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Level: Master 2 / Language and Communication

Module: E-Learning

Course 1: Fundamentals of E-learning

Lesson1: Benefits and Drawbacks of E-learning

- **Course Scope:** An introduction to the general topic of e-learning (this course is an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of online learning)

- **Course Learning Objectives**

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Explore the different benefits of e-learning.
- Discover some of the drawbacks of e-learning.

Guiding Questions to the Course

1. What are the advantages of e-learning?
2. What are its disadvantages?

- **Course Content**

2.1 Benefits of E-learning

There are numerous benefits to online learning that are unique to the medium¹:

- **Any time.** An applicant can access the learning programme at any time that is convenient (24/7).
- **Any place:** Participants do not have to meet in person, nor even be in the same country as the teacher. Students and instructors can be anywhere in the world. Individuals can log on at work, home, the library or in a community learning centre.
- **Asynchronous interaction:** Unlike face-to-face or telephone conversations, electronic mail does not require participants to respond immediately. Learners have time to prepare their responses and to reflect about the content.
- **Group collaboration:** Electronic messaging creates new opportunities for groups to work together, sharing electronic conversations that can be more permanent than voice conversations. Webinars can be powerful learning and problem-solving experiences.
- **New educational approaches:** Many new learning strategies become economically possible through online courses that can provide unique opportunities for users to share innovations in their own work with the immediate support of electronic groups, researchers, scientists, and experienced educators.
- **Enriched learning:** Simulations, games and online collaborations, used increasingly in e-learning environments, engage students in learning activities or skills.
- **Integration of computers:** The online learner has access to computer applications. This

¹ <https://www.worldwidelearn.com/e-learning-essentials/e-learningbenefits.html>



means that materials can easily be incorporated into a lesson and downloaded so all participants can run, explore, and refine the content material and then share their findings and improvements.

2.2 Disadvantages of e-learning

Though e-learning offers ease, flexibility and the ability to remotely access classrooms, it presents certain inconveniences²:

- **Isolation:** learners may feel a sense of isolation. This is because learning online is an ‘by yourself’ act for the most part, which may give the learner the feeling that they are acting completely alone.
- **Limited student feedback:** In traditional classrooms, teachers can give students immediate face-to-face feedback. Personalized feedback has a positive impact on students. The traditional methods of providing student feedback do not always work in an E-learning environment
- **The Lack of face-to-face communication:** The lack of face-to-face communication with the instructor inhibits student feedback, causes social isolation, and could cause students to feel a lack of pressure that it causes students to abandon their studies more easily.
- **Computer illiteracy:** Computer illiterate people have major trouble in accessing E-learning as an educational method. Beginner students may encounter difficulties in managing online learning software and computer files. Students who are not accustomed to newsgroups, emails and web browsers may fail online classes.
- **Internet Connection Problems:** Unreliable computer connections and computer problems can cause students to miss tests and deadlines. Both the instructor and the students must have a good internet infrastructure. Other technical problems can also cause training disruption such as the maintenance, updating hosting, and backup costs. In addition, some of the technologies are not very user friendly; hence the learner faces difficulty in their use.
- **Security:** As with all software, security is an important problem in distance education platforms. Especially e-learning platforms that offer official certificates can be attacked by malicious people. Because of this, the system must be open-source and periodical maintenance, updating, backup, and hosting.
- **Cheating:** Along similar lines, it can be easier for students to cheat on online exams.
- **Plagiarism:** Keeping in mind that your students are using a computer and not being monitored at all times, they could potentially plagiarize essays and other assignments.
- **Health related concerns:** E-learning requires the use of a computer and other such devices; this means that eyestrain, bad posture and other physical problems may affect the learner. When running an online course it's a good practice to send out guidelines about correct sitting posture, desk height, and recommendations for regular breaks

Pros of E-learning	Cons of E-learning
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² <https://www.le.ac.uk/users/rjm1/etutor/e-learning/disadvofe-learning.html>



<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexible schedule 2. Opportunity to watch a lecture again 3. Can be joined from almost everywhere 4. Could be done after work 5. Huge variety of topics 6. You can save paper 7. No commuting required 8. Online courses may be cheaper 9. More effective way of learning 10. Individual learning pace 11. Convenience 12. Perfect for parents 13. Adaption to our technological society 14. Available even in times of pandemics 15. Positive environmental impact 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Requires high levels of self-discipline 2. Less individual support 3. Some people may not have access to a computer 4. Good time management skills necessary 5. People with disabilities may need personal education 6. Dropout rates may be higher 7. Fewer interactions with other students 8. Fewer networking possibilities 9. Technology issues 10. Hard to get financial support for online courses 11. Motivation to learn may suffer over time 12. Overall acceptance of online courses may be lower 13. Some online courses might be a scam 14. Not available for all fields of study

Table 1. The Pros and Cons of e-learning³

Group Discussion: Communication Assignment

Here are some questions to answer as an extension of the course content (To be discussed in groups):

1. How do online classes work?
2. Does online education help students?
3. Think of more examples of pros and cons of online education

Project assignment: Classroom Presentation

“The Pros and Cons of e-learning”

Topic: How can the modern learner overcome the challenges of e-learning?

Requirements – Your presentation should include information about the following:

- a. Adaptability
- b. Technical Issues
- c. Computer Literacy
- d. Time Management

³ <https://www.eskill.com/blog/e-learning-pros-cons/>



Additional Improvement Resources

For an extensive understanding of the benefits and drawbacks of e-learning check these links

- <https://www.joomlaims.com/blog/guest-posts/e-learning-advantages-disadvantages.html>
- <https://www.gyrus.com/top-6-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-e-learning-for-your-training>
- <https://darlodigital.com/what-are-the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-e-learning/>