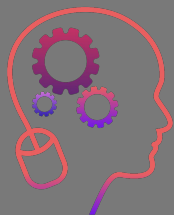


Continuing professional development in digital education for VET



COVET

Module 2: E-Learning for VET Teachers Unit 2.1: Exploring E-Learning Environment



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Entire training program is available at: <https://www.covet-project.eu/>

Module 2: E-Learning for VET Teachers

Unit 2.1: Exploring E-Learning Environment



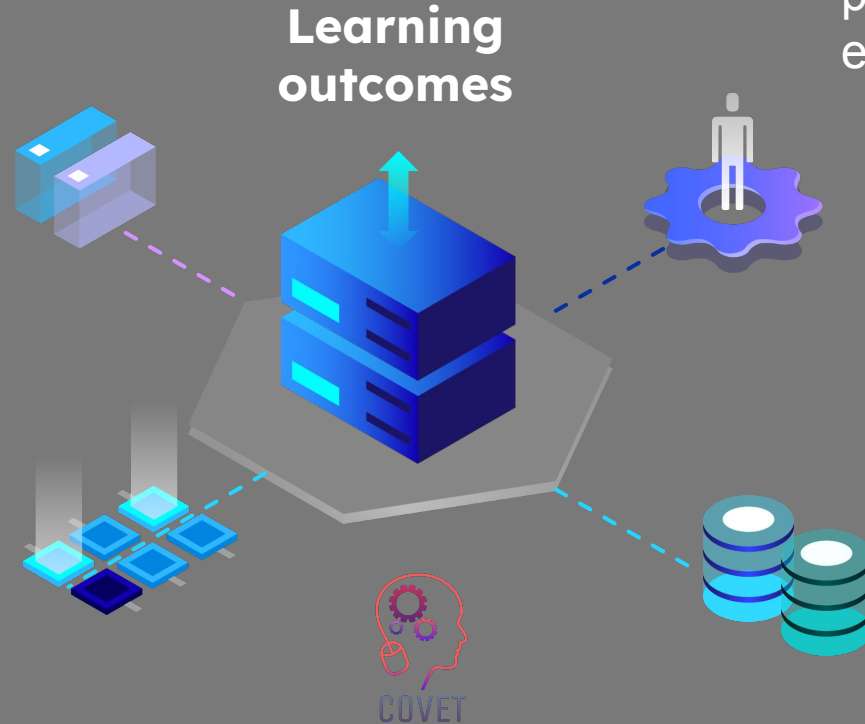
At the end of this Unit you will be able to:

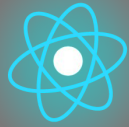
...understand what e-learning is.

...explore different possibilities of e-learning.

...analyse the different elements of e-learning courses.

...adapt the provided contents to your needs.





The second part represents a delving into the issue, collecting suggestions, ideas, and more details to explore.



The third part is a collection of videos, testimonials, written documents, cartoons, etc. to explore the focused issue surfing the Internet.



The first part focuses on the central topic, through an analysis of the Unit key words and an expository short text.

Each Unit is composed of 4 parts



The fourth part is a testing section through which you can test yourself and reflect on what you learnt.

Content of the Unit

- What is e-learning?
- Different elements of e-learning courses.
- Explore the different forms of e-learning to find the most appropriate for your professional environment.



What is e-learning?

E-learning, also known as distance learning, refers to the use of technology and the web for learning purposes, with the aim of improving the use of resources and services, and the remote exchange and collaboration between individuals.

Our culture tends to be information-centred. We commonly think that if there is more information on a given subject, things might go better. Obviously, information is important to learning, but it is only one part of the learning process.

Thus, when we talk about e-learning we mean a series of training paths that are based on knowledge but also involve interaction between the participants in the learning process in a technology-mediated instructional path. It is a mistake to think of e-learning as simply an online platform containing a range of information.



What is e-learning?

In recent times, due to Covid 19, we have all become more familiar with distance learning. We have all been involved, directly or not, in a distance learning experience.

The transition from emergency to innovation is short, and it is often from the most difficult situations that opportunities previously unexplored open up.





What is e-learning?

But what exactly is e-learning, and what are the advantages of using this method for training?

