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Up next on ATETV. Online courses, are they the right fit for you?

For many students taking online courses works with their busy schedules. The ability to take a class at any time and from anywhere allows for greater flexibility. There is a growing number of people taking cyber classes.

Just about anybody could take an online course and be successful, just like anyone could attend a course in person and be successful.

I was very skeptical about online courses for different reasons just I didn't think that I was going to have the same experience that I was going to have in the classroom. It is just like a classroom with advantage that you can make your own time.

Online courses typically are just as challenging, enriching and beneficial as face to face courses. Most online programs are almost entirely asynchronous and what that means is you don't have to be logged on at the same time as the other students, or your instructor. You are logging on when it's convenient for you. It can be late at night. It can be first thing in the morning. You can be in a different time zone. It can be on the weekends. You're doing your course work when it works for you.

It's wonderful, I can work on it at home at my own pace, you know, by the pool side with my laptop under an umbrella, watching the kids on the pool, you know.

Students have these busy lives where they have jobs and families and other commitments. So what an individual needs to do is to set aside numerous times to log in to check it. And so that requires some time management skills to set your own deadlines and to keep yourself motivated because while it's easy for college student to cut a class, it's even easier not to log in to class.

You know, you still need to do the readings, you still need to do the assignments, you still need to be there for the discussions. You might not have to be there at the same time that everybody else is there, but you still need to be there.

What I don't understand, I can actually hit an ask my instructor button and it will send it to the teacher.

So we don't want to create high technical barriers for people to get access to these courses. So, if you can browse the web and if you can follow links and you can send e-mail and you can attach a document, you can basically do everything you need to participate in an online course.

It is critical that they understand what online learning is about.

It is different than going to a classroom and looking at an instructor face to face and having them stare at you and give you the evil eye if you're not keeping up. It's a little bit easier to get behind and get off track in an online course. So we do everything we can to really keep the student engaged.

Those live sessions allow you to ask questions that you're going to get an answer to immediately, get to know the instructor and the other students a little bit better than you might when you're not logged on together. So there is a nice added benefit to being able to attend a live session. They're almost always archived so that you can watch them after the fact if you weren't able to attend.

The people who are developing online course whether they be instructors or instructional designers are really thinking about the fact that students learn in a variety of ways. Some students learn best by watching videos, some students learn best by listening to the instructor narrate a learning object and you know that can be anything from a diagram to a PowerPoint presentation.

So text and video, audio pieces, interactive learning objects and activities are really all integrated into the learning experience.

So there's a lot of exciting stuff up there on the web, but without a course designed around it, it's not as useful. We've designed the online courses to take advantage of the communication aspects of online, the online environment. And so the learning management system, the technical tool that you use to teach online gives students opportunities to interact with each other and to interact with their faculty member as well as interact with content. So, you had a lot of facets to it that keep it engaging.

There are a lot of misconceptions people have and one might be that because it's an online course, everything you're doing has to be on a computer. But, you know, if you're taking an environmental science class, you might need to go out into a swamp. You know, you might need to go out into the world and then come back and talk with other people about what you saw.

There are also hybrid courses, so one popular model is to take a science a course and do all the didactic components online, but then when it comes time to do a lab, not to do a virtual lab but to come on campus and do a lab.

Let's change that red switch and hit start button to start

For me being a single mom of three, it was hard but because of the online courses and the flex lab, it gave me the flexibility to where one day I could come in the morning, the next day I could come in the evening and it was pretty much on my time and at my own pace

People take thei courses on an iPad on an iPhone, on their Android.



You can access these courses from anywhere, anytime. Students need to have options. They can't be forced to come to a campus to learn. There have to be other options for them.

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Thanks for watching.