ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 4 - number 97 Wednesday 29 january 2020

How to insert user-generated content in online business training

Is it possible to use the material produced by employees of a company within an online company course?

An instructional designer not only can, but must use the content produced by users in an online business course. The reasons are not so much of an economic nature, such as savings given using content produced by others, but of a training nature. In fact, one of the key elements for the success of an online course is user involvement. The self-production of content is a way to make users feel an active part of their training path. The most difficult part is making sure that users participate and with quality content. Here are some strategies to **encourage the generation of training content by students** in the context of corporate training.

Focus on the production of video, audio and images to be included in the LMS

The network is full of user-generated video and audio content. The reasons for the success of **how-to videos** ("how to") lie in the fact that whoever produces the content is not the best expert on the subject, but an ordinary person with whom it is easy to identify. If employees are following a training course on how to perform a safety procedure, it is very likely that they are much more informed, than the instructional designer or managers, about the concrete situations in which they had to apply this procedure in the workplace. Instead of looking for an example "academic" or taken from the network, the trainer can ask the course participants to talk about their experience with that procedure by making a video or audio to be included in the LMS, Learning Management System. With your smartphone, anyone can take pictures in the workplace, post a video or audio on their LMS account or on social media.

Stimulate the production of content by introducing gamification elements in eLearning

Some students may find it difficult to show themselves on video or record their own voice. To facilitate their participation, the trainer can divide the students into small groups. Everyone can find a representative who collects the different experiences and reports them, becoming a sort of **narrative voice** of the group. To stimulate participation even more, points could be assigned to the group that participates most or realizes the most relevant content. In this way, the challenge is inserted, a highly appreciated playful element. As in the best gamification strategies, the prize can be virtual, more points or a badge, but also real, as discount coupons.

Encourage the creation of texts through social learning

Content written by employees can also be of great help for modules of an online course. Through the forum integrated in an LMS, users exchange information and get answers that they can use to solve practical problems in the workplace. The trainer can take note of the most important issues for employees and use the answers and comments deemed most valid as training content. **Social learning** also works in blended courses, both in the classroom and online. Students can be asked to write the dialogues of a typical work situation and represent it in class. The texts, then, can be used by the trainer for video animations or simulations that are used to review the training contents or as a basis for subsequent training courses.

User-generated content has the main purpose of making students of an online course an active part of their training path. To increase their involvement, the trainer can focus on the production of video, audio and images to be included in the LMS, stimulate teamwork with interactive and real challenges, use forum texts and practical exercises as interactive training tools for future business courses.