The world of e-learning offers a lot of tools for distance learning: Learning Management Systems (LMS) platforms, webinars, online assessment tools, training management, tools for socialization and information exchange between teachers/students and students/students, mobile and micro e-learning, and even virtual reality for learning purposes.

E-learning is characterised by the absence of time and attendance constraints for learners, typical of teacher-led training courses.

This leads to a saving of about half of the time dedicated to training, thanks to the possibility of using the contents at any time and from any place, when the learner needs it. In addition, as the content is always available online, the user can use it in multiple study sessions, tailoring the time necessary for learning.

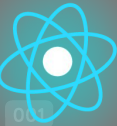


What is e-learning?

Other points in favour of e-learning are:

- Facilitated training monitoring: the LMS collects all the information we need.
- More immediate updating of content: if you want to change a content, all you must do is update the course with a few clicks. In addition, the content is highly customizable.
- Wider coverage: anyone with an Internet connection can train.
- Possibility of personalization of learning by the user: If there is something I do not understand, I can decide to review the lesson, re-do an exercise, go deeper with the material at my disposal.

E-learning also has disadvantages, of course, for example the lack of a physical relationship with the teacher and other students, which may affect the motivation to learn.



Different types of e-learning

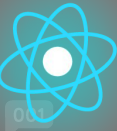
Computer Managed Learning (CML) operates through information databases. These databases contain bits of information which the student needs to learn, together with a few rating criteria which enable the system to be individualized according to the preferences of each student.

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) is another type of e-learning which uses computers together with traditional teaching. It uses a combination of multimedia such as text, graphics, sound, and video in order to enhance learning

Synchronous Online Learning allows groups of students to participate all together in a learning activity, at the same time, from any place in the world.

In Asynchronous Online Learning, groups of students study independently from each other, at different times and locations, without real-time communication taking place.





Different types of e-learning

Adaptive E-Learning. Taking a number of parameters - such as student performance, goals, abilities, skills, and characteristics - into consideration, adaptive e-learning's tools allow education to become more individualised and student-centred than ever before.

Linear E-Learning. Sending training material to students through television and radio programs are classic examples of linear e-learning.

Interactive Online Learning allows senders to become receivers, and vice-versa

Individual Online Learning refers to the number of students participating in achieving the learning goals, rather than the student-centredness of the material.

Collaborative Online Learning. Students must work together and practice teamwork in order to achieve their common learning objectives.

Learn more at this [link](#)



“

We need to bring learning to people
instead of people to learning.”

- Elliot Masie



Interesting sources



Online learning could change academia -- for good. [Tyler DeWitt](#)



List of learning management systems. [Wikipedia](#)



[10 Biggest Disadvantages of E-Learning \(with solutions!\)](#)



[How online learning companies are using the pandemic to take over classroom teaching.](#)



[Best eLearning Trends and Predictions for 2022](#)



[Setting a new bar for online higher education](#)

“

“Online learning is not the next big thing,
it is the now big thing.”

- Donna J. Abernathy



Analyse the different elements of e-learning courses;

Creating a learning online environment doesn't mean transforming contents into digital contents and publishing them in a technological space on the net. On the contrary, it is necessary to design all the macro elements that make up a networked teaching-learning environment, also taking into account traditional teaching environments, integrating them efficiently and effectively. It is then necessary to use specific software tools, suitable for the teaching situations that are to be promoted on the network, on valid authoring systems that support e-learning standards, that have a support community behind them and that are constantly updated.



What are the characteristics of an e-learning course?

Target group and objectives

Identify who is taking the course, in which situations will the learner need the course content? After the course, what should the student be able to do? Can the learner put into practice the activities done during the course? This will help you create content that is relevant to the learner's needs and meaningful for the types of decisions they will face in the future.

Easy and immediate navigation

An eLearning course should have an easy interface to help users comfortably navigate through the course content. Ideas and contents must be arranged in a logical way, but it is important that navigation icons are well placed and visible to users. Navigation should permit students to see their progress, letting them switch between past, present and future modules.



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What are the characteristics of an e-learning course?

Positive and not too formal language

It is also important to use supportive language that helps the participant feel comfortable during the training and satisfied with what the students is learning.

Interactivity

Interactivity is essential in an e-learning course. Interactivity gives users the opportunity to put what they have learnt into practice in potential real work scenarios. This can be done by giving students quizzes or simulations at regular intervals during the course. Once the activity has been completed it is possible to evaluate the users' answers and give feedback on what has been done. If the learner has made a wrong decision, the trainer can step in by indicating the reason for the error and guiding the learner towards the correct action.



