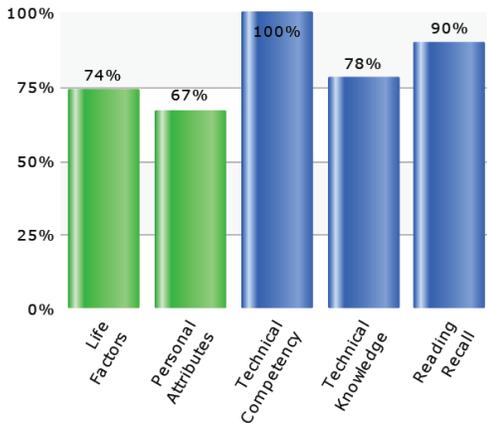
Online Readiness Assessment

BEING A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT

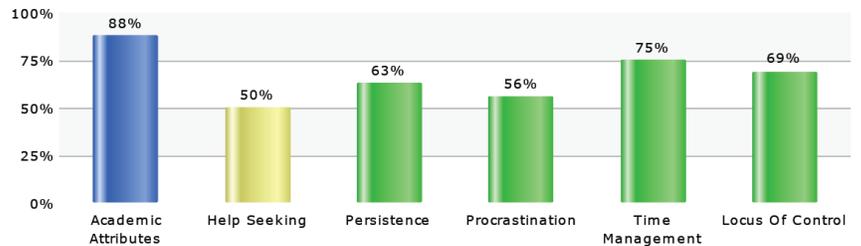
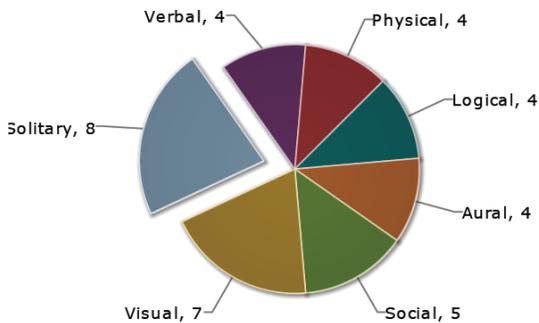
Before you take an online course at CWI consider completing the Online Readiness Assessment (ORA) at the CWI Assessment Center.

If you would like to complete a similar assessment from home you can find other assessments online; completing an assessment will give you a good idea of where you lie for the many different factors that lead to *Being a Successful Online Student*. Below are examples of the type of feedback provided by a typical Online Readiness Assessment.

General Summary



Learning Styles



Reading Rate



The Assessment also includes:
Explanations of each individual measurement
How you compare to the average scores received
Expanded learning styles information
Resources for support