

Five Steps to Successfully Convert your Classroom Training to eLearning

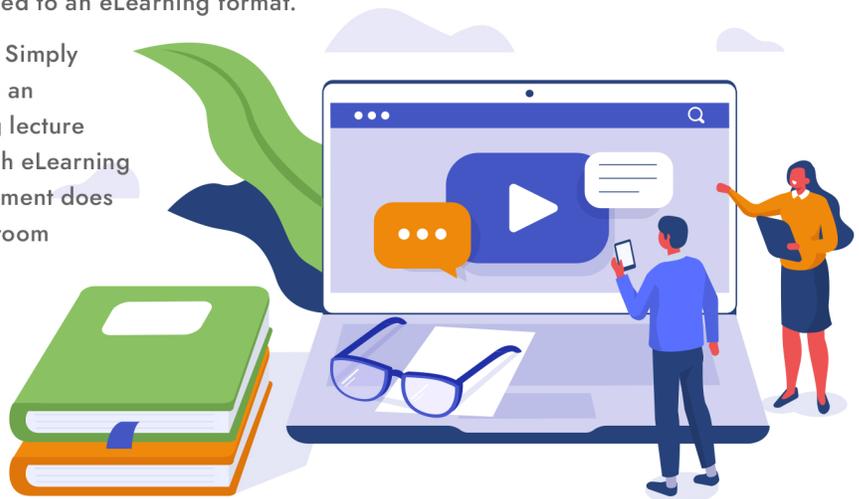
Nearly 70 million strong, Millennials are now the largest generation in the American workforce. This generation is tech savvy and, having grown up with 24/7 internet access, sees the world as being connected through technology. Millennials often prefer to interact with others via e-mails and text messaging as opposed to face-to-face communication. As such, corporate training for the Millennial generation may best be accomplished through internet-based delivery systems.

Over the last several decades, corporate training has made significant shifts toward online learning (eLearning). This trend is showing no signs of abating. A recent Global Market Insights forecast predicts that the eLearning market size will grow at a CAGR of 8% between 2020 and 2026.¹ According to a recent UF Canvas study, the eLearning market is expected to reach \$325 billion by 2025.²

This shift is being driven by the fact that the majority of today’s workforce prefers eLearning and the significant benefits it can provide over traditional classroom instruction. With a rapidly changing business environment and an increasingly global and virtual workforce, companies need training options that are cost-effective, scalable, and can be rapidly deployed to address employee knowledge gaps.

As a first step towards implementing eLearning, many companies convert their in-person training content (i.e., PowerPoint presentations, videos, audios, documents, etc.) into an eLearning format. Simply moving this content directly into a Learning Management System (LMS) using an eLearning content authoring tool is a mistake. There are several reasons for this:

- **Incomplete information** – Most traditional classroom training material only contains a small fraction of the information that is conveyed to the students. This is because a substantial part of classroom teaching comes from the instructor’s anecdotes, examples, and personal experiences, none of which will be captured in the course materials. Just a few bullet points in an instructor guide can lead to a 15-minute conversation in the classroom. An eLearning class needs to document all the important information communicated to students.
- **Outdated information** – Traditional classroom training materials may contain incorrect or outdated information which requires correction before being transferred to an eLearning format.
- **Information needs to be transformed** – Simply transferring classroom training materials to an eLearning format can result in an engaging lecture being converted into a boring, click-through eLearning course. What works in a classroom environment does not always work in an online setting. Classroom training content needs to be transformed into a structure and format that will produce a successful eLearning course. This requires a careful analysis of course objectives and requirements, along with application of instructional design principles.



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Even if classroom training course materials are high quality, complete, and have been created with instructional design principles, they will still need to be transformed to some extent when being converted to an eLearning format. Incomplete and/or poorly designed classroom course materials will require significant work by a skilled eLearning developer to be transformed into a successful eLearning course.

While the journey from classroom instruction to a successful online training program can be challenging, it is certainly worth taking. In this white paper, we will discuss some of the factors that are driving the rapid growth of the eLearning industry, along with a best practice methodology for converting your classroom training to eLearning.

What is eLearning?

