Characteristics of the Successful Online Student

Online courses offer students opportunities to learn in new ways and make learning available to many who cannot attend a traditional class. In general, the successful online student should possess the following qualities:

- **Be open minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.**
  Introverts as well as extroverts find that the online process requires them to utilize their experiences. This forum for communication eliminates the visual barriers that hinder some individuals in expressing themselves.

- **Be able to communicate through writing.**
  In the virtual classroom, nearly all communication is written, so it is critical that you feel comfortable in expressing yourself in writing.

- **Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.**
  With the freedom and flexibility of the online environment comes responsibility. The online process takes a real commitment and discipline to keep up with the flow of the process.

- **Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.**
  When you experience difficulty on any level (either with the technology or with the course content), you must communicate this immediately. Otherwise the instructor will never know what is wrong.

- **Be willing and able to commit to 8 to 10 hours per week per course.**
  Online is **not** easier than the traditional educational process. In fact, many students will say it requires much more time and commitment.

- **Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the course.**
  The requirements for online are no less than that of any other college writing course. An online course is a convenient way to receive your education, not an easier way.

- **Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.**
  The learning process requires you to make decisions based on facts as well as experience. Assimilating information and executing the right decisions requires critical thought.

- **Have access to a computer and a high speed internet.**
  The student must have access to the necessary equipment to be successful. Many students prefer to work from home; however, students may access the computers in the LATI library on campus and the Watertown Regional Library.

- **Be able to think ideas through before responding.**
  Meaningful and quality input into the virtual classroom is an essential part of the learning process. Time is given in the process to allow for the careful consideration of responses. The testing and challenging of ideas is encouraged; you will not always be right, just be prepared to accept a challenge.

- **Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.**
  To be successful, the student must take responsibility for his or her learning. The more engaged the student, the more meaningful learning will occur.

Modified from Santa Fe Community College Open Campus at
http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/English/onlinestudent.htm