E-Learning Modes

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|  | **Formats** | **Features** | **Advantages** | **Challenges** |
| **Overview** | Live online  Asynchronous Instructor-led | *(features common to all types of e-learning)*   * Information/training is delivered through information technologies and electronic media * Instructors & learners are not in the same physical location | *(advantages common to all types of e-learning)*   * Potential for one presenter/instructor to reach many geographically distributed learners * Eliminates time and cost for travel * Convenience of training and learning at your desk | *(challenges common to all types of e-learning)*   * Lacks non-verbal cues and expressions of in-person interactions * Difficult for instructor to gauge learner response/commitment * More challenging to teach “soft skills” |

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| **Live online** (synchronous) | Instructor-led webinar, videoconference, Google Hangout | * Instructor & learners meet at same time in a virtual ‘room’ * Slides, application sharing, whiteboard, polls, breakout rooms * Communication through:   + one or two-way audio   + text chat   + video * Sessions may be recorded for later viewing | *Creators*:   * Most like a f2f classroom – easier transition * Shorter time to develop than other e-modes * Instructor/presenter can respond to questions & comments in real time * Live interactions with learners * Reusable presentation materials     *Learners*:   * Most like a f2f classroom * Ability to ask questions in real time * Peer social interaction in real time * Connections with people virtually when not able to meet in person | *Creators*:   * In-person facilitation skills not the same as online facilitation skills * Prone to technical issues, Internet connection difficulties * Need to prepare learners for online environment * Short learner attention span   *Learners*:   * Prone to technical issues * Learning curve to get comfortable with technology * Short sessions * Distractions; hard to pay attention |

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| **Asynchronous Instructor-led** | MOOC, recorded lectures, discussion forums, blogs, email | * Instructor & learners not online at same time * Instruction = written, audio, video, etc. * Threaded discussions, email, assignments * Scheduled – usually start and end dates * Usually longer (multi-week) | *Creators*:   * Instructor’s time flexible * Good for in-depth topics, In-depth discussions * Variety of activity options * Potentially large number of participants   *Learners*:   * Convenience: flexible time, individual pace of learning * Time-bound: start/end dates and deadlines * Good for in-depth topics * Possibility of interaction with instructor * Peer learner interaction through online channels | *Creators:*   * Front-loaded effort * Lack of live interaction; harder to give feedback * Effort of following learner activities * Lower completion rates   *Learners:*   * No live interaction * Response time to questions & discussions * Variable availability of instructors * Requires more learner self-motivation * Peer interaction requires more effort |

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| **Self-Paced** | Online courses, tutorials, job aids, how-to videos, articles | * No instructor (instructional design team instead) * Learner works at any time, usually alone * No schedule – maybe no due date * Computer graded learning assessment * Cost/effort almost all up front | *Creators*:   * Create/design learning once, use many times * Standardized content and delivery * Scales endlessly   *Learners*:   * Fit learning options to individual needs * Learn at own pace * Learn at any time * Revisit; use as a reference | *Creators*:   * Skill-sets needed: subject matter expert, instructional design, technical skills * Time/effort/cost required up front * Difficulty of updating topics * Need LMS for tracking * Low completion rates   *Learners*:   * No human/social interaction; boring * No deadlines * Requires self-motivation, discipline * Limited effective length |