

Math 096-600
Introductory Algebra
Spring 2010
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Taking An Online Mathematics Course

The following document is just to share with you a few thoughts and comments in reference to taking an online math course.

First of all, I'd like to congratulate you for deciding to take the online math course listed above. Online courses seem to be a new form of education, especially in the mathematics discipline.

- **Advantages of Online Math Course:**

There are a few advantages of taking a math course online. Just to name a few: A student can log onto the course at their own time instead of the scheduled "class meeting" time. Students can work around other obligations such as work, travel, etc . . . A student can work quietly in their own comfortable environment that they so choose.

But keep in mind, just like almost everything else in society, there are deadlines. Online math courses allow you to work at a different pace BUT there are still deadlines and due dates that must be adhered to in reference to homework, exams and final exams.

- **Online Myths:**

There is a myth that usually follows an online course and that myth is, ". . . it'll be easier than a traditional class . . .". That myth is totally up to the student. Any college course will demand time and dedication whether the course is online or a traditional (sitting in a classroom with other students and the instructor).

In a traditional math class, homework is assigned, exams are given and they must be done at certain deadlines given by the instructor. Time must be put in; students must attend class, ask questions of the instructor and participate. Outside of class, time must be set aside for homework or projects that are required and due for the class. **Online classes require more discipline.**

One of the biggest mistakes students make is that they assume that they can ". . . register now and do the work later . . ." Let me give you an example:

A student registered for one of the math online courses in the fall semester, which started in August. The student did not begin any work on the online math course until the middle of the semester! The student finally got in contact with me and asked if he/she could turn in all the late assignment, take the (3) missed exams and turn in their assigned project.

The student assumed that, “I can register at the beginning of the semester, and do all the work later”. That did not work and the student end up failing the online math course.

Again, such actions do not work and in most online courses . . . the result is a failing grade. Remember, you are taking an online course to learn, that is the bottom line.

Student Responsibility:

When taking an online math course, it is the Student’s Responsibility to work to the best of their ability to be successful. Below are some items, but not limited to, that students must take the initiative to be fully responsible for their online course.

- **Student’s Responsibility to a Good/Solid Internet Connection & Computer:**

It is the student’s responsibility to be sure that they have good internet access and are working on a reliable computer (desktop or laptop), . . . that is the student’s responsibility. It cannot be stressed enough that students must make sure that they have access to a reliable internet connection, again this is the student’s responsibility. If your computer, laptop or internet service that you are working on “crashes” or “breaks down”, that is not an excuse for missing homework exercises or missing an exam at the scheduled time. The student must find another avenue (use another computer or laptop, etc. . .) as soon as possible to continue and complete the required material in the course on time.

- **Student’s Time Commitment Responsibility:**

Ask yourself the following question, “Do I have the time & commitment to take an online math course?” If your answer is an honest “Yes” to both, then the experience will be challenging and I will be cheering you on to your success. If your answer has any sense of hesitation or even “No”, (remember, be honest with yourself), then I would encourage you to put some serious thought into your schedule, time and commitment. Almost all students who do not pass an online math course will comment, “I thought I had the time but I just got busy with other stuff”. So again, I encourage you to seriously recognize the time & commitment you, as a student, will need to put into an online math course.

- **Student’s Code of Prerequisite Honesty:**

When you register for an online course, you are stating that you DO meet all the prerequisites for the course. It is not a good idea (and not condoned) when students register for an online math course and have not met the prerequisites prior to the start of the course. Any student registered in the course and who does not meet the prerequisites for the online math course will be disenrolled and not allowed to continue the course until the prerequisites for the online course are met.

- **Student's Responsibility to Stay on Schedule:**

When you have logged on to the course, you will notice that homework exercises must be done, exams must be taken at specific time-windows that will be provided and the final exam must be taken with serious intention. All have a required due date or deadline. Always stay on schedule.

- **Student's Responsibility to Use Other Resources:**

We all have different learning styles; some of us have a few similar forms and some of us have totally different learning styles. Keep in mind, you can always utilize other resources to assist you in learning the math material. For example; watching the videos that are provided may work for many but not for all. Some of us may just be happy with the notes that are provided for each section. Some of us may need to go to the library and physically pick up a math book and look over the pages to assist you in understanding the material better. Thus, I suggest you utilize other materials wisely to your benefit.

I have had students comment, "I have no idea what the video or the notes are saying!" or "I don't understand!" Remember, it is the student's responsibility work their way through this challenge. This may require you to seek other avenues; find a tutor, go to the library and find other math books on the topic, go online and "Google" the topic. And you may ask the instructor. The instructor may assist you with a few comments or suggestions but not ALL questions or comments. If that's the case, then the student should be in a traditional face-to-face math course. Remember, it is the Student's Responsibility to Learn.

- **Student's Responsibility to Contact the Instructor:**

Where's the Instructor?!? Taking an online course is a big responsibility that a student must accept and recognize that the instructor does not have the same online schedule as you. Remember, the instructor may or may not be online when you are. If its during Fall/Spring School business days, most likely the instructor can get back to you the same day or the next day. If you are online at 3:00 a.m., it is highly unlikely the instructor is online. Or if you are online during the weekend, most likely the instructor is not. Such the case will not have an immediate response to a student. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor IMMEDIATELY if a situation has occurred or a concern has developed. Again, let me say, students must accept the responsibility of learning with an online course.

Now, you can also find me at my office on the San Juan College main campus in Rm. #1640 of the West Classroom Complex, Upper Level during my office hours.

- **Student's Responsibility to Contact Tech Support:**

Whenever the student is having problems with their online course (such as logging in/off, screen issues, etc . . .), the best thing to do is contact the Tech Support immediately. For example, if you have a 2 or 3 day window for an assignment due, it is not a good idea to wait until the last minute to work on the assignment. Technology works in funny ways and for some reason or another, if the student begins to have computer or website issues,

the result may be a missed assignment and an effect on their grade. It is safe to be responsible and manage your computer work and know how to get in contact with Tech Support immediately.

- **Student's Responsibility for your Success.**

Let me share with you this information:

Students who cannot physically make it to the San Juan College main campus (i.e. in other cities or states) are considered, Non-Local San Juan College students (NLSJC-S).

Students who can make it physically (in some case also taking classes) on the San Juan College main campus are considered Local San Juan College students, (LSJC-S).

NLSJC-S have a much higher student success (passing) rate than LSJC-S. We do not know why, but that has been the trend for several years now. Talking with several "LSJC-S", the comment that I hear the most is that, ". . . I took the online course because I thought it would be easier . . .". This has been detrimental to the student's outcome and resulting in a failing grade. Again, it cannot be stressed enough . . . students must take the initiative, the responsibility and the time to learn and be successful in an online math course.

In closing, again I congratulate you for enrolling this Math 096-600 Introductory Algebra course. I look forward to working with you and wish you the best of luck!