# E-LEARNING: A NEW ERA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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**ABSTRACT**

E-learning is a learning system based on the use of electronic resources. It replaces face-to-face education and offers most benefits of increased accessibility, flexibility, and cost needed in higher education learning modules. This has made it a very rapidly sought-after mode of education during the pandemic. E-learning refers to the use of technology in learning and education. There are several aspects to describing the intellectual and technical development of e-learning. This article provides an idea of e-learning, different e-learning methods, initiatives and its role in libraries.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

We live in a world that is constantly changing. The presence of computers has revolutionized the world. Computers have brought in a host of new technologies for education. Learning has changed as well. Starting from the ancient guru-kula system to formal classroom learning in schools to distance education, the process of learning in education has come a long way. E-education is the process of learning where computers are used at each possible step of the process: enrollment, instruction design, content delivery, evaluation, assessment and support.

## 2. What is e-Learning

E-learning refers to the use of electronic media and information and communication technology in education. E-learning is broadly inclusive of all forms of educational technology in learning and teaching. E-learning is inclusive of and is broadly synonymous with multimedia learning, technology-enhanced learning (TEL), computer-based instruction (CBI), computer-based training (CBT), computer-assisted instruction or computer-aided instruction (CAI), internet-based training (IBT), web-based training(WBT), online education, virtual education, virtual learning environments (VLE) (which are also called learning platforms), m-learning, and digital educational collaboration. These alternative names emphasize a particular aspect, component or delivery method.

## 3. E-Learning Delivery Methods
### A. Self-Paced Courses

The obvious advantage of a self-paced course is convenience. People can get the training they need at any time. This can include just-in-time training where a person gets exactly the training he or she needs to perform a task. Self-paced courses are created with e-learning authoring tools. Self-paced courses can be delivered in many ways including:

- Internet
- Intranet or Local Area Networks
- CD-ROM or DVD
  Self-paced courses usually have these features:
- Multimedia: A mix of text, graphics, animation, audio and video to enhance the learning process
- Interactivity: An instructional strategy that helps a learner practice what they have learned
- Bookmarking: This lets the learner stop the course at any time and restart it from the same point
- Tracking: Report the learner's performance within a course to a Learning Management System (LMS)

### a. Discussion Groups

A discussion group is a collection of conversations that occur over time. Other names for discussion groups are message boards, bulletin boards and discussion forums. A discussion group might start with a question from an individual. Sometime later, another individual responds to that question. Others can respond to the question (creating a thread) or they can start their conversation (forming another thread). A threaded discussion might also start with a teacher asking an open-ended question

that leads to a class discussion. Discussion groups can be used to support a group of people taking the same class or can be used to support people performing similar tasks.

**b. Virtual Classroom**

A virtual classroom duplicates the capabilities found in a real classroom. A virtual classroom provides:

- **A place to meet**: Students and teachers use their computers to go to a virtual meeting place instead of a classroom.
- **Take attendance**: A list of students is recorded.
- **Lecture:** Teachers can choose from a variety of synchronous technologies including:
  o Slide presentation
  o Audio and video conferencing
  o Application sharing
  o Shared whiteboard
- **Interaction with students**: Students can indicate when they want to speak by virtually raising their hand. Teachers can let students speak through audio and video conferencing. Teachers and students can use instant messaging and chat.
- **Quizzes**: Teachers can present questions to students.
- **Breakout Sessions**: Students can work together in groups.

**c. Audio and Video Conferencing**

Audio conferencing can be implemented in two ways:

- Computers connected to the Internet. Common names for this kind of implementation are IP Audio Conferencing or Voice-over-IP.
- Phone conferences. People dial the same number to participate in an audio conference.
  Video conferencing can also be implemented in two ways:
- Computers connected to the Internet. The computers need digital cameras.
- Special video conferencing devices that connect over the Internet or phone lines.

**d. Chat**

Chat allows several people to communicate with each other. Each participant uses a computer to type their comments. The other participants can see the name of the person and their comments.

**e. Shared Whiteboard**

A shared whiteboard lets a group of people communicate by typing comments, drawing, highlighting and pointing. A shared whiteboard is a common feature within virtual classroom software packages.

**f. Instant Messaging**

Instant messaging is similar to chat. One person communicates to another through typing. Instant messaging also provides some additional features. With instant messaging, one can keep a list of people that you might like to chat with. The list will indicate if they are online, offline, available for chat or busy. These features make instant messaging an excellent tool for learning from peers.

**g. Learning Management Systems**

A Learning Management System (LMS) manages the process of learning. The marketplace offers hundreds of different LMS products priced from thousands to millions of US dollars. All LMS products manage learners, provide reports, and manage access to self-paced courses and/or instructor-led courses. Some LMS products also manage one or more of these:

- Administration
  o Groups (i.e. organizations within a company, jobs, geographical, working groups)
  o Administrative permissions (who can access data, who can perform certain functions)
- Training management
  o Scheduling and access to virtual classes
  o Creation of blended learning
  o Assignment of training based on certification requirements
  o Authoring
  o Online sales of courses
- Employee management
  o Skill assessment
  o Assignment of training based on skills
  o Performance reviews
  o Recruiting
  o Succession management

**h. Knowledge Management**

Knowledge management systems provide direct support for employees as they do their jobs. Many types of systems are referred to as knowledge management systems including:

- Document Management
- Knowledge capture
- Information portals
- Search tools

In the real world, people have jobs to do and budgets are limited. Our learning program will need the power of technology to overcome the limitations of time, distance and resources. To support these, we need different e-learning delivery method

**Impact on Students and Educators**
**1. Greater Accessibility and Flexibility**

Advantages, such as flexibility, accessibility, and personalized learning, have made online learning possible for some students, especially disabled students, to learn at home. It has also increased education in remote areas among students.

Unlike traditional education, where students have to attend classes, students will not be moving to a whole new state or even a different country to study at this point. They can connect their lectures at any time that suits them or their preferred locations.

Moreover, it allows students to work part-time, indulge in their hobbies, or improve their skills.

## 2. Better Pace and Retention

In traditional education, there is increased peer pressure to understand what is taught in a lecture and perform well in examinations.

Fortunately, eLearning allows students to learn at a convenient pace without having to worry about peer pressure. Self-paced learning helps students understand their concepts clearly and, in turn, builds their confidence.

### Engaging Style of Learning

Contrary to popular belief, eLearning in higher education can provide an engaging learning experience for students. In eLearning mode, students find it easier to participate in discussions about a topic, as eLearning more than takes away the fear associated with public speaking.

Moreover, students can readily collaborate with their peers to create something innovative or solve a problem creatively. They can also contact their professors for doubt clarification and receive responses quickly. Thus, eLearning increases the opportunity for students to interact with their peers and professors and consequently improves their communication skills.

## 4. Plenty of Upskilling Opportunities

Nowadays, many jobs require candidates to possess a particular set of skills in addition to academic knowledge. Thanks to the flexibility of eLearning, students can become job-fit while pursuing their graduate or postgraduate studies. In an eLearning scenario, students can pursue other courses besides their degree courses online to hone their existing skills or gain a new skill. Constant upskilling increases students' technical knowledge and enables them to stay ahead of the competition**.**

## 5. CONCLUSION

Among many others, the main reasons why E-learning is highly effective are flexibility in the learning environment, personalized instruction, and instant feedback. Due to its transformative power for students, teachers, and institutions, integrating eLearning strategies into higher education becomes inevitable. The process of introducing new technologies into educational institutions can be a time-consuming and rather complicated one.

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