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Please cite the original version:

Maarit Vähäkangas (2020): The leap into maritime e-learning solutions. The Captain : 16-18.



Ahti Hyppönen, Aboa Mare's Lead Instructor for Polar Code training explains the Egg Code.

The Leap into Maritime e-Learning Solutions

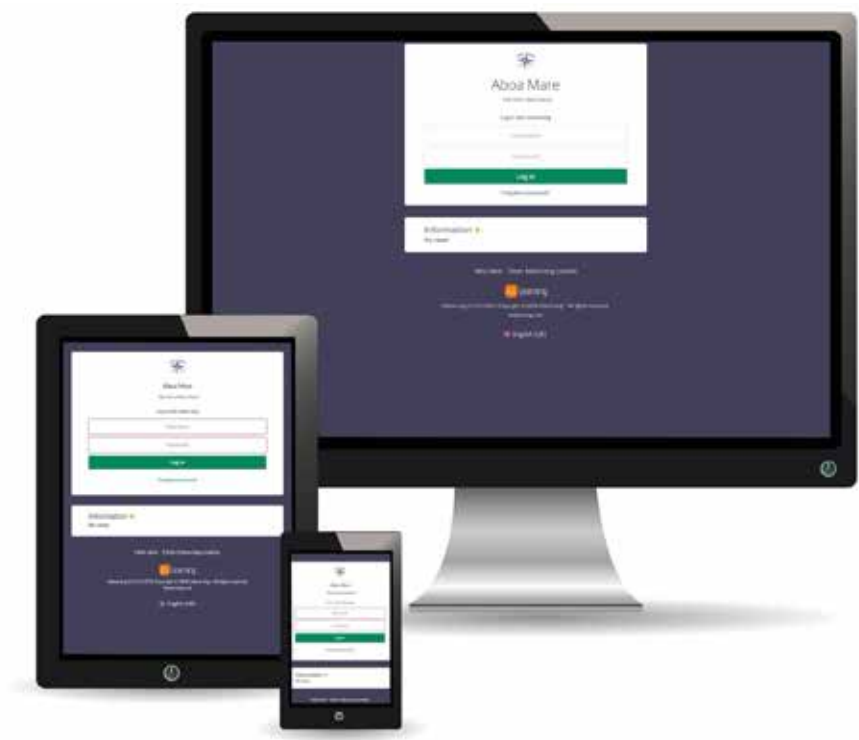
THE PANDEMIC FORCED many maritime training centers to start educating online basically overnight. Polar Code Basic was the first course that Aboa Mare transformed into an online course. Other courses are under development, in cooperation with shipping companies. Let us take a closer look at some e-learning solutions, focusing on the strategies we found feasible as we started delivering Polar Code Basic training online. We will also look at the advantages and challenges with online courses for course participants and training centers.

SOME MARITIME COURSES are quite easy to transform into online courses, as other courses require more development before they can be conducted virtually. Online course possibilities are endless as the technology evolves and new solutions are introduced.

The same objectives matter in online environment as in an on-site classroom. We must define the outcome, what do we want our course participants to learn by participating in an e-learning course? What skills should they have at the end of this course?

For us, it was natural to transform Polar Code Basic to an online course, as ice navigation is one of our core competences. The content and structure of the course had to be re-designed to work well in online environment, as the pedagogical method of presentation changed.

WE ACHIEVED THE best outcome by dividing the Polar Code Basic training content into concise segments i.e. modules. A clear module structure, along with proper description of the course outlines and content, helps the course participant to understand



You can access the online material with all devices. Offline training is also enabled.

the objectives while studying. It is important that the course content is simple to understand at a glance. Our course overview includes information about the duration of the course and an introduction to the different modules. There is also a test after each module to check if the student understood everything in the module, and a final exam at the end of the course.

WE BELIEVE THAT a good e-learning course consists of compact information in a nice package, where the amount of text is limited and emphasis is laid on visualizations such as images, graphics and videos that support the content. It is much more effective to learn by watching videos, than by reading written material on your own.

The advantage of educational videos is that a learner can pause the video and watch parts again that he or she didn't understand the first time. In addition, course participants can watch the video regardless of time and place.

As studying online can be quite independent, it is important to bring some interactivity to the course. There are different digital tools for supporting interactive distance learning. We have found that e.g.

quizzes and polls are an easy way to bring interactivity to the online course.

The syllabus is sometimes left more open in an e-learning course, so the course participants can explore and develop new ideas and cultivate their critical thinking. The instructor can also consider giving the course participants a variety of options, different ways to accomplish something. This might enhance the course participant's learning process, as there are various learning styles.

COURSE PARTICIPANTS IN different locations can participate in a virtual class and collaborate with the instructor and other course participants. For instance simulator training can be conducted in a virtual class - the participants can operate the simulator remotely, under supervision of the instructor. In virtual simulator training, the course participants can practise and solve highly realistic scenarios. Remote operations also enable us to provide Polar Code Advanced as an online course.

In an online environment, the course participants are obliged to take more responsibility of their learning. Responses from Polar Code instructors have



“E-learning training possibilities are endless as technology evolves”, Ahti Hyppönen explains.

shown that some parts of the teaching seem easier online. It is for instance easier to share charts and media content online, than in a classroom.

THE AMOUNT OF course participants may be larger in an online course, as there is no need to fit everyone into a classroom. On the other hand, if the group size becomes too large, it may be difficult for the instructor to give guidance to the participants individually. The advantage of online education is also that the costs of travel, accommodation and learning materials come down. Shipping companies can save expenses by letting the employees take online courses, instead of travelling on site.

A challenge with online education might be that course participants have different IT skills or a bad network. Course participants should meet minimum internet speed and display requirements to guarantee course satisfaction. Online education works, as long as the technology is in order and everyone knows how to use it.

The feedback an instructor gives to a course

participant, is just as important as the feedback the participant gives to the instructor about the course. We all develop and learn more constantly.

The experience we have gained so far through the Polar Code Basic e-learning course has been instructive. We will continue to evaluate the course materials and teaching methods and develop them further where needed. As always, the best courses are achieved when developing both on-site and online courses together with our customers.

IF YOU WOULD like to know more about how Aboa Mare Academy and Training Center can help your company and its operations, please get in contact with us at:

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