

From the Editor's Desk



HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2013, to all our readers, seafarers ashore and those out at sea.

"A man is but the product of his thoughts, what he thinks, he becomes." – Mahatma Gandhi

"You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." – Mahatma Gandhi

"We must agree that anything that is determined by intellect is an intellectually concocted thing. We, human-beings to build courage, confidence and determination to grasp the reality, for improved conditions by better solutions, all with our better intellect and under-standing." – Dr. Chandran Peechulli.

"Each of us in our own way can try to spread compassion into people's hearts. Western civilizations these days place great importance on filling the human 'brain' with knowledge, but no one seems to care about filling the human 'heart' with compassion. This is what the real role of religion is." – Dalai Lama

"This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness." – Dalai Lama

We expect each MMD (Mercantile Marine Department), in every region of our country, that represents the Office of the Directorate General Shipping, to be a model of excellence, in theory and practice, a place where regulatory support for professional fulfilment and breakthrough, towards seafarers quality and welfare. The need to be committed in creating an environment that fosters the professional and personal achievement of each person who crosses the threshold. By sharing these achievements across, each MMD's image is heightened. Seafarers to be the beneficiaries of these achievements, every accomplishment should bring us one step closer to our ultimate goal of better lives of seafarer's and their families. MMD Centres in the region should bring in all potential benefits of multi-disciplinary management. India and Sri Lanka last week inspected flag of convenience vessels at several ports across South Asia to help drive up seafarers' pay and conditions. DOES THIS MAKE SENSE? * When, Indian national registered vessels like Prathiba Cauvery and Werna of one single Indian Shipping company, widely exposed recently by the media, proved unseaworthy vessels, playing with the lives of the Indian Seafarers. Does this not make sense? *To probe into the issue.

US DOE study, the meta-analysis was formed after looking at roughly 1,000 studies, and then filtering them down to 45 studies, which were sufficiently rigorous and covered the desired questions directly. These 45 studies were then carefully reviewed to distil the information for this one report. As far as I am aware, there is no better answer anywhere to the question "does eLearning work". The Answer: The US DOE meta-analysis came to several conclusions. I encourage you to read the full report yourself, since there are many useful nuances to the conclusions below - all of which will provide a greater understanding of eLearning effectiveness. Let's look at some of the most notable conclusions:

Conclusion number 1: Online learning outperforms face-to-face learning:

- "Students in online conditions performed modestly better, on average, than those learning the same material through traditional face-to-face instruction. Learning outcomes for students who engaged in online learning exceeded those of students receiving face-to-face instruction."
- The effect size here (the size of the difference in effectiveness) between on-line and face-to-face instruction was quite small, but it does exist with the "win" going to on-line learning. However, with the effect being so small, I have always considered the learning effectiveness between on-line and face-to-face to be roughly equivalent. We can say unequivocally that on-line learning most certainly does not produce inferior outcomes when compared to face-to-face instruction, as many incorrectly believe. I should note, however, that until I performed my own studies in the 1990s, I also assumed that eLearning would be inferior. I was wrong.

Conclusion number 2: Blended learning is best:

- "Instruction combining online and face-to-face elements had a larger advantage relative to purely face-to-face instruction than did purely online instruction."

Blended learning is the technique of combining learning modes - in this case on-line learning and face-to-face learning. The conclusion above indicates that when you use a combination of on-line and face-to-face training, the learning outcomes are better than for either face-to-face or eLearning alone. This makes intuitive sense because each mode of learning has strengths the other one cannot offer. Therefore combining them yields results that either alone cannot offer.

- The conclusion here is clear, if your goal is to provide the very best training possible, you should use a combined approach involving both face-to-face training and on-line learning.

Conclusion number 3: Interaction with peers and/or instructors improves learning outcomes:

- "Effect sizes [i.e. the improvement in learning outcomes] were larger for studies in which the online instruction was collaborative or instructor-directed than in those studies where online learners worked independently."
- This is a very important conclusion which cannot be stressed enough. One of the major advantages to on-line learning is its ability to connect people to one another. It facilitates informal learning by connecting trainees - allowing them to learn from one another in a way that face-to-face training can't. In addition, despite perceptions to the contrary, on-line learning can be facilitated by an instructor and, as the conclusion above shows, learning outcomes are improved when this is the case. Therefore, while it is indeed possible and effective for trainees to learn on-line independently, the best outcomes are achieved when we use technology to connect people to further facilitate the learning process.

Conclusion number 4: Blending and connecting are the most important considerations:

- Most of the variations in the way in which different studies implemented online learning
- did not affect student learning outcomes significantly... Of those variables, the two mentioned above (i.e., the use of a blended rather than a purely online approach and instructor-directed or collaborative rather than independent, self-directed instruction) were the only statistically significant influences on effectiveness."
- There are many different ways in which we can facilitate on-line learning. One of the variables we hear about the most is the media type - the choice between text, images, videos, audio, etc. The US DOE study looked at how delivery and media affected the learning outcomes. What they found was that aside from the decision to employ eLearning, the only two variables which created a significant improvement in learning outcomes were blending (combining face-to-face with eLearning) and connecting trainees to an instructor and other trainees - both of which were mentioned above.
- Interestingly, however, it was found that substituting one media type for another (for example, video for text) made no significant difference in outcomes. So while there are clearly situations where one media type is preferable over another, this conclusion tells us that aside from these special situations, it is safe to choose media based on what is economical to create and maintain.

