Student Expectations

If you like to manage your own time and have a flexible class schedule, you are probably considering taking online and hybrid courses. They allow you to study anytime, anywhere, and still cope with other important responsibilities in life. Did you know that many online students outperform those who take face-to-face courses?

Sounds great, right? So why do some students become discouraged after enrolling in online courses? Well, some students did not receive proper and adequate orientation to prepare themselves for these courses. Without proper guidance, the sense of isolation in an online course and the desperation for help can be daunting.

YES, you need to LEARN to LEARN online, and this resource will help you identify the best strategies for being a successful online student.

Read this carefully.
Before considering taking these courses, it is helpful to look at some traits that have defined more successful online students. Successful online students would:

1. Be self-motivated and independent
2. Meet deadlines
3. Have good communication skills, including reading and writing
4. Believe that they have control over their own success

If you are not sure if you have these qualities, don’t be discouraged. You can work at developing these qualities, but bear in mind you will need to have these qualities as you pursue your online courses.

To simplify things for you, we have condensed best strategies for your success into a few checklists. Before you start your online courses, please read them carefully and make sure you have everything checked off:

I. Checklist for Essential Technologies:
Before the semester starts, get prepared by making sure you have access to these technologies:

- A computer
- A stable Internet connection
- Microsoft Office, OpenOffice, or Google Docs
- Plugins for your browser, including Flash, Java etc., and a browser configured to work with the Learning Management System
- My Maricopa access to register for classes, pay tuition, view grades, etc. (http://my.maricopa.edu)
- Maricopa email (http://google.maricopa.edu)
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II. Checklist for Getting Started:
Prior to or during the first week of class you need to make sure to cover all the activities on this list.

- Login to My Maricopa http://my.maricopa.edu to add/drop classes and check class schedule
- Login to Canvas https://maricopa.instructure.com/ ASAP!
- Read and understand the course syllabus and schedule due dates.
- Print or save a copy of the syllabus and schedule on your computer.
- Put course due dates on your calendar.
- Buy the required book or materials to complete the course.
- Plan at least 1 hour of study time per credit course per week (study at least 3 hours per week for a 3-credit course).
- Check your Maricopa email for announcements from your instructor.

III. Checklist for the WHOLE semester:

- Complete and submit assignments on time.
- Access online class materials regularly (1-3 times per week depending upon the course).
- Allow extra time for assignment completion in case of unexpected technology glitches.
- Communicate regularly with your instructor about questions and concerns.
- Be self-directed and independent.
- Understand that even though you don’t see your classmates physically, they are still there, and can be a valuable resource when you need help.
- Use the Success Center. Phoenix College has a center that is dedicated to help you improve your academic skills and catch up with homework. They are located in lower level of the Library

IV. Checklist for coping with difficulties:
Sometimes life happens and you find yourself falling behind and feeling overwhelmed. Do not despair. Take positive steps to rectify the situation. Give yourself the permission to make these positive changes:

1. Contact your instructor ASAP and tell them your situation. Chances are, they have been contacting you to find out what’s been going on or why you’ve disappeared. All instructors care about how their students perform in class because it is also a reflection on their teaching.
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2. Check your course schedule and make a list of things you’ve missed. Depending upon your instructor, you may be able to make up these assignments. It is up to you to work it out with your instructor.

3. Move forward and do NOT miss future deadlines. Whether your instructor has decided to give you a second chance, you have to put your mistakes behind, and MOVE FORWARD. Keep track of future assignments and make sure to complete them FROM NOW ON.

4. Connect with other students. Even though you may not see your classmates physically, they may be struggling just like you, and would welcome your questions and concerns.

5. Go to the Success Center. Phoenix College has a center that is dedicated to help you improve your academic skills and catch up with homework. They are located in Hannelly Center.

Now that you are ready to begin your academic journey, there is one final and important principle that will guide you through school: Academic Integrity. Academic integrity takes COURAGE, especially when faced with peer pressure and failure. Strive to uphold these values to protect our academic community:

1. HONESTY: Be honest with yourself and others. “Dishonesty, cheating, lying, fraud, theft jeopardize the rights and welfare of our community.” (International Center for Academic Integrity)

2. RESPECT: Respect yourself and others for their contribution to the community of knowledge. Make sure to acknowledge others’ work by giving credit and citing.

3. RESPONSIBILITY: Everyone is responsible for upholding integrity. It means “taking action against wrongdoing, despite peer pressure, fear, loyalty, or compassion” (page 9, International Center for Academic Integrity). In other words, it means reporting a friend for cheating, and not making it easy for others to copy your work (reference: International Center for Academic Integrity, www.academicintegrity.org).

The lack of Academic Integrity is Academic Dishonesty, which is a SERIOUS OFFENSE. Some of these offenses include:

   a. Cheating

   b. Lying or inventing information or citation

   c. Assisting others to violate academic integrity

   d. Plagiarism

      i. Plagiarism occurs intentionally or not, when you present any information as if it were your own.

      ii. Intentional plagiarism examples: paying someone else to write your paper, submitting group work as though it were your individual work, submitting work without citations.

      iii. Unintentional plagiarism examples: being careless with scholarly procedures.

      iv. Avoid plagiarism by: being honest and not cheating, and following scholarly procedures