



## **Is Online Learning Right For Me?**

**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, managing the content, directions and discussion in an online course becomes increasingly difficult. Information in an online course is frequently delivered via written material on the study's web site. The instructor will not be immediately available to deliver the information auditorily or to provide clarification for any misunderstood concepts or assignments.

**Will I need to utilize assistive technology to complete this course?** For some students with disabilities, the use of assistive technology is necessary and essential. This can pose a challenge if some aspects of the online course management system are not compatible with the assistive technology you are using. Fortunately, JIU offers a four-week trial period for you to start a course and see if the learning environment is right for you. You will also be required to take JIU's Orientation Course prior to the start of any courses you are registered for; use this as an opportunity to identify any challenges that you will encounter while engaged in online study, and communicate with the JIU Disability Services Coordinator to discuss possible accommodations.

**How comfortable am I with computers and technology?** It is important to be aware of your current comfort level with technology and computers. Are you a digital native? Or are you a digital immigrant? Digital natives are those students who have grown up with computers, are quite agile in manipulating the technology and are comfortable using all forms of technology. Digital immigrants didn't grow up using technology.

For many digital immigrants, technology's widespread use came after they had entered adulthood. The technology is more difficult for immigrants to navigate and appears to be more mysterious. Accessing all course information and instruction in an online format may be intimidating and stressful. 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 education?** It's important to be aware of your expectations of the online learning environment. 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 talk with your Admissions Counselor to find out as much as possible about the format and requirements of the online program you are interested in, the expectations the instructors have of you, and what you need to do to successfully complete a course. The more information you learn about the program prior to enrolling and beginning your courses, the better you can determine if online study is right for you.