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What are the characteristics of an e-learning course?



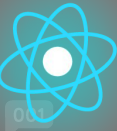
Design

No matter how good the content is, your students will be bored and become disinterested if the design is not good. Good design means the use of correct visual elements such as images, colours and tables. Use a uniform style of graphics, fonts and colours throughout.

Follow progress

A course will be useless without being able to track the progress of your learners. A Learning Management System (LMS) will help you track the progress of your course participants.





Behind the scenes of E-learning design: the professional figures

Course design is a very specific discipline, instructional design, and it is carried out by specific E-learning professionals. These are training designers who work together with subject matter experts and platform developers to create ad-hoc training courses. Often those who create E-learning courses are not trainers or teachers.

In reality, there can be many other professional figures involved in an E-learning process, besides those already mentioned, for example:

- Project managers
 - Content developers
 - Multimedia developers
 - User experience experts
 - Helpdesk operators
- All these professionals work together to create distance learning courses that are as engaging and stimulating as possible for the user. Learn more at this [link](#).



“

“It’s time to step up to the plate and get passionate about your work commit to making eLearning courses that don’t bore people to tears, but instead inspire and motivate them to learn a new skill, change a certain behavior, or improve their performance.”

- Cammy Bean



Interesting sources



Choosing The Right eLearning Methods: Factors And Elements



Basic Elements of an E-Learning Course from E-learning Heros



The Era of Online Learning | Niema Moshiri | TEDxUCSD



4 Things you need to know about instructional design for elearning. Tim Slade

Content Library 360

An ever-expanding source of 9+ million gorgeous course assets



“

“eLearning doesn't just "happen"! It requires careful planning and implementation.”

- Anonymous



Explore the different forms of e-learning to find the most suitable for your professional context.



As already mentioned, e-learning is not just about offering a course or content through a delivery platform.

The key element to start with is the concept of learner-centred learning, i.e. the idea is to transform learners from mere 'users' to creators of their own learning journey.

Learners must be encouraged to manage courses according to their needs and to improve their own learning, respecting different learning times.

*Apart from the popular e-learning platforms,
what are the trends that e-learning is currently heading in towards?*

Let's see some examples

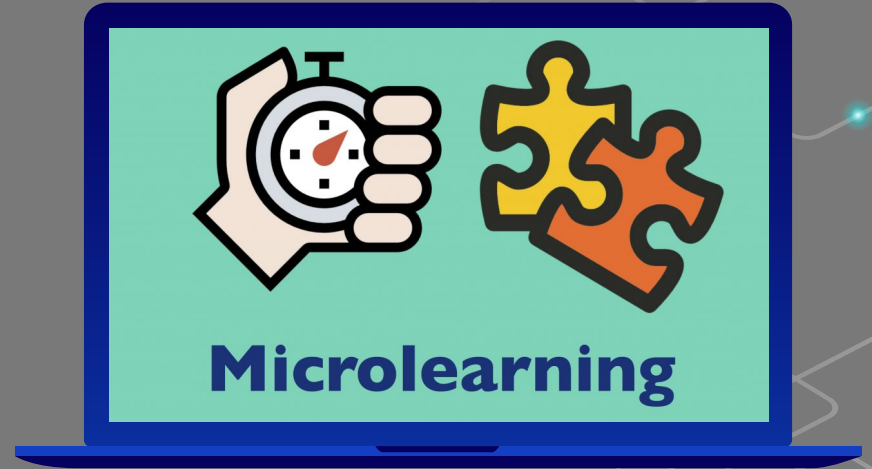
Mobile learning and micro learning

We don't have to explain to you the central role that mobile devices have played in our lives over the last decade. We are talking about Mobile Learning, or M-Learning. What is it all about? Mobile Learning is a way of accessing training content via mobile devices (smartphones or tablets). We must be able to learn everywhere not only within the office or school, but also from home, perhaps from the sofa, while travelling, at 'non-canonical' times, a little at a time, when our days allow us. With the Mobile App, then, users are no longer necessarily tied to Internet access, but can also train offline, without losing the ability to synchronise progress and track training in the LMS, once the connection has been re-established.