Conclusion number 5: eLearning works, regardless of the subject matter:

- "The effectiveness of online learning approaches appears quite broad across different content and learner types."
- eLearning has been around long enough and studied long enough that we can safely conclude that it is effective for all kinds of knowledge acquisition. There is nothing special about maritime knowledge or maritime learners that make the field immune to the benefits of eLearning. That is not to say that there are no hurdles to overcome in maritime eLearning - there are. For e.g., the availability of internet on-board, and the sophistication of vessel based training both have slowed the adoption of eLearning in the industry. However, those obstacles are being (and have been) largely overcome by maritime-specific learning management systems (LMSs) and the industry is following suit by adopting eLearning methods. This study makes it clear that the benefits of eLearning are not domain-specific. Murray Goldberg, Author, Founder & President of Marine Learning Systems, concludes: In the late 1990s, when eLearning was new to the world, there was a tremendous amount of activity around the question of whether eLearning produced good learning outcomes. The maritime industry has been slow to the "eLearning party" and there are some advantages to being the last one in. One of those advantages is the fact that the question of effectiveness has been answered. It works. Although it has taken roughly 15 years to come to that conclusion, the evidence is now overwhelming.

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SOVEREIGNTY IS ON THE AGENDA

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Nicaragua V. Colombia, is an immemorial case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). It is important to know the background of the case, as time would have eroded our memories since 2001 when the application was originally filed by Nicaragua over Colombia at the ICJ for executing sovereignty over a few islands around such areas of Nicaragua and Colombia. Here is the entire case analysis including the stand of the parties, taken originally at the court hearings, along with the concise verdict of the ICJ. Nicaragua first instituted the suit against Colombia in December 2001. Colombia initially submitted its preliminary objection that the ICJ lacks jurisdiction to decide the matter. The ICJ heard the contentions in the preliminary objection and delivered the verdict in December 2007. Thereafter, the ICJ before actually proceeding with the merits of the case, Costa Rica and Honduras had applied to ICJ in 2010 for leave to intervene in the proceedings. Nicaragua and Colombia although filed their responses to the applications by Costa Rica and Honduras, the court had denied to grant leave and proceeded with the merits of the case. The public hearing on the merits were held during the first half of 2012. Finally six months after the hearing and 11 long years after initiating the dispute, the court had finally given its verdict in November 2012.

The Jurisdiction issue:

When Colombia objected to the jurisdiction of ICJ, Nicaragua put forth two main grounds by which the ICJ had jurisdiction:

- (1) under Article XXXIV of the American Treaty on Pacific Settlement 1948 ('the Pact of Bogotá')
- (2) on the basis of declarations made by both Nicaragua and Colombia accepting the compulsory jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with Article 36(2) of the Statute of the Court.

Further, by virtue of Article XXXI of the Pact of Bogotá, the parties recognize the jurisdiction of the Court as compulsory ipso facto in all disputes arising among them. Colombia objected to these grounds and argued that these specific issues were already settled under the Barceñas-Esguerra Treaty, 1928 and its Protocol of 1930. Further it pointed out Article VI of the Pact of Bogotá which says "matters already settled by arrangement between the parties... or which are governed by agreements or treaties in force on the date of the conclusion of the present treaty" and claimed as such the court's jurisdiction was not based on Pact of Bogotá. The court in its verdict upheld the 1928 Treaty and further held that the sovereignty over the islands of San Andrés, Providencia and Santa Catalina to Colombia was granted under the same. Henceforth, it is clear that the Sovereignty over such islands by Colombia was upheld. However, the court was of the opinion that the 1928 Treaty did not settle the question relating to the part of San Andrés Archipelago, Roncador, Quitasueño and Serrana. Hence, the court clearly determined its jurisdiction to handle the issue on such maritime aspects. Colombia further asserted 1928 Treaty along with the 1930 Protocol on the 82nd meridian as the delimitation line of maritime areas had settled the issues on delimitation of boundaries, but the court held the 1930 protocol did not affect the delimitation and that it had the jurisdiction to decide on the maritime delimitation. The main components of the dispute were (i) determination of Sovereignty over certain maritime features (ii) Maritime delimitation based on the findings of the Sovereignty. This clearly depicts that the later component is a particular aspect, that could be decided based on the former. Nicaragua had requested to court to delimit the Maritime boundary of the EEZ and the continental shelf that would perhaps include areas beyond 200 nm of the Nicaragua coast with an extended continental shelf. The parties disagree on numerous points. Colombia argued that both east and west facing coasts were associated with its islands and added that several features of Quitasueño bank also qualify it as an island. Nicaragua contends that Quitasueño is a permanent submerged bank. Colombia had put forth its argument that all the islands generate maritime rights and entitlements upto a distance of 200 nautical miles from their baselines which is similar to any other land territory. By virtue of fourteen votes to one, it was held that Republic of Nicaragua's claim contained in its final submission, requesting the court to adjudge and declare that " the appropriate form of delimitation, within the geographical and legal framework constituted by the mainland coasts of Nicaragua and Colombia, is a continental shelf boundary dividing by equal parts the overlapping entitlements to a continental shelf of both parties. The Court unanimously held that the Republic of Colombia has sovereignty over the islands at Alburquerque, Bajo Nuevo, East-Southeast Cays, Quitasueño, Roncador, Serrana and Serranilla. Further found that it cannot uphold the Republic of Nicaragua's claim contained in its final submission and decided that the line of the single maritime boundary delimiting the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zones of the Republic of Nicaragua and the Republic of Colombia shall follow geodetic lines connecting the points with co-ordinates. The single maritime boundary around Quitasueño and Serrana shall follow respectively a 12 nautical mile envelope of arcs measured from QS 32 and from low-tide elevations located within 12 nautical miles. Finally, Nicaragua's contention of being prevented by Colombia from having access to natural resources to the east of the 82nd meridian was rejected.