Letter to New Online Math student, from Ken Taylor

The online math classes taught through Skyline College are very well organized and thought out. I believe that any person who has enough time and desire to succeed in a math class is able to do so, given the course structure I was offered at Skyline College. During the spring of 2008 I am taking Math 200, or Statistics and Probability, online with Ms. Moss. Being a full time employee and full time student I did not have much time to devote to this class, but have been able to utilize the resources provided to me to pass the course with what will be a decent grade.

In Statistics online you should expect to find all the tools necessary to learn the course material and pass the class. The website used and the curriculum itself are very well planned out. There are also many ways to get assistance with your work and contact either the instructor or other students. You should also expect to need a little time familiarizing yourself with the website, so I recommend beginning early.

There are a few strategies I recommend for new online math students. The first is to do your online homework and quizzes early, you may even get extra credit for completing the homework in advance, plus it keeps you from missing the opportunity to do it in case of unforeseen problems. Also, the best way to succeed in this class is to stay on top of your work, both online and written. If you let your assignments back up on you, like I often did, it can be hard to learn the material while scrambling to complete the work at the last second. Also, be careful with your overall schedule, too much school work and other engagements such as work and family can make it difficult to stay on top of an online course. For me, I was not able to stay ahead of the assignments due to the fact that I overextended myself this semester. One thing
that didn’t work for me was how sometimes many assignments were due within a few days.

This was only a problem, though, because I didn’t have enough time to set aside for this course.

If I could change anything about how I handling this course I would go back in time and
beginning the homework early, before the semester actually began. That usually has been an
option for online courses I have taken. Another thing I would do would be to work on the
online homework and corresponding written homework at the same time. The last thing I wish
I did that I would if I took this class again, is attend the study sessions that I often had important
commitments such as work.

Three good habits I exhibited in this course were using the practice questions while
doing homework, using the lecture notes provided by Ms. Moss while doing homework and
quizzes and using all of the different help features that are available while doing online
homework. Three bad habits I wish I didn’t pick up during this course were not putting aside a
specific day and time to do my math assignments, forgetting about discussion board and
homework deadlines because I didn’t look closely at the website enough and just not devoting
enough time to study in general. Unfortunately I had a very difficult time staying organized
during this class. The reason I had this trouble was because I took too many units while
commuting long trips morning and night. There were some things that I did to be somewhat
organized. I kept a calendar, that has all of the course assignment due dates on it, in my
notebook that I always had in my backpack. I also tried to visit the website often, although
sometimes unsuccessfully.
Staying organized, devoting sufficient time and utilizing all of your resources effectively are all very important for this course. Good luck, I wish you much success.