Case Study: Profile of an Online Learner : Tracey Nielson

By

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Assuming this is the first online course Tracey has taken, she is still expected to have basic computer literacy skills, such as typing, software navigation, online navigation, etc, all of which are used when registering for an online class. Tracey can also research her class online to see what technical requirements are required, such as internet access, specific software and hardware, etc. Personally, as a student who likes to be prepared ahead of time, I would like the syllabus of my future class to be available at least a week before the class begins, so I know what the class guidelines and expectations are before the first day. Now, from the instructor’s side this shouldn’t be an issue, as syllabi are usually constructed towards the beginning of course development. The students who choose not to use this preview have no excuse of not being prepared when the information was made available to them earlier. In order for an instructor to help first time students especially, the “syllabus preview” needs to contain the course information, the instructor information and contact information, course management navigation basics, exact textbook information and suggestions of where to buy them, any required online programs, and a general course outline. Still, if the instructor wanted to be extra helpful, they could either open the course early, so students could get a sneak preview of the first section of work, or if this isn’t allowed or technically possibly, the instructor could send out a document outlining the first week’s work and assignments, so that students are not hit with an unexpected workload. As an online student, it is always neve wracking when I scan my online course on that first day with multiple assignments, and due dates already on the horizon. This must be even more intimidating for first time online students who are still struggling to get used to the course management software and all the other adjustments that come with online schooling. Simply put, students need to do their research ahead of time, and instructors could post or send first week’s information out early. These are only a few steps that could be taken to help beginning students.

REFERENCES

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