

Helpful Language for Online Learning Designers

Here are a few terms used in this learning program. Your team's definitions might be slightly different than ours. As long as you are all collaborating with the same definitions in mind, you're good to go!

Instructional Design – Instructional design refers to the systematic process of translating core principles of adult learning into practice through the creation of materials and activities for a learning event. For GLP, these design principles are the same whether we're designing an in-person meeting or crafting content for online delivery. We use the term *design* throughout this learning program both as a verb (the process of creating a structured learning experience) and as a noun (the product you create).

Learning-Centered – This is how GLP refers to the sweet spot between a design that is *learner-centered* (driven entirely on the learner) and one that is *teacher-centered* (driven entirely by the teacher). By following this learning program, you will create a learning-centered design, in which both learner and teacher have a role in making the experience a success.

Online Learning – The term online learning is often used synonymously with eLearning. It is an umbrella term that includes any type of learning accomplished on a device (computer, tablet or smartphone) and usually over the Internet. This learning program is an example of online learning in which you are interacting with the content provided.

Virtual Learning – Virtual learning happens when facilitators and learners interact through computers or another device. They may interact in real time (synchronously) or with a time delay (asynchronously). A common example of virtual *synchronous* learning is a Zoom exchange. A common example of virtual *asynchronous* learning is the use of a chat room where learners post and other learners and/or facilitators reply at different times.

Blended Learning – A blended learning program combines an *online* portion (that is typically self-paced) with video/audio, chat and/or *in-person* interactions or collaborations. Two common examples of GLP blended course formats include 1) in-person courses with short online portions before or after; and, 2) multi-week virtual courses in which a cohort connects synchronously at the start or end of the course.

Learning Management System (LMS) – LMSs are software platforms for creating, delivering, managing and tracking your course content. There are hundreds of options that fall in two broad categories:

Open Source Software is free. It often requires a good administrator and/or a vendor and must be hosted on your own server. Commonly used open-source software includes Moodle and Joomla.

Proprietary or Cloud-Deployed Software is hosted by a vendor that you pay for, download and access. The cost is based on annual subscriptions (ranging from \$500 to 10k per year) or on the number of learners you have using the system. Examples include Ruzuku, Thinkific, Teachable, etc.

Content Creation Software – Most LMSs allow you to add videos, documents, photos, text, graphics and quizzes to your design. But you may also opt to buy content creation software or an e-learning authoring tool. These give you a wealth of options such as motion graphics, interactive videos, and branching scenarios – as well as assets such as characters, icons, and voice overs. Examples of content creation software include Articulate 360 and Adobe Captivate.