



The Importance of Microlearning in eLearning Design

by ELB Guest Author | Mar 2, 2016 | eLearning, Featured, Instructional Design Resources, Resources | 2 comments



THE IMPORTANCE OF MICROLEARNING IN ELEARNING DESIGN

If you search for a definition of “microlearning” in Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary, you won’t find one. The way I describe microlearning is a brief, succinct learning activity that:

- Requires a short amount of time
- Covers very specific topics
- Exists (often) as part of a larger curriculum

These “knowledge nuggets” (as I’ve heard them referred to) are a natural fit for eLearning design that’s focused on meeting the needs of the modern learner, in any environment by providing just-in-time training.

Modern Learners

Today’s learners (myself included) are often overwhelmed with too much information. We’re distracted by competing priorities and are impatient to get the information we need. When you incorporate microlearning into your eLearning course design, you’re able to meet the needs of your learners by providing bite-sized pieces of information that are easy to digest.

Digital Environment

Thanks to the technology available via smartphones, tablets, laptops, and other forms of [mobile delivery](#), microlearning can take place anywhere and at any time. This makes it easy to deliver training in a retail environment, a classroom, a hospital, corporate office, or anywhere a WiFi connection is available. Learners can access the information they need, whenever they need it—and thanks to the brevity of microlearning, it's easy for designers to update or replace content to ensure it reflects the most current information.

Just in Time Training

I recently had a microlearning experience when I found that my car battery was dead. In order to learn how to jumpstart the dead battery, I didn't use the manual that came with the jumper cables. I didn't reflect on what I'd learned in my Driver's Ed class a few (ahem) years ago. Instead, I stood next to my car (okay, it's a minivan) with my smartphone and watched a video a few (okay, three) times. Thanks to that just-in-time training, I was able to successfully start my car battery. (Insert audience applause here.)

It's the same with your learners— they want access to training that's just in time, when they need to perform a certain task, or that helps them grasp a new concept. eLearning courses allow you to take the concept behind quick instructional videos and make them more interactive. The goal of delivering just-in-time training remains the same, but thanks to checks for understanding and interactive elements, it's even more likely that your learners will be able to use and retain the information you've provided.

Not all training content fits into microlearning. But, look for [places](#) where you can incorporate and utilize this approach. Your organization and your learners will surely reap the benefits when just in time learning content is accessible at any time and from anywhere.



Liz Sheffield is a freelance writer with a background in training and development. She specializes in writing about everything related to the human side of business. You can contact her via [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

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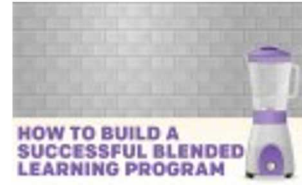
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Paul Schneider on March 4, 2016 at 4:12 pm

Some great points here. One thing to keep in mind, even when developing larger sequenced courses, is if you focus on your key objectives you can break items up into smaller topics (ahem learning objects) and especially if you have an LCMS or LCMS like authoring platform you can easily slice and dice and repackage those into another KBase type course, perhaps with even a different branding or searchable interface or even add direct links that jump to parts of the course automatically making your internal learning portal a great reference tool as well.



pete on March 9, 2016 at 6:45 am

Yes, absolutely Liz! My present challenge is dealing with idiots who feel empowered to manipulate my content based on their nonexperience (worse than inexperience) and silo point-of-view.

Their present fixation is getting old-style web-lesson content on smartphones! It's like dealing with squirrels – a bright shiny thing gets their attention and they proceed to manipulate and shred whatever it happens to be. When it's finally all crumbled and broken – they walk away.

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