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Online courses: is synchronous or asynchronous training better?

Training in times of social distancing has only one way out: it must take place online. Before starting an eLearning project, there is a choice to make: is synchronous or asynchronous learning better for your employees?

Never before has eLearning been the only real alternative for employees to continue their training or school learning. For those who already have an LMS and educational material to transfer online, all that is left to do is choose the type of learning to offer their employees. Is it better to offer a course that involves activities on your own or a course led by a trainer? Answering this question means deciding whether to opt for **asynchronous or synchronous learning**, assessing the pros and cons, depending on the educational objectives you want to achieve.

Asynchronous training: pros and cons

Asynchronous training consists in the totally autonomous study of **eLearning** material: videolessons, podcasts, texts, simulations... The student can learn where and when he wants, according to his own time. The **flexibility** left to the student is one of the advantages of asynchronous training. For example, an employee can decide to follow an update on their department's procedures from their tablet in the evening. He or she can choose the pace at which he or she wants to continue the lessons, spending more time on the more difficult ones and quickly overcoming the ones he or she has already internalized. At the end of the form he or she runs the **quizzes** and receives **feedback** almost immediately if the process is automated. The drawback of asynchronous training is that you **can't ask the trainer for clarifications** or confront your colleagues during the study phase.

Synchronous training: better the webinar or the virtual classroom?

When learning is guided by a trainer who meets the learners on a live platform and indicates step by step the cadence of the lessons, the delivery date of the tests and so on, we talk about **synchronous eLearning**. In this case, there are essentially two ways in which teacher and students can meet: a **webinar or a virtual classroom**. The **webinar** is an online seminar open to the participation of many people simultaneously. It is particularly useful when you need to train by a certain date staff located in different offices and countries, or simply a large number of people including suppliers or customers and partners at the same time. The **virtual classroom** is designed for smaller groups of up to 25 people who need to interact not only with the **trainer** but also with each other. The advantage of synchronous training is the **possibility to interact** and ask for clarifications. The disadvantage is that the pace of learning is decided by the trainer.

How to choose between synchronous and asynchronous eLearning?

Because of its characteristics, **asynchronous training** is particularly suitable for transmitting norms and notions that need to be elaborated. It is easier to follow guidelines at your own pace by reviewing the material independently. **Synchronous training**, where students and trainer are in the same place and at the same time is suitable, for example, to inform employees and partners about the launch of a new product. If using the virtual classroom, meetings can be limited to a small number of people as department heads, sales managers, who meet to develop a common strategy. **Autonomy or collaboration** are the key words.

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