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How to design microlearning content

The risk with micro content is that the information provided is not comprehensive enough. Here is how to structure microlearning content to make it comprehensive and effective.

Microlearning is recognised as playing an increasingly important role in distance learning, however you look at it: whether it is the future of eLearning or a great complement to traditional online courses. The rise of microcontent is not only explained by the amount of time each of us spends with our smartphones, but also by the need to **learn quickly** what is urgently needed. In order to create content that responds to a training need within a few minutes and helps the learner put what they have learned into practice, **microlearning design** must focus on effectiveness and engagement. Here are some tips for designing comprehensive microlearning content.

Choosing a single learning objective for the microlearning module

Considering that microlearning content is often used in the workplace and that you are not only short of time but also have a certain urgency, **microcontent** should not last more than 5-6 minutes. With such a limited duration it is natural that the course micro-module can only deal with one objective at a time. To determine what this objective is, as always in educational design, one starts from the training needs. What do the beneficiaries of the course need to learn? In which order?

Creating the structure of the micro-course

The structure of the microcourse can follow different models:

- Proceeding from the simplest topic to increasingly complex notions, as in the case of technical training
- Presenting interlinked contents from which the learner can freely choose, as in the case of soft skills training.

In both cases, it is always useful to include reinforcement modules in the structure of the micro-content, to review the notions learned and to use **quizzes to assess progress** at the end of the module and at the end of the course. In addition, the graphics and navigation buttons should indicate at a glance which micro-content to open or choose.

Outlining the structure of the micro-content

With regard to the individual modules, in order to be more effective, it is useful to base them on a very simple structure, dividing the content into three parts:

- **Introduction**, where you insert the theoretical part to be learned or answer a specific question on the model of how-to guides.
- **Demonstration**, presenting the solution to the problem using a video, infographics or demonstration images.
- **Practice**, you involve the learner by asking them to put what they have learned into practice by creating quizzes, games or simulations with drag and drop functions, for example.

Depending on the learning model you want to use, you can also start with the demonstration, generating reflection, and then find the general rule, proceeding in an experiential way.

Using language and multimedia content to engage learners

Having clear communication is crucial in any kind of course, but even more so in microlearning. When designing micro-content, the language must be clear, **concise** and at the same time welcoming. The aim is to push the learner to change a behaviour with the knowledge they have learnt, so the language must encourage action without giving the sense of a command.

Even more important are multimedia elements: video, audio, infographics, simulations. For example, one could use

- a **demonstration video** on how to operate a machine
- a **simulation** on the use of software or to practice customer management
- **images** with comments to present a new product.

The aim of multimedia elements is not to embellish the course but to better illustrate the course content at a glance.

Whatever one's opinion of microlearning, it is a fact that it is increasingly central to eLearning. To make it effective, it is necessary to structure the course in micro-modules of maximum 5 minutes dealing with a single training objective using a simple structure with clear language, videos and other **multimedia** elements for demonstration and practical purposes.

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