



onTrain

Online Training, the treasure within

B. Online Training

4. Promoting a learning attitude

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Let's start



What am I learning here and why?

We will focus here on why it is important and how you can support and promote a learning attitude, not only in your group of students, but also your own. This is very important to build up an inclusive society that offers equal opportunities of access to a high-quality learning standard and to keep the learning community citizens active.

What content will I find here?

You will find here some notions on the importance of supporting a learning attitude and a few practical recommendations on how to do it.

Teaching or learning?

Since the Middle Ages it has been believed that the teacher's task is to teach and the learner's task is to learn. We have seen in previous units, however, that the role of the teacher has changed profoundly in recent years, as the role of the learner has, until it gradually has become a builder of his or her own knowledge and a subject who builds his or her own attitudes and skills. It is considered fundamental in this sense to replace lessons with **learning units**, which are programmed by the trainer and personalised for each learner on the basis of levels of development and learning, rhythms and styles of learning, attitudes. The design of the learning units must take into account the plan of the training offer and conform to the personal characteristics of the individual learners and be articulated in activities that are part of an integrated training system.

Characteristics of the Learning Units are:

1. the **personalization of the training courses**: the aim is the formation of the personality: knowledge is functional to knowing how to do and above all to knowing how to be;
2. the substitution of individual work with **group work**;
3. the use of **new learning tools** different from textbooks, from the blackboards, etc.

Why promote and support learning (your own and those of your users)

The learning that we undertake voluntarily outside formal training courses, which are those characterised by the presence of a teacher, content and timetable already decided in advance by the organisation responsible for training and a traditional classroom setting, can and must be encouraged and supported. This type of learning is receiving a big boost thanks to the enormous amount of information (including video information) available on the Web, the possibility of communicating via the Internet with other people or experts, the spread of systems that allow you to certify your learning outside formal learning paths.

Some advantages of non-formal learning are the possibility to choose the content, the place, the days and the time of study, the limited cost, the use of different learning modes than the classic frontal lesson with which many adults are uncomfortable. However, despite its many advantages, it requires a number of tricks that are not easy for some of the people who intend to use it to master, and this creates the need for support offered by third parties.

How to support learning

Let's see briefly how to promote and support your own learning and that of your students.

1. **Choose a learning objective** and develop an action plan to achieve it structured in sub-objectives and articulated in a chronological sense. The detailed structuring can also take place gradually, as we deepen our knowledge of the topic of interest in our preferred learning styles and the possible structuring of our learning environment.
2. **Identify your preferred learning styles.** For example, some of us prefer to learn alongside, others by reading independently, others in formal contexts. Being aware of one's preferred learning styles allows for faster and more effective learning.
3. **Identify and choose possible study materials.** Today the search for materials is mainly on the Internet (sites, web articles, videos, discussion forums, etc.) and is mainly directed to free resources.
4. **Choose how to structure your study environment** and which study aids to use. The place where learning activities take place varies according to individual possibilities and preferences. Study aids can be personal computers, pen and paper, highlighter, pencil, pencil sharpener, etc.
5. **Analyze the study materials.** This can mean reading books, articles, watching videos, listening to audio files, watching people doing certain tasks.
6. **Extract the main concepts and methodologies from the study materials.** If our goal is to acquire information on a particular topic, this phase involves identifying the

main events or characteristics. This activity will be facilitated by strategies such as highlighting or underlining parts of text, drawing diagrams, writing summaries. If, on the other hand, we want to learn how to carry out a certain activity, in this phase we should identify, thanks to the study materials, the subtasks whose synchronized or sequential execution makes it possible to carry out the main task, and for each of them the theories/principles that guide the action, the methodologies used, the ways of using any tools used. In this second case it will be useful to prepare observation grids and/or discuss with others what are the salient aspects of what has been observed and equally summarize in writing the most important elements or assemble video clips.

7. **Support the storage of information.** This phase is very important especially if the objective is to acquire information on a given topic. In this case some of the strategies already described in the previous point are useful, such as drawing diagrams and writing summaries, plus a number of additional strategies such as repeating the main concepts aloud, paraphrasing, writing formulas, writing essays, answering multiple-choice quizzes, developing nursery rhymes to help you remember the most important terms. If, on the other hand, you want to learn how to do a certain activity, it is useful to watch the videos several times, focusing on the most important aspects.
8. **Practice what you are learning.** This phase is especially important when you want to learn how to do a certain activity. This phase can include doing exercises, discussing case studies, carrying out simulations, carrying out real activities alongside a competent practitioner, but also realizing concrete things such as, depending on the objective, paintings, small machines, computer programs, handicrafts. The learning of activities is facilitated by the repetition of cycles composed of execution, observation (which can be self-observation and/or hetero evaluation), performance evaluation, programming of the next cycle trying to improve further by avoiding repeating the limits that have emerged. It is therefore very useful to set up observation grids and/or obtain feedback from third parties (on feedback from third parties see point nine).
9. **Monitor your learning process.** This means in particular verifying day by day that the sub learning objectives are actually achieved within the planned time frame, keeping track in a diary of indicators such as daily study hours, number and type of exercises carried out each day, results, number of errors and difficulties that have emerged, emotions and level of motivation, etc.
10. **Identify and use sources of feedback, sharing and support.** For example, it is possible to address and network with fellow students (also through discussion lists, specialized sites with virtual communities, Facebook or LinkedIn groups), paid teachers, coaches, experts in the field, co-workers and other experts.

