

MYTHS AND TRUTHS

Taking Classes Online (Distance Learning)

MYTH

Online classes are easier than face-to-face (F2F) courses.

TRUTH

Many students find online classes to be **MORE** challenging than F2F classes. Before taking the leap into the virtual classroom, figure out if it is for you. Taking online classes require a special set of skills: self-direction and motivation, written communication skills, technological skills, strong reading ability and **more time management**. On average, students usually earn higher grades in F2F classes than in online classes.

MYTH

Online classes are “work at your own pace.”

TRUTH

Unless the course is specifically listed as “self-paced” it will have due dates and deadlines just like F2F classes. If you miss those deadlines due to a computer problem or because you didn’t go online that day, your grade will suffer. It is VERY important to log in to the class as soon as the class begins for the term as there will be assignments due right away.

MYTH

Taking an online class is a good way to learn computer skills.

TRUTH

In order to be successful in an online class, you should already know how to use email (including attaching and sending documents), how to navigate an online environment (do you regularly shop, pay bills, spend time online?), and how to access Blackboard. You should also have easy access to a reliable computer with up-to-date software and stable internet access. Taking a class without the right equipment at home is strongly discouraged.

MYTH

You can sign up for online classes past the official add date.

TRUTH

Online classes are subject to the same add/drop dates as F2F classes. Online students are subject to all the same MxCC policies and procedures as on-campus students.

OTHER IMPORTANT TIPS:

1. If you have never taken an online course before, assess your online literacy – go to: <http://www.mxcc.commnet.edu/Content/READI.asp>
2. If you decide you are comfortable with the online structure, sign up for an Online Orientation; it will provide a comprehensive tour and understanding of the site. You must be familiar with the geography of the site. Click on all the tabs.
3. Set and commit to a regular time when you absolutely will “go to class” and do the work. You need to free yourself of the competing time demands and make time for the class. One of the biggest pitfalls of taking an online class is falling behind.
4. As in “on-ground” classes, communicating regularly with the course instructor will be key to your success.