THE FUTURE OF ELEARNING - 10 TRENDS TO BE AWARE OF


Gouldian Finch | January 25, 2019 Education

Dusty blackboards, smudged overhead projectors, and over saturated photocopies - Surely this sounds like many people's education experience.

If that's the case, take solace in knowing that, in many schools, those factors are in the past. Today, eLearning reigns supreme.

For those who don't know what it is, eLearning refers to learning that utilizes electronic means to create a more dynamic and instructive learning environment. This

manifests through the use of interactive whiteboards, online classes, and so on.

Rather than developing as niche concept in the education sector, eLearning is rapidly becoming the dominant means to pass on knowledge to those of all ages. However, since it is still quite new, the concept is still evolving and changing on a constant basis. At ViewSonic, for instance, many tenets of eLearning can be seen in its myViewBoard education platform.

To that end, we've identified 10 trends that we believe indicate the future of eLearning and its role in the classroom. For those teachers, professors, parents, students, and administrators who are looking to make a wise investment in the future of education, this guide is for you.

1. Adaptive Learning

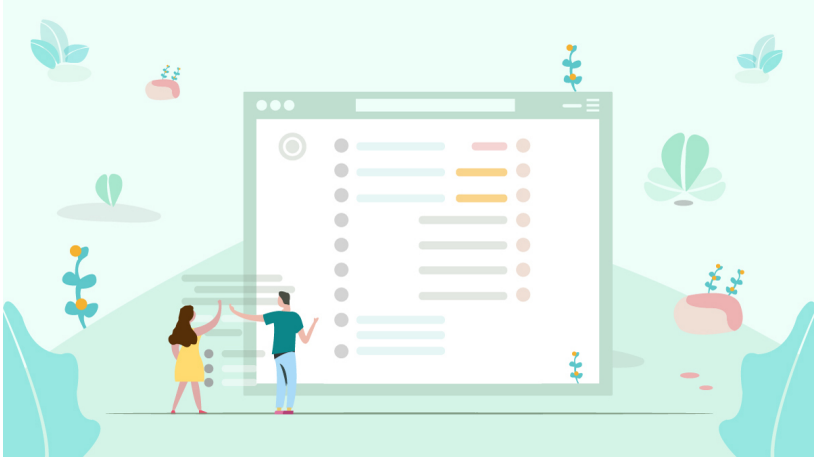
Adaptive learning is a style of education where resources, activities, projects, and assignments are tailored to each student's individual needs. In the context of eLearning, the implementation of adaptive learning is usually performed by way of established algorithms and assessments, as opposed to the potentially arbitrary determinations of teachers themselves.

Thus far, adaptive learning has been largely experimental, with companies and competitors having spent the past couple of years working out the kinks and engaging in small-scale execution. As eLearning continues to develop, the experiments will end and the widespread adoption will begin. Already, the major eLearning platforms are offering adaptive learning services, and there's no reason that the trend won't continue for the foreseeable future.

2. Social Learning

Social learning takes the base components of human interaction and group dynamics and applies them to the modern technological age. Online forums, class-wide chatrooms, file sharing platforms - with social learning in the electronic space, collaboration has never been more productive, efficient, and seamless. Now, teammates can offer insight and support from anywhere, whether it be their classroom, their homes, or their nearby coffeeshops.

As social learning applications continue to develop, more and more collaborative tools will likely enter the fray for market dominance. What's more is that, outside of individual classrooms and group project scenarios, social learning as a whole could grow to become the spine of school-wide curriculums everywhere.



3. Video learning

Although it's a bit of a generalization, they say that there are three types of learners - visual, auditory, and kinesthetic - that excel best in education when faced with videos, vocals, and practical demonstrations, respectively. For many years, despite this dichotomy, auditory learners were the only group properly served by the standard lecture/note-taking classroom format. With the advent of eLearning, that's no longer the case, with video learning becoming more and more of a fixture in classrooms everywhere.

