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How to use microlearning to improve learning

The reduction of students' attention span strongly affects instructional design. The solution to make training effective? Microlearning.

The training of students and workers has long integrated eLearning as a teaching tool. Its qualities have made this technology a congenial solution in both school, especially university, and work settings. The flexibility of use, the multimedia nature of the content and the interactivity of use are features that are as innovative as they are appreciated.

However, in a context of continuous and increasing stimuli, users may suffer from a reduction in **attention spans**, which could affect student performance. One of the most appropriate solutions to counter this problem is **microlearning**.

Microlearning and blended learning

Microlearning is a training strategy distinguished by its short duration and focus on specific topics. To fully understand this concept, **we can define microlearning as the art of conveying information in small doses, with a focused and effective approach**. These "learning molecules" can take many forms, such as short videos, infographics, quizzes or short interactive modules. These snippets are designed to be easily accessible and consumable in minutes, allowing learners to learn flexibly, adapting to their schedules and rhythms.

How does microlearning fit into blended training?

Blended training is an educational approach that combines elements of online and traditional learning. In this methodology, microlearning finds a privileged place because it can be easily incorporated within the learning context: both in the transitions between online and live classes and as a central element of the course. For example, microlearning can be used to provide background information and prepare students before a classroom lecture or workshop.

A common application is to use microlearning as a "springboard" to prepare students for more in-depth discussion or specific tasks during traditional classes. In this way, microlearning can increase the overall effectiveness of blended training by reducing the need for lengthy classroom training sessions.

Thus, one can see how **microlearning offers numerous benefits in blended training**. Some of the key benefits include:

- Improved flexibility of use
- A reduction in cognitive overload
- Rapid learning
- Increased engagement
- Improved retention

Students can access microlearning whenever and wherever they wish, adapting it to their **own learning** commitments and pace. Therein lies the greater flexibility of use for users. Microlearning then, presents information in small segments, avoiding **overloading students** with an excessive amount of content at once. Thus, due to its brevity, microlearning enables students to acquire new skills quickly and efficiently.

It should also not be overlooked that the use of multimedia and interactive formats in microlearning can increase students' interest. In a context where stimuli are multiple and ubiquitous, making use of multiple information and training tools is a strategy for maintaining student attention. Short-term receptive attention can then be combined with medium- and long-term memory, when frequent repetition of micro-content can improve information retention.

In summary, microlearning is a valuable addition to blended learning, as it enhances the learning experience and enables learners to acquire skills more effectively and sustainably

Microlearning and continuing medical education (CME)

A confirmation of the potential of microlearning can be found in sectoral training courses. If we consider health care, we can observe a field where its practitioners are required to undergo in-depth and constant training, which requires continuous revision of what they have learned in their long university years.

Continuing medical education (CME) is essential for these professionals as discoveries and best practices constantly evolve. Microlearning has proven to be an effective means of facilitating continuing education and keeping physicians and other health professionals up-to-date.

Microlearning can be applied in a variety of ways to CME, from keeping up to date on clinical guidelines, to managing medical emergencies, to the skills needed for patient management and communication.

It also offers numerous benefits for medical professionals. These can optimize the time they spend on training while maintaining their professional operations. With microlearning, physicians can receive constant updates on the latest medical breakthroughs, keeping their skills on the cutting edge. Also not to be overlooked are the opportunities that microlearning gives to personalize learning, choosing the training modules most relevant to one's specialty and training.

Microlearning and the psychology of learning

In designing microlearning, it is critical to understand the **psychological principles** that influence learning in order to create effective training content.

Learning psychology suggests that information learned in the short term can be quickly forgotten. However, information that is repeatedly revisited and applied is more likely to result in long-term knowledge. Microlearning, with its short modules and the possibility of frequent revision, is ideal for fostering long-term learning. The fragmentation of information into small segments, typical of microlearning, can improve comprehension and retention in this way. That is, individuals can better assimilate concepts when they are presented in small chunks, avoiding cognitive overload.

In addition, microlearning can offer immediate feedback, in the form of quizzes or interactive questions, allowing learners to assess their knowledge and receive instant corrections.

Microlearning and attention span

Attention span, or attention span, is a crucial aspect in learning. That, with the advent of the Internet and smartphones, this attention span has shrunk is a well-known fact. A few seconds of active attention is what advertisements, news, TV shows and music videos compete for. This can change people's behavior and make it more difficult to maintain concentration for extended periods.

Attention span varies from person to person but, in general, is limited to a relatively short interval of time, often between 10 and 20 minutes. This fact presents significant challenges in the context of learning, as excessively long study or training sessions can lead to dispersion of attention, boredom and reduced retention of information.

Attention span is particularly critical in online learning, where digital distractions can be abundant. Careful instructional design must take these limitations into account and seek **solutions to maximize learning effectiveness**.

Microlearning is a direct response to the challenges of attention span. Its modular structure, with short, focused content, perfectly matches the individual's attention span. Clear and specific learning objectives are addressed in short learning modules, maintaining attention and facilitating retention of information.

In addition, microlearning encourages active learning by engaging students in interactive activities or quizzes that require active

participation. This can be achieved with focused, interactive content, realistic scenarios, and a variety of formats to alternate between, perhaps spacing the repetition of content.