Thanks to mobiles, training can take place in any context, and this is linked to another idea that has recently emerged in the field of e-learning: micro-learning.

Micro-learning is a learner-centred teaching strategy, where content is reduced and summarised in 'pills' to reduce cognitive overload. With micro-learning it is possible to concentrate topics into themed blocks and deliver them in the form of quotations, short films, diagrams, but also short questions directed to learners on their own devices.



Gamification: because by playing we learn

Gamification is the use of game mechanics in non-game activities to attract and engage the audience. One example is 'Pokemon Go': people have 'gamified' their walks by using an app to catch virtual Pokemon.

Gamification has four key elements:

- A challenge or goal that sets out what a person must achieve to win.
- Obstacles or impediments that must be overcome to achieve the goal.
- Rewards that users receive when they overcome obstacles and goals.
- Game rules that define the user's interaction with the game.

This concept of taking the essence of games (fun, play, creativity and challenge) and applying it to educational objectives, rather than just entertainment, makes the objectives themselves more fun. Gamification not only improves engagement, but also promotes learning retention.



Gamification tools for eLearning

Here are some simple ways to implement gamification in your lessons.

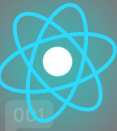
Badges. To be considered as "best", learners will have to earn as many badges as possible while completing different activities.

Scores and Leaderboards. You can add more value to badges by awarding any number of points that can be given to the user along with the badge. You can use these points to establish a rewards programme or league tables that create healthy competition. Leaderboards show the users with the most points on the platform, facilitating internal contests!

Rewards. To further incentivise your users to collect points and badges, create rewards that can be unlocked after reaching certain goals.

Contests. To stimulate users and engage them effectively in your training programmes, you could also organise competitions within your platform, e.g. by setting goals to be reached within a certain period of time.





Top Gamification Learning Management Systems

Gamification can help everyone welcome change management in an engaging way. The eLearning Industry did a lot of research and testing to identify the best gamification LMS software to help you out.

Find out more about Gamification Learning Management Systems at this [link](#)



Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR) in E-Learning: the future is now



In recent years, augmented reality is proving to the e-learning sector that it can be an excellent tool for education and training. Augmented reality improves human experience through sounds, images, texts and videos accessible via a device. In this way, it enhances learning and its retention in a wide range of areas.

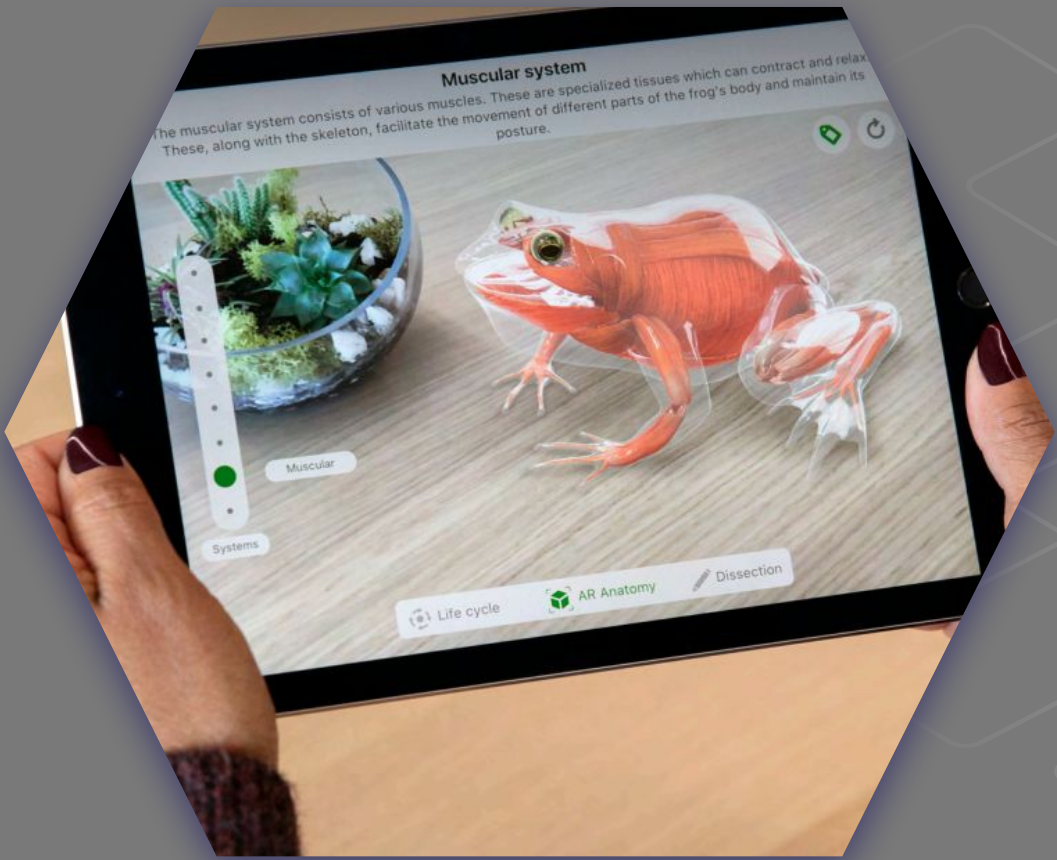
In E-Learning, artificial intelligence offers many possibilities, and the distance learning sector can benefit from these tools. Placing oneself in a 3D environment in which people interact through the use of devices (Virtual Reality) can be of great help for certain types of training.

