



onTrain

Online Training, the treasure within

A. Online Training

2. Benefits of E-Learning

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Let's start

 E-Learning has totally changed the way knowledge is conveyed to learners. Compared to the traditional method of teaching with chalk and blackboard, E-learning makes learning simpler, easier and more effective. There are many advantages that e-learning offers compared to traditional face-to-face teaching¹.

What am I learning here and why?

In this chapter you'll learn more about the opportunities and boundaries of E-Learning in adult education. You will also learn what distinguishes E-learning from classic face-to-face training and what the advantages of E-learning are compared to classical training.

What content will I find here?

The trainer will know about the pros and cons of E-Learning and will be able to recognise and take advantage of the E-Learning potentialities.

E-Learning characteristics - pros and cons

Why is E learning a thing? What are the advantages in the eyes of the course providers? With E learning, pros and cons are virtually the same as its possibilities and constraints. E learning is particularly great for adult and senior citizen education as it offers many possibilities. At the same time E learning is not magic, some sort of panacea that can be used for literally every aspect of adult education. The illustration down below emphasizes that, so have a look!



¹ Gupta, S. (2017): 9 Benefits Of eLearning For Students. Elearning Basics. online: <https://elearningindustry.com/9-benefits-of-elearning-for-students> access: 17-01-2020

 PROS	 CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-Learning is not bound to place and time. That's great especially for people living in rural areas, so have unflexible schedules or people with disabilities. Sometimes E learning is the only way they can take part in a course. • Every participant is able to learn at their own speed and can repeat the contents as often as he or she wants. • E-Learning can be varied and stimulating to the sensory organs. • Thanks to interactivity, participants can interact with each other and study, repeat and check how fit they are with the help of exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be able to successfully take part in an E learning course the participant needs to have at least a basic understanding of computers and the Internet. • E learning courses are bound to fail if participants can't motivate themselves to take part. • Social interaction and exchange is limited - sometimes there is not at all. • Creating an E learning course is more expensive and elaborate than creating an in-class course. • Some topics are not fit at all for E learning (e.g. learning to ride a bike) - others only in conjunction with E learning.

Comparison of in-class & E-Learning courses

Now that you have been thoroughly introduced to the topic of E learning you probably know most of the differences between in-class learning and E learning. Please consider those when creating a course right from the beginning. Most aspects have been named in previous chapters.

Consider the following chart as repetition and summary.

In-class courses	E-Learning courses
The participants and teacher meet at a certain time and place.	The participants can study whenever and wherever.
You need to study at a certain time.	Participants ought to organize themselves and plan when they want to learn.

Communication and social interaction are immediate.	Communication/social interaction happens in written form and in an asynchronous manner.
Contents are presented verbally with the help of PowerPoint Presentations, handouts and discussions.	There are quite a few forms of media: audio, video, text, interactive exercises etc. E-Learning can stimulate sensory organs.
A teacher presents the contents.	E-authors write the contents. Tutors aid the participants if need be.



Are there a few more differences that are prevalent? Write your thoughts down below.

In reality, the differences are often not that clear. Most of the E-learning courses are a mixture of both anyway. Then the session will be called “blended-learning”-method.

What is blended learning?

The way in which blended learning is delivered is usually dependant on circumstances, making a universal, all-encompassing definition hard to establish. Wikipedia offers the following definition:

“ *Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or place.*”

However when it comes to E-Learning, the “place-based classroom methods” can be replaced by webinars, making the learning even more accessible and convenient. Here at LearnUpon, we believe blended learning encourages personalization of the E-Learning experience by combining the best aspects of in-person teaching with technology-based E-Learning methods. It broadens the learner experience by supporting anytime, anywhere learning, and reshapes the role of the instructor. When applied to eLearning, blended learning is again circumstance-dependant, but usually involves:

- A portion of the learning occurs online, with the student being able to manage the pace at which they learn.
- Another portion of the learning is trainer-led, usually conducted through webinars, allowing remote learners to engage more easily.

Essentially, through blended learning, online and instructor-led training is complementary and creates an integrated learning environment.