Before we dive into eLearning benefits and implementation methodology, let's take a little time to define exactly what we mean when we use the term eLearning. To put it broadly, eLearning uses electronic technologies to present information to learners outside of a traditional classroom setting. Although it does not necessarily need an online element, most eLearning today is delivered via the internet. There are several different eLearning formats:

- **Asynchronous learning** – Many corporations utilize this format in their eLearning programs. In asynchronous eLearning, there is no real-time interaction between the instructor and students, or between students. Instead, a single learner engages the content directly through a technology system. Asynchronous learning maximizes flexibility for the learner by allowing them to control the pace, schedule, timing, and location of learning. Examples of asynchronous learning include self-paced online training modules, social media and video discussions, online forums, webpages, content stored in a repository such as an LMS, etc.
- **Synchronous learning** – This format is becoming popular in academia due to COVID-19. Synchronous eLearning is an instructor-led experience where all participants are logged on to a platform at the same time and can communicate directly with each other in a virtual classroom setting. In this eLearning format, the instructors maintain control of the class and the pace of instruction. Synchronous learning is facilitated by platforms that support audio and video conferencing, live chat, live-streaming lectures, etc.
- **Blended learning** – Blended or Hybrid learning programs combine synchronous, asynchronous, and classroom instruction. Corporations often use blended learning by having learners go through asynchronous eLearning modules prior to an instructor-led session. This allows learners to acquire the basics in a self-paced online training so they can more effectively leverage their time with the instructor either in-person or through an online platform.
- **Microlearning** – Microlearning is a subset of eLearning that is characterized by short learning modules that learners can study at their convenience. This format is becoming very popular with younger employees (i.e., Millennials and Generation Z). Microlearning content can take many forms (e.g., text, videos, interactive multimedia, etc.), but will always require just a short amount of time to be reviewed by the learner. Microlearning is best when delivering relatively simple information (e.g., employee onboarding, compliance training, skills training, etc.), but not ideal for complex concepts or in-depth trainings.

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eLearning curricula can include many different content delivery methods – pre-recorded lecture content, videos, webinars, visuals/graphics, text, quizzes, simulations, podcasts, virtual reality, games and other interactive elements. It may be organized into formal courses, or it can be structured as more learner-directed, informal learning with elements like wikis, forums, or stored resources in an LMS. While the diversity of options can seem overwhelming, the benefits delivered to your organization by a well-designed eLearning curriculum can be significant.

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eLearning Benefits?

eLearning can provide several important advantages over traditional classroom learning. A few of these include:

Reduced costs – After an initial capital expenditure for development, eLearning courses can be reused and updated without much expense. In addition, travel, lodging, and material costs can be eliminated for both employees and instructors. Hiring instructors is also no longer necessary

Faster training times – A Brandon Hall Study found that eLearning typically requires 40-60% less employee time than learning the same material in a classroom setting.³ Good asynchronous eLearning design allows employees to skip what they already know and instead focus on learning what they need to know. Moreover, with short eLearning modules (i.e., microlearning), employees can access training online when they need it during their workday. This can reduce or even eliminate the need for instructor-led training (ILT) in some cases.

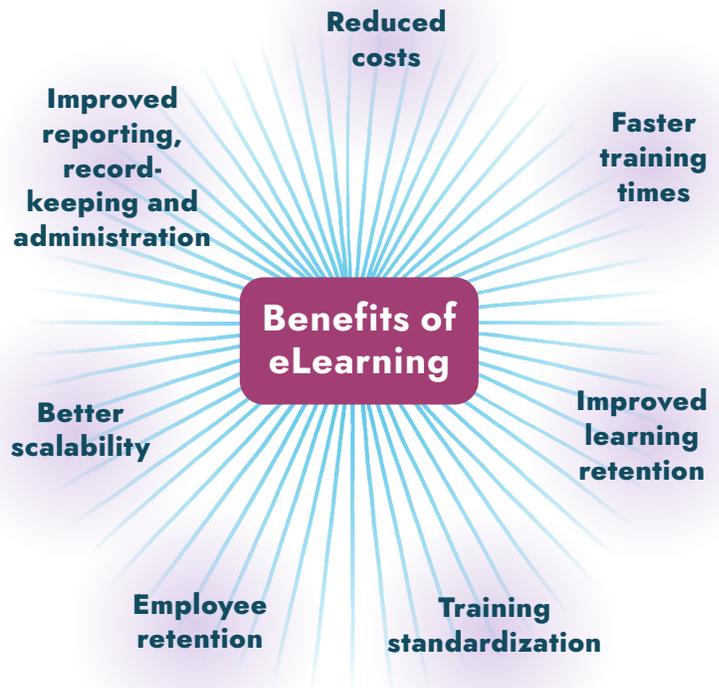
Improved learning retention – The Research Institute of America determined that e-learning boosts learning retention rates by up to 60%.³ The engaging nature of interactive eLearning helps facilitate better retention than the passive experience of a traditional classroom. Other factors which support better eLearning retention include:

- eLearning allows learners to revisit their training as needed.
- Trainees in an asynchronous eLearning course have control over their learning experience and can pause and go back over any part of their training as many times as needed for comprehension.
- Employees can train when their energy levels and focus are maximized for retention due to their ability to access asynchronous eLearning anywhere, anytime.
- eLearning can cater to diverse learning styles by incorporating video, audio, text, interactive graphics, quizzes, and more.