The strength of VR is simulation. The greater immersiveness and interactivity of VR allows students to enter a 'scene' without any kind of risk. Imagine how useful it could be to get our students 'inside' an emergency room, or in the middle of a battle in the First World War, or on Mars.





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“Students do not learn much just sitting in classes listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers. They must talk about what they are learning, write reflectively about it, relate it to past experiences, and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves.”

- Arthur W. Chickering and Stephen C. Ehrmann



Interesting sources



Re-inventing Education for the Digital Age. David Middelbeck



How to build better learning experiences with personalized learning



The Era of Online Learning | TEDxUCSD



E-learning methodologies and good practices. A guide for designing and delivering e-learning solutions from the FAO elearning Academy



“

“eLearning is changing. And, we will see new models, new technologies and designs emerge. So, let’s drop the “e” – or at least give it a new and wider definition.”

- Elliot Masie



Test yourself

CAI is a type of e-learning.

True - False

E-learning is structured in predefined blocks.

True - False

The weakness of VR is the simulation because it distracts from the content.

True - False

Sending training materials to students through television and radio programs are classic examples of linear e-learning.

True - False



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Test yourself

Student's progress within an e-learning platform should only be visible to the teacher so as not to influence the course progress.

True - **False**

With the Mobile App, then, users are no longer necessarily tied to Internet access.

True - **False**

Gamification is the use of game mechanics in non-game activities to attract and engage the audience

True - **False**

Micro-learning is a learner-centred teaching strategy and provides notions for 10 minutes every hour, allowing the student to focus on targeted content

True - **False**

Test yourself

Take 20 minutes to think and do some research on how you can use games in teaching activities.

Then lists 3 ways to implement gamification in your lessons.

- 1
- 2
- 3

“

“Teaching in the Internet age means we must teach tomorrow’s skills today.”

- Jennifer Fleming





Summary – key take-aways

- Information is important to learning but it is only one part of the learning process.
- E-learning is characterised by the absence of time constraints and attendance for learners, typical of teacher-led training courses.
- No matter how good the content is, your students will be bored and become disinterested if the design is not good
- Learners must be encouraged to manage courses according to their own needs and improve their training, respecting different learning times.

Continuing professional development in digital education for VET

This training material is one of the outcomes of the Erasmus+ project: **“Continuing professional development in digital education for VET”** and it has been created to help teachers across Europe to address the challenging situation in online training delivery in VET.

The CPD program consist of three independent parts:

- Training modules
- Instruction set of sample online lessons
- Guide to the CPD training program

All project outputs have been produced by seven partners from seven European countries working together:

- ProEduca z.s., Czech Republic
- Archivio della Memoria, Italy
- Asociatia Pentru Sprijinirea Initiativelor Educationale, Romania
- Solution Based Training & Consultancy (SBTC), Turkey
- CEBEM FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL SL (Daniel Castelao), Spain
- TUS Midwest, Ireland
- Northern Regional College, UK

All materials are available (downloadable) free of charge from the project web-page: <https://www.covet-project.eu/>





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