ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

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Using scenario-based learning for the training of health workers

Scenario-based learning allows you to recreate some realistic situations in a virtual environment, to be ready for any eventuality. This is why this technique is very effective for training in health care.

In a sector like healthcare where it is essential to combine knowledge with the ability to make crucial decisions in a very short time, scenario-based learning may be the most suitable **eLearning** solution. What can **scenario based learning** give to the **healthcare system** and how can this model be best exploited?

What is scenario based learning?

Learning by doing, simulations, role-playing are all terms that accompany **scenario based learning**, a training model in which you learn by simulating situations that could happen in the world of work. With branching, or **branching**, the story of a course takes a different turn depending on the choices of the learners who open, in fact, to different scenarios. Person and **storytelling** are other terms that accompany scenario-based learning because realistic characters are inserted within a story that evolves according to the decisions made by the protagonist.

Why is scenario branching suitable for the healthcare sector?

In the health sector **continuous training** is a must: new therapies, new techniques, new standards and, as is well known, new diseases. With staff engaged in "non-social" shifts, i.e. at night or at weekends, eLearning and, in particular, scenario-based learning, are the key to **training where, when and how you want** in a practical way. The challenge of scenario-based **branching** is to reduce unknowns as much as possible and prepare healthcare staff to deal with any situation, even the most unexpected from both a technical and emotional point of view.

How to prepare a scenario-based course for medical staff

The first stage of any scenario is the **story** where the Person is at the centre. In the medical field, it is not a simple identikit, but a real patient who must be followed and treated, reflecting critically before making crucial decisions for his or her health. The staff not only participates in the story, but also determines the course of it and learns from the consequences of their actions: every decision on clinical condition, therapy, procedures to follow involves a different evolution of the story. The tools available to bring the scenario to life go from interactive photos and videos with real or animated characters to virtual reality.

Some examples of scenarios for online training in the health sector

Scenario-based **online courses** are regularly used in the continuous training of medical staff or in recent years in university specialization courses in virtually every area of medicine, from pediatrics to surgery. For example, the College of Nurses of Ontario, regularly prepares scenarios in the event of a pandemic. In one of these scenarios, which date back to 2018, the protagonist is Cindy, the nurse who is facing a flu peak when the emergency room is missing a third of its staff. Cindy has to establish quickly what the priorities are, respecting the procedures to be followed in these cases and the relationship with the patient, and it will be her choices that will make the difference. In another scenario, Owen has to face up to both his responsibilities in the event of a pandemic and his family's health concerns.

Scenario-based training is very effective in preparing staff for ordinary and extraordinary situations that may occur in the workplace. Thanks to eLearning, scenario-based training is even more effective because it can be used at any time to meet the needs of those working on the health front. The way to maximise this positive impact is to plan **online training** in time, even in unsuspicious times.