



There are more options available today than ever before in reference to how we want to complete our college classes. While it is great to have choices, the more choices we have the more difficult it can be to determine which choice may be best!

The purpose of this document is to provide basic information on the different types of courses, and to help you determine which style of teaching might be the best for you, for your learning style, and for your personal situation. As a parent, it is intended to offer ideas to present to your child so a good academic decision can be made.

If you have any further questions about the different type of courses, or anything college or career related, head over to my website at [College and Career Matters](http://CollegeandCareerMatters.com) – and if this document is helpful for you, I offer a companion document inside my free digital resource library titled “How Do I Know If Online Courses Are For Me? – 16 Questions Every Student Should Ask Themselves Before They Enroll In An Online Class” To access this companion document, simply go to my homepage at [College and Career Matters](http://CollegeandCareerMatters.com) and in the top menu select the option FREE Library of Downloads!

I am excited to see you there and help you and your child through the process of creating a plan for post-secondary options and success!

All My Best,

~Tawna

Tawna Schmidt, EdD, MAEd, BS
Founder, College and Career Matters Academy



Dr. Tawna Schmidt
College and Career Coach
www.collegeandcareermatters.com



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How Do I Know If Online Courses Are For Me?

In today's world of education, there are many options to earning a college degree. The most difficult part in making a decision that is best for you is ensuring you understand each option clearly.

There are three types of coursework offered by institutions of higher education. The first is on-campus, often called brick and mortar, the second is online, often called web-based coursework or distance education, and the third way to take a college class is the hybrid method.

Let's talk about what the coursework actually looks like in each of the options.

On-Campus - On-campus courses are just as they sound - they are completed on the college campus and the meetings usually take place in a lecture hall full of desks, roundtables, or benches. The students listen to the instructor teach the lesson, often through a lecture, and take notes.

Assignments typically consist of group projects, research papers, exams, and presentations. Depending on the instructor, the course may or may not include student engagement through class discussion.

Online - Online courses are also just as they sound - they are completed online through the use of a computer with an internet connection. Online courses typically do not have pre-scheduled meeting times. The majority of the course, if not all of it, is completed online from the student's place of study (home, office, etc.) Some colleges will require the student takes their course exams on the college campus; however, this

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is rare. Many students do not even live in the same town or even state where they are taking the online college course.

Hybrid – Hybrid courses are a bit harder to interpret how they are completed based on their name. These courses are a combination of on-campus and online courses, allowing the student a little bit of each method of teaching. Depending on the college, a student may be required, for example, to be in class once a month, or twice a month, for student discussion, and all other assignments are completed and turned in to their instructor through the online platform used by the college.

What are the pros and cons of each method of taking college courses?

This is a common question and one that is extremely important when a student is considering all their options. However, I do not like to refer to ‘pros and cons’ as a universal thought because what might be a ‘pro’ to one student may be a ‘con’ to another when discussing the methods to take college classes.

For example, one student may think it is a ‘pro’ to get up, get dressed, and drive to class three times a week because they love the interaction with the other students. However, another student may look at getting up and driving to class as a ‘con’ because they hate fighting the traffic and they never contribute to the class discussion.

This is one of the biggest reasons the option of taking college classes with different methods has been so helpful for students – they can find the method that meets their personality and learning style and take those kinds of courses.

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This leaves the real, and more important, question, “How do I know which kind of college course is right for me?”

A common misconception is that online courses are easier than on-campus or hybrid courses because the student is not expected to be in class. While it is true – the student does not have to drive to class and be present with the instructor – but they must log-in to their class a specified number of times each week and often for a specified amount of time.

National averages indicate that 50% of students that take an online course are successful; whereas 70% of students that take the same on-campus course are successful. This is not something to scare you off from taking an online course, but only shared to make you aware that it is important that online courses are a good fit for your personality and learning style. Success in an online course has more to do with personality and learning style than academic intelligence.

So *how do you determine if online courses fit your personality and learning style?*

Answer the following questions to learn more about yourself and if online courses are something you should consider.

