



MICROLEARNING

Microlearning is a fairly recent trend in web-based teaching; it is also a way to implement digital pedagogy.

Microlearning is based on the idea that the content you want to teach is divided into small bits of information or time. These are called 'nuggets' or 'nuggets of information'. A nugget can be many things: a moment, a lesson or a situation. It can also be a unit or a skill.

Microlearning is a way of teaching that is learner-centered. Each moment of learning is goal-oriented and has a short time span. The word 'microlearning' refers to small and short. Short in this context really means short. The length is minutes or even seconds. The change is quite profound when you think of traditional teaching that is usually discussed in terms of hours.

First consider the content as a whole. You might start by thinking about how long a time is wise from a learning perspective. Then you chop it into smaller units. What are the things the students must learn? How can this learning happen if you chop it into small units of time?

A microlearning unit may include orientation, a short video focusing on the content, or an instruction or learning assignment. Microlearning is often conducted by using a video; the video itself might include an activation or an assignment. A microlearning unit may also take the form of a short podcast.

The moment for learning will be distributed to the students through the web or in a web-based learning environment. The students may use computers or handheld devices. The idea is that students can access the teaching moment conveniently anywhere, they can reach their target easily, and the learning will require only a short time.

Microlearning is especially fit for situations in which the participants need to learn the use of an application or a new skill that can be presented through a video, and where the students then can apply the new skill in their work assignments.

Microlearning is also good for developing teaching skills and knowhow. When a teacher is unable to participate in training or needs help quickly, he or she can study by using moments of microlearning. Many organizations are already using microlearning when teaching systems everyone must be able to use. Everyone can learn the part they need to brush up on. These microlearning units may for instance consist of voice-over videos with information on services.



Microlearning can be assimilated into teaching in many ways. It can be used in flipped classroom situations. The flipped classroom is a form of blended learning whereby one plans teaching by using both classroom and distance learning. The name flipped classroom comes from traditional classroom teaching where one first has a classroom lesson taught by the teacher, followed by homework. In flipped classroom learning one starts with independent study, for example by using a short video presentation to familiarize students with new content. This is followed by a teacher-led classroom situation in which the students actively study using learning assignments given by the teacher. In the classroom the students work either alone or in groups.

Microlearning is a useful, student-centered method where content is easily available at the right time. The students do not waste time when studying, and the moments may be incorporated into other work assignments or studies. Think about teaching the use of tools of information work: how to write a text, how to edit a text, how to use spreadsheets; or how to use an application or access a system.

The microlearning materials often take the form of videos, which often make learning a new subject easy. A video can be used to teach something in stages, or to show how something is done. The students have easy access to microlearning units if these can be found in a web-based learning environment. From a teacher's point of view, another good thing is that a single unit can be attached to several learning situations. It is readily available to be reused. Microlearning units can be used as single moments or as parts of a larger whole.

You can combine moments and build learning processes of varying lengths even if you originally planned a unit (moment) for a very specific and clearly-defined assignment. Microlearning can also help students create individual learning goals and learning methods when they need to define what to study and when.

A microlearning moment is small and short, and so is the process of making it. This is good, because if you need to redo the moment, it will not require much of your time, or be expensive to do.

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