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7 types of writing needed to produce an eLearning course

Let's find out how many types of texts are needed within an eLearning course and what characteristics they should have.

Within an eLearning course, texts are called upon to perform many different tasks. There are texts that need to engage and motivate the learner (such as course titles or descriptions), others that need to guide the learner through the learning experience (such as navigation buttons and platform user guides), and still others that need to illustrate concepts and notions (such as course materials).

Writing texts for eLearning is therefore not an easy task. The designer will have to navigate between very different styles and tones and will have to possess skills for **expository, creative, persuasive and technical writing**.

In this article, we'll outline the **7 main types of writing** potentially needed to produce an online course.

1. Screen text writing

On-screen text plays a very important role within an online course because it helps the student better understand the content and memorize it.

One of the most common mistakes related to on-screen text is to make it exactly match the audio narration. Why should you avoid this? Because if the on-screen text matches the audio script, you risk making the course predictable and, more importantly, boring your students.

So try to provide something new to the student, but remember to be concise and not overload your course with text. Finally, make sure you favor short sentences or bulleted lists that help the student **memorize key concepts**.

2. Writing audio scripts

The **audio script** contains the texts that make up the audio track of your course. It can be read by the instructor, a voiceover (e.g., a professional speaker), or an animated character.

In all these cases, remember that **writing to be heard** is very different from writing texts that are to be read. Pay attention to word sounds and sentence cadence, and be sure to maintain a **conversational tone**.

Determine the style and language best suited to your audience and favor **short sentences**. And remember: the best way to engage an online learner is to give them the impression that someone is speaking directly to them, as if the course was built just for them.

If you decide to use an outside **speaker**, be sure to prepare "voice instructions" that provide specifics on pronunciation of terms that may be distorted, such as acronyms, person names or foreign words.

3. Writing stories

Studies in education show that **storytelling** helps people learn, retain, and retrieve the information embedded in a story. But how do you **write stories for eLearning**?

First, the story should have three phases: an introductory phase in which you present the scenario and protagonist; the central body in which you present a problem or challenge; and the conclusion, which should always include a resolution or final lesson.

Also remember that the story must be **plausible** and relate to a situation or problem that the student might actually encounter in the workplace or in daily life.

4. Writing scenarios

Scenario-based learning is one of the most effective teaching methods because it allows the student to explore a situation and make his or her own decisions based on what he or she has learned.

Specifically, it allows you to **simulate situations** that might happen in the world of work. With branching, or branching, the story of a course takes a different turn depending on learner choices that open up, precisely, different scenarios.

If you choose to use this approach, you will need to write the correct path first and then bring the additional (incorrect) paths to life. Remember: each path should provide an opportunity to learn why that was the correct or wrong path.

Finally, make sure that each path within a scenario is plausible and realistic.

5. Writing microcopies

Microcopies are **small instructions** and phrases used in eLearning and user interface design ("Click here to continue", "Take the test", "Click on each of the tabs to learn more", etc.). These texts guide the student in navigating the course and their clarity inevitably affects the **learning experience**. Unclear texts could confuse the student as to what they should do at the end of a module or, more generally, the paths they should take to find what they need.

Microcopy writing is therefore critical to an effective online course. It will be important to be concise, choose your words carefully, and include the right amount of detail.

Our suggestion is to include most of the instruction at the **beginning of the course** - this is when the student will be least confident. Finally, you can create an option tab where you include all the instructions on navigating the course and have the student decide if they need that assistance.

For more, also read " **Tips for improving online course navigation**".

6. Writing learning tests

Writing a good **learning test** can be the most difficult task in an eLearning project. You need to be extremely thorough, make sure that the questions are clear and that each question, as well as each proposed answer, cannot be misinterpreted.

Write questions that are directly related to the **learning objectives** and do not ask anything that has not been explicitly covered within the course. Also, make sure that all available answers for a given question are plausible: in other words, avoid including blatantly incorrect answers. Your goal should be to get the student to think about the questions and really test the level of learning achieved. You will find that finding plausible incorrect answers is the hardest part.

Finally, if the student gets an incorrect answer, provide an ad hoc text explaining why that option is incorrect. This will help him understand the error and improve his experience.

For more, also read " **10 Tips for Writing a Good Learning Test**".

7. Copywriting

Copywriting involves the purposeful use of language to persuade someone to take an action such as taking a course, using a product or listening to an expert. Titles and course descriptions, for example, are part of this type of text.

For effective writing, you can refer to the AIDA model, an evergreen of communication that explains how to attract potential customers:

- A stands for "**attention**": get your audience's attention by immediately focusing on the problem the course is intended to solve;
- I stands for "**interest**": keep their interest by explaining the benefits of the course;
- D is for "**desire**": emphasize the benefits by explaining to students how the course will help them solve their problem;
- A stands for "**action**": provide a call to action, such as inviting the reader to purchase the course or request a demo.

For further discussion, also read " **How to Write an Online Course Description**" or " **Tips for Choosing the Perfect Online Course Title**".

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