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BONUS SECTION

10 COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT ONLINE CLASSES	
1	<p><i>Do online courses meet at a set time?</i></p> <p>Typically, online courses do not meet at a set time. Students are required to be in class a specified number of days per week based on their college, which means they must log in for attendance and possibly provide an answer to a discussion question or engage in the online class conversation in the forum.</p>
2	<p><i>Are online courses self-paced?</i></p> <p>Typically, online courses are not self-paced. They are on the same schedule as the on-campus classes, the student is just completing the course on-line at home during the same time frame as the on-campus class.</p>
3	<p><i>Is the course syllabus the same for on-campus and online courses?</i></p> <p>This depends on the college. Typically, the course curriculum is the same so the same concepts and content is covered. The major assignments and exams will be similar or the same, with each instructor teaching the class with his or her personality interjected into their instruction.</p>

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4	<p><i>Do online classes take less time than on-campus classes?</i></p> <p>Online courses do not take less time than on-campus classes, and they are also not considered to be easier. Students save commute time to campus, finding parking, etc., with an online class; however, the time spent in class whether it is online at home or on-campus with other students is comparable. Many students enjoy the convenience of online coursework so they do not have the commute time and parking challenges.</p>
5	<p><i>I have always heard online classes are easier, is this true?</i></p> <p>This simply is a myth that I am unsure where it started or who started it! It is common for students to make this assumption, as I have had multiple students make this statement to me. In an online class, the student has no choice but to participate and be present in class, as it is all recorded in the college platform. When a student is sitting in class with other students, they often choose to sit in the back row and not participate, and they get away with it.</p>
6	<p><i>Do I need special skills to be successful in an online class?</i></p> <p>The first skill that a student must have if they want to enroll in an online class is a basic knowledge of using a computer and the internet. It does not take a wide range of technological skills, but basic knowledge is necessary. The student must also be willing to learn the learning platform the college uses for teaching the courses. Common college online platforms are</p>

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	<p>Loudcloud, Angel, Moodle, and Blackboard, among others.</p> <p>The student must also have at least minimal organizational and time-management skills. There is not an instructor or other students reminding you when assignments are due, presentations must be completed, or exams are coming up.</p>
7	<p><i>How do textbooks and supplies work in an online course?</i></p> <p>With an online course, just like an on-campus course, this is the responsibility of the student. All materials should be obtained prior to the course starting or there is a likelihood the student will be behind as soon as the first day of class.</p> <p>Some colleges house an online library and the student uses these books for their class. This is done by logging in to the college library and accessing whatever is needed in the course. If the college offers an online library, there is typically an additional fee that has to be paid for the class.</p>
8	<p><i>Is there a specific kind of internet connection that is needed for an online course?</i></p> <p>No. The typical internet connection is sufficient, whether it is hard-wired to your computer or wireless. You can even go to the local coffee shop and connect to their wireless internet if you like to study in that environment! As long as you have an internet connection and a computer, you can attend class!</p> <p>Some colleges require the student has a webcam and microphone if the class requires group work, presentations, or video responses. This question should be asked when you enroll for an online class, or be sure to read the small print on</p>

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	the schedule.
9	<p><i>What if I have technical issues and an assignment is due? Will it be late?</i></p> <p>Typically, the assignment is late if it is not turned in by the specified due date and time. The instructor will know if you wait until the last minute to work on it, and then you cannot turn it in because of technical issues.</p> <p>There is a dedicated line for technical issues if a college offers online courses with someone that will help you. However, the time this office is open varies so you need to plan accordingly. It is also wise to get the hours of the technology department at the beginning of the class if it is not on your syllabus so that you are prepared in the event you do have challenges during the class that were not expected.</p>
10	<p><i>Can I just use my smart phone, iPad or tablet to complete my online class? I have an internet connection with it.</i></p> <p>At most colleges, this will not work. There are parts of the course that will not be accessible on a mobile device, depending on the learning platform they use. Computer access is required.</p>

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