Consistency, continuity, and accountability in Instructor Guides

Materials

For VILT:
- Internet connection
- Zoom or other conference
- Slide deck
- Instructor Guide Template (MS Word)
- PDF sample of course IG

For ILT:
- Laptop or computer
- Projector
- Slide deck
- Instructor Guide Template (MS Word)
- Print out samples of IG

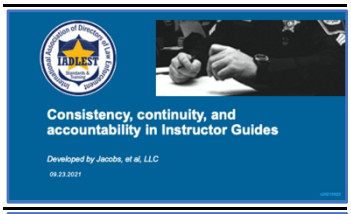
Objectives

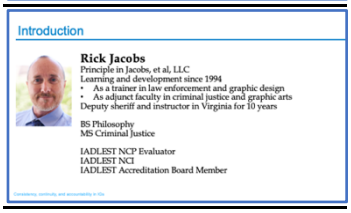
- Define the terms "continuity, consistency, and accountability" as they relate to law enforcement training.
- Evaluate past and current training materials for continuity, consistency, and accountability.

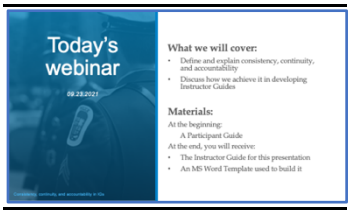
Poll – what should be in an instructor's guide? – 3 min

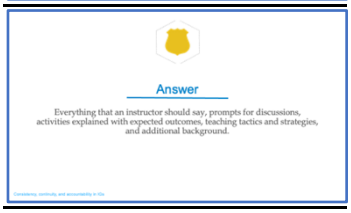
Options:
- the least possible: a basic bullet list of subjects
- as little as possible: an outline with a few lines on what should be discussed
- outlined information with some examples, questions, and explanation of activities
- everything that an instructor should say, prompts for discussions, activities explained with expected outcomes, teaching tactics and strategies, and additional background

An instructor guide should contain all the information that an instructor expects a participant to walk away with. It should identify discussions, activities, strategies, and be in a manuscript – textbook – format.

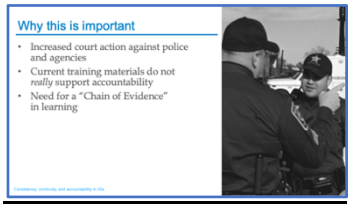








Why this is important



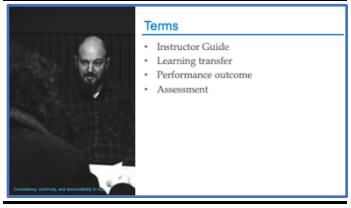
Increased litigation and criminal charges against law enforcement professionals have increased a question of the efficacy of training. Defunders claim that defunding law enforcement won't impinge on training because training "clearly isn't working."

We know that this isn't true – it works millions of times a day in interactions with citizenry. However, knowing the reality is one thing, proving quite another.

One thing that has hampered law enforcement is the nature of how law enforcement train. A lot of training is done, but it isn't consistent in who, what, and how it is delivered. There isn't continuity between iterations of training and training blocks. All of this has led to a difficulty in maintaining accountability.

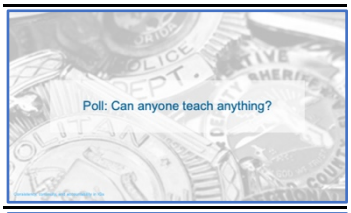
The days of "based on my experience and training" as an argument are over. The view of law enforcement has been corrupted by TV, movies, and pundits, but we don't have a lot of evidence to argue back. There is a need for more evidence of what is trained, how it is trained, by establishing a "chain of evidence" of industry knowledge.

First things - terms



We need to establish some common terms:

- **Instructor Guide** – the document that an instructor uses to train a course.
- **Learning transfer** – the act of conducting information from an instructor to a participant using various strategies.
- **Performance outcome** – the expectation of why training is being provided. What that performance looks like is wholly based on the verb in Bloom's Taxonomy.
- **Assessment** – the measuring of a participant's performance to a specific outcome.



Poll – can anyone teach anything? – 3 min.

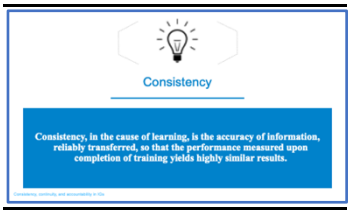
Options:
- Yes
- No

Yes, with the proper documentation, anyone can teach anything, with a few exceptions. You are experts in learning transfer, you do not have to be expert in the content. However, the more proficient, the better. Being an expert in the content adds context and nuance.

