Adirondack Learning Academy

NCAA

Curriculum and Guidance for Homeschool Students

Homeschooling in the Digital World:

Everything you need to know

Looking into Online Learning?

Gathering information and answering questions

Either you're new to homeschooling or you've been homeschooling for a while, but you've decided you are looking to go digital. There are many benefits to moving your homeschooling endeavors to a digital format. Maybe you prefer the ease of an all in one curriculum, or maybe the thought of the grading and report cards being done for you appeals as a time saving factor. Whatever the reason, there are some important things to consider when choosing your online education provider.

10 Things to Consider

Gathering information and answering questions

The following are 10 reasons online learning is becoming so popular for homeschool students:

1. Reaches students where, when and how they learn. A great supplement to experience based learning programs.

2. Creates opportunity for quality, personalized learning.

3. Removes geographic and budgetary barriers to expand access to the best available courses.

4. Empowers students and parents with the choice to teach and learn in the right environment for them.

5. Allows students to learn using the same tools they must master to succeed in today's modern workforce in which more and more training is delivered online.

6. Levels the playing field so that all children, regardless of where they live, are able to receive the world-class education they deserve.

7. Provides important data so that students and parents can know where students are, and where they need to be, along the learning path, allowing for curriculum mapping and course correction before problems arise.

8. Gives more students access to rigorous college preparatory courses and expands access to college credit options including dual enrollment and Advanced Placement course.

9. Boosts access to more foreign languages and electives.

10. Has the potential to reduce dropout rates. Sometimes, online courses are the only way for young people with difficult life circumstances to complete high school.

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Myths **Common misconceptions about online learning**

Before we get into the different types of online learning, let's look at a few of the myths out there surrounding online learning. Here are seven of the most common misconceptions about online learning.

MYTH: **Online learning is only for motivated and technically advanced students.**

There is no typical profile of students who learn online. For students with chronic health conditions who have difficulty getting to a physical school, it provides access to quality education. For families that move frequently, it moves with them. For some, online learning is a great option after a failed experience in a traditional school setting.

MYTH: **Online learning can't serve students unless they have constant parent supervision and support.**

Online learning can occur from home under parental supervision. High-quality online programs provide personalized instructional support for students. Because high-quality online learning programs allows for more student input and options, they also gain the skills required to take ownership of their learning. In many online programs, students have access to their teachers for real-time conversations over the phone or through instant messaging.

Myth: **Online courses are easier for students than regular courses.**

Most online courses are not shortened or easier than regular courses. They are aligned to state requirements and standards. They require active participation and in some states students are required to take state assessment tests and have attendance policies.

Myth: Online students are isolated and therefore will be socially disadvantaged.

Students often interact both online and off as they complete assignments and socialize with other students and adults at home, and in the community. Most homeschooled students become active members of their community and participate in a variety of programs and organizations in their local areas.
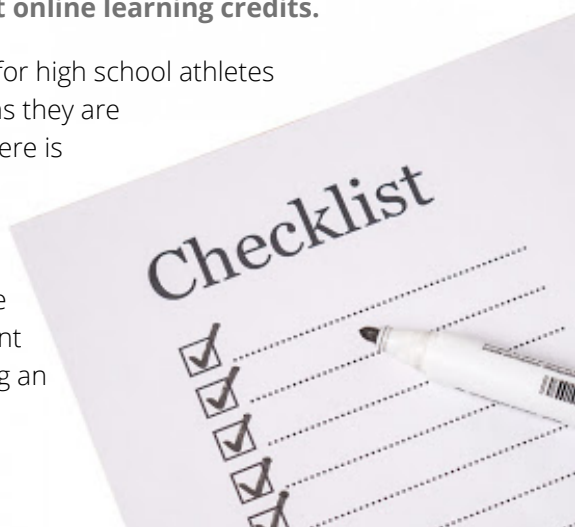
Myth: A student is more likely to cheat online.

Cheating is no more common online than in the classroom. There are many technological ways to deter it and track it. In many cases, cheating is caught immediately with a variety of software programs available for plagiarism.

Myth: Virtual schools are about technology.

Online programs are about curriculum and instruction for students. Technology just makes it easier to provide communication, access to resources, and uses sound, graphics, video, text, interactivity, and other digital components to enhance instruction.

