

Is e-Learning For You?

More and more people are turning to their computers to get the credits they need towards a college degree.

The convenience, especially for parents, is one of the biggest draws, as parents can take a class at their convenience and still be home with their family. Not only can classes be taken whenever the student wishes, but most lectures can be viewed over and over again.

With over 4,700 accredited higher education institutions nationwide, nearly 85 percent will offer some kind of online courses or degree programs this year. The online-learning industry is expected to grow from \$6.3 billion in 2001 to more than \$23 billion in 2004, according to market researcher IDC.

E-Learning has become an integral part of mainstream higher education and a key program for hundreds of universities. The lure of being able to obtain the same education as on-campus students while attending class anytime, anywhere, 24/7 has proven irresistible to thousands of adult learners worldwide.

So, who is the right candidate for an online degree program? How does anyone know who will flourish when it comes to e-Learning? There is no definite formula that applies to everyone, but there are several characteristics that may lead to a successful experience with online learning. Many prospective students initially think that earning their online accredited college degree would be easier than enrolling in a traditional college degree program, but in actuality, students must exhibit a high level of dedication, commitment and discipline to be successful in an online degree program.

The drive behind why a parent is seeking to enroll in an online degree program can also play an important role in the success. There are many obstacles that many adult business professionals encounter in their pursuit of a higher education including:

* Work hours - Not everyone works consistent hours. Many work irregular hours, rotating shifts or varying days.

* Business trips/conferences - These often stand in the way of professionals wanting to take courses. Colleges and universities are limited in how much absence they can excuse from a class, even though the absence is because of work place commitments.

* Family/personal commitments - It can be very difficult for family members to understand why the student has to rush home, eat a quick meal and then leave again for classes. If the spouse works and is counting on help to care for the children, it may be impossible for the student to continue their education. Many adults are also engaged in competitive sports, community activities, churches or other recurring events of a personal nature that interfere with class schedules.

It is important to keep these situations in mind when deciding if an online degree program is right for you. If you are not sure, enroll in one course to "test the waters." If students think that an online degree program will work for them, there are many programs to choose from. Remember, education is a serious issue, and that proper research should be done to find the accredited college or university that fits each student's personal needs.

Interested students should seek accredited online degree programs that feature online "classrooms" that are designed with the very latest technology to give students the "digital tools" they need to enhance their educational experience. These tools include on-demand video streamed lectures that allow students to view the lectures as many times as they need, an asynchronous online bulletin board that permits students and faculty to interact on key topics and chat rooms that are used by instructors to host "virtual" office hours where students can collaborate real-time with faculty members. Employees can attend class anytime, anywhere 24 hours a day, seven days a week with no classroom attendance required.

Bisk Education, Inc. is a leading provider of multimedia web-based, interactive educational programs for professionals and working adults. Bisk's University Alliance division, with over 70,000 students enrolled, is the nation's largest exclusive e-Learning provider of online associate's, bachelor's and master's degree and certificate programs from regionally accredited institutions. Programs are delivered online from schools such as Villanova University, Regis University, Saint Leo University, Jacksonville University and the University of South Florida, with additional programs and universities to be added in the near future.

The University Alliance (<http://www.universityalliance.com/ck>) features "online" classrooms with on-demand digitally streamed lectures that allow students to attend class anytime 24 hours a day, seven days a week and to replay their lectures as many times as they want, plus unparalleled one-on-one support from professors, academic advisors, student services representatives and technical support. No on-campus classroom attendance is required in any of the University Alliance online degree or certificate programs. Students can access their online classes from home, work, or anywhere where they have a computer and access to the Internet.

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