ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 60 Wednesday 13 march 2019

Web based learning: tools, techniques and methodologies

Web-based learning consists in distributing digital material to all users to facilitate self-learning. The distribution of information material can be in synchronous or asynchronous form.

When we talk about web-based learning we refer to the process of sending digital material to users for self-learning purposes. This is a fairly simple model, according to which, to learn something, it is sufficient to transmit the information from an issuer to a recipient.

Difference between synchronous and asynchronous web-based learning

The provision of material for web-based learning can take place in synchronous or asynchronous mode. The web-based synchronous learning is when the issuer supplies the information to the recipient / recipients using an audiovisual communication channel, through a streaming transmission system.
Recipients follow the lesson live, but usually participate only later to interact with the teachers. The interesting aspect of synchronous mode is that it is essential when a user does not have the opportunity to physically follow a course. The negative reflection is that accessibility problems, perhaps linked to the Internet connection, can prevent the entire course from being followed and can therefore create difficulties in understanding.
The asynchronous mode is still the most widely used in the diffusion of digital material. The parties do not share the same temporal condition. The user, as a recipient, can take advantage of the material when it deems it most appropriate and can use it without fear of interruptions typical of synchronous training.
On the other hand, the absence of time sharing requires those who provide the training to prepare the material with great care, trying to be clear and to include as many notions as possible. Lacking interaction with the teacher, in fact, it is essential that the user does not encounter problems in understanding the material and, therefore, in learning.

Asynchronous web-based learning: difference between autonomous form and assisted form of learning

The web-based synchronous learning can, in turn, be divided into two paths: the one in an autonomous form and the one in assisted form.
The autonomous path consists in making available to the user the information material necessary for self-learning on a specific platform. There is no interaction with the teachers. It is up to the user to research the material he is interested in and that best matches his learning needs.
The assisted path, instead, provides, in addition to research and use of material in an autonomous form, the presence of moments of interaction with the teacher, always through the computer. Compared to the autonomous form, in this case there is a greater interaction but only with the teacher and not with the other users.

The best solution

The best solution, probably, is that which involves a mixed use of synchronous and asynchronous mode. Providing distance learning synchronously is often the right choice when there is the need to participate in a course that can not be followed in person. If this formula is combined with and integrates the asynchronous one (sending summary slides and other useful material) then it is much easier to reach the objective hoped for on both sides: for the teacher to be clear and complete, and for the user to understand the material and learn new concepts.

Article taken from FondazioneDocentiPon