From video-based lectures to instructional videos, video learning has certainly come a long way from the shared-classroom televisions of old. Today, and going forward, there is nary an application that cannot be improved by the use of video learning. As such, there's no reason to expect a backslide anytime soon.

4. Artificial Intelligence

It's safe to say that artificial intelligence, or AI, has surpassed its original reputation of being the evil impetus behind HAL 9000 and the Y2K conspiracy theories. Today, what with Apple's Siri, Microsoft's Cortana, and your everyday text-based chatbots, AI has experienced at-home integration around the world.

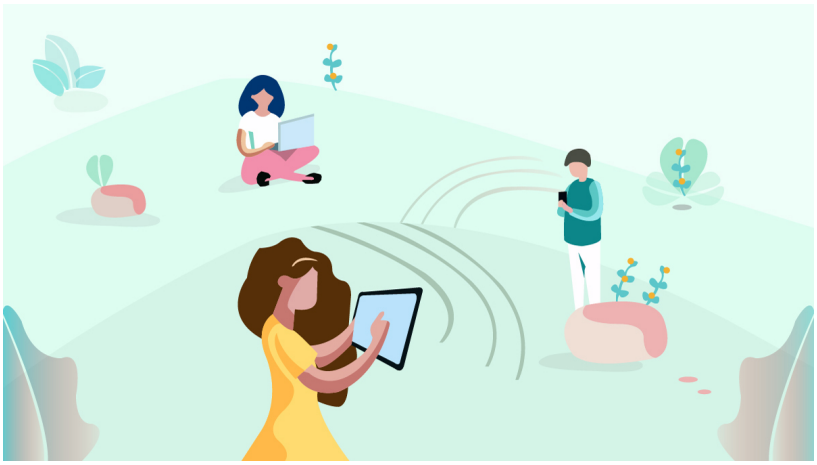
Beyond simple smartphone commands, AI has found a use in the context of eLearning. Backing up the concepts behind adaptive learning, AI is not only able to guide students through courses, but it can also help inform learning predictions and on-the-fly personalization. The potential applications for this currently seem limitless, considering the presence of AI in several industries outside of education. Within, however, consumers and instructors alike can expect more and more sophistication, with more flexibility permitted when it comes to alternative learning styles and needs.

5. Microlearning

It's common sense that many students, regardless of their age, may be daunted at the prospect of large, multi-phase projects. Those students, as well as collaborative classrooms everywhere, have found much greater successful by breaking up projects, lessons, and other learning materials into manageable chunks. These so-called chunks may

manifest as video lectures, readable text, interactive activities, to name just a few applications.

Otherwise known as microlearning, instructors have found that lessons, in addition to online modules, yield greater and faster retention when, for example, a 2-hour long lesson is broken up into 4 30-minute long sessions. Microlearning is indicative of a trend that goes beyond eLearning itself, and into the realm of traditional classroom spaces. As such, it's clear that the common implementation of microlearning is not yet complete.



6. Gamification

It doesn't matter whether you're five years old or fifty, learning is always more interesting, not to mention more digestible, when it's fun. Referred to as gamification, or game-based learning, this facet of eLearning attempts to make education fun!

It isn't all about fun and games, however, as there are proven benefits surrounding the initiation of games following the introduction or review of lessons. First off, it can provide immediate application of, and interaction with, the material. When understanding is up, so too is engagement, retention, grades, and overall classroom happiness.

Given the large swath of positive results, there's no reason that game-based learning solutions will not continue to be implemented in classrooms, both digital and physical, for the foreseeable future. Moreover, when it comes to the somewhat impersonal nature of eLearning in particular, gamification of the industry is not just welcomed, it's ideal.

