



# Learner Persistence in an Online or Blended Learning Environment

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# Agenda

- Why students take online courses
- Understanding the verbiage
- Barriers for Online and Blended Courses
- 5 Key factors that encourage persistence
- Additional facilitators of persistence

# Online Learning Facts

In the United States . . .

- 1 in 4 students have taken an online course
- 5.8 million people take online courses annually
- 28% of adult learners take courses online
- Only 29.1% of administrators surveyed think their faculty see “the value and legitimacy of online education”
- 63.3% of academic leaders regard online learning as critical to their long-term strategies



# Why Students Take Online/Blended Courses

Top 5 Reasons why students choose online or blended learning.

1. More comfortable learning environment
2. Convenience and flexibility
3. More interaction and greater ability to concentrate
4. Avoid a commute
5. Improve Technical skills

# Persistence Versus Retention

- Persistence – the rate at which students complete programs
- Retention – the rate at which students stay at a program or school

# Stop Out Versus Drop Out

- Stop out- Leaves an educational institution but returns to complete education later (may be at a different school).
- Drop Out – Leave an Education institution but does not return to complete education later.



# Persistence Barriers

1. Auditory learning style
2. Lack of digital literacy
3. Difficulty in accessing resources
4. Isolation and Decreased Engagement
5. Lack of computer accessibility
6. Personal life barriers
7. Poor communication

# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

1. Satisfaction with online learning
2. A sense of belonging to a learning community
3. Support
4. Time management skills
5. Quality of interactions and feedback





# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

## 1. Satisfaction with online learning

In one study . .

- students who had graduated from an online program reported 92.3% satisfaction;
- students still enrolled in a program reported 71.8% satisfaction;
- Students just beginning reported 57.7% satisfaction; and
- those who withdrew from courses reported 20% satisfaction.



# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

## 2. A sense of belonging to a community

- Two studies on resiliency indicated that students who are more adept in forming positive social relationships in the online environment will likely be persistent.
- Students with stronger social connections to peers will derive support and encouragement to persist.
- This sense of a virtual community contributes significantly the persistence.

# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

## 3. Support

- Emotional support can be derived from family, friends, or peers.
- A feeling of camaraderie within the classroom will significantly contribute to persistence.
- Support from classmates and faculty are imperative to student persistence.
- Technical support - the perception of being unsupported is more of an issue than the actual technical difficulty.

# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

## 4. Time management skills

- The flexibility of an online course is very attractive to students attempting to balance work and family demands.
- An asynchronous format allows control over one's schedule and course work with less disruption to work and family schedules.
- Persistent students tend to have better study habits and complete work in a timely manner.

# Top 5 Key Factors to Success in an Online/Blended Course

## 5. Quality of interactions and feedback

- Feedback that is constructive and adds meaningful input into learning is viewed as valuable by the students and will contribute to persistence.
- Ambiguity in content or communication can be difficult for the online student to process, thus increasing the importance of quality interactions with faculty and other students.

# Other Facilitators of Persistence

- Goal commitment
- Scores and performance
- Self-efficacy
- Personal growth
- Self-motivation

# Professional Development



Visit <https://calpro-online.org/selfdirectedcourses.asp> and sign up for our FREE self-directed online course: *Learner Persistence*





# References

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