

**In-class vs. online course:**

Who can succeed in an online course? Anyone.

Who typically actually does succeed in an online course?

- Students who are self-motivators. Students who can provide their own motivation and desire to learn the course material and complete the exams.
- Students who are good at staying ahead of deadlines.
- Students who do not procrastinate.
- Students who can manage their own personal schedules in such a way as to demand the time needed to study and complete the course material.

Who typically has trouble passing an online course (especially one in science or math)?

- The national average was roughly 50%. That is roughly half of the people who enroll in online courses do not complete them. Why not?
- It's not a matter of how smart these students are.
- It's not a matter of how difficult the courses are (they are equivalent to the on-campus courses).

Roughly fifty percent of the students who enroll in online courses do not complete them. Why not?

1. When people sign up for an online course, they do not tend to carve out the time each week to learn the material. They aren't forceful enough with their own personal schedules to demand the study time. Instead, other personal events and activities take over their schedules and study time ends up 'taking a back seat' and/or procrastinated until right before the deadlines.
2. When people sign up for an online course, they aren't prepared to take notes. For some reason, because they aren't attending lectures, most students don't take notes. Instead they stare at endless pages in the textbook, staring at the words, wondering why the material isn't sticking in their minds.
3. Most people do not have experience forcing themselves into active learning roles. Most people do not have experience taking charge of their own learning and directing and actively ensuring that they are learning the material. Instead, most students expect the book to teach them, instead of using the book to teach themselves. The book is a tool, and an active learner uses the tool. A passive learner watches and stares (and hopes).
4. Most college freshmen and sophomores procrastinate. Most, not all. But most do. Most procrastinate, and without constantly driving yourself to campus, it's easy to procrastinate until there isn't enough time left to do anything worthwhile.

Getting back to the original question: Who succeeds in an online course?

- Anyone can.
- And I've watched students with learning disabilities shine brilliantly in this online course because they can take the exams over and over again and continuously improve their scores. But this option only works if the student is willing to work on the material early and way ahead of the deadlines. In order for the unlimited attempt option to be useful, the student has to leave themselves time to retake the exam.
- I've also watched students with English as a Second Language succeed and get A's in this course. Again, the unlimited option on the exams makes the difference for the students who are willing to put in the time and effort.
- Mature (and that doesn't mean old) students tend to do very well in the online courses. These students tend to be focused and they don't want to waste their time. They want to study something, learn it, do well on the exams and complete the course the first time. These students generally study actively (taking notes, working the exam question in the study guide, making study summary sheets, etc.) and take the exams well ahead of time.
- Students of all levels of abilities and talents. You don't have to think you are smart to take this class and you don't have to be a science geek to take this class (most students are non-science majors).

**So, who succeeds in an online course?** Anyone who wants to. Just study ahead of time. Stay ahead of the deadlines. Remember that you still have to take notes even though you aren't coming to campus. The CD-ROM and textbook are your classroom. Just put in the time like you would if you were taking the class on-campus.

And remember, I'm not trying to trick you on any of the questions or exams. Geology is not a game, it's a really cool subject that you will find useful for the rest of your life!

- You have almost all of the exam questions in the Green Geology Study Guide
- You have unlimited attempts (until the timeout deadlines) at all of the major Module exams
- You have an excellent CD-ROM and textbook, as well as the internet

Anyone can succeed in this course, and every term lots of students do extremely well and some students even finish weeks early.

Geology is a fantastic subject and I hope that you enjoy this course and your time spent studying geology.