



a limbic|case study

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Following the introduction of e-learning at The Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering it was time to take things to the next step. The Royal Navy wanted to get the best from e-learning **and** traditional training delivery. The Royal Navy wanted a **blend...**

The Vision

The Leading Engineering Technician course is the second stage on the career ladder for a Marine Engineer.

The course is substantial: a 42-week City & Guilds accredited course comprising just over 1,200 hours of training time per trainee, which on removing practical and Key Skills training still left some 450 hours of class time.

The Navy wanted to introduce technology without compromising the quality of the training, and gain more time for hands-on practical work.

The Approach

A crucial aspect in designing a blend is to design for the right reasons: just because you **can** turn things into e-learning doesn't mean that you **should** turn it into e-learning.

It's very easy for an e-learning vendor to apply the formula *a blend = maximise the e-learning element*. On the other hand, it's very easy for a traditional training company to apply the formula *a blend = maximise the instructor-led element*.

A more balanced approach considers all things equal, which allows us to focus on the **learner** and the **learning outcomes**. This leaves us with *a blend = learning design + learner experience + delivery modes*.

With experienced instructors and classroom

time available, and demonstrations and hands-on practicals plentiful it was truly a case of understanding how and where e-learning would add value.

The challenge for LIMBIC and the subject matter expert (SMEs) was to design an effective blend that included e-learning where appropriate, maximised the instructor's role and impact, and increased time for practical work.

To get this right it was essential that LIMBIC spent significant time on site at HMS Sultan. Working so closely with the Royal Navy project team and over 20 SMEs, the project became a real partnership.

LIMBIC's team engaged with SMEs in groups and individually to discuss the ideas involved in learner-centred design, the various modes of delivery available, and where e-learning could achieve desired outcomes.

Chief Petty Officer 'Scotty' Nicholson spent a lot of time with LIMBIC's learning experts as he worked on two modules. Scotty's view on the approach to the blend was very positive:

"For so long things have been done in the old 'traditional' way. Working on this project with the learning designers changed my philosophy on learning. It's immaterial in a way that our blend has an e-learning side to it; even if it didn't the whole approach by the LIMBIC team to the blend brought a new way of thinking about delivering training."



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E-learning components of the blend

Courseware for 10-15 min self-study tutorials designed for underpinning knowledge, basic concepts, and in-context scenarios for application practice.

Virtual laboratories designed for the classroom, allowing trainees to explore and discuss laws and complex concepts.

Animated demonstrations designed for classroom facilitation so that trainees can follow and understand the operation of complex systems.

Video vignettes to show simple processes and methods.

A **wiki** containing all course materials, including more in-depth information to satisfy curious students. The wiki is based on the Mediawiki engine (as used by Wikipedia) to ensure instant familiarity.

Moodle as the RNSME learning portal both inside the classroom for the instructor, as well as outside the classroom for the student. E-learning materials will grow thanks to Moodle as instructors add additional materials (quizzes, activities, documents and links), and as students and instructors engage in online forums.

Not only do the students have media rich courseware and several other resources at their disposal, but by using **Moodle** instructors can continually enhance the learning experience by adding new materials, quizzes, activities, and links to learning resources quickly and easily.

Andy Tower, instructor at HMS Sultan: "I've been putting together a 20-question quiz to drop into Moodle. The instructor's role is definitely becoming much more facilitative."

Andy was the first instructor to pilot the blend and the new learning technologies: "It's interesting how some students work their way through the e-learning by dipping in and out, whilst others work methodically through from start to finish. From the pilot runs it seems that allowing about 30 minutes for e-learning activity with 15 minutes of me clarifying points and providing further guidance is a good way for the students to learn."

The Future

The Royal Navy are on track to have 30 hours of self-study e-learning courseware, and up to 5 hours of instructor led media rich e-learning.

Almost 200 hours has been freed up that can now be used for higher value classroom events such as discussion, practice and case studies; more opportunities for trainee reflection; and more time to devote to practical activity.

Lieutenant Commander Tracie Price headed up the implementation:

"As a direct result of LIMBIC's work, the RN will now be delivering training that appeals to the modern generation and, more importantly, we will be sending engineers that are more competent and confident to the Fleet."

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