ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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The importance of context in eLearning

The details of an online course, from the objectives to the contents, must be contextualized. It is an essential feature that will allow students to be aware of the usefulness of the training path and of the job opportunities.

Within the communication, and not only, there is an element that cannot be dispensed with to understand what is being discussed and, consequently, to avoid misunderstandings. Even in the world of eLearning, it is necessary to help students understand both the objectives and the information offered in an online course.

On the one hand, when potential students are evaluating the training path to be undertaken, the context is fundamental. What are the objectives of the course? What are the possible job opportunities? What added value does the training course provide? They all seem obvious concepts, yet it is the first approach that students will have with the course, even before having to deal with the design of the platform, its usability or the contents of the course itself. It is a crucial moment for decision-making: at this time the person will decide to choose your course or opt for another one.

On the other hand, however, after the course has been chosen, the training course must involve the students, show them what they are learning and why, how the proposed contents will serve them in the future to carry out a specific profession or to acquire additional knowledge in their profession. This type of context is essential to motivate and involve students throughout the course.

Here are some tips to "contextualize" an online course:

1. Contact a target

Even if an online course tries to address a broad audience, you need to put yourself in the shoes of students who might be more interested in this course. This means identifying the target and, after analyzing it, trying to create an online course that meets their needs and their expectations.

2. Feedback as a source of improvement

A fundamental element for improvement is feedback. In fact, students who have already taken the course can be an endless source of valuable data. Expectations, objectives achieved, contents: these are all elements on which those who have just attended the course, but also those who have attended the course in the past, can offer an incredibly useful perspective.

3. Offer a wider context on the contents

Any topic can be further investigated. Often, the online course, like any other course of study, cannot analyze in depth all the topics it contains and related to it. For this reason, it is essential to offer and recommend external tools, so that students can expand their knowledge on a subject that they particularly like or that is fundamental to their career path. Bibliographic references, videos and events are very useful means to contextualize and deepen information.

4. Offer a practical course

Although most online and non-online courses are based essentially on theoretical content, it is important that these data are always inserted into a context giving real examples that can be useful in working life. This is a feature that really makes the difference between one course and another. For this reason, simulations are of great help in this sense, i.e. providing students with practical experiences to prepare them for the use of the knowledge acquired in the world of work.