ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Tell me the colours of your course and I'll tell you who you are

About the importance of the use of colours in the didactic design of e-Learning courses ...

Question in her blog The Elearning Coach.

It is obvious that **e-Learning is a mainly visual training method**. For this reason the use of colours in didactic design can enhance the uniqueness and sophistication of the training, and at the same time make earning easier by students.

Colour is a key component of visual communication. It helps us in representating the reality, in focusing, in expressing the emotions, in connecting information, in getting better readability and in creating psychologic impact.

So, **which colours should you use in your next e-Learning course**?

Red ? Symbol of passion, energy and excitement. If you want to get the attention of your students and drive them to an important information, or if you want to strengthen their motivation, you have to choose red. This colour is ideal for situations linked to immediacy. For example, if you want students to reflect on a specific topic or if you want to drive them to selected sections of your e-Learning course, you can use red to give a sense of urgency.

Orange ? The colour of optimism, communication end mentally stimulating. If you're dealing with a rather boring or complicated topic, you can use orange to make it more cheerful and involving.

Yellow ? Symbol of optimism, intellect and cheerfulness. It may help reinforcing the memory and stimulate mental functions. If you're trying to improve the retention of information, or make a boring topic more exciting, choose yellow. Use a darker tone, because light yellow may be difficult to read on the screen.

Blue ? Brings a feeling of peace, calm, trust. It also is the most preferred colour: in fact blue is the favourite colours of professionals trying to make it easy to understand a complicated topic. For this reason it may help to make the content less confused and complicated .

Green ? It is the colour of growth, balance, and peacefulness. It's ideal to use when you're trying to achieve a fresh and balanced design. It is also known as the colour of peace, so you'll use green when you want to calm students down before an important exam.

Violet ? A sophisticated colour, symbol of imagination and amusement. If you want to create a more optimistic learning environment, encouraging students to amuse and involve in the learning process, then violet is the ideal colour. Select violet with blue undertones when you want to give a more relaxing feeling, with red undertones when you want to excite and involve your students.

Brown ? This colours brings feelings of solidity and cordiality, at the same time giving a sense of seriouseness. If you want a more neutral colour, helping to balance the general feeling of e-Learning courses, you can opt for brown.

Colours also have a strong influence on the learning process. One of the main objectives of the design of didactic and information contents is to **reduce the cognitive effort** needed for their understanding. Some ways how colour helps the meaningfulness and improves the learning are:

- **Colours improves the visual discrimination**. In situations when beginners are learning to visually discriminate, like in the reading of radiographies, it is possible to stress difficult markings with a very strong colour.
- **Colour code acts like a signal**. Use colour coding to coordinate textual explanations with corresponding graphics. A small coloured shape, maybe in the form of an icon, rather than coloured text, works better.
- **Colours improves narration**. In a illustrated story, a red face shows embarrass or anger. The use of colour to show an emotional answer can contribute to a better understanding of the story.
- **Colour evokes emotion**. Colour always has an emotional impact. Warm colours (red, yellow, orange) bring emotions and stimulations, while cold colours (blue and green) bring calm. It is important to select colours with the awareness of their effect on the public.

It should also be considered that the perception of colours varies from individual to individual; it is influenced by the brightness of ambience light, by the surrounding colours and from how the eyes of an individual process the visual information transmitted to the brain.

The article then describes the dimensions of colours (tone, saturation, value) and finally suggests some ideas about how to better use colours in the design of e-Learning contents: how to get richer colours, how to find alternatives to the scale of greys, how to improve contrast, how to remove relevance, how to avoid colour chaos.

Read the full article ...