

First Things First

The most important question you have to answer is whether your student is well suited to an online learning environment.

Profile of a Successful Student

Instructors with years of online teaching experience agree that students who have a successful, satisfying experience learning online share several critical characteristics:

Good Time Management:

Can your student create and maintain a study schedule throughout the semester without the face-to-face interaction with a teacher?

Effective Communication:

Can your student ask for help, make contact with other students and the instructor online, and describe any problems she/he has with learning materials using email, texting, and/or the telephone?

Independent Study Habits:

Can your student study and complete assignments without direct supervision and maintain the self-discipline to stick to a schedule?

Self-Motivation:

Does your student have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in online courses because of an educational goal? Can she/he maintain focus on that goal?

Academic Readiness:

Does your student have the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in the class?

Technologically Prepared:

Does your student know how to open, create and/or save a document; use various technology tools (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, grammar checker, calculator); and identify various file formats (e.g., doc, xls, pdf, jpg)? (from Michigan Educational Technology Standards for Students 2009).

Counselors and teachers often use the *MVU Online Readiness Rubric* on page 11 to help students understand what is required of a successful online learner. If you identify areas in the rubric where your student is lacking, you can determine what needs to be addressed to best support them in those areas.

See *Is Online Learning Right for Me?* on page 12 for more guidance.

The Stanford Research Institute's publication *Supporting K-12 Students in Online Learning: A Review of Online Algebra 1 Courses* examined the accessibility of online learning for students, especially those who were at risk of failure. The report cautions that students who have failed a face-to-face class may have challenges that will affect their success in an online course, too. For example, many students do not realize that they will have to be even more accountable for their time, performance, and productivity in an online course.

