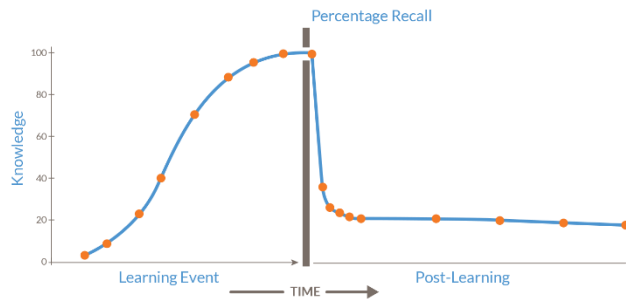


THE FORGETTING CURVE AND COMPLIANCE TRAINING: IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER?

By Sean Murphy, Product Manager

What does a 167-year-old German scientist have to do with your compliance training? If you want to increase retention of the content in your training, the answer is “everything.”

Hermann Ebbinghaus was a German psychologist credited with theorizing fundamentals of human learning, including the learning curve, the spacing effect, and the forgetting curve. The **Ebbinghaus Forgetting Curve** illustrates the fact that retention following a learning event drops steeply soon after completion of that event, until it flattens around 30-days post event.



Steven Just, Ed.D., Chief Learning Officer at Intel Learning, a developer of continuous learning platforms, writes, “What gets stored in our long-term memories is subject to decay...deep learning occurs when memories are stored in long-term memory and stabilized. This is called memory consolidation.”

Fortunately, for those challenged with reducing compliance risk, there are strategies to help increase the long-term retention of compliance training.

Tools to Increase Retention

As Dr. Just writes, the key is to “retrieve the memory from long-term memory, bring it into working memory, process it, and then re-encode it in long-term memory.” Four primary strategies support this process: adaptive questioning, microlearning, assessment, and gamification.

Adaptive questioning takes advantage of the “spacing effect” and the “testing effect” to create a pattern of “successive relearning.” To maximize the learning, quiz learners over a period of days, or weeks, following a

learning event and resend the questions that an individual learner answers incorrectly more frequently.

Microlearning involves breaking content into short “content nuggets.” Deploying those nuggets regularly, on a schedule, flattens the forgetting curve and heightens retention. Interleaving two or more related, but different, content streams increases the results even more. Content nuggets can be in the form of text, video, audio, or any combination of all three.

Research shows that **assessment** is an effective tool for increasing retention. Don’t limit yourself to summative assessments that only measure mastery of a topic at the end of a training cycle. Add pre- and post-tests to measure learning gains, priming tests to help form cognitive schema, and diagnostic tests for remediation.

Gamification increases learning through motivation. It can be as simple as setting up contests between groups of learners, even if the format is not in the form of a traditional “game.” The concept isn’t limited to electronic training. Making workshops and POAs more competitive drives greater results. Rather than just presenting a scenario for discussion, introduce a “mystery” concept, starting with clues (emails, social media posts, phone call transcripts, etc.) to help participants search for red flags and hints. Teams can then compete against each other as they solve the scenario using the clues and their understanding of best practices and policy.

Keep it Continuous

Whether you launch a continuous learning system to help manage the delivery of individual components, or incorporate these strategies into your existing curriculum, the results can be dramatic as information is “re-stored” in the learner’s long-term memory.

To truly reduce risk, the learning you continuously roll out after the completion of an initial event is as vital as the initial event itself.

PharmaCertify compliance training products include [Compliance 365](#), an innovative continuous learning system for the life sciences industry.