ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 93 Wednesday 11 december 2019

How, when and why to use learning tests in e-learning

The learning test cannot be missing in your e-learning course. If you want to find out how, when and why you test your students' learning, read on!

Today, companies all over the world are increasingly using new and technologically advanced learning methods, because they have proven to be highly effective and convenient. As we know, an element that cannot be missed in your e-learning course is the learning test, to be submitted to the students to verify the knowledge learned. If introduced at the right time, these tests can offer many advantages, such as:

- allow self-assessment of employees
- encourage the commitment of each trainee
- create a pleasant learning environment
- collect important data to make further observations

This explains why using learning tests in e-learning is useful. But how should a test be structured to make it effective and how to choose the most suitable test for our course and for our students?

There are several ways to test students in online training courses: multiple-choice questions, drag the answer, space filling, real or false, quizzes based on concrete scenarios and based on the game. The type of test should be chosen based on the skills you want to test, the time that students must answer the questions and the number of people involved in the training.

1. Multiple choice questions

Also adopted in traditional evaluation methods, multiple choice questions are common in e-learning for a good reason: they work! In this type of test the student must answer a series of questions, each with a certain number of answers. If you choose to include multiple-choice questions in your training course, you must make sure to ask direct questions, this will ensure that you are verifying the employee's direct knowledge of the subject and not his deduction skills.

2. True or false

This type of test, simple but effective, can be particularly useful if placed at the beginning of the course or at the end. The results will give you an idea of the level of knowledge of your employees, both before supporting the course and afterwards, making you understand the effectiveness of your e-learning training.

3. Filling of empty spaces

These quizzes serve to assess the true knowledge of a student, since there is only one correct answer and the student must know it exactly to get the point.

4. Drag the answer

This type of test introduces a playful element in online training, as it requires the student to "play" with the options and create a correct sequence of answers. This style of application lends itself to testing the knowledge of sequential processes, making the training interactive, as employees must move items on the screen to respond correctly.

5. Quizzes based on concrete scenarios

Tests based on concrete scenarios allow the student to test their knowledge in a practical environment, offering scenarios of real working life that they may find themselves having to solve in the future. In this regard, a virtual laboratory has been launched in America that allows students to apply their skills (acquired during training) in an environment that simulates work.

6. Game based quizzes

Last but not least, with the use of games (or gamification) some playful elements are introduced in the quiz, to motivate students to do better and better. With the quizzes based on the game, you help students consolidate their knowledge, because they have fun while they learn and practice what they have learned.

Therefore, how should quiz questions be to be effective and useful for learning in e-learning?

In the previous paragraphs we have already answered part of this question. It is important that the quizzes are relevant to the course content, precisely where the student needs to understand difficult concepts. The quiz questions should focus on the material covered in the lesson that is considered important with respect to the general learning objectives. In fact, quiz questions must be concise and in line with the course content: the aim is not to ask trick questions, but to evaluate that students have learned the course content.
After explaining the various types of quizzes that can be used and how the questions should be in order for them to be effective, all we have to do is answer the last question: what is the most appropriate moment to submit the test to the students? The answer is simple: there is no better time to propose a quiz. It can be done at the beginning of the course, during or after the course.

1. A test at the beginning of the course

The questions at the beginning of the course are intended to generate curiosity about the content of the course or to assess the students' starting knowledge.

2. A mid-course test

It helps to understand if students need to repeat sections or just do a quick review. To evaluate the learning path and improve student involvement in the training path, it is useful to insert tests at the end of each chapter or unit of the e-learning course. In this way, in fact, it is possible to give a partial assessment of the student who, therefore, will be aware of his progress made in the training course. Not only that, but the insertion of the evaluation quizzes at the end of each chapter of the course also allows the trainers to find answers to important questions, useful for carrying out a sort of self-evaluation of the course: were they able to learn the main concepts? What are the possible elements on which they still must improve? Was the course content effective or not? If not, what should be improved?

3. A test at the end of the course

It serves to understand what has been learned. In this way you will help the student to evaluate if he has understood the information or not and you will have a better idea about the effectiveness of the course content. Feedback about answers it has a strong emotional and educational value for the student. For this, we must always explain with courtesy why an answer is wrong. It is also good to reinforce the correct answer, explaining why it is.

As we have seen, there are various ways to test students' knowledge in your e-learning training courses: are you ready to create something exceptional for your employees?