

Online Education



Figure 1 Teacher behind laptop at desk smiling. Student behind laptop at desk smiling

Contents

- **Information for Students**
- **How Does It Work?**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**
- **Quick Facts**
- **The Online Classroom**
- **How to Apply**

Information for Students

What is Online learning?

Online learning, in the context of higher education, is simply any type of learning that takes place outside the traditional model of on-campus classes. Traditionally, students come to campus for instruction; but through Online learning, the college comes to students through the internet.

What are the benefits of Online learning?

Most of the literature you'll read on Online learning programs seem to stress the benefits for persons who otherwise have busy lifestyles, full-time jobs, and family commitments. These are legitimate factors, since most Online learning classes allow you to schedule your studies with a greater degree of flexibility than you can in traditional classes.

Please take note: Online courses are not any easier than traditional courses, nor will your studies be any less comprehensive. If you're looking for an easy way out, this isn't it. In fact, because you don't

have the face-to-face interaction with professors: Online learning usually requires more motivation and self-direction than in person courses.

Who might take an Online class?

Students who enjoy independent learning, who are disciplined and organized and don't require face-to-face interaction with a faculty member or other students.

How Does It Work?

Westchester Community College utilizes the Blackboard Learning Management System. Students can access the Blackboard system from any computer that is connected to the Internet.

Online courses run on a semester basis, as do most traditional classes. Each has a specific start and end date. Most classes last about 15 weeks and each week brings new lectures and assignments. Assignments might include readings, quizzes, participation in discussion boards, projects or papers. Some courses will have midterms and finals.

In many ways taking one of WCC's online classes is no different than taking a traditional class. Online classes have the same tuition and academic credit as do their counterparts. You still have an instructor, textbooks, classmates, homework assignments and exams. The main difference is that you will not be tied to the structure of a class that meets at a particular place on a regular basis. You'll have the flexibility to complete your workload where and when it is convenient for you.

Email is an important aspect of online learning. After registering for classes for the first time, you will be assigned a WCC email account. To access your email account, go to mywcc.sunywcc.edu.

Blackboard Tutorial: You can familiarize yourself with Blackboard by going to: sunywcc.edu/blackboard

If you already have a MYWCC account do not login first, just proceed to click on the link on the login page entitled – SAOrientation: How to Use Blackboard.

Is Online Learning Right for Me?

Students who might prefer online courses:

- Have excellent time management skills
- Learn best by reading or watching
- Prefer not to drive to campus and are able to commit other time for completing and submitting assignments
- Have convenient and reliable access to the internet at most times
- Are self-motivated
- Have some computer skills and enjoy the internet
- Enjoy taking control of their own learning

Students who might prefer on-campus courses:

- Work better in structured time environment
- Learn best by listening and speaking
- Are able to commit the time for commuting and attending 3-4 hours of class per week and completing assignments
- Have difficulty obtaining regular access to the internet and email
- Are motivated by others
- Are uncomfortable using a computer
- Prefer a more instructor-led structure

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I log into Blackboard?

Go to sunywcc.edu/blackboard and use your MyWCC username and password to log in.

I am first time user, how do I find my user name and password?

Before using any of the WCC online systems, you must first activate your account. This is a one-time process and only takes a few minutes. Go to mywcc.sunywcc.edu – MyWCC Account Activation.

I forgot my password, how do I retrieve it?

Go to mywcc.sunywcc.edu and click on *Forgot My Password*.

I do not see my class in Blackboard, what do I do?

Students are automatically enrolled in Blackboard from the Registrar's computer application system and this process can take up to 24 hours to update. In addition, Blackboard courses are made available one week prior to the first day of class. If you log into Blackboard and do not see your courses listed, *DO NOT PANIC*. You may have logged in too early.

Technical Support

For Blackboard technical support call the SUNY Online Helpdesk at 1-844-673-6786. or visit their website <https://online.suny.edu/help/>. Let them know that you are a Westchester Community College student and need assistance with Blackboard.

Blackboard Helpdesk Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday 7:00AM-12:00AM Midnight EST

Saturday 10:00AM-8:00PM EST

Sunday 10:00AM-9:00PM EST.

Quick Facts

- More than [1/3](#) of college students in the US have enrolled in at least one online course
- [80%](#) of online students live within 100 miles of the institution they attend.
- WCC offers over [100](#) online courses during the Fall and Spring semesters and 80% of those courses are taught by our full-time faculty.

Sources: WCC enrollment reports; College Atlas: <http://www.collegeatlas.org/41-surprising-facts-about-online-students.html>

What Students Say about Online Education

How many hours did you spend on school work each week on your online course?

- 19% 5 or fewer hours per week
- 43% 6-10 hours per week
- 21% 11-15 hours per week
- 10% 16-20 hours per week
- 6% More than 20 hours per week

How would you compare the academic quality of your online learning experiences with your classroom experiences?

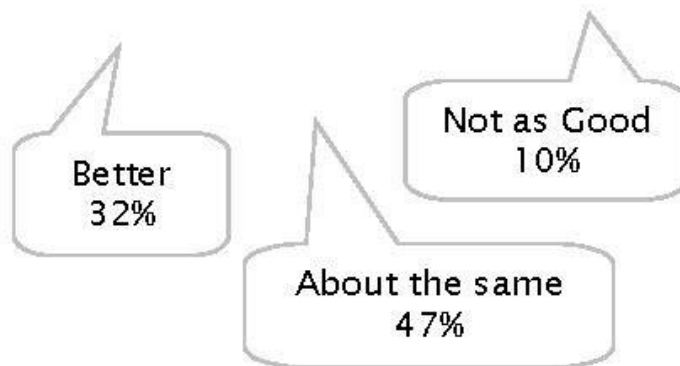


Figure 2 Better 32% Not as Good 10% About the same 47%

Sources: Clinefelter, D. L., & Aslanian, C. B. (2015). Online college students 2015: Comprehensive data on demands and preferences. Louisville, KY: The Learning House, Inc.]

The Online Classroom

Blackboard is an online learning system available to Westchester Community college students. It allows instructors to post class materials and communicate with students online.

Students can access the Blackboard system from any computer that is connected to the internet.

How to Apply

Please see the [STUDENT RESOURCES PAGE](#) for more information on how to search for and register for classes. You can also always contact us with questions: onlineeducation@sunywcc.edu