ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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The nine elements of modern learning

When realising an eLearning course, a number of quality criteria must be met. Let us discover the nine elements of modern learning.

When we design eLearning courses and realise training content, we need to meet a series of criteria that will enable us to achieve high learning performance.
In this article I will show you what the nine elements of modern learning are and comment, from my experience, on the main characteristics and peculiarities of each approach.

Accessibility

The realisation of eLearning courses must guarantee, first and foremost, easy accessibility of content and immediate availability. When realising a course, put yourself in the shoes of your learner audience and try to reduce the gap that may prevent proper accessibility of the course.
Providing proper accessibility means creating the conditions for proper usability and a pleasant user experience.

Do the acronyms UX and UI mean anything to you? UX stands for user experience and indicates all the tricks you can put in place to simplify the use of your users (well-positioned buttons, correct links, avoid constantly leaving the course for external links, etc.). UI, on the other hand, stands for user interface and indicates the work we will have to do on the graphics of our course to guarantee stability and visual pleasantness, as well as to respect the graphic guidelines of our customers.

Making a course accessible also means thinking about all the arrangements that can help people with disabilities to enjoy it properly. Thus, it is necessary to insert subtitles on the screen, check the use of colours, use fonts suitable for visually impaired people and set up a series of tools to guarantee the best user experience for our audience.

An accessible eLearning course is, in absolute terms, a product that will be appreciated by your audience and that will guarantee your professional growth.

Autonomy

A good eLearning course is one that is self-managed and can be completed autonomously, without the intervention of technical support or a company tutor.
For this reason, it is very important to set up both LMS technology and content in such a way as to prevent system errors or training gaps.
From the point of view of authoring your courses, try to set up your products as simply as possible to avoid system errors once they are uploaded to the LMS. Also, export the SCORM course in the appropriate format and test it on different browsers or, at least, on the browsers most used in your company or by your customer.
Very often I have had to launch content on my favourite browser (and updated to the latest version) and the client complained that it did not have good usability on outdated systems and with outdated browsers!
Good instructional design also helps in the autonomy of the course. Trivially, trying to cover all the holes in our users' knowledge base will allow us to avoid answering e-mails asking for clarification or even delivering an incomplete course.
Furthermore, the possibility of introducing a virtual assistant into your course will allow you to handle frequently asked questions quickly and creatively!

Blocks

Whether it is a traditional course or a microlearning format, your content should be presented in chunks to ensure easy navigability and controlled enjoyment of the course.

Building your training content in blocks will allow you to organise a course summary and make it visible in the authoring structure in a drop-down menu.
Thanks to the block structure, I can usually deploy a series of content interspersed with insights, call to actions for my learners and, above all, pop-up questions that help to better fix the topic.

Topicality

One of the fundamental characteristics that, unfortunately, we tend not to consider so often is the topicality of the eLearning course content. Every course should be up-to-date with recent topics and content or, if this is not possible, it should be easily updated.
The problem with the lack of topicality of eLearning courses is, primarily, the need to shift resources to projects, relying less and less on the possibility of introducing the use of platforms that allow for the rapid modification of content.

With integration via LMS, the DynDevice platform allows you to quickly edit your course content and update it if there are new developments in sight (change of a regulation, typos, change of company organisation chart, etc.).
It is for this reason that you should, in the management of your training projects, ensure easy editing of content, whether in motion graphics or created directly with scorm authoring tools.

Immediacy

Immediacy is an element that must be structured in terms of both the technological use of the course and the content. It is necessary to install eLearning courses on a platform that allows for immediate response and, above all, a high capacity to receive user feedback. Furthermore, it is necessary for the platform to be able to track user behaviour in order to guarantee a follow-up on the use of the course and to operate a series of ex-post activities that will guarantee a unique focus on the resources of your company or customer.

The immediacy of the content is defined both in the instructional design phase and in the content realisation phase. The instructional design of your eLearning courses must necessarily take into account the possibility of getting straight to the point of the topic, avoiding too many turns of phrase and unwanted frills: as we have often said on the pages of this blog, less is more.
The realisation of content must also be straightforward: it is better to produce simple but effective content (infographics, slideshows, etc.) than to produce content that is too difficult and full of in-depth pdfs.

Tailor-made

I have often spoken to you on the pages of this blog about the need to create tailor-made content for people.

An instructional designer is able to identify his target audience by proposing a series of multimedia products that will serve to intercept the specific need of his audience.
When designing eLearning courses, it is necessary to structure the entire offer on the basis of the competences of a particular group of people.

Let us imagine an eLearning product for a telephone line maintenance group: what kind of content will they need? Should the content be accessible in a mobile version when the operator is in the field? What are the tutorial elements?
You will have to tailor the eLearning courses for a particular category of learners.

Hypertextuality

It seems a bit of an archaic use of technology but, to be honest, hypertext is still a very important process in the realisation of eLearning courses.
We have often spoken of the need to realise courses capable of using different types of content (multimedia) and of telling stories on different channels (transmediality) while maintaining a linear or transversal coherence.
This is why I advise you to think about the structure of your e-learning courses: try to avoid creating products that can be played and left 'in the background' while users do other things. On the contrary, create numerous channels of attention, hypertexts

structured in such a way as to go in search of deepening, to test knowledge and, above all, to feed the desire to learn.

MVAK

MVAK stands for Multimedia, Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic. It is the master attitude for any eLearning course that can keep attention and engagement high. It is all about the ability to send input to the user to stimulate learning. Obviously, input cannot and should not be an end in itself, but you must imagine and structure it as pieces of a large jigsaw puzzle that allows you to provide information in a simple and accessible way.
One example is the ability to create podcast content or microlearning pills that manage to tie in with a series of graphical info, for example, that you provide later in the course. Other uses of the MVAK system are to be found, for example, in gamification, in the realisation of content awareness trailers or, as is often the case, in the realisation of social campaigns for course orientation.

Social

Since the world has changed in favour of a massive use of technology for distance learning, it is really very important to pay attention to the socialising capacity of training courses.
Here I will not talk about the importance of networking in face-to-face training courses, but it is very important to integrate, within contemporary courses, the possibility of leaving feedback on social networks or, for example, organising in-depth webinar sessions with tutors who are experts on the subject.
The social sphere is very important both for learner engagement, but above all for the possibility of understanding how much our course is appreciated by people. If you create online courses for direct-to-consumer (business-to-consumer) sales, you will have realised how much media batting you will have to do before you start selling your first access or receive the first ten pieces of appreciative feedback on your chosen platform.
This is why it is super important today to be clear about the socialisation dynamics of a course, right from the design phase. Will it be accompanied by an awareness campaign? Is it a topic that is requested by many people in private groups on social networks? What topics do people often ask for?
When creating a course try to answer these questions.

These are the nine elements of modern learning according to the Owens Kadakia model (il design della formazione, FrancoAngeli), but feel free to integrate your personal attitudes towards rewriting your own eLearning course production model.

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