The use of technology to promote a learning attitude

Technologies represent a tool for:

- Facilitating curricular learning;
- Promoting cognitive development.

The effectiveness of technology is related to:

- the organisation of the programme in relation to goals to pursue (therefore, by the software that is used)
- cognitive and emotional characteristics of the learners
- positive attitude of the teacher in the act of mediation.

In this perspective technologies are understood as both:

- tools: personal computers, Internet network, interactive whiteboards, video projects;
- resources: open applications sources available on the web, multimedia materials, virtual working spaces, clouding computing, etc.

The presence of digital in the classroom activity constitutes a valuable resource, able to respond to a wide spectrum of needs, configuring itself as a factor of inclusiveness.

The term "didactics 3.0" designates an approach that, exploiting the extraordinary technologies of Cloud Learning, transforms and overwhelms the paradigms of traditional learning, offering to everyone, indiscriminately, through innovative teaching methods (cooperative learning, project-based learning, metacognitive approaches, laboratory didactics) the possibility of realizing a customized training according to inclinations, needs and the cognitive style of each one, without any more constraints of space, time and resources. Properly selected hardware and software aids can make the learning environment more welcoming and stimulating, improve the differentiation of the didactic paths, and promote greater participation by those who present cognitive difficulties, allowing the elimination of those barriers of access that increase the gap between comrades.

The European surveys clearly show the educative value that modern technologies cover in school environment for the purposes of cultural growth and development of those skills required by contemporary society.

The European Commission has resolutely placed the use of the technologies as an opportunity to support lecturers in making the cooperative and inclusive teaching in extremely heterogeneous contexts, and in the presence of learners with special needs. The majority of European countries share the principle that an appropriate use of digital tools can reduce inequality and support inclusion. Adequate preparation of teachers is necessary in such scope, for the proper use of modern devices technology to support effective learning practices, tailored to the needs of each learner.

Examples

A central element of any non-formal learning session is the discussions, whether in plenary or in small groups of participants. A very important point of the non-formal methodology is always to carry out an appropriate debriefing, i.e. the discussion at the end of each activity. Any activity is not considered complete without a proper discussion among the participants, based on the sharing of each participant's moods, points of view and personal experience. The facilitator must also ensure that everyone in the group is able to speak, if they can. It is a very delicate role that requires great sensitivity, empathy, moderation, understanding and active listening skills, which can be acquired and exercised through experience.

Exercises



In this guide we are talking about e-learning. There are many ways to stimulate learning through the use of digital tools. A lesson is all the richer the more multimedia elements are used. Here are two simple exercises to make lessons more attractive and stimulate the use of multimedia tools by learners.

Exercise 1: Head in the cloud



Create a **free cloud file storage space** for your course/lesson and give reading authorization to the students. Regularly upload content and ask them to download/read/visualize it. This will be a stimulating tool that will enable learners to have full access to any material whenever they feel like to have it, and it will also help keeping them interested in using an innovative tool that will enhance their ICT skills.

Exercise 2: Can you hear it?



A **podcast** is an episodic series of spoken word digital audio files that a user can download to a personal device for easy listening. A podcast is tool that is particularly suitable for educational purposes - you can record audio lectures, summaries, descriptions, narrations, and those files can be played on computers, tablets, smartphones, MP3 files players. Now, try to record your lesson and send the file to the learners. It has to be not very long and with a captivating tone of voice, you don't have to bore them. You can use short bits of songs, sort of a jingle, not longer than 10 seconds, between chapters or topics. T the end of the podcast, ask the students to give a feedback through a specific channel of communication, so that to make sure they kept listening until the end.

Summary



In this chapter you have learnt that the way we think about the relation between the teacher and the learner has changed a lot in the last decades. Supporting a learning attitude is a very important topic in lifelong learning and it can be implemented through a series of simple and free of costs actions that the tutor has to take into account to involve learners and make them active in the learning environment.

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