Training standardization – eLearning eliminates the risk of different employee groups receiving different instruction from different instructors by providing a consistent eLearning experience from any location accessible through the cloud. This benefit is especially important for global organizations in regulated industries who need to establish consistent workflows across sites.

Employee retention – Today's employees expect their employers to invest in their development. eLearning offers an easy way to provide employees with ongoing learning and development experiences so that they feel valued. According to LinkedIn's Workplace Learning Report, 94% of employees say they would stay at a company longer if it invested in their development.⁴

Better scalability – You can only get so many people into a room for classroom training. When you've got 2,000 employees to train, that's a problem. In contrast, eLearning can be delivered anytime, anywhere from a mobile device, laptop, tablet or desktop.



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Improved reporting, record-keeping and administration – Online learning enables the ability to capture feedback from learners, as well as track metrics to determine the return on investment (ROI) of your training programs. eLearning delivered via a learning management system allows reporting on a wide range of metrics.

Converting Your Classroom Training to eLearning

Converting your classroom training to eLearning requires a skilled application of instructional design principles to ensure success. Instructional design is the science of designing, developing and delivering educational curricula in a manner which promotes an effective and engaging learning experience.

The instructional design world is vast and there are a wide variety of frameworks that have been developed over the years to create successful learning experiences. One of the oldest and still the most widely used instructional design models is known as ADDIE – Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The five steps of the ADDIE model are essentially a roadmap to help guide your team through the course design, development and delivery process to ensure the course material meets both learner’s and organizational needs.

Step 1: ANALYSIS

The first step in the ADDIE model is critical to set the proper foundation for eLearning success. Without a detailed assessment of the course materials you are converting, along with the organization itself, it will be difficult to create an eLearning course that fulfills the needs of both the company and the learners. Interviews with company stakeholders and SMEs will need to be conducted to assess the following:

Choosing the Right Authoring Tool

Choosing the right authoring tool is essential for effective conversion of classroom training materials to eLearning. Aspects that will need to be considered in this decision include:

- Your learner’s needs.
- Your budget and cost of the tool.
- Scalability and versatility of the tool to make future course additions/upgrades
- Skills of the development team.
- Course delivery method (i.e., mobile device, laptop, tablet, etc.)
- Instructional design strategy)
- Time constraints for course development

Accommodating Different Learning Styles

Different people have different learning styles – visual learners, auditory learners, and kinesthetic learners. An important feature of eLearning is its ability to accommodate all learner preferences.

- eLearning can incorporate a variety of different formats to address different learning styles (e.g., videos, eBooks, audio, simulations, games, interactive graphics, quizzes, etc.)
- Content hosted on an LMS can facilitate collaborative learning via the platform’s discussion forums.
- Social learning opportunities can be facilitated by hosting real-time discussions and query sessions.

Training assessment – Before you begin converting classroom training to eLearning, it is important to analyze the classroom training content to determine if the entire classroom training can be replaced with eLearning or if it requires blended learning. For employees working in manufacturing, for example, training can be primarily eLearning, as manufacturing is typically a rigid process that can be adequately described by an eLearning course. For employees working in areas with complex and variable workflows (e.g., R&D), however, either virtual or in-person training with a subject matter expert (SME) will usually be necessary.

Audience assessment – eLearning course designers will want to know as many relevant details about the intended audience as possible so they can determine how best to present the information to them. How is the instruction relevant to the audience? What are their demographics, roles, background, and history around the topics being learned?

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How many students will take the course? Is there a predominant learning style among the audience?

Content assessment – A thorough content assessment is necessary for eLearning developers to understand what they are working with. Is the classroom material being converted up to date? Does it make sense and flow well? Is it appropriate for an eLearning format or does it need to be transformed? Is the content complete and relevant to the learning objectives? Any deficiencies identified will need to be corrected through collaboration between the eLearning developer and an SME.

