



What is the SUNY Learning Network?

Reaching out to students

Imagine a way that students can study and take classes at any time and from any place. --That's the promise of the SUNY Learning Network (SLN).

The SLN is supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and SUNY System Administration -- Office of the Provost - Advanced Learning & Information Services. Through the hard work of more than 50 SUNY institutions -- there is something revolutionary happening in the SUNY system.

The SLN is an Asynchronous Learning Network (ALN). An ALN is a new approach to teaching and learning that is student centered. It eliminates the constraints of time and location that higher education normally places on students.

ALNs also emphasizes innovative instruction and learning. The activities of a traditional class are the same -- students read course materials, write papers, do research, and communicate with their instructor and fellow students. The students, and the faculty, use technology to accomplish these tasks. The course design facilitates these activities through a computer network. The learning is both interactive with faculty and collaborative with other students. Faculty and students can also leverage the wealth of resources available through the Internet to support this instruction.

This could be The Most Convenient Way to a College Degree for many students. Or students may take just a few courses in the ALN format to complement their on campus studies. Either way, students and faculty alike are starting to catch this wave of the future.

"I always get front row parking. I never have a bad hair day," writes one of our students. "I can pass notes to my classmates and not get in trouble. I can get up in the middle of class, grab a cup of coffee and read a book to my two-year-old grandson. The class is waiting for me when I get back and I haven't missed a thing."

David Jaffee, a faculty member from SUNY College at New Paltz, also sees the benefits of the SLN. He feels that "it is vital that one approach the distance learning course with some explicit pedagogical principles and strategies, and exploit the technology in order to close the gap between the isolated independent student and other human participants

-- namely, instructors and students -- who can enhance the learning process." The principles and practices that David incorporated in his Social and Economic Development course include interactivity, mediation, active learning, and collaborative learning. Regarding his course, David feels, "the level of class participation and discussion far exceeded, in quantity and quality, anything I have ever experienced in the traditional classroom setting."

High expectations for expansion

Using computers either from home or at a local campus, students have had the opportunity to select from a growing portfolio of courses. The SUNY Learning Network started in 1995 with eight courses. Today, we offer more than 4,300. This growth in the course portfolio is representative of the plans to expand the SLN within the SUNY System and there is always great enthusiasm for new campuses to participate in the program.

Nature of the Learning Experience

Would you like to be part of an exciting revolution in higher education?

If you would like to earn a college degree or just take college courses, but find it difficult to adjust your schedule or commute to a campus, the SUNY Learning Network may be the answer for you. You now have an opportunity to take courses and attend classes at your own convenience any time and any place.

In an on-line college course the instructor and students are connected to each other through the Internet. Using the Internet, you can at any time receive instruction, compose and submit assignments, ask questions of the instructor and other students, discuss issues and actively participate in the class all from your home, your office, or the nearest campus computer lab. Depending on the faculty member and the discipline, courses may also incorporate other web based materials, textbooks, application software, simulations, and even learning activities outside of the Internet like experiments, observations, or other projects.

Students should plan on working on their course several hours (typically 3-4 hours of work per credit hour of the course - i.e. 9-12 hours for a 3 credit course) every week of the semester. While course requirements may vary by course, student should also plan on interacting in their course several times during the week.

The SUNY Learning Network is a consortium of SUNY campuses who have joined together to offer graduate and undergraduate online courses. Prospective students are welcome to observe a course by clicking on the "Observe a Course" tab above.

The on-line courses are available to degree seeking students or to students who simply want to take courses for personal development (non-matriculated students).

While students should always check with their advisor, credits earned in the program are typically transferable. You can also earn credits by combining traditional on-campus courses and distance learning studies from the colleges participating in the SUNY

Learning Network.

Each year new on-line courses and degree programs will be developed and offered.

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SLN is a constituent organization of Advanced Learning & Information
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