

eLearning Terminology

Authoring tools – Software designed specifically for the development of eLearning.

Bandwidth - The amount of information that can move through a connection in a given amount of time. It is usually measured in bits per second.

Chat - A discussion that occurs online when all users are logged in at the same time. It is also defined as a form of online communication.

Distance Learning - An educational situation where students and teachers are separated by time and distance. The common link between them is the Internet.

eLearning – The use of electronic devices (computer, tablets, or phones) to deliver educational or training content to learners.

Experience API (Tin Can API) – A relatively new specification for eLearning which makes it possible to collect information about a range of educational experiences a learner has, both online and offline.

Gamification - The application of game elements and gaming techniques to non-game elements (in this case, online learning content) in an effort to make it fun and engaging. It's the use of game mechanics to encourage learners to explore and learn as they move towards an end goal.

Learning Management System, or LMS – System used to distribute eLearning courses and track students' progress.

M-learning (or mobile learning) - The delivery of education and learning experiences through the use of personal electronic devices, primarily (but not limited to), tablets and smartphones. Advantages of m-learning include its portability and just-in-time accessibility.

Multimedia - The interactive use of text, graphics and colors to display a concept. It could be a PowerPoint slide show or a complex interactive animation.

Scenario-based learning - A type of eLearning that aims to put the learner in the context of the real-life situations they will face when they are to apply the knowledge and skills being taught. A scenario presents a realistic challenge, several choices, and feedback which is presented in terms of consequences.

Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) - A collection of standards and specifications used for eLearning. It defines communications between the published content created in the authoring software and the hosting environment, which is most commonly an LMS.

eLearning Options

Synchronous Distributed Course — Web-based technologies are used to extend classroom lectures and other activities to students at remote sites in real time. These courses use web conferencing or other synchronous e-learning media to provide access to a classroom experience for students while otherwise maintaining a normal face-to-face schedule. Synchronous distributed courses are significantly limited in terms of time flexibility, although that can be increased by recording lectures and related activities and making them available for later viewing.

Web-Enhanced Course – Online course activity complements class sessions. Internet-based work augments classroom activity or supplants a relatively small amount (typically, 20 percent or less) of the traditional classroom activity. Web-enhanced courses are not normally considered to be e-learning courses, but they may be a step toward a hybrid or online course.

Blended (also called Hybrid) Classroom Course – Online activity is mixed with classroom meetings, replacing a significant percentage, but not all required face-to-face instructional activities. For example, if a course traditionally meets in a classroom three times per week, a blended version might use online sessions to replace one or two of the traditional weekly classroom sessions or to focus face-to-face sessions on laboratory or project work.

Blended (also called Hybrid) Online Course – Most course activity is done online, but there are some required face-to-face instructional activities, such as lectures, discussions, labs, or other in-person learning activities. These courses are the mirror image of blended classroom courses. Most course activity is conducted online, but a small amount of scheduled in-person classroom or other onsite group activities events are required. While this category of course may commonly be called an “online” course, the distinction is important because the inclusion of face-to-face work sets some geographic limitations on student access to the course.

Online Course – All course activity is done online; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course. Purely online courses totally eliminate geography as a factor. They consist entirely of online elements that facilitate the three critical student interactions: with content, the instructor, and other students.

Flexible Mode Course – Offers multiple delivery modes so that students can choose which delivery mode(s) to use for instructional and other learning purposes. The distinguishing characteristic of the type of course is that it provides students with the option to select from multiple delivery modes, which also increases their control over time and place as well as delivery mode. The “Emporium” model eliminates all class meetings and replaces them with a learning resource center featuring online materials and on-demand personalized assistance. This gives students control over when they study by allowing them to choose when they access course materials, to choose what types of learning materials they use depending on their needs, and to set their own pace in working with the materials. The HyFlex blended learning model provides students with both classroom-based and online options available for all or most learning activities, giving them the flexibility to choose when and where they study based on their own needs, desires, and preferences.