

Readiness for eLearning

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Distance education teachers and planners can help their prospective learners prepare for, or at the least assess their own readiness to learn within an online environment. Research supports that this is a critical consideration, since an individual learner's success in an online course often hinges on this foundation of readiness. Learners who are planning to take a course or program on-line are advised to also assess their own readiness to successfully learn in the virtual environment.

Readiness entails three dimensions to assess: the learners' computer or technical skill, learning skills, as well as their time management behaviors.

Computer/Technical Skills

The more experience a student has in using basic computer skills (use of networks, wordprocessing and other software applications, ability to upload and download files, use of the world wide web and email, accessing online library and other resource databases, and experience with online forums and other discussion applications), the more ready they are to take an online course. Other foundational requirements include access to a stable Internet connection and dependable computer and printer.

Learning Skills

Readiness is fortified by the ability to work independently, have self-motivation, mature reading and writing skills, and a proactive approach to learning, as well as a positive attitude about the learning experience in general.

Time Management Skills

Readiness is evident when a learner can safely plan chunks of time for participation and study within their existing lifestyle and commitments. This obviously requires a respectable level of commitment and discipline to manage time over the long term in order to complete the course.

Recommended Online Readiness for eLearning Tools

There are some excellent free online Readiness for eLearning Tools available for learners to use (and teachers to examine).

Three highly recommended ones include:

- Schrum, L. (2001). [SORT: Student Online Readiness Tool](http://www.alt.usg.edu/sort/)
University of Georgia. <http://www.alt.usg.edu/sort/>
(TIP: Use Internet Explorer to access this tool)
- DeSantis, C. (2002). [eLearners Advisor](http://www.elearnersadvisor.com/)
University of Guelph <http://www.elearnersadvisor.com/>
- Novosel, S. (2000). [Readiness Index for Learning Online \(RILO\)](http://www.nursing.iupui.edu/About/CTLL/Online/rilo.htm)
Indiana University School of Nursing
<http://www.nursing.iupui.edu/About/CTLL/Online/rilo.htm>