DISTANCE LEARNING TERMINOLOGY: A WORKING LIST

Asynchronous learning: Learning in which interaction between instructors and students occurs intermittently with a time delay. Examples are self-paced courses taken via the Internet or CD-ROM, Q&A mentoring, online discussion groups, and email.

Audioconferencing: Voice-only connection of more than two sites using standard telephone lines.

BBS (bulletin board system): An online community run on a host computer that users can dial or log into in order to post messages on public discussion boards, send and receive email, chat with other users, and upload and download files.

Blended Learning: Learning, training or educational activities where distance learning, in its various forms, is combined with more traditional forms of training such as "classroom" or in person training.

CBL (computer-based learning): An umbrella term for the use of computers in both instruction and management of the teaching and learning process.

CD-ROM (compact disc read-only memory or **compact disc read-only media):** A computer storage medium similar to the audio CD that can hold more than 600 megabytes of read-only digital information.

Chat room: A virtual meeting space on the Internet, an intranet, or other network, used for real-time text discussions. Unlike one-to-one instant messenger applications, chat rooms enable conversations among multiple people at once.

CoD (Content on demand): Delivery of an offering, packaged in a media format, anywhere, anytime via a network. Variants include audio on demand and video on demand.

Connect time: The amount of time that a terminal or computer has been logged on to a computer or server for a particular session.

Cookie: Information stored on a user's computer after he or she visits a Website. The cookie tracks data about that user but can be disabled in the browser.

Delivery: Any method of transferring content to learners, including instructor-led training, Web-based training, CD-ROM, books, and more.

Discussion boards: Forums on the Internet or an intranet where users can post messages for others to read.

Distance Learning: Educational situation in which the instructor and students are separated by time, location, or both. Education or training courses are delivered to remote locations via synchronous or asynchronous means of instruction, including

written correspondence, text, graphics, audio- and videotape, CD-ROM, online learning, audio- and videoconferencing, interactive TV, and FAX.

End user: The person for whom a particular technology is designed; the individual who uses the technology for its designated purpose. In distance learning, the end user is usually the student.

Fully interactive video (two-way interactive video): Two sites interacting with audio and video.

ILT (instructor-led training): Usually refers to traditional classroom training, in which an instructor teaches a course to a room of learners. The term is used synonymously with on-site training and classroom training.

Internet-based training: Training delivered primarily by TCP/IP network technologies such as email, newsgroups, proprietary applications, and so forth. Although the term is often used synonymously with Web-based training, Internet-based training is not necessarily delivered over the World Wide Web, and may not use the HTTP and HTML technologies that make Web-based training possible.

Microwave: Electromagnetic waves that travel in a straight line and are used to and from satellites and for short distances up to 30 miles.

Modular: E-learning that's made up of standardized units that can be separated from each other and rearranged or reused.

Multicasting: The transmission of information to more than one recipient. For example, sending an email message to a list of people. Teleconferencing and videoconferencing can also use multicasting.

Multimedia: Encompasses interactive text, images, sound, and color. Multimedia can be anything from a simple PowerPoint slide slow to a complex interactive simulation.

Online: The state in which a computer is connected to another computer or server via a network. A computer communicating with another computer.

Origination site: The location from which a teleconference originates.

Podcast: A method of publishing audio files or digital recordings to the internet for download and/or playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The generally accepted definition has expanded to include video as well (Vidcast or Vodcast.)

Real-time communication: Communication in which information is received at (or nearly at) the instant it's sent. Real-time communication is a characteristic of synchronous learning.

Receive site: A location that can receive transmissions from another site for distance learning.

Self-paced learning: An offering in which the learner determines the pace and timing of content delivery.

Synchronous learning: A real-time, instructor-led online learning event in which all participants are logged on at the same time and communicate directly with each other. In this virtual classroom setting, the instructor maintains control of the class, with the ability to "call on" participants. In most platforms, students and teachers can use a whiteboard to see work in progress and share knowledge. Interaction may also occur via audio- or videoconferencing, Internet telephony, or two-way live broadcasts.

Teleconferencing: Two-way electronic communication between two or more groups in separate locations via audio, video, and/or computer systems.

Videoconferencing: Using video and audio signals to link participants at different and remote locations.

Vodcast: or **Vidcast** is a method of publishing video/digital recordings to the internet for download and/or playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The video method of this delivery is an offshoot of podcast technology.

WBT (Web-based training): Delivery of educational content via a Web browser over the public Internet, a private intranet, or an extranet. Web-based training often provides links to other learning resources such as references, email, bulletin boards, and discussion groups. WBT also may include a facilitator who can provide course guidelines, manage discussion boards, deliver lectures, and so forth. When used with a facilitator, WBT offers some advantages of instructor-led training while also retaining the advantages of computer-based training.

Webcast: (*Web + broadcast*) (noun) A broadcast of video signals that's digitized and streamed on the World Wide Web, and which may also be made available for download. (verb) To digitize and stream a broadcast on the World Wide Web.

Web conference: A meeting of participants from disparate geographic locations that's held in a virtual environment on the World Wide Web, with communication taking place via text, audio, video, or a combination of those methods.

Webinar: (*Web + seminar*) A small synchronous online learning event in which a presenter and audience members communicate via text chat or audio about concepts often illustrated via online slides and/or an electronic whiteboard. Webinars are often archived as well for asynchronous, on-demand access.