



## Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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### **Student Steps to Success**

As you get started in your online course, it's important to know the online learning environment is different than the classroom learning environment. Get off to a good start and check out these steps for success.

#### **1. Communicate**

One of the most important factors for success is learning how to communicate and develop relationships with your teacher and fellow students from a distance. Your school also has a point of contact, likely a counselor, who can assist you. Follow these proven strategies to start strong:

First contact—do this right away!

- Look at the initial communication from your iCAP Point of Contact to learn how to log on to your course.
- Log on to your online course and read the orientation materials that should include how to contact your online instructor. Most courses will have a message system within the course for you to use.
- Follow the start-up instructions from your online teacher and your school.

Stay connected—keep in touch regularly!

- Stay in regular contact (at least weekly) with your teacher and fellow online course students throughout the course.
- Use the course message system (or email), participate in any forum discussions and attend online meetings your course may offer or require.
- Respond in a timely manner to communication from others.
- Need more direct help? Use the phone! Participate in your teacher's online office hours. Don't let your frustration build. Get in touch with your teacher or school counselor right away.

## **2. Get Organized**

Online learning can feel like a whole new ball game, and every class is different. Before you start your work, get organized and make sure you understand what is expected of you.

- Complete the orientations. Time spent with course orientations will pay off with a smooth start. You will learn important information about how your course works, what is expected of you, and what you need to do to succeed. Your school may offer an onsite orientation in addition to the online orientations in the course itself. Reduce confusion and frustration and complete the orientations!
- Use a binder or notebook. Create a way to organize your course materials; it can be an electronic folder or a 3-ring binder with paper print-outs. What is important is that you have ready access to your assignment schedule, syllabus, checklists, due and completed assignments, downloaded reading materials, etc.
- Know the assignment schedule and due date policy. Many online courses have flexible schedules, but some providers have “due dates” or reduced points for late work. It is important to know what the expectations are for the course and the teacher. Your online course syllabus and teacher are good sources for that information. There may also be expectations from your home school. Make sure you understand them all and keep the calendar handy!
- Plan ahead. Look ahead in your course outline or syllabus to plan for quizzes and exams.

## **3. Be Self-Motivated and Independent**

- Make a commitment to your online course and set your priorities. While online learning is flexible, it requires a commitment that is similar to your regular classes.
- Engage in the work. Online courses require active participation. So, be prepared for your online teacher and iCAP Mentor to expect that you engage in your coursework regularly.
- Stick to a regular routine. The more you can plan a specific time and place for your course each day, the better you will be able to maintain a steady work pace.
- Stay on pace or work faster. Start your class as close to the start date as possible. Work ahead, to the extent you can, while you are waiting for an assignment to be evaluated.

## **4. Ask for Help**

- It's good to try to figure out problems on your own as best you can, but don't let it go too long.
- There are people available to help you. Contact your teacher or school counselor.