ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 8 - number 274 Wednesday 31 January 2024

All the eLearning words: the terms you need to know

A vocabulary with terms related to the world of eLearning: here's how to use the right words in an online course.

The world of **training** is constantly evolving, between new teaching methods and different learning methodologies. In recent decades, traditional classroom training has been joined by digital training, which allows the user to participate in courses from anywhere and at any time. Furthermore, trainers have increasingly abandoned traditional frontal lessons to make room for learning in which the student becomes the protagonist.

To ensure more inclusive, interactive and engaging training, capable of reducing physical barriers and increasing the accessibility of courses, **eLearning** has played and still plays a fundamental role today. Online courses, in fact, allow students to connect even from their own home, people with disabilities not to have to worry about physical obstacles and various users to feel an integral part of the learning process, thanks to the different participation and involvement strategies, always most important in learning.

eLearning jargon

The arrival of eLearning has introduced, into the training field, a series of **terms** previously unknown or used with other meanings, so much so that a truly **specific jargon** has been created surrounding digital training and online courses.

On the one hand, this is the result of an ever-increasing specificity and diffusion of eLearning, which has required the introduction of specific words to indicate the different learning methods, the tools used in digital or mixed training and the different figures that gravitate around this world.

On the other hand, however, the introduction of this specific jargon could put many possible users of online courses into difficulty, perhaps already unaccustomed to new technologies. In this case, excessively technical jargon could be counterproductive and lead students to abandon the platform or course if it is full of new words that are difficult to understand.

All eLearning terms

To unravel the main words related to the world of digital learning, a guide may be useful, a sort of eLearning vocabulary, which can be useful both to trainers, to the creators of online courses, and to users. The most used terms and acronyms in an online course are mainly the following:

1. **eLearning**: indicates a learning method that is based on the use of new technologies to facilitate access to training.
2. **LMS**: the learning management system is the platform that allows the delivery, monitoring and management of educational courses and online training programs.
3. **Educational Planning**: indicates the development and structuring of multimedia devices and contents useful for training. In the case of eLearning, it must take into account the need for an Internet connection and the development of activities based on an LMS platform. Furthermore, the design must provide for the interactivity of the courses, the involvement of the user, and modularity, which consists in organizing the contents into specific modules, from which the student can choose, depending on the objectives he has set. Furthermore, the lessons must be easily available and the user must be able to access them quickly and easily. The design of a virtual classroom requires commitment and precision, to prevent the entire course from being ineffective due to the methods of access and dissemination of the lessons.
4. **Synchronous learning**: this is a learning modality offered by eLearning. In this case, the user can decide to remotely access the lesson being held live. In this case, the appearance of the class will seem typical of traditional learning, in which however the student can participate while staying at home.
5. **Asynchronous learning**: it is the second learning method offered by eLearning, which provides the user with the

possibility of participating in the online course at a different time than the one in which the lessons took place. This is non-concurrent training, because the student can attend the lesson at any time.

6. **Microlearning**: this is an approach to training based on modules that cover single topics in a limited time. The tools available for this learning method are different: from short videos and infographics, to interactive activities, all interspersed with quick quizzes and tests. This allows students to keep their attention high, reducing cognitive overload and encouraging greater user involvement: all ingredients that can lead to an increase in learning effectiveness.
7. **ROI**: the acronym indicates the return on investment, i.e. the ratio between how much was earned and how much was invested. Simply put, ROI indicates a company's profit. But when it comes to training, this never coincides only with the money actually obtained after a certain investment. In this field, in fact, the return on investment must also measure the effectiveness and quality of training initiatives. This means that the revenue must also be shown in terms of improving the satisfaction and efficiency of the training process. Read also: " **How to calculate ROI in elearning**?".
8. **Blended Learning**: is a blended learning approach, which combines traditional classroom training methods with those of online lessons. In this way, online and offline learning come together to complement each other in a beneficial balance for learning.
9. **Gamification**: this term, which can be translated into "gamification" in Italian, refers to the inclusion of gaming strategies in a training course. The aim is to create greater student involvement, inducing them to learn while having fun and leading them to delve deeper into some concepts without feeling the burden of studying in a boring way. In this way, students can learn through playful elements, which can be applied to challenges and quizzes or which can constitute a completely new modality, such as prize games or point leaderboards. Another possibility is to include simulations within the lessons.
10. **Mobile Learning**: the term indicates the ability to access training content from any mobile device. This is a particular type of learning, which was created precisely to be easily accessible from cell phones and smartphones, so as to allow the student to participate in lessons from any physical location.

The use and understanding of these terms allow users to feel more involved in the learning process and to understand the different facets that eLearning can take on, so that they can then choose the training method that best suits their needs. On the other hand, eLearning vocabulary is of fundamental importance for the creators of the platform and the online course.

Be careful not to overdo it

All the terms we listed in the previous paragraph are easily found on the platforms that offer online courses. It is important that whoever is designing the course takes into consideration, right from the start, the importance of including specific jargon within the platform: each aspect has its own name and it is essential to use the correct terms to express precise and clear and also to give the course a sense of greater **effectiveness**, because it was designed by competent people, able to navigate the large and complex vocabulary of eLearning.

Not all users, however, know precisely the terms and meanings behind the acronyms and words of eLearning. For this reason, it is good that the platform does not appear to be a set of technicalities incomprehensible to most, but on the contrary can provide **clear information** through **specific terms**. To succeed in this aim, two strategies can be applied:

1. **Use specific words**, which specifically refer to the learning methodologies or tools and techniques you use in your online courses, **but always explain them**.
2. **Don't use too many acronyms**, it's better to replace them with the full name, or accompany them with synonyms. If you still want to introduce them, so that the user gets used to the eLearning jargon, always specify in brackets what the meaning, including Italian, of each acronym is.