MYTH: The NCAA won't accept online learning credits.

The NCAA allows online courses for high school athletes to be eligible for college as long as they are college preparatory in nature. There is a rigorous process virtual programs must go through to be NCAA approved. If you are taking online classes and you are an athlete, it's extremely important that you check that you are taking an NCAA approved online class.

Digital Curriculum VS. Textbooks

What's the difference

Many people struggle with the decision to move away from traditional textbooks. Digital content is new on the scene compared to traditional textbooks. Here are a few interesting facts about the digital content being delivered in the educational world.

It is the most up to date curriculum. Most textbooks take much longer to publish. Once they are ready to be purchased, some of that information is out of date. Online curriculum is much easier and faster to update, so you are getting the most current information available for your student.

Textbooks can be monotonous. There are pictures sprinkled in, but they are not interactive the way digital content is. The digital curriculum providers incorporate videos, interactive maps or graphs, games and other fun ways to engage students and hold their interest.

Digital curriculum also has the added benefit of integrated assessments. Textbook curriculum frequently require you to purchase supplements and assessments separately.

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Online Curriculum VS. Online School

Compare and contrast

There is a big difference between an online curriculum and an online school. Let's go over a few of the options for you.

Public Online Schools are very similar to public brick and mortar schooling except it is done from home. They are state run online schools. Many of them are free, but they are not available in every state at this time. The other thing to consider is that they may have significant added costs that are only disclosed as you look deeper into the program. There is teacher support and the grading and reporting is done for you. The parent does not have control over the curriculum or any modifications they would like to make for their student.

Private Online Schools are very similar to the online public schools. They are also usually associated with a brick and mortar school. There is teacher support and the grading and reporting is done for you. Private online school parents also do not have control over the curriculum or modifications they would like to make for their student. These schools can be very expensive so it is important to thoroughly research any private online school you are interested in to make sure you are getting your money's worth.

Online Curriculum VS. Online School

Compare and contrast

Online Curriculum Providers are entities that provide curriculum to homeschool parents, not an online school. There are 2 ways homeschool parents can utilize curriculum providers.

A la carte curriculum

Parents research each of the individual businesses providing curriculum for different subject matters and mix and match the online curriculum they would like for each subject matter. This gives parents flexibility in the curriculum, but adds a lot of work. Parents are then responsible for creating lesson plans, grading and keeping records themselves on top of making sure they are meeting all the homeschool requirements for their state. The cost of creating a digital homeschool program this way varies because you pay for each class separately.

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All inclusive curriculum provider

Entities that provide the homeschool family with everything they need to homeschool their student in the digital world. Parents get all their curriculum from the same provider so there is consistency on course content delivery. Parents are not responsible for creating lesson plans, grading and keeping records themselves. The cost of creating a digital homeschool program this way is not free, but it is significantly less expensive than the private online schools. This is your middle of the road option.

Everything You Need to Know
Now what?

Now that you have the basic information on the types of digital homeschooling, it's decision time.

Homeschooling means a parents choice to be involved in their student's education. Finding an online curriculum provider is the best way to stay involved in your student's education and current with today's form of content delivery. Adirondack Learning Academy provides you with the curriculum you need with the added services you are looking for to make homeschooling online an ideal option for your student.

Adirondack Learning Academy uses a top of the line curriculum called Odysseyware, does all the grading for you, creates a degree plan for your high school student, provides report cards, transcripts and student support. There is a learning coach for each student that answers all your homeschooling questions along the way.

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de·ci·sion
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noun

a conclusion or resolution reached after consideration.

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Tips for Success

A few things I've learned along the way

Digital organization

Make sure you have a digital filing system in place when you begin your academic year. Google drive is great because you can access it anywhere at any time. It's helpful to have a folder on your computer for each year and then separate folders in each year for each student. Under each student each subject should have a folder.

Calendar

A digital calendar is a great way to keep on track of your student and any important details that need to be submitted to your school district in a timely manner. Having a daily schedule that you use so that work gets completed in a timely manner has really been helpful for many homeschool families.

Use Google Documents

Complete essays in google docs first, then upload and submit them to your online curriculum provider. Paper essays scan or take pictures of them and upload to a folder on your google drive. Never again have the oh no! I can't find that notebook or paper.

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