

Aneta Grzyb-Hejduk

Motivating module in estakada courses

What makes a good e-learning course? First of all - interactivity. Feedback.

What does that mean? Is it enough when upon completion of a course we take some tests and receive back something like:

Good! You have well mastered lessons 1, 2, and 4. Unfortunately you should repeat lessons 3 and 5.

One has to have a lot of time and patience, not to complain: Oh, no! I have to go through the whole two lessons again! And what is it that I haven't understood correctly?

Let's imagine a teacher says to a pupil:

After our last lesson you haven't scored the best. You have given only 40% correct answers. Therefore, we shall repeat the entire lesson all over again.

Why don't they concentrate on the 60% troublesome ideas instead? Of the remaining 40% the teacher could choose only really necessary ones.

And what is going to happen in an opposite situation? Will the teacher say:

According to the rules you have passed our last lesson, so we shall not return to its contents. Not even when you don't understand something important (of the 40% you failed to answer).

Usually, passing a test conditions passing a course by the system (lesson completed and passed). Consequently we get used to learning how to pass a test, instead of learning lesson contents.

Theory-practice-test cycle

Estakada puts exercises and tests inside a lesson, so they interlace the course.

After each small part of the material, introducing single concept in theory and practice, we ask one or several questions. The learner answers them without delay and receives valuable commentary. Such tests are not intended to verify whether the learner has memorized everything. They verify comprehension, ability to interpret and apply knowledge. Consequently, their objective is not to audit learner's performance (although they are trackable). Their purpose is mainly to help the learner's self-improvement.

Results of a training have to be relevant to its goals. Therefore questions should not verify factographic knowledge. Right exercises should help the learner understand what is required of her or him. What attitudes, skills and knowledge should she or he attain.

Self-management content. How to cause the learner to repeat?

Right repetitions are essential to attaining knowledge and further motivation of a learner. According to research, the longer the material the more repetition required. And it is not directly proportional - to learn a two times longer material we spend more than a two times longer time.

One can get discouraged by that!

In order to encourage to learning - estakada has introduced a new system. It enables individualized repetitions, based upon answers to the questions given within the lesson.

Upon completion of the lesson, as well as during the lesson, the learner can watch statistics and find out which parts of the lesson were understood correctly and which caused some trouble.

When she or he chooses repetition - the content reduces itself to the fragments necessary to understand the troublesome ideas.

Instead of going through the whole lesson in search for pieces of knowledge she or he has missed during test, the learner automatically reaches necessary contents.

Double motivation

We call our system "double motivation", for it motivates learners and disciplines methodics experts working on the content.

Learners are encouraged to concentrate on the material during the lesson and to repeat the fragments not having been comprehended.

Experts, who prepare the course, are challenged by obligation to carefully structuralize the content and prepare suitable exercises and tests.

Otherwise, the learner might:

- receive knowledge inadequate or insufficient to solve the problems;
- receive completely unbound contents, while the lesson should be consistent and well thought-out.

Careful structuring is very important to motivate grown-up learners. Grown-ups like to analyse and solve problems themselves, draw their own conclusions. In order to do that they need a well planned material.

Obviously, we can place as much tricky tests onto LMS or the course itself as we want, to verify the knowledge afterwards. Such tests shall generate information for training administrators, shall be a base of certification, etc.

Exercises inside lessons serve the learner. Help her or him to self-improve, provide her or him with feedback, are a basis for well prepared repetitions.

Estakada courses are designed so that they:

- focus learner's attention during a lesson, not only at final test;
- keep attracting the learner's attention, also by built-in statistics available on demand;
- enable self-improvement (do I understand well what I see and hear?);
- provide constant feedback;
- enable selfassessment by the learner;
- make repetitions easier, limit them to issues most required by the particular learner.