**Thesis**

* Less effective due to the instability that comes with being on the internet, surrounded by distractions
* Not having prior experience with the internet or certain programs could put some at a disadvantage
* Video lessons make use of less of a student’s working memory capacity
* Neurodivergent students, particularly those with ADHD, have the most difficulty due to trouble focusing as well as more antisocial behavior in being away from peers

**Background**

* 1989, University of Phoenix offered the first online classes
* 1996, Jones International University became the first fully online university
* 2020 caused everyone to move over to online classes in order to slow the spread of covid-19
* Due to this, the total undergrad enrollment dropped by a total of 6.6%, which is approximately 1.2 million students

**Useful Terms**

* Just read from slides

**Effectiveness**

* Someone who is focused and confident will see more success in a class
* The difficulty with online classes is that it is very easy to become distracted, then from there you become less confident in the education.
* Essentially, you envision your reality
* Not solely the fault of the student, as online classes generally lack structure and motive to prevent a student from checking out
* When referring to students who are less comfortable in using the internet, the added difficulty in doing so provides less self-fulfillment in completing tasks

**Difficulty**

* The difficulty in these online courses closely ties with their effectiveness.
* Due to many classes being less effective in their objective, it can additionally make it much more difficult for a student to achieve their desired grade.
* Particularly in higher level classes, students require a higher level of working memory in order to retain information and succeed in a class.
* Again, due to the distractive nature of the internet, this level of necessary working memory is increased, thus raising the difficulty of an already hard course.
* Regarding programs which many stem classes will make use of, most of these will require a basic understanding in order to be sufficient in.
* A basic understanding which is best taught in an in-person environment where a student is able to get in-depth, individual help with as needed.
* As online classes don’t have this, it becomes a matter of the instructor providing a quick overview of the program, then maybe directing students to a YouTube tutorial for any further questions.
* After this, students are expected to be comfortable with the software, and are assigned increasingly difficult assignments over the semester, which will simply add stress to a student who never fully got a grasp of the program since day 1.

**Students with ADHD**

* Now moving on to the final point of focus, being neurodivergent students.
* Specifically referring to those with ADHD, these are the group which are impacted most heavily by online learning.
* As I speak from personal experience, the biggest difficulty in moving to online classes is the change in environment, going from a structured classroom of peers designed with limited distractions, to one’s own home, filled with potential distractions.
* Along with this, many instructors would meet very few times a week if at all, and would very rarely talk about upcoming assignments, which would be found on the class’s calendar.
* As someone with ADHD, it is quite uncommon to seek out a due date if it doesn’t somehow enter your mind. This is a big reason why it is very common for most teachers in a classroom to write upcoming due dates on a board and remind students about them quite often.
* Regarding the social disadvantages to a neurodivergent student, it greatly impacts social development when a student is forced to stay at home and attend classes away from peers.
* More specifically referring to younger students with ADHD, school is the most important aspect in developing social skills, and this carries on long into their life. Having taken that away for close to two years, many neurodivergent students had shown an increase in antisocial behaviors even after returning to the classroom.
* I know I’m not like 10 years old, but even I still feel the effects of this to this day, and I had only recently started to return to my normal social self a few months ago.

**Counter Argument**

* Regarding the pandemic, this may have been the only option we had in order to best prevent the spread
* As a result, online learning did potentially shorten the quarantine and prevent unnecessary deaths.
* However this is not the only use for online education, as we’ve seen before that it did exist over 30 years before the pandemic even started.
* Online learning provides an affordable option for those who may not be able to pay for the traditional college degree, as prices are higher than ever.
* Along with this, there are some who may be able to afford an in person college, but don’t have the time to do it on a normal schedule. Many online classes allow the flexibility for someone to watch pre-recorded lectures and complete assignments and test at their own pace.
* This is undoubtedly a great option for those who would like to pursue this path, as it gives those with little opportunity the chance to pursue their ideal future.

**Rebuttal**

* Now I know there isn’t a whole lot we could have done in the short amount of time we had to take action against covid, but I do believe that there could have been more action taken in order to prepare teachers on how to better hold an online class.
* This 2 year long instance also does not reflect what online learning truly is, as it is in fact not a good choice for most students.
* It’s shown to be very helpful to some, however it is quite an uncommon case.
* And on top of this, it has shown to be a major setback in the mental and social development of all students, however much more so for those with ADHD

**Conclusion**

* Online learning is in fact much more difficult for the average student
* A large factor of this increased difficulty is due to how it is much more ineffective, and a result of the difficulty leaves students much less satisfied in their education.
* Students with ADHD are impacted the greatest, so much so that it can set them back socially, as it restricts a major part of their development as an individual.