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The differences between gamification and game-based training

Applying game elements to corporate training increases user engagement. But when to use gamification and when to use game-based learning?

Continuing education plays a crucial role in the competitiveness of companies. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to find increasingly effective training methods that increase employee engagement and, as a result, foster effective behavioral changes in the medium and long term.

One of the main keys to increasing the involvement of workers involved in online training is to make **training active** by combining **playful elements and learning**.
In this article, we will analyze the two main trends in this area, **gamification and game-based learning**, illustrating their characteristics and differences.

Gamification: what it is and how it works

Gamification involves applying game elements or mechanics to a nongame context in order to increase user engagement and promote desired behavior.

In the case of training, the desired behavior is course completion, and the game mechanics that can be used include experience points, leaderboards, levels, badges, etc.: all tools that tap into the human needs to compete and succeed.

Through gamification, then, playful mechanics are applied to existing content, making training more engaging and motivating users to interact with learning elements.

Applying gamification to corporate training offers numerous benefits:

- It encourages **collaboration**, fun and productivity
- Encourages **specific behaviors**
- It provides immediate **feedback and gratification**
- Is **quick and inexpensive to implement** and incorporate within existing training programs, as it does not require the creation of new learning content (but applies to existing content)
- It facilitates **progress monitoring**

Despite these benefits, gamification is not an appropriate strategy for all types of training-it is best suited for simple content that is easy to understand and memorize. But if employees take too long to complete activities, their engagement levels decrease and the effectiveness of the gamification element diminishes.

Speaking of gamification, read also:

- **Gamification: the company-wide benefits**
- **Gamification in eLearning**
- **Gamification: learning by playing**

Game-based learning: what it is and how it works

Game-based learning is a type of active learning experience within a game structure, which has specific learning objectives and measurable outcomes. In other words, the entire course is turned into a game.

In a game-based learning environment, users learn new concepts and practice in a **risk-free environment**. Their progress in the game is directly related to their understanding of the subject being taught.

Unlike gamification, game-based learning is also suitable for **teaching complex concepts**: because the training is both fun and challenging, users stay involved longer and are able to assimilate more complicated concepts.

Game-based learning offers **several advantages**:

- It provides users with **clear and challenging objectives** within a game structure
- Requires a high degree of **interaction**
- Offers informative feedback on **student performance**

On the other hand, however, game-based learning is not applicable to existing training content, but requires the creation of **ad hoc content**. Designing game-based courses can therefore be expensive and time-consuming.
For more on game-based learning, read also:

- **4 myths about "game-based learning"**
- **The use of role-playing games in corporate training**
- **Game-based learning: cognitive load, motivation and learning**

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