Taking online, hybrid and student option courses: is this a good fit for you?

You may decide to take online courses because you feel you will no longer need to utilize accommodations. However, while traditional accommodations, such as front row seating and tape recording lectures may no longer be necessary, online learning often produces a need for a different set of accommodations. Before you make the decision to take an online course, please carefully consider what is required in the course as well as your strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some questions you should consider when deciding if you should take an online course:

   * **How well do I manage my time?** The independent nature of online study requires a firm grasp on the ability to manage your time. You will be required to set a regular study schedule, keep track of assignments and due dates, as well as participate in online discussions. This may be more difficult without regular, in-person reminders from an instructor. This requires discipline to ensure that the course is not forgotten in your day-to-day activities.

   * **Does my disability affect my ability to process and comprehend written information?** For individuals with certain disabilities, reading and comprehending/understanding the content, directions and discussion in an online course becomes increasingly difficult. Information in an online course is frequently delivered in written format. The instructor will not be immediately available to deliver the information auditorily or to provide clarification for any misunderstood concepts or assignments. While assistive technology (such as software that will read the text) may benefit you in these situations, you must first familiarize yourself with the technology prior to enrolling in online courses.

   * **Will I need to utilize assistive technology to complete this course?** For some students with disabilities, the use of assistive technology (such as JAWS or screen magnifications software) is necessary. This can pose a challenge if some aspects of the online course management system are not compatible with the assistive technology you are using. We recommend that you view BCC's eLearning 101 course online prior to registering for online courses. Try to use your assistive technology with the sample course to identify any challenges that you will encounter while engaged in online study.

   * **How comfortable am I with computers and technology?** It is important to be aware of your current comfort level with technology and computers. Accessing all course information and instruction in an online format may be more intimidating challenging if you are not comfortable with technology. Knowing your comfort level with computers and technology will allow you to determine whether or not online study is for you.

   * **What do I expect of the online study?** It's important to be aware of your expectations of the online study. What kind of interaction are you expecting from the instructor? Are you expecting a lot of personal interaction or a little? Do you think that you will have a lot of writing to do or not as much? What information are you basing your expectations on? You should find out as much as possible about the format of the online study, the expectations the instructors have of you, and what you need to do to successfully complete the course. The more information you can gather before enrolling and beginning online courses, the better you can determine if online study is for you. You may gather information by directly contacting the professor assigned to the course. You may also call the CITE lab for specific technology related questions.

Adapted from Empire State College: http://www.esc.edu/esconline/across_esc/disabsvc.nsf