



MarineNet TTP



Improving Presentations for Online Learning: Part 1– Content and Organization

This TTP is for you if...

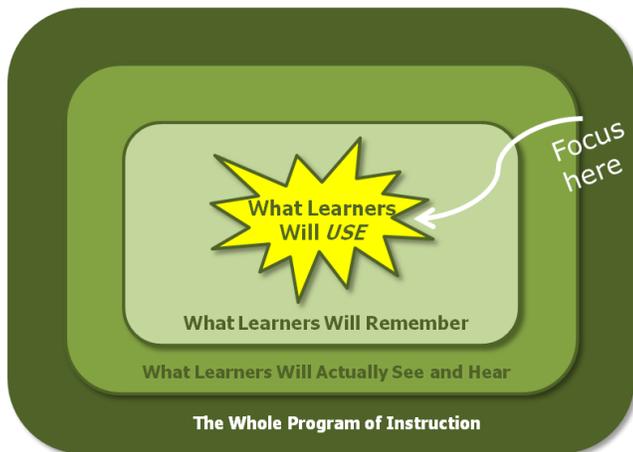
You've determined that training is the best solution for an identified performance problem (or have been specifically directed to provide training and verify completion).

You lack the time, technical expertise, and/or resources to develop a "real" interactive course for MarineNet.

You're willing to invest a bit of time and brainpower toward providing the best possible learning experience given existing resources.

The following tips are based on well-researched and acknowledged best practices in the conversion of instructor-facilitated presentations into online, self-paced learning without instructor support.

1: Cull the "must know" from the "nice-to-know" information.



Identify the two or three points that are most critical to successful mission performance. Keep only the content that truly supports understanding of the critical 20% the learner MUST know.

Provide hyperlinks or list references for additional or more detailed information.

2. Get the learners' attention.

Start with something new and different. Present a little known fact or myth. Describe a case with an unexpected twist or outcome—make it a cliffhanger and save the outcome for the course conclusion.

3. Chunk the content.

Add some structure and break the content into logical, easily consumable sections. Structure gives learners a sense of how concepts fit together and makes the information easier to recall and apply.

4. Let learners know where they are.

Put up a "sign" at the beginning of each new section—make all the signpost slides look and feel similar to each other but different from content slides. Ideally, the signpost slide will focus learners on what they will get out of this section and why it matters.

Include a title on every slide, but make title content really useful. Try writing a "newspaper headline" that summarizes the main idea of every slide in clear language. Alternatively, ask a brief question that you will answer with the slide's content.

5. Turn learning objectives into motivators.

Focus on key things the learner will want to be able to do—try framing the objectives as questions and pointing learners to the specific place in the course that will help them.

Speak directly to the learner (use "you"). Turn "I-know-it" verbs like "identify" and "describe" into "I-can-do-it" verbs like "disassemble" and "use."

6. Eliminate distractions.

Our brains have only so much bandwidth for processing incoming information. Don't squander that precious but limited attention. Remove entertaining but irrelevant or unhelpful anecdotes, clip art, photos, slide transitions, and template items.



Every unit is different; every training plan unique. MarineNet provides flexible solutions.

7. Cut the text.

Include the LEAST amount of text you can use to communicate clearly and facilitate learning. The “Rule of Six” says no more than six bullets per slide, six words per bullet. If using sentences and paragraphs (which may make more sense if you are not adding narration), keep sentences short and limit paragraphs to three sentences.

Better yet, if your slides tend to be text-heavy like this one...

Distance Learning Defined

- **Distance Learning** encompasses the design, development & delivery of instruction to students at a different time and/or place than the resident schoolhouse. The instruction provides a deliberate, accessible, interactive learning experience between the student & the instructor/course developer with delivery methods that vary from print-based to faculty & from video-teleconferencing to computer-based instruction/technologies.
-- adapted from CJCSI 1800.01D OPMEP.
- **Marine Corps Distance Learning (MCDL)** encompasses both distance education and training. To accomplish this, the CDET employs appropriate course design, supported by specific instructional techniques & technology. The MCDL LMS, learning support tools, and infrastructure are integrated to enroll and track student progress, deliver curriculum & course materials, enhance faculty & student interaction, assess student performance, and record graduations/course completions in MCTFS.

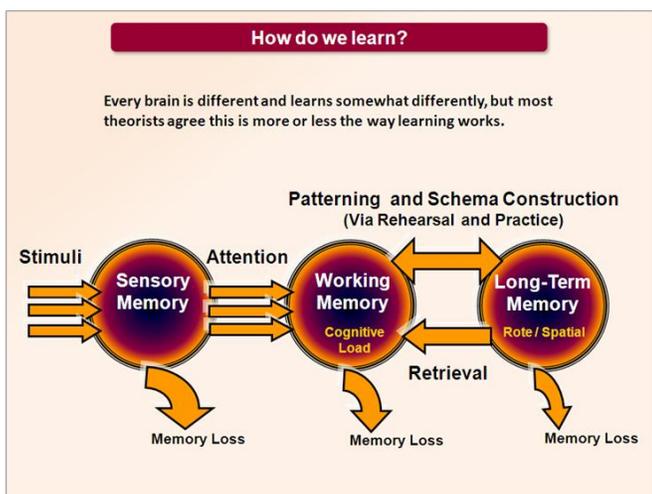
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...consider providing a more easily readable PDF document instead of a slide-based presentation.

8. Think visual.

Whenever possible, *show* rather than *tell*. Use images or photos that are central to the learning points, like a diagram of a process flow or an illustration of a mechanical operation.



If you're using MS PowerPoint, take advantage of the SmartArt and Chart features. Find relevant photos at:

- www.defenseimagery.mil
- <http://www.marines.mil/news/Pages/photos.aspx>

Consider using your own digital camera to take photos of elements that are unique to your content and operational environment.

9. Capture the instructor's contribution.

The most effective Marine instructors provide real-life context through relevant “war stories.” Add a scenario or two that center around authentic experiences and lessons learned. Include examples of things that have gone wrong or key mistakes to avoid. If you are adapting someone else's presentation, you typically won't find these examples in the speaker notes—be prepared to do some digging.

10. Engage the learner.

Incorporate questions and choices. Stop your story at crucial points where mistakes are often made and ask for the learner's input.

Alleged Sexual Assault: Commander's Response

You are the Kilo Company commander. Your Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) informs you that a sexual assault has been alleged by one of your Marines against another.

What action would you take?

You might also give learners a set of plausible options (targeting the most common errors or misperceptions), then follow with feedback that specifically addresses each choice. If your PowerPoint skills are up to it, you can link each choice to its own feedback screen, then bring all learners back to the next screen in the instructional sequence—but simply asking a question on one screen and providing feedback for every choice on the following screen will increase the chances that learners will remember and apply what you are trying to teach.



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