

Avoiding Awkward: Delivering Difficult Topics Through Animation

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Emotion

Emotion plays a central role in this learning experience (Elias & Mocer, 2012). The use of storytelling is designed to evoke empathy from the learner. The scenarios expose the learner to potentially familiar real life workplace situations and experiences which some may find difficult or uncomfortable to watch.

Highly stylised animated characters and settings ensure that the simulation remains familiar but different enough from real life to reduce the likelihood of a negative emotional response creating a barrier to learning.

“...your message can get muddled with the portrayal of real people... With animated video you can... strike a wider range of emotional tones. This can help cover difficult subjects effectively, without causing your audience to put their defenses up.”

(Vyond Team, 2016)

Method

This digital learning project was developed using Vyond to create the animations and Articulate Storyline 360 to add interactivity. Vyond is an online video platform that allows us to quickly create animated content using a customisable library of visual assets and templates. We can rapidly design and edit characters and settings before adding animation and voiceover. Vyond gives us the freedom to make changes whenever necessary and make future edits easily.

The course was released to a pilot cohort of learners in mid 2019. These learners were spread across a cross-border charity, healthcare organisation and financial services institution.



**“...very accessible and practical...
...the animation made it easier for me to pay attention and watch a challenging topic...
...reminiscent of childhood and comforting...”**

Catering Manager,
National Rehabilitation Hospital

References

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Images: The Learning Rooms. (2019). Stills from course *Bullying and Harassment training for all* [Image].



Bullying and Harassment Scenarios

Select a scenario to begin



The New Employee



Break Room Exclusion



Inappropriate Comments



Each scenario will take 30 minutes

This course contains audio



TEST AUDIO

Introduction

Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment are the behaviours most frequently cited as undermining dignity in the workplace.

We developed a course called ***Bullying and Harassment training for all***. The course includes an interactive 30 minute eLearning package and three animated scenarios.

Learners follow realistic and relatable stories of three workers experiencing inappropriate behaviour in their workplace. Scenario based learning engages the learner by asking them to make decisions based on what they have experienced and presenting immediate corrective feedback or positive reinforcement based on their choices.

Animations are a great tool for displaying complex issues and can help learners understand difficult concepts more easily

(Ainsworth, 2008)



“Our learners found the module engaging and felt that the animations brought the situation to life”

Director of Human Resources,
Depaul



Results and Conclusion

Analysis of feedback from the first cohort suggests that the course has been well received by both line managers and employees. Learners felt that the course content was practical and true to life and that the interactions were an excellent way to reinforce learning.

Notable feedback referred to the animated content as being “reminiscent of childhood” and “comforting.” This is a testament to the effectiveness of animation.

It is hoped that the launch of this course within an organisation will improve knowledge of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment as well as triggering and driving behavioural change where required.

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