Once these initial assessments are complete, you'll have a much better idea of the who, what, when and why of your eLearning curriculum. The final step is to compile these findings into a formal Training Requirements Document that includes the following:

- **Training scope** – defines which roles, parts of process, functional areas, external target audiences (e.g., FDA) are in and out of scope for inclusion in training deliverables.
- **Training requirements** – details the requirements necessary for a smooth training program (e.g., training technology platform, vendor criteria, technical requirements for training delivery or materials creation, compliance requirements, etc.)
- **Assumptions and dependencies** – describes feasibility, process, technical availabilities, or other project-related assumptions on which the viability of the Training Requirement Document might be based.
- **Training Plan** – defines the curriculum objective (what needs to be learned or improved), metrics to be measured, what learners need to know before they can start, delivery method (blended learning, asynchronous learning, etc.) for each course being converted, number of review cycles and timeline, timeline and frequency for each audience group.

Creating eLearning Assessments

Assessments (quizzes) provide a way to test the achievement of the learning objectives stated in the Training Plan and are thus a necessary part of successful eLearning courses. Here are a few tips for creating effective eLearning assessments:

- Be sure assessments are aligned with the learning objectives.
- Include assessments at the completion of each module or topic, and a final quiz at the completion of the entire course.
- Pre-training assessments can be useful to determine whether students possess the necessary prerequisite knowledge levels. If the student fails to achieve a minimum score, they can be transferred to another eLearning course that covers the basic information.
- Include different question types in your assessments to make them more interesting to learners – drag and drop, true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, etc.
- When learners do not answer a key question correctly, take them back through a review slide to reinforce the concept.



Step 2: DESIGN

In the design phase, you work to create a blueprint for how everything in your eLearning course will be laid out in accordance with the Training Plan. Depending on your time, budget, resources and what you have outlined in the Training Plan, there are a couple of possible deliverables at the end of the design phase:

Storyboard: A document that lays out how the text, images, narration and audio, navigation, animation and transitions, etc. will all fit together in your eLearning course. If your storyboard is handed off to the course developer, it will also need to include detailed notes for them.

Prototype: A prototype is more like a draft version of key aspects of the eLearning course that includes sample slides to test and determine whether specific features work as intended. This will allow a company stakeholder to get a feel for how the course will look and function before signing off on the next phase of the process (course development).

Step 3: DEVELOPMENT

The development phase is where the fun begins for course developers, as this is where you finally get to build out your eLearning content via an authoring app. There are typically several subtasks involved in the development phase:

Content Creation – Developers use the chosen authoring tool to build out the content (e.g., interactions, navigation, assessments, etc.) for an engaging eLearning course. In this phase, you choose and/or create appropriate colors, fonts, graphics and multimedia to make your course look professional, aesthetically pleasing, and polished.

Testing – Quality Assurance (QA) testing is an important part of the development process. Items which need to be tested and reviewed include grammar, spelling, navigation, flow, usability, interface design, aesthetics, interactive elements, instructional design standards, and alignment with learning objectives.

For effective QA testing, you will want to go through several revision iterations based on the number of review cycles specified in the Training Plan. It is important to get someone with a fresh set of eyes to review your course. Ideally, a panel of experts that includes SMEs, instructional designers, and eLearning developers should review course material. Be sure to indicate the type of feedback you are looking for in each review cycle.

Another great way to obtain valuable feedback is to select a diverse user group for pilot testing. After they complete the course, have them fill out a survey form to collect their feedback and implement any good suggestions for improvement. Learner satisfaction is, after all, an important part of a successful eLearning course.

Step 4: IMPLEMENTATION

Once the development phase is complete, you are ready to share your course with learners. Depending on how important it is for you to track and report on learner behavior, you'll share your eLearning course in one of two ways – via an LMS or the web.

Web – If you do not need to track learner behavior, you can upload your course directly to the web and provide a URL link to students so they can access the training.

LMS – If you do need to track learner behavior and progress, an LMS offers the ability to track a variety of metrics such as who has started and/or finished the training, assessment grades, forum engagement, which employees are assigned to which training programs, which quiz questions gave the learners the most trouble, length of time for course completion, etc. That said, every LMS offers different functionalities, so it is important the LMS and Training Plan are aligned.

Step 5: EVALUATION

In the evaluation phase, you assess whether the eLearning course met the learning objectives described in the Training Plan. eLearning courses are typically either information-based (designed to convey information) or performance-based (designed to improve performance). Specific measurable indicators for either scenario should have been identified in

Use of Interaction

Classroom training materials do not contain interactive elements, as the instructor actively engages with students by asking questions and facilitating discussion. Asynchronous eLearning courses are self-paced, however, with no ability to interact with a trainer.