7. Mobile Learning

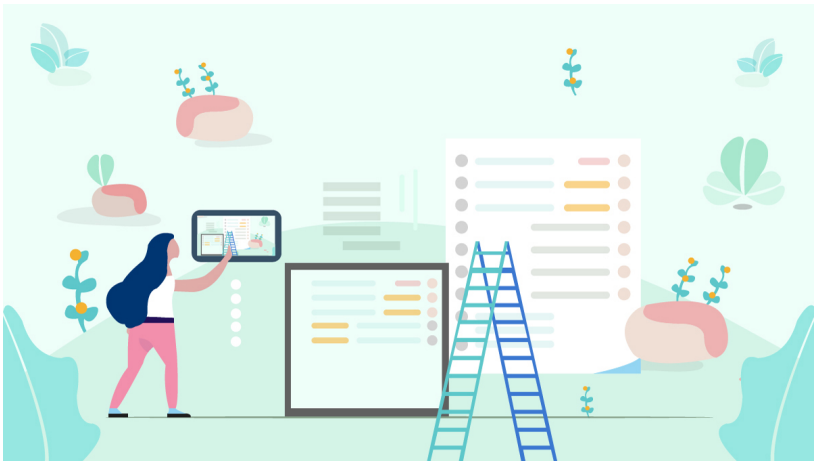
Although not strictly a part of what comprises 'traditional' eLearning, the evolution of mobile learning, or mLearning, is certainly an appropriate trend to consider. Not too long ago, the concept of doing anything on your mobile device beyond simple phone calls and 8-bit games was a pipe dream. Fast forward to today, just about everything is possible, and everyone appreciates the ability to do things while on-the-go.

When it comes to mLearning, however, there is still a slight bit of way to go before it becomes fully viable. The past couple years have been very kind to it, in that respect, with phone-based language-learning applications coming to the fore. While it's a decent step, mLearning architectures still need to find ways to embrace the same learning facets trends that eLearning managed to do before it can become widespread and commonplace. That said, in the future, there's no doubt that mLearning will grow to be huge.

8. Augmented & Virtual Reality

360-degree visuals, graphics overlays, and an explorable interface - these are just a few applications for augmented and virtual reality in the context of eLearning. Already, the pre-existing paradigm of a teacher scribbling on a blackboard has gone out the window and there's nowhere to go, but up.

In practice, augmented and virtual reality allows practitioners of eLearning to fully immerse their students into the subject matter, regardless of whether it involves mathematics, science, history, or literature. What's more is that augmented and virtual reality also serve to take the other factors of eLearning to all-new heights. Video learning, gamification, and mobile learning have never been so immersive when paired with augmented and virtual reality, and the technology is improving all the time, so look forward to seeing this eLearning trend continue for a while yet.



9. Learning Management Systems

In many collaborative environments and workplaces, employers and managers commonly implement what is known as a content management system, or CMS, to create and store digital content. Recently, this concept has expanded into the world of eLearning. With the advent of learning management systems, or LMS, instructors and other eLearning practitioners are able to develop, document, and administer the courses and curriculums that are produced.

Considering the behind-the-scenes nature of LMSs, it has become easier than ever to simultaneously plan ahead and course-correct. In either case, this sort of content curation works is permitted by way of an LMS user's ability to share information and integrate materials at the last minute. As modern forms of learning, and eLearning in particular, become more and more digitized and supported, the availability of an LMS will make lesson planning and management a breeze, thus doing away with the old analog methods for good. As such, LMSs are here to stay.

10. Learning & Development

Learning Management Systems aren't only about lesson planning and implementation. More to the point, they assist teachers and other behind-the-scenes figures to gather actionable data and other analytic factors. Not only does this help all involved to properly evaluate the effectiveness of a lesson and/or overall course, but it also plays a key role in Learning & Development.

Otherwise known by its shortened moniker, L&D, Learning and Development is a management strategy that correlates individual performance with overall institutional goals. While this is commonly applied in a variety of industries and contexts, we are obviously here to discuss its specific role in eLearning. Therein, those working with L&D assist teachers in applying the gathered data in a way that improves that which is lagging in their lessons and courses.

Gamification, augmented reality, microlearning, video learning, social learning, and adaptive learning processes were all borne out of data-driven indications of success. As eLearning continues to grow, the role of L&D, as well as data and analytics, will continue to expand in turn. After all, it would be difficult to advance and improve without the facts to back it up.