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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL NEWSLETT



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## Distance Learning While in the Field or Fleet, Whether Officer or Enlisted

Story by Journalist 2nd Class Anthony Reese

Whether stationed in Virginia, San Diego, or even Baghdad, the opportunity for advanced education is a very real prospect. The ability to achieve a master's degree or professional certificate from the Naval Postgraduate School is now possible!

The Naval Postgraduate School Distributed Learning Resource Center (DLRC) promotes network-based learning for operational professionals in the armed services. The center's primary objective is to provide distributed learning to the field and fleet. The DLRC facilitates the instructional design and expertise of subject specialists that bring education to the student wherever.

Distributed learning at NPS uses online resources to deliver graduate level courses via video tele-education, and other online technology and resources. These methods all serve to create a virtual classroom environment, especially from the use of Blackboard learning technology.

To sustain the momentum of distance learning, the quality of interaction between the student and teacher remains a primary focus of educators within this field. Although the preparation can be time-consuming according to educators who have used the format – the overwhelming benefit to the student and education process is well worth the preparation.

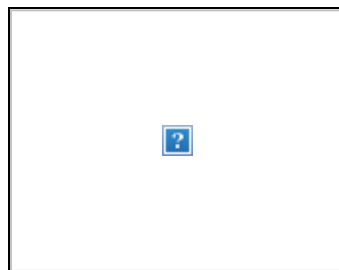
“Integration of asynchronous interactive learning modules allows me to spend more time in the classroom focusing on critical thinking skills and the transfer of tacit knowledge,” said NPS information science professor Tom Housel. “The student benefits by gaining flexibility in their schedule and by having the opportunity to obtain explicit information relative to a particular course or topic prior to class lecture. This has proven to increase the level of student satisfaction with a course and enhance the quality of student and faculty interaction in the classroom.”

According to NPS associate professor of public budgeting Richard Doyle, “Modules created in the Blackboard learning support system have exceptional flexibility for faculty.” He said flexibility of online modules for the student is significant, especially when there is a need for access to online materials in advance of – or after attending a class. “All students, regardless of the course delivery format are able to interact with the instructor and each other via the communication tools in Blackboard.”

Online education is only the vehicle however, according to most distance-learning professionals. “It is still the education professional behind the catalyst that the education is delivered to the student – wherever they may be,” said Kari Miglaw, DLRC coordinator.

In February 2001 Miglaw was instrumental in bringing University of California, Berkeley professor Americ Azevedo to NPS to lecture on the values of interaction between the student and professor in the education process, and particularly how it applies to distance learning to oppose some of the concerns around online education.

“The goal is to pinpoint the key areas of the distance learning process in education that benefit the student through the distance-learning medium,” said Miglaw.



NPS' distance learning programs are not restricted by the preventive legislation that currently does not allow enlisted personnel to attend NPS as a student said director of the Office of Continuous Learning, Tom Hazard. Congress ruled in November 2000 that enlisted personnel may attend distance-learning classes in the same manner in which officer personnel are able to. "The same drivers that are pushing for the better education of the military officer are also looking to increase the level of education among the enlisted ranks."

"When I think of education, I do not discriminate between officer and enlisted," said Hazard. "I only think of the qualified student and his or her educational need. It is important that we utilize this technology in the manner in which it best fits. The role of the educator and learner is changing. No longer will a 20 year-old classroom and a teacher at the chalkboard be the only method of receiving an education."

The focal point still remains on the relationship between the professor and student according to Hazard. "The Navy should add incentive to the military professional who desires and achieves a technical education from NPS over personnel who receive a non-technical degree from some other university. No longer should we discriminate between officer and enlisted when education is the concern."

Currently, enlisted personnel are attending the courses offered from the DLRC. Not only are enlisted members benefiting from the chance of receiving advance education while remaining operational, they are speaking highly of the means in which they were able to experience the environment of the classroom while remaining operational.

"The program was very rewarding and challenging," said Operations Specialist Senior Chief Petty Officer Bobby Baker. He completed an NPS certificate program for Information Systems and Operations in April 2003. "I enjoyed the experience and learned a lot," said Baker. "I would recommend it to anyone."

"The difference with distance-learning is that it ensures 100 percent participation – there is no back row to sit and hide," said Hazard. "The student is engaged in the learning process in the same manner as everyone else. There does exist the major attraction of education from the distanced perspective when considering military personnel out in the field and fleet. Education must be mobile in the military realm."

Hazard said there is more interaction between the students in the online environment than in the traditional classroom. "E-3's and E-4's are in the same learning environment as Navy Captains," he said. "The online environment allows the engaging of every student without the barriers that may come along in the traditional classroom environment."

#### [SEAL prepares for English Channel swim](#)

*Chief Journalist Michael Martin*

In August 2002, Petty Officer Neil Roberts became the first Navy SEAL killed during combat in Afghanistan. Roberts displayed extraordinary bravery while fighting Taliban ground soldiers after his helicopter was shot. [more...](#)

#### [NPS Computing: 50 Years Golden and Growing](#)

*Barbara Honegger*

As the Naval Postgraduate School celebrates 50 years on the forefront of academic computing, Aug. 27, it's fitting that Superintendent Rear Admiral Patrick Dunne is a graduate of the Department of Mathematics, for NPS's move from Annapolis five decades ago not only coincided with the birth of the Information Age, its first computer was the proud property of the Department of Mathematics. [more...](#)

#### [Kick the Tires and Light the Fires: It's Moving Time](#)

*Journalist 2nd Class Chad Runge*

The Aviation Safety Program has been a mainstay at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) for several years, however, it was recently announced that they'll soon be packing their bags for sunny Pensacola, Fla. The School of Aviation Safety will be relocating and will then be part of the Aviation Center of Excellence (ACE). The center will reduce training track times for prospective squadron Executive and Commanding Officers by collocating numerous courses at Naval Air Station Pensacola. [more...](#)

*From External News Sources...*

#### [Land swap benefits](#)

*Monterey Herald*

Fort Ord agreement includes preference for military faculty and staff housing as well as provisions for affordable housing property. [more...](#)

**SEAL to take plunge***Monterey Herald*

Navy Lt. Cmdr. John Doolittle is putting on fat for the biggest athletic challenge of his life -- a swim across the English Channel. Doolittle, 34, a student at the Naval Postgraduate School, plans to swim the channel from Folkestone to Cap Gris Nez next month, and he's been training by swimming the cold waters of Monterey Bay and trying to put on pounds in between. [more...](#)

**Navy school tapped as defense training site***Monterey Herald*

The Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey has been named the United States' Partnership for Peace education and training center, a move that could mean even more international students on its campus and a seat for the U.S. military at the planning tables of the defense ministries of 45 other nations. [more...](#)

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