ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 2 - number 10 Wednesday 31 january 2018

Which are the essential skills for online learning professionals?

At the base of all our results there are skills. In an ever changing world of work, it is essential to stay up-to-date.

Skills define a professional. They are in continuous refinement: the new challenges offered by an ever changing world ask us to update our skills.
What changes has the incessant technological evolution brought to the learning world? We can identify mainly four.

1. **from single events to longitudinal processes**: training, in eLearning or in classroom, can still be delivered today in a "one shot" formula, but this approach is rapidly declining as it is reductive and inadequate for the purpose of achieving a effective learning. The training distributed over time and integrated with the work practice outlines a more incisive approach. As a result, online learning professionals will create fewer and fewer training events to be enjoyed in one go and more and more training processes that successfully combine formal and informal learning.
2. **from vis-à-vis to "remote"**: for some people, participating in a live experience is more engaging than experiencing it from behind a monitor. The contemporary world, however, often imposes frenetic rhythms and does not allow us to always be physically present at every appointment. Online learning is an engaging experience that gives the opportunity to participate on demand, in full comfort: the possibility of taking advantage of training remotely or directly on the move (from mobile) is easily reconcilable to everyone's commitments. Clearly, digital learning requires new skills from the training professional.
3. **from dependence to empowerment**: the greater availability of information given by the diffusion of internet has led people to conceive learning as something than can be managed individually, according to their own preferences, without "teachers" who speak from the top of a pulpit. "More and more students love to have control over their own training, they look for quick solutions to their problems, they do not consider anyone's opinion as sacred and they realize that everyone, including them, is at the same time teacher and learner".
4. **from standard to personalized timing**: up to now, most of the training experiences were enjoyed in the classroom, with many organizational and cost problems. Today there are plenty of tools needed to design effective, easily manageable and usable online training. More and more trainers will take advantage of them, with many advantages for students too.

Areas of competence and skills to be developed

It is clear that learning professionals will have to preserve traditional skills, to de-emphasize other and new to be developed. Clearly not all professional profiles will need to develop all the following skills: some profiles will be more specialized than others. But, in general, which skills will be useful for learning professionals?

To interact with **stakeholders**, eLearning professionals will have to develop the following skills:

- ability to offer formal, informal, e-learning or blended training with new tools and technologies
- consulting skills, useful in helping customers: from the analysis of problems to the search for new and customized solutions
- project management skills to manage complex projects and change management skills to guide customers in change processes towards innovations
- entrepreneurial skills

To interact with **students**, it is always necessary to develop each solution keeping in mind the centrality of the learners themselves. How to deal with them?

- as an expert: teaching basic concepts to neophytes works very well in eLearning

- as an instructor: it is essential to impart basic knowledge and help beginners to acquire critical skills ... and it is possible to do it in eLearning.
- as a coach: the ability to develop students' independence and control over their own destinies is increasingly useful and required, and this requires co-designed learning paths distributed over time and integrated with the experience in the working life.

To interact with the **media** it takes exercise and creativity (this is perhaps the area where most of the training professionals are less at ease). What are the most relevant skills to develop?

- "journalistic" communication skills to write a blog, interview experts or publish videos on specialized topics and hot topics
- design skills to design educational content in eLearning
- video production capacity
- ability to select information and teachers to involve in the course, to meet the needs of a specific target

What are the most significant **transversal** skills?

- Keep your eyes open and be aware of industry trends
- Stay abreast of new training technologies so you do not miss an opportunity
- Share experiences and learn from mistakes and successes of other professionals

Read the complete article...