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The use of video improves learning?

According to many, using video in online courses can help improve student learning and engagement. Despite this, several scholars and experts do not fully share this theory.

A recurring question that is often addressed to those involved in the eLearning sector, but also to those who use the online courses is as follows: does the use of videos improve learning? In recent decades we are constantly bombarded with visual content, from videos to infographics, from social network photos to billboards.

Yet, in general, the images remain more imprinted. It is no coincidence that many claim to have a mainly visual memory. A 2014 Huffington Post article shows the results of an experiment in which more than 500 education professionals confirmed this trend. But is it really like that?

Donald Clark, an expert in the field of "online learning business", responds differently to the initial question. First of all, far from diminishing the importance of video in learning processes, it reduces the enthusiastic tones of other experts. These visual tools, according to Clark, are useful; however, alone they are not enough. Referring to his professional experience, he shows that videos can be extremely practical to remember some data, for example procedures, but do not have the same effect on other elements, such as numbers and concepts, especially the abstract ones.

If on the one hand the videos seem more engaging and awaken the interest of the students, it is equally true that it is essential that the study is also based on other types of training media (for example, it may be useful to propose the video transcription) and also on the carrying out of exercises and tasks of various kinds.

This is not the only evidence to watch out for when deciding to include videos in an online course. To be effective, visual content must also respond to a number of features or risk undermining the learning process and the involvement of students.

A research by Guo, Kim and Rubin, based on the study of the behavior of a sample of 128,000 students, shed light on some data related to video viewing for training purposes. Here are three of the main findings and related recommendations of scholars:

1. **Preference for short videos**: after about 6 minutes of video the interest starts to fall. It may be useful to break it down into different parts to avoid drawing the attention of the students.
2. **Enthusiasm helps to stimulate the study**: preferring a quick, motivating and exciting video is preferable to a slower one, which does not transmit passion to the audience.
3. **Better informal and personal videos**: there is no need to create highly professional visual content. An informal video often helps to involve more the learner.