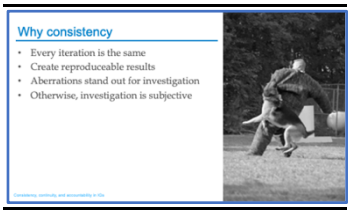
Why consistency

Training without consistency is nothing more than checking a box. For this course, we will define consistency as:

> *Consistency, in the cause of learning, is the accuracy of information, reliably transferred, so that the performance measured upon completion of training yields highly similar results.*



What this means is that after every iteration of training, despite who delivered it, the bell curve of results should show a very high-level of learning transfer. How that is done starts with the Instructor's Guide (IG).



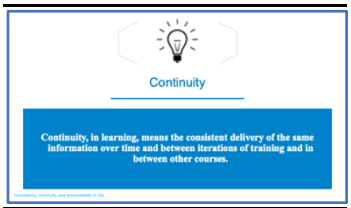
Consistency in training means that you can create reproduceable results – this is science and evidence. It means that no matter who teaches a course, to whomever the audience may be, the participants demonstrate an expected performance outcome. It also shows that all personnel were trained to the same consistency, so aberrations can be more successfully identified.

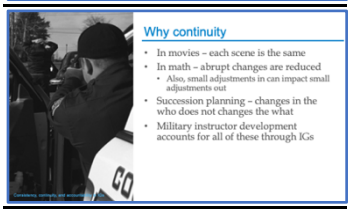
If there is a history of high success, with consistent results, and suddenly there is an aberration, it provides a more targeted examination. Was it the class? Was it the instructor? Or was it something else that can be investigated?

Without consistency these investigations are, at best, subjective evaluation and guesswork, at worst, blame and rejection.

Why continuity

> *Continuity, in learning, means the consistent delivery of the same information over time and between iterations of training and in between other courses.*





In movies, it means the details are the same in different scenes. In math it means that a function does not have abrupt changes in value and that small changes in output can be adjusted by small changes in inputs. In business and leadership, especially in law enforcement, it means a continuous chain of command or a plan of succession if there are changes in leadership.

All apply to learning. In different teaching environments or iterations of training, there are no big changes. Someone should be able to walk into a course taught at any time and find the instructor in the same place, at the same time, providing the same information, as other instructors at other times.

The mathematic expression of continuity applies for adjusting to unexpected changes. Small changes, such as a change in instructor, a change of venue, or the availability of certain resources, should be small changes that can be adjusted so the results are the same.

The succession explanation of continuity is by far the most common issue in law enforcement training – who is teaching. In my conversations with academy instructors and directors, the biggest problem with training is the ever-changing access to instructors. It could be the changing of instructors every two years – this seems to be the average. For some it is a dependence on volunteer instructors. Still others, it is a lack of access to skilled, capable, or knowledgeable instructors.

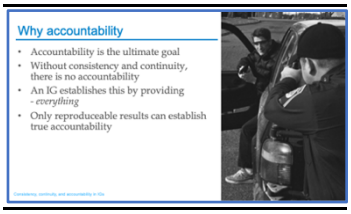
The military manages continuity issues through honing new instructors in a very calculated, intentional development process. But it all starts with the Instructor Guide.

Why accountability

Most people have a pretty good idea of what accountability is. However, as we have already done, we will provide a learning definition for accountability to establish the baseline.

> *Accountability is the result of consistency and continuity, and provides the science and evidence to identify responsibility and justify consequences.*

Accountability is ultimately the goal. While we want our personnel to be prepared, capable, and safe, ultimately it comes down to liability, exposure, and holding personnel accountable for their actions, behavior, and understanding.



Accountability cannot be established sufficiently if there is no consistency or continuity in training. The lack of consistency has led to a lot of injustice within the law enforcement rank and file – to personnel and agencies alike, as well as unjust acts to the citizenry.

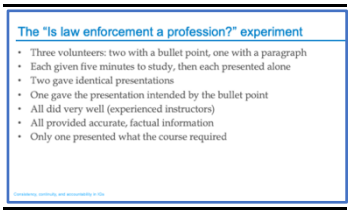
If the courseware content in an IG contains everything an instructor and participant needs, then it will have consistency, continuity, and accountability. This includes all information and background, as well as instructor prompts, discussion questions with summaries, activities articulated with expected results (assessments are activities), instructor preparation notes, and specific instructions within the content to include timing, presentation, and resources.