As learner engagement is critical for eLearning success, course designers must add interactive elements to engage the learner. If you're walking students through a process, for example, have them actually attempt the procedure as realistically as possible through a simulated environment.

There are three main categories of interactive elements which can be included in an eLearning environment:

- Learner to content – interaction between the learner and the course content (e.g., simulations, interactive graphics, branching scenarios, etc.)
- Learner to instructor – interaction between an online learner and an instructor via electronic dialog, email, computer conferencing, etc.
- Learner to Learner – interaction between learners via group projects or moderated by an instructor.

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the Training Plan, and data from the LMS should be reviewed to determine if the learning objectives were met. The data evaluated from the LMS in the evaluation phase can also be used to determine which parts of the course may need to be improved (e.g., which quiz questions seem to be giving the learners the most trouble?).

Conclusion

The process described in this white paper (ADDIE) to convert classroom training material to an eLearning format works for creating new eLearning courses from scratch as well. The methodology is the same in either case, but there may be more work required for step 1 (Analysis) when creating an eLearning course from scratch.

If the classroom course materials you are converting are low quality, then the process of converting to eLearning will be like starting from scratch, and company stakeholders will need to be interviewed to gather all the information required for a thorough analysis. If the classroom material is high quality, however, some (or even most) of the assessment work for step 1 may have already been done when the classroom course was originally created. In this case, much of the work in the Analysis phase will simply involve reviewing the assessments that have already been completed to confirm the information is still relevant and current before being compiled into the Training Requirements Document. That said, even with high-quality classroom training materials, you'll probably need some up-front analysis to gather information that was not collected in the previous assessments.

While the ADDIE methodology is probably the most popular and widely used instructional design model, it is not the only one. Others that are popular for converting classroom materials to an eLearning format include:

- **Merrill's Principles of Instruction**
- **Gagne's Nine Events of Instructions**
- **Bloom's Taxonomy**

Gagne's Nine Events of Instructions is particularly well-suited for guiding eLearning conversions. In any case, it can be valuable to do some research into the different instructional design models before you start your eLearning conversion project in order to discern which approach is best suited to accomplish your learning objectives.

As this white paper shows, successfully converting a classroom course to eLearning involves much more than just moving a PowerPoint deck and/or a recorded lecture online to increase accessibility. Many companies make the mistake of trying to accomplish eLearning conversions in-house when they do not have the expertise on staff to be successful. Unless your organization has professionals with business analysis, eLearning development, and instructional design skills, best practice is to outsource your eLearning program development to a qualified third-party consultant.

About Kalleid: Kalleid, Inc. is a boutique IT consulting firm that has served the scientific community since 2014. We work across the value chain in R&D, clinical, quality and manufacturing areas to deliver support services for software implementations in highly complex, multi-site organizations. At Kalleid, we understand that people are at the center of any successful business transformation and implementing effective eLearning programs for our clients is one of the key elements of our integrated approach to IT projects. Kalleid professionals have extensive experience producing customized training materials to help maximize the business value of your IT projects and business transformation efforts. If you are interested in exploring how Kalleid customized learning solutions can benefit your organization, please don't hesitate to contact us today. If you are interested in exploring how Kalleid customized learning solutions can benefit your organization, please contact us at **617-366-2656** or **info@kalleid.com**.

¹ "E-Learning Market Size By Technology (Online E-Learning, Learning Management System (LMS), Mobile E-Learning, Rapid E-Learning, Virtual Classroom), By Provider (Service, Content), By Application (Academic [K-12, Higher Education, Vocational Training], Corporate [SMBs, Large Enterprises], Government), Industry Analysis Report, Regional Outlook, Growth Potential, Competitive Market Share & Forecast, 2020 – 2026," Global Market Insights, May 2020. Preeti Wadhvani, Saloni Gankar. Available at: <https://www.gminsights.com/industry-analysis/elearning-market-size>

² "E Learning Climbing To \$325 Billion By 2025 UF Canvas Absorb Schoology Moodle," Forbes, July 31st, 2018. TC McCue. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tjmccue/2018/07/31/e-learning-climbing-to-325-billion-by-2025-uf-canvas-absorb-schoology-moodle/#4f4505713b39>

³ "LMS 101: Rethinking Your Approach to Employee Training," Forbes, Feb. 14th, 2017. Steve Pezold. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paycom/2017/02/14/learning-management-systems-101-rethinking-your-approach-to-employee-training/#16d5005a755b>

⁴ "2018 Workplace Learning Report," Available at: <https://learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/learning/en-us/pdfs/linkedin-learning-workplace-learning-report-2018.pdf>