Pros and Cons

**From *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies***

**Advantages:**

1. Providing more flexible access to content and instruction at any time, from any place

(a) increasing the availability of learning experiences for learners who cannot or choose not to attend traditional face-to-face offerings,

(b) assembling and disseminating instructional content more cost-efficiently, or

(c) enabling instructors to handle more students while maintaining learning outcome quality that is equivalent to that of comparable face-to-face instruction.

**From *A qualitative study of physicians’ experiences with online learning in a masters degree program: Benefits, challenges, and proposed solutions***

**Advantages:**

(1) convenience and flexibility;

* enabled students to overcome constraints that would otherwise have prohibited their participation in the Masters program
* having no similar on-site program offered closer to home, full-time employment and its related demands, and lack of sabbatical options and ability to get away from work were common geographical and work-related constraints for students
* family demands, in particular, childcare, or class availability

(2) cost of the program;

* tuition was lower and expenses related to travel and lodging could be avoided

(3) learning format preference (i.e. preferred online to on-site instructional method)

**Disadvantages/Challenges:**

1. Asynchronous communication environment

* challenges for communicating clearly, collaborating, sharing the workload, and establishing relationships
* difficult to understand others’ points of view or had their own points misunderstood
* the lack of face-to-face interactions impeded relationship building, with adverse consequences ultimately for learning, completing tasks, and satisfaction

2. Technical issues

* inadequate computer hardware or software, insufficient computer and typing skills, and slow or unavailable internet access at home, work, or while traveling
* reported difficulties tracking, viewing, and responding to long, complex discussion threads

References:

*A qualitative study of physicians’ experiences with online learning in a masters degree program: Benefits, challenges, and proposed solutions* <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01421590802366129>

*Research and Practice in K-12 Online Learning: A Review of Open Access Literature*

<http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/607/1182>