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Immersive learning: what it is and how it works

Features, benefits and how immersive learning works.

Traditional classroom training techniques are largely based on auditory **learning styles**. In an increasingly technology-driven world, however, traditional learning is in danger of failing to keep users engaged throughout the entire training course. To this end, now more than ever, it is critical to provide more inclusive and accessible learning experiences that adapt to the needs and attention spans of modern learners.

With this in mind, immersive learning is an extremely effective way to provide users with a **stimulating and engaging learning environment**. So let's find out what immersive learning is and what its characteristics are.

What is immersive learning

Immersive learning is a technique that, by exploiting technology, creates artificial content and environments that accurately replicate real-life scenarios. In such an environment, students are no longer simply passive spectators, but become active participants who directly influence learning pathways. They, in fact, can interact with their surroundings by simulating behaviors, decisions and mistakes even before applying them in real working life.

Immersive learning thus offers a **safe and risk-free space** where learning can be repeated and success can be accurately measured. But that's not all: by immersing employees in "real-world" work situations, it improves both their engagement and the long-term retention of the knowledge gained.

The 3 pillars of immersive learning

Immersive learning combines several elements that help improve teaching effectiveness and user engagement.

1. Virtual reality
Virtual reality is an extraordinary tool for learning, as it allows the user's brain to be taken to another place through complete immersion.
When wearing a VR visor, one can in fact look around seeing and hearing a virtual world almost identical to the real one, with strong mental as well as emotional involvement.
Such immersion allows you to experience typical work situations and hone your operational and soft skills in a safe environment.

2. Spatial design
Spatial design is the methodology for building and developing training content in virtual reality and brings together disciplines such as cinematography, user interface (UI) design, and user experience (UX).

Such design aims to enhance students' feeling of immersion and on three levels simultaneously:

- **spatial presence**, whereby students lose the feeling of being in a virtual experience;
- **self-presence**, whereby students are driven to interact with the virtual environment because their actions actually have an impact;
- **social presence**, whereby the virtual environment is enriched by the presence of people to interact with and learn from, just as would happen in the real working world.

Thanks to these dynamics, users interact with the virtual world as if it were real, significantly increasing their involvement and fostering long-term retention of the notions learned.

3. Data science
Immersive learning enables the acquisition of data and information about user behavior that traditional training methods cannot provide. Specifically, data are provided on:

- **Usage**: frequency, duration and completion of training
- **Attention and engagement**: where and how learners pay attention
- **Performance**: task completion and correct responses to assess proficiency
- **Sentiment**: qualitative feedback from participants
- **Predictive analytics**: a combination of immersive data mapped onto real-world data to create a model based on machine learning

Benefits of immersive learning

One of the main characteristics of an immersive learning environment is strong interactivity. This not only helps to eliminate distractions, but also kills monotony, improving users' engagement levels and motivation.
Let's look in detail at what the main benefits of immersive learning are.

Content adaptability
With immersive learning, training content is easily adaptable to your organization's practices, values and procedures, so no course will ever be the same.

Repetition
An immersive learning environment provides a space in which users can practice as often as they see fit. Moreover, since each of their decisions sets different mechanisms in motion, they can explore different outcomes based on different actions taken from time to time.

Goodbye distractions
With the spread of mobile devices, modern life is increasingly full of distractions that we cannot resist, and this has resulted in a drastic drop in people's attention span. This, of course, is likely to have a negative impact on learning experiences and a student's ability to learn and retain information. Immersive learning offers a particularly effective tool in this regard, as it blocks out the real world, providing a distraction-free environment in which students can focus fully on the task at hand.

User-friendly learning
In a traditional learning environment, users often work at a speed or level that is not suitable for them, so some will find it too slow and may lose interest, while others may have difficulty keeping up. Unlike more traditional forms of learning, immersive learning is student-centered and allows the student to learn at his or her own pace: he or she can then practice as often as desired resulting in unique learning experiences that are highly personalized.

Emotional connection, motivation and engagement
Mimicking the real world, virtual interactions activate the same neural pathways in the brain that a real experience would activate, creating realistic emotional responses that increase user engagement and motivation within the learning process.

Real-time feedback
In an immersive learning environment, every decision directly impacts the experience and provides immediate feedback to users.

Safe space in which to learn
Immersive learning provides a safe and risk-free environment in which to explore, practice the concepts learned and learn from mistakes made. This type of training is therefore particularly effective for training in difficult or dangerous situations or locations.

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