ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Is your online course overloading the students?

How to understand if you are overloading the students with content and avoid it.

If you are an expert in the subject that deals with the course, you will almost certainly be driven to try to insert as much information and interactive content as possible within it, with a view to offering value and completeness. In reality what you are building is probably too complex a content that will be a stumbling block for the completion of the course by the students themselves. Instead of increasing their satisfaction, you may run the risk of discouraging them. Or at least, it is worth asking whether this is not actually the case.

4 reasons to avoid a content overload in the online course

1. Ruin the course layout

The inclusion of too much content penalizes the course both on a "conceptual" level and from a graphic point of view in the strict sense. Each slide could be "ugly", as well as heavy.
The visual disorder moves away. Better to reduce the amount of texts and videos by breaking the content on multiple slides and videos (not too many of course) so as not to frighten the students.

2. Trainees struggle to complete the lesson within a reasonable amount of time

Online courses have the great advantage of being able to be used in moments of free time (for example during breaks and trips). To adapt to the work and life times of the trainees, each lesson should be accessible in not too long times or in any case in small pieces.

The overabundance of content can also hinder mobile learning: use on smartphones or tablets can lead to long loading times and problems in navigating the course.

3. Cognitive load too high

Trying to consume too much content at the same time is counterproductive: it tires students and prevents them from learning in the most effective way. The ideal duration of each online training module is between ten and fifteen minutes.

4. Students with special needs are more likely to feel overwhelmed by too much content

Autistic students will feel more overloaded, dyslexic students will have greater difficulty distinguishing words on the screen, students with reduced motor control skills will have greater difficulty clicking on graphic elements that are presented in a confused way due to crowding. Reducing the amount of information presented in a single lesson can greatly improve these students' learning experience.

How to avoid overloading your students' content

1. Organize the course by topics

Organizing the course into topics allows the instructional designer to divide the lessons into micro-segments. By taking advantage of these natural breakpoints, you keep your attention high and facilitate your students' engagement.

2. Use the micro quizzes

The quizzes and tests help students to effectively retain the information they have learned by developing their information retrieval skills. If you have a long lesson based on different topics and you decide to break it by topics, you can create a natural moment to make a review point, through a micro quiz.

3. Videos lasting between ten and twenty minutes

Some online courses were made video recording conferences that were held live: the result is that the videos last about fifty minutes each. By their nature, the duration of videos in online format should be much shorter and should be a couple of minutes, at most about the duration of a T ed Talk (15 minutes).

Before making a video, define the time necessary to develop the topic. If the video gets longer, divide it by micro-topics.

Article taken from LearnDash