

NAVY TESTING BLENDED LEADERSHIP COURSE
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Though it is argued the function of leadership is to produce more leaders, one of the greatest attributes of a true leader may indeed be in realizing when is the time to follow. And, though we call some “born” leaders, because they possess a seemingly natural strength of character, their leadership skills and attributes are not innate, but a product of their socialization. While effective leadership cannot be taught, its art form must be learned. But how and where do effective leaders learn this art? The Navy is attempting to answer these questions through revolutionary approach to leadership training.

Currently, the Chief of Naval Education and Training’s Naval Leader Training Unit (NLTU), San Diego, is testing state of the art leadership courses as a replacement for the current Leadership Continuum courses. The new courses are designed to maximize Sailors’ proficiency in organizational leadership.

“In the past, the Navy has tried to teach leadership to Sailors, instead of creating an environment in which they can grow and develop into effective leaders,” said Cmdr. Matt Peters, Task Force for Excellence through Commitment to Education and Training (EXCEL) Chief of Staff. “The Revolution in Training is focused on creating that environment of learning, and these new course designs are focused on providing Sailors with the tools to succeed in that environment.”

Driven by the need to vitalize leadership training, the Navy is putting alternative educational delivery methods to the test at the NLTU Coronado, Calif.(Note: Gary, are NLTU Coronado and San Diego the same?) First class petty officers participating in the experimental courses experience the same blended environment of interactive courseware,

video and instructor-led discussions that are currently being taught to corporate executives in private industry.

The courseware, developed by Ninth House Network of San Francisco, (SF stands alone) a leader in interactive leadership delivery systems, will subsequently be tested at the Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy, Newport, R.I., NLTU Little Creek, Va., and Naval Aviation Schools Command. Pensacola, Fla..

"The current Ninth House product pilot is to learn more about the best ways to use these types of learning tools," said Master Chief Greg Pratt, Chief of Naval Education and Training Force Master Chief. "We hope to set in motion a continuous approach to leadership training where a Sailor can receive refresher training either through traditional delivery methods or through E-Learning. This will allow the Sailor to continue to better themselves not only as a leader, but as a whole person."

Blended learning allows course developers to bring cutting edge leadership courseware into a self-paced program that provides students the opportunity to absorb information at a rate that best suits their individual learning capacities, thus increasing student success rates.

Concepts and implementation strategies are reinforced through powerful instructor-led discussions at pivotal points throughout the course in either one-on-one, or group settings. Students completing the pilot almost unanimously agree the computer-based system is not only relevant to the Navy environment, but will help them in becoming more effective leaders. Students felt as though they were actually a part of the program making the decisions on whether they would succeed or fail.

"The course design allows students to see real responses to scenarios, instead of trying to imagine them," said one student. "I would however, add more Navy-specific leadership

scenarios to work with, as they would further reinforce the lesson topics, thus ingraining them into memory.”

In addition to the E-Learning, instructor discussion, and interactive video scenarios, students will leave the course with continued access to a broad range of leadership development courses, allowing them to further sharpen their skills as they travel along their career paths.

The focus of the Leadership Continuum developmental working group, is to deliver essential leadership training at appropriate times throughout a Sailor’s career, based not on their rank, but on the position they hold.

“The hope is that when all is said and done, our approach to leadership training will be to provide the appropriate learning opportunity before they take on a particular responsibility, and will not be tied to rank, but rather job or tasking,” said Pratt. “The important part of the equation is delivering training at the proper time to enable Sailors to be successful.”

And so, as the Navy works diligently to identify the leadership competencies required of Sailors, it is likewise pressing hard to develop a training system that supports that requirement. But what is different today is the way the Navy is approaching the challenge, developing tools complementary to new opportunities, creating an environment that grooms effective leaders, where Sailors hone their art, while developing a new state of mind.

“I applaud the Leadership Pilot,” said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark. “We must take risks, challenge all assumptions, ask the tough questions, and try new ideas.”

The Revolution in Training is Clark’s initiative to revolutionize Navy training and education while creating a new culture of learning that encourages Sailors to learn, grow, lead and excel. For more information on the Leadership Pilot and the Revolution in Training visit

www.excel.navy.mil