E-learning

E-learning, or **electronic learning**, is a general term that describes education or training programmes which use computers and other electronic devices such as digital media. It includes everything from traditional classrooms that incorporate basic technology to online courses and **distance learning**.

■ E-learning in the classroom

E-learning may consist of:

- a **traditional setting**, which includes an **interactive whiteboard (IWB)**, i.e. a large interactive display in the form of a white board, or a **smart board**, a computer screen on which you can write with special markers. These media provide dynamic content that is more engaging than simply using a textbook. **Edutainment**, or content designed for being both educational and entertaining, can keep students' attention while providing knowledge about a topic;

- a **classroom performance system (CPS)**, which provides a completely digital learning environment. It includes a projector for displaying videos and web content and a digital chalkboard for the instructor. Students can complete quizzes and tests using digital response pads rather than handing in papers.

■ Distance learning

There are also other opportunities for self-study or distance learning:

- **computer-based training (CBT)**, in which students learn by using special training programs both online and offline. Its main advantage is that learners can work at their own pace, but there is no human interaction. However, it could be beneficial for revision at home or for individual work in the school lab;

- **web-based training (WBT)**, also called **online education,** or **web-based education**, in which the material is made available on the Internet through a **virtual learning environment**. Typically, it has text and graphics, animation, audio and video, and needs additional bandwidth and software to work properly. This system can be used both for individual or group training assigned to a **virtual classroom**, i.e. without the need of physical attendance. The content can be easily updated, and the system can easily be controlled by an administrator and a tutor. Moreover, WBT can be linked to other systems. Online education also allows students to submit assignments and complete tests online;

- **blended learning**, which is a mixture of class attendance and web-based training.

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to assess: *valutare*
attendance: *frequenza*
bandwidth: *larghezza di banda*
to hand in: *consegnare*
IWB: *LIM*

■ Virtual learning environments

In order to create a virtual learning environment, or a **learning platform** as it is also called, a **learning management system (LMS)** • is necessary. A learning management system is a software application or web-based application used to plan, implement, and assess a specific learning process. It provides an instructor with a way to create and deliver content, monitor students' participation, and assess learners' performance. An LMS also offers interactive features such as discussion forums for the students.

Google Suite is an example of a widespread system which provides a virtual classroom, a conference room for synchronous lessons and other utilities. Another popular open-source learning environment is Moodle ••.


The US Department of Defense has created a set of specifications to encourage the standardisation of LMSs which are called Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM).

Moodle stands for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It is used by thousands of educational institutions around the world.

MOOC

A massive open online course (MOOC), or open online course, is an online course with an unlimited number of participants and open access via the web. It provides both traditional text materials, such as lectures, videos, articles, and interactive activities such as forums or social media discussions to support the interactions among the participants and with the tutors. Moreover, it provides feedback to quizzes and assignments. Popular platforms which provide free MOOC courses are: Future Learn, Coursera and the Open University in English and Edu Open in Italian.
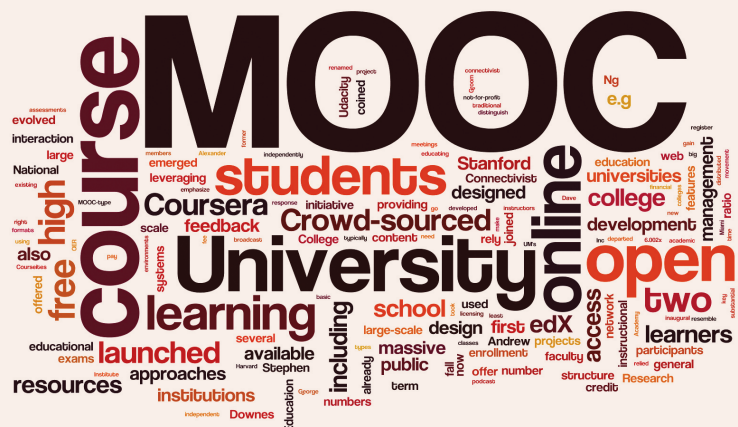
1 📄✏️ **Explain why these statements are false.**

1. CBT is a type of online training that requires a computer.
2. Edutainment means using videos in the classroom.
3. CPS stands for computer performance system.
4. Web-based training requires a virtual classroom.
5. Moodle is a learning management system.

2 📄 **Read the text and complete it with this list of characteristics.**

1. Can be either an asynchronous or synchronous activity
2. Has a global reach
3. Is just-in-time/needs-based
4. Reduces costs
5. Spans multiple devices/mobile

What's the Value of E-Learning?

E-learning offers a lot of value compared to more traditional training options, such as lectures. It:

a. ☐ Traditionally, e-learning has been asynchronous, which means there is no predetermined time for the learning to take place. Everyone can go at their own pace and take their time to learn what they need to know, when they need to know it. However, more synchronous e-learning is now being offered through web conferencing and chat options. The great thing about e-learning is it gives you the option to do one, or both;

b. ☐ E-learning can simply be placed online and easily accessed by people around the world. There is no need for expensive travel or meetings across multiple time zones;

c. ☐ Online courses can work on computers as well as on mobile devices, such as smartphones and tablets. This means e-learning courses can literally be in the hands of the people who need them, at all times;

d. ☐ It's possible to create, publish, and share a course within a few hours. The software is so easy to use that almost anyone can create engaging courses;

e. ☐ All of the above-mentioned factors result in cost savings for organisations that use e-learning courses to replace some of their traditional instructor-led training.

As the world becomes increasingly connected and globalised, more people have consistent access to the Internet, computers, smartphones, and other technological devices. When we provide people with learning opportunities on these devices, they can use them to access timely resources and training, while on the job.

Adapted from: *https://community.articulate.com/series/getting-started/articles/what-is-e-learning*

3 👥 PAIR WORK **Answer the questions.**

1. Have you had any experience of e-learning?
2. According to the types described on the previous page, how can you classify your e-learning experience?
3. Do you like e-learning? How would you describe your experience?
4. What platforms do you know of?