

eLearning for “Me Learning” – IPEC-Americas to Launch New Training Format

In the Glossary of the Association of Talent Development, the premier association for workplace training professionals, the definition of eLearning is described in part as “web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via Internet”¹.

In the strictest sense of this definition, IPEC-Americas has been offering eLearning for years via its monthly webinar series. Now IPEC-Americas will take the next step and turn eLearning into “Me Learning” for individuals involved within the pharmaceutical excipient industry!

IPEC-Americas is developing its initial eLearning curriculum on one of the subjects it knows best: excipient good manufacturing practices (GMPs). One of IPEC-Americas objectives for the course series is to bring its exceptional excipient GMP knowledge and practical application to various types and levels of employees within excipient manufacturing and distribution companies as well as pharmaceutical companies as applicable to the topic.

Current Training Offerings

For those who need an overview on or introduction to excipient-focused issues, IPEC-Americas offers a variety of webinars on a number of excipient-focused topics as well as live classroom training (“workshops”), open to the public or on-site content-specific training for corporate audiences. A key and invaluable source of learning for face-to-face workshops is the interactions among and between participants and the instructors.

New eLearning Offerings

IPEC-Americas’ new eLearning courses will be targeted to specific groups within an organization, such as Corporate departments (Quality, Regulatory, etc.), site senior management, manufacturing plant supervisors, hourly workers, etc. The GMP information presented in these courses will be relevant to that specific targeted group and include periodic “learning evaluations” to allow learners to answer questions related to the content on a timely basis to determine whether they have learned the concepts and information presented.

eLearning courses, which may be accessed via a computer, tablet, or smart phone, allow participants to view the course materials and evaluate learning (via questions at the end of each section) at times and places that are convenient for them. While the initial courses offered will be approximately 2 hours in length, attendees can spend as much or as little time viewing (and reviewing) the content and questions as is convenient for them in any given circumstance.

¹ <https://www.td.org/Publications/Newsletters/Learning-Circuits/Glossary>

How Does It Work?

IPEC-Americas has partnered with iCohere, a California company that offers a “unified learning (system which) brings the many modes of professional development and collaboration into a single (web-based) delivery platform. *Unified Learning* is about integrating different modes of learning into a single, consistent user experience.”²

Curriculum and content is being developed by the IPEC-Americas’ Training Team and training staff. Learners can register and pay online for courses, view the course, complete learning evaluations, and receive a certificate of completion when they have successfully finished the course and evaluations. The certificate is a suitable record that demonstrates completion of training in the topic offered by a qualified instructor/organization. Once registered and paid, learners have a set period of time (a few weeks to a month, depending on the course) to access and complete it. Learners will also be able to send inquiries via e-mails to the instructor if they have questions which are not answered within the course itself.

Benefits of eLearning

eLearning has exploded in popularity in recent years, and there are some good reasons why. Here are some of its benefits:

- **Convenience:** eLearning courses can be viewed anywhere at any time. As long as learners have a computer, tablet or smart phone and internet connection, they decide when, where and for how long they want to view the course.
- **Self-paced Learning:** because content can be viewed and re-viewed, learners decide how fast they want to progress through any section. Although most IPEC-Americas courses are designed so that learners must pass a section’s learning evaluation before proceeding to the next section, they will be allowed to review the content leading up to the corresponding learning evaluations and re-take the learning evaluations multiple times. Once they’ve passed the learning evaluations in all the sections within the course, they can review, proceed or skip around within the sections as desired until access period expires.
- **Cost:** eLearning’s cost advantages are many. Since fees for most eLearning courses tend to be significantly less expensive than tuition for attending an in-person training course, eLearning can often allow more people within an organization to receive training. In addition, learners may be able to take the course in their own workspace (or virtually anywhere else) in small parcels of otherwise non-productive (or even personal) time, thus avoiding the expense of travel and significant absence from the worksite and/or tasks.

² <https://www.icohere.com/>

Characteristic	eLearning	Webinar
Timing	On demand (at learner's convenience)	Real time (unless recorded and viewed later)
Instructor and course materials	Recorded	Live (unless recorded and viewed later)
Interaction	Via learning evaluations (questions, essays, etc.), usually interspersed throughout and at conclusion	Poll Questions and audience Q&A (if used)
Learner Q&A	Not applicable unless learner may communicate with instructor by e-mail	Verbal (if allowed) or typed (if used)
Duration	Almost any duration possible – usually 1 hour to 40 hours or more. Duration of any single session is up to the learner.	Usually 1 – 2 hours per session
Repetition	Learner may repeat almost anything, a given number of times	May replay, but location of specific content is not easily identified within recording
Access	Usually unlimited for a specific duration of time (e.g., 14 days after purchase)	Real time (for live event), sometimes unlimited availability of recording
Technical Requirements	Web-capable device with up-to-date operating system	Download of webinar software (WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.)

The Future

IPEC-Americas' first eLearning courses will be offered in the summer of 2016. New courses will be added on an ongoing basis. The current plan for eLearning calls for the curriculum of excipient-related courses to be completed by the end of 2017 with new topics and curricula being developed simultaneously.

The Training Team and Staff are continuously reviewing subjects and topics for workshops, webinars, and eLearning with the goal of offering the most relevant and timely training on excipient regulatory, quality, safety, and supply chain issues.

Input on topics are always welcome from you, IPEC-Americas stakeholders – if you have a topic that you'd like to see in an eLearning course (or workshop or webinar), please send it to linda.herzog@ipecamericas.org. Only by meeting YOUR needs can IPEC-Americas make excipient eLearning the best "Me Learning" available!