

## E-learning

The world's largest e-learning conference, Online Educa, took place in Berlin, Germany at the beginning of December. It attracted over 2,000 participants from around the globe. What is the future of e-learning?

1 Have you ever taken part in learning online? Compare and discuss your answer with a partner.

2 Match the term on the left to the definition on the right. Which terms are you familiar with?

(a) F2F	(1) A mixture of classroom and online teaching
(b) Blended learning	(2) Content Management System – a system used to organise content of e.g. a website
(c) CMS	(3) Face to face or classroom teaching
(d) M-learning	(4) Learning with electronic media, such as e-mail, the Internet etc.
(e) E-learning	(5) Mobile learning – learning on the move with mobile phones, laptops etc

3 Quickly scan the transcript of a telephone conference and underline any of the expressions in exercise 2.

**E: OK John. What do you think of their pitch?**

J: Well Ed, they want to sell us 'coaching by text messaging'. I think it'll be popular with the sales team – they travel a lot. All the guys in the field have PDAs or palms and are always using their mobiles. The idea is 'anywhere, anytime' learning – nothing new there. Er, I think it's called 'M-learning'. The training organisation sends a text each morning with a task.

**E: Learning by doing? Angela. Do you want to come in here?**

A: Well, it sounds a bit – er, superficial. I mean, what can you really learn like this? Nothing deep or complex, I'm sure.

**E: Fair point. So, why not go ahead and tell us about the Web training people's visit?**

A: Well, this seems quite exciting. They organise virtual seminars – it could be a great cost saver – we employ fewer trainers!

J: Yeah, but don't people then miss the social side of training. I enjoy our seminars ... and they're good for morale!

A: "But they're so expensive – and people aren't at their desks. Anyway, these guys offer webcasts as well – and you can store

them on the server

J: Yeah, that's good if you miss the webcast.

A: I think they call it online streaming or something. It'll work for a lot of our training courses – you know, finance, IT ... oh, and the marketing course. They want to create the content for us and store it in a CMS. That will give employees access to training 24/7.

J: It just won't work with the language training. I tried two years ago to move it all online but the staff didn't want it. They liked the face to face aspect. Look Angela, we never seem to get anywhere on this – maybe we should take a look at blended learning courses for language learning at least?

**E: OK, let's wind this up. We've got some hard choices. I mean, do we pay someone to write the content for a web platform? And what about quality issues? How do we know if the training is going to be effective? Let's do a cost-benefit analysis for our various options. I think e-learning could be a way forward, but I don't want us to end up losing money. We need to do this properly.**

4 Now read the whole transcript. Which ideas do you agree and disagree with?

5 One word in each line does **not** collocate with the word in the grey box. Delete this 'odd word out'.

(1)	(a) blended	(b) adult	(c) online	(d) mobile	(e) pitch	learning
(2)	(a) web	(b) content	(c) language	(d) management	(e) F2F	training
(3)	training	(a) manager	(b) organisation	(c) programme	(d) course	(e) mobile

6 Discuss the following questions in small groups. Be ready to report your ideas to the class.

- Describe the different kinds of training in your company. Is the training effective? How is it evaluated?
- What improvements would you suggest to the training run in your company? Justify your suggestions.
- Would you wish to introduce / increase e-learning in your company?