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How to transform traditional training into interactive eLearning

Here are all the steps you need to implement to transform traditional teaching content into effective materials for engaging e-learning

Online training has become an important aspect of learning, both in schools and in work environments. Because of this, e-learning has earned a prominent place in the educational landscape, so much so that it is also a viable alternative to face-to-face courses. Indeed, the **advantages** of being able to take a class remotely are many: from accessibility, to flexibility, to the economic advantage that lack of travel brings. But in order for digital training to be effective, the creator of the course or lesson cannot simply transfer online content that has already been previously used and designed for classroom teaching.

From the classroom to digital

Technology has revolutionized the world, changing most aspects of everyday life, relationships, and spatial and temporal relationships. Then, with the pandemic of Covid-19, digital has entered the lives of every worker and student, who due to the lockdown have been forced to stay at home and carry out their activities from the back of a screen. Thus, the world of education has also pushed forward toward e-learning, which has shifted the predominant place of training from the classroom to digital.

All it takes to access e-learning is to have an Internet connection and a suitable digital medium, but organizing an online lesson or course is not an obvious process. It is not enough, in fact, to transfer the content used in the classroom into the virtual world, without making any changes. If this approach is used, in fact, it may not be completely effective and leave students dissatisfied with their learning experience. It is therefore necessary to transform the content used in the classroom into engaging digital experiences.

To move from the classroom to digital, it is first necessary to properly **organize the course**, dividing it into blocks and then into lessons, each based on the previous one: by following the predetermined path, the student will be able to achieve the set objectives. For e-learning to be successful, moreover, it is not enough to structure a "click-next" course, in which the user simply moves from one piece of content to another. Fundamental, in fact, is to make learning interactive, so that students can test and consolidate the knowledge they have learned through study.

Finally, it is not necessarily the case that all content used in the classroom in presence can be converted to e-learning: some topics are most effectively conveyed only if they are addressed in the classroom, and the online component would negate their effectiveness.

The 5 steps

To move from the classroom to digital, transforming existing content used in traditional training, 5 steps can be followed:

1. **Analyze existing content**. The first thing to do when deciding to transfer content from the classroom to digital is to figure out what information is most relevant to the online course and worth reusing. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to take an inventory of the material, which will allow you to determine how much and what content is already there. At this point, while also taking into account the types of information, which can be in the form of text, video, or audio, it is possible to figure out which materials can also be reused on the Web.
2. **Define learning objectives**. This step is useful to be able to define, later, what to include or exclude from digital content. In fact, based on the objectives established for the course, it will be possible to decide what content is most appropriate to be transformed into digital lessons.
3. **Identify the format of the e-learning course**. One digital training may require a more basic format, while another may need more advanced and interactive courses, with a variety of different approaches and content to offer. In particular,

there are three main formats of e-learning courses to choose from:

- Synchronous learning, which takes place at the same time for all e-learning users through the use of virtual classes;
- Asynchronous learning, which the user can use at any time. This is video lectures or multimedia content that can be enjoyed freely by the user, who can decide when and from what place to access the lecture;
- Blended learning: this is a combination of synchronous and asynchronous training, with some lessons that can be taken independently and others that must be taken at the time they are offered.

4. **Planning the course**, to understand which content already used in the classroom to keep and which to discard. Planning also allows you to create constructive, interactive, and effective e-learning experiences for students from existing lessons.
5. **Course development**. This is the last phase and consists of the actual creation of the course, with the transition from traditional content into digital content, which is adapted to the needs and objectives of the lessons.

The evolution of content

Training has evolved, moving out of the classroom and becoming digital. But not only that. In fact, e-learning, too, is constantly changing face, based on new technologies and the various approaches offered, and previously developed content becomes obsolete. In such cases, it is necessary to convert obsolete learning materials into new engaging e-learning content.

Content transformation should aim to improve the following aspects:

1. **Adaptation to user needs**. Users' working days are increasingly full of activities, which often prevent them from carving out the necessary time to devote to learning. In reevaluating outdated content, it is good to keep in mind the need for more flexible learning, allowing learners to conduct lessons on the go or on daily breaks. This can be done by reusing previous content based on long texts and breaking it down into **microlearning** pills that can be accessed in a short time. In addition, the course should also be designed for mobile media, which allow the user to have access to learning at any time of the day.
2. **Improve retention**, through scenario-based learning. Traditionally, e-learning relied on quizzes, multiple-choice assessments, or fill-in-the-blank tests, which, while still useful today, need to be complemented by other approaches that are more engaging for new learners, making them feel comfortable and inclined to continue on the path. In this sense, it can be useful to place learning objectives within scenarios, in which the student can find himself or herself. Using scenarios to include quizzes and tests helps to engage the student in learning and memorization.
3. **Facilitate the application** of already acquired learning by producing dynamic and interactive learning content to create a broader and more engaging experience. Interactivity allows students to practice continuously on their device after a lesson or block is over, giving immediate application to newly learned knowledge. The use of microlearning pills can be useful in providing a learning path that combines theoretical training, the practical part, applications to real-world scenarios, and verification of skills. In fact, the student can attend a short theoretical lecture, which can be provided by different modes (text, video, audio or other), after which a short exercise can be included in the course, allowing the student to immediately apply the knowledge just learned. Finally, the student can move on to assessment on the micro-lesson just completed. This approach allows the student not only to learn, but also to apply the knowledge immediately.
4. Achieve high levels of **transfer of learning into skills**. The main goal of training is to ensure that learning is transformed into skills and behaviors that can be applied in the workplace. The content itself can ensure training, but not the learners' applicability of the concepts acquired. For this, it can be useful to use the strategy of simulation, which allows students to be confronted with the need to make decisions. Existing e-learning content, such as scenarios and case studies, can be used and converted into interactive decision-making experiences that are based on real, past or potential work situations that have already occurred. It may also be useful to consider moving to more interactive e-learning content with experiential approaches. One way may be to use the playful technique, through virtual games or stories on which to base learning.

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