Benefits for learners

- Blended learning offers the learner convenience and flexibility; they have the ability to control their learning pace and learn remotely.
- Academic research suggests that blended learning gives learners a more comprehensive understanding of the course content.
- Because blended learning allows learners to interact with instructors and fellow learners, social learning is supported².

Example

E-learning makes it possible to share knowledge online, whether in synchronous or asynchronous form. Thus, the flexibility they have themselves in learning is very high. For example, you can easily participate in meetings (synchronous) while you are on your way to a conference or you can easily access learning content on an online learning platform online (asynchronous) or even offline.

Exercises



A virtual learning environment also offers a wide range of possibilities in terms of different tasks, exercises and online activities. In the following two of them are explained in more detail:

Exercise 1: Concept mapping



The basic idea is that learners are given a central concept. To that concept other related concepts that the students already know are graphically mapped. It can be done individually or in a group. It can also be done in an instructor-led setting. It is generally done at the start of a unit of activity in order to tie the new concept to already internalized ideas, but can also be done as an assessment at the end of a lesson. It is also possible for concept maps to have more than one main concept. The key is the interconnectedness of knowledge.

Examples: [Quick assitional read about Concept Maps](#)

Generally, the goal of a concept map is to relate ideas that already exist in the learners mental structures to new ideas and concepts. Some sample objective statements can include: During and after constructing the concept map, learners will...

1. understand the interconnectedness of concepts x, y, and z,

² Lawless, Caroline (2019): What is blended learning? online: <https://www.learnupon.com/blog/what-is-blended-learning/>
access: 2020-03-13

2. understand concept x,
3. connect related concepts in field x,
4. express new ideas in terms of already internalized concepts,
5. identify misconceptions,

...as determined by successfully attending to 80% of rubric items.

For synchronous applications: Online, a useful resource is a whiteboard space. Additionally useful tools would include a synchronous chatspace within which students can connect concepts.

For asynchronous applications: Learners can create the maps using any of the tools listed below or one provided/suggested by the instructor.

Guiding Questions for this Lesson: How does concept x relate to concepts y and z? What do we already know about concept x with relation to pre-existing cognitive structures?

Now it is your turn! - Try to develop a concept for your next online-session with the topic "How to present content in virtual spaces?". Show you result other trainers and ask them for feedback³.

Useful software for Concept mapping:

- FreeMind (free of charge): http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page (it is usual pre-installed on Window PC's, so no download is necessary).
- Mindmup (free of charge): <https://www.mindmup.com/>

Exercise 2: Wisdom from another



Concept mapping can also be used in a modified form for a larger group in online training.

Synchronous solution: Divide participants into groups of 3 or more. These are now each sent in a separate virtual room. The task is to collect all the previous knowledge on a specific topic that you as the trainer have specified and then to prepare it visually in a mind map. At the end, all groups are brought back into the virtual classroom and present their results. Now the trainer and the participants could summarize all results once again in a large overview sketch.

Asynchronous solution: here too, it is possible to use this technique. Unlike in a synchronous scenario, here it is only possible via Wikis, Forums, Etherpads or GoogleDrive. But here, too, the task is that three people always belong to a group and are supposed to gather their previous knowledge on a specific topic - in the form of a mind map. At the end,

³ University of Illinois Springfield: ION Professional eLearning Programs. Online: <https://www.uis.edu/ion/resources/instructional-activities-index/concept-mapping/> access: 17-01-2020

the results of all groups are sent to the trainer, who then collects all the mind maps and generates a large overview from them.

The aim of the whole thing is that the learners in groups can exchange their knowledge and thus learn from each other.



This chapter provides a first overview of the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. For more detailed information on specific topics in online learning environments, please also see all the following chapters, which are all correlated to this unit.

Summary



In this chapter, the trainer learnt all about opportunities and boundaries of E-Learning in adult education. They now know the characteristics as well as the advantages and disadvantages of E-learning. In the same way, prospective online trainers are now aware of the differences between online courses and classroom courses and can thus weigh up which form of implementation is best suited to their learning content. They know also all important things about “what is a blended-learning-scenario”.

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Further

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