You can only have accountability with reproduceable results. The less information provided, the more randomness in presentation and the more likely material can be included that will go unaccounted for.

How we achieve it

The "Is law enforcement a profession?" experiment

The following story was a demonstration at the IADLEST 2019 conference in Milwaukee, WI. It comes from a presentation by Rick Jacobs called "Experience is only context, not content."



A presenter conducted an experiment to illustrate a point at a conference for instructors and academy directors. The presenter asked for three volunteers to take a sheet of paper, study it for five minutes, and then present the topic to the class.

The first two were given a sheet with a bullet point from a state's training on law enforcement ethics that stated "*Describe how law enforcement is a profession.*"

The third subject's sheet had the same prompt "*Describe how law enforcement is a profession*" but also included a paragraph from the training that described how law enforcement is a profession because it requires training, yearly professional development, state board certification, a set of rules and ethics that must be adhered to, has established qualification criteria, etc., then examples of how those impact the profession.

One at a time, they were brought back into the group. The two with a bullet point only presented first. They both described the requirements of how to become a law enforcement officer: age, training, and other criteria.

The third person came in and presented the material that he had been provided - the bullet point *and* the supporting material.

The group was stunned. All three gave technically correct and accurate information. Only one actually answered the prompt. Of the first two, one was an academy director with over 30 years of law enforcement experience, the second an academy employee and instructor with a decade of experience. The third was an academy deputy director from a foreign country, with no US law enforcement experience.

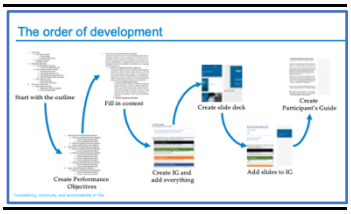
It was clear that more information provides a more accurate result when instructing participants and reduces the need for instructors to interpret and assume the content.

It starts where a lot of training development currently ends.

An exceptional quantity of training content amounts to not much more than an outline. Sometimes the outline has a little more information; sometimes it will include a few more instructions. However, this cannot be the end of it. When an instructor is left to interpret what is needed to be transferred, the content is no longer consistent. If it is not consistent, there is no continuity, and thus there can be no accountability.

The good news is that instructors who develop their own training materials already have the basics down and are only missing a few vital steps further in development. To get to the point of an outline is tremendous work and is, ultimately, one of the most important parts of training development. It is literally the pivot point where training goes from analysis, research, and design to full development.

The order of development



We will start where most training ends – the outline.

Whether it is in a Roman numeral format or other such list, development starts where the outline ends. The outline provides the framework for the course in its entirety.

- Click for *Add TPOs* -

Once the outline is complete, then the Performance Objectives are developed (training/learning objectives). The top level of the outline (what would be in Roman numerals in a traditional outline) are your Terminal Performance Objectives.

From Terminal Performance Objectives, you create the supporting performance objectives called Enabling Performance Objectives. From there, you create any other supporting "headers" that become sections and chunks.

This is what is already represented in a lot of Instructor Guides that are in only a bulleted or outline format – it is already broken down to that level.

Using Bloom's Taxonomy allows you to select verbs that then dictate how to measure learning transfer through assessments. Knowing how you will assess the acceptable performance of an objective dictates the activities you need to reinforce the content so they can perform acceptably. It also helps establish the level at which they perform.

For instance, "Know" or "Identify" can be measured by a multiple-choice test. "Describe" or "demonstrate" cannot. If you use "Describe," you are implying that the participant will have to communicate their performance. If they are asked to "demonstrate," you are implying the participant will actually have to perform an activity, whether it is a role play or mechanical manipulation.

Once the outline is done, you have your objectives established and an idea of how the performance needs to be evaluated, fill it in - just like writing a report. Do not worry about activities, testing, knowledge checks, or other things until you have all the content written.

Once it is written, you go back and add these items, imagining along the content how the course is progressing through the instruction. The instructor notes, callouts, and activities are done last, based on how the content is best presented.

Once the content is completely flushed out, then you create a slide deck. We won't go into slide deck design here, but slide decks are typically built only after the instructor guide is built.

When you have finished the slide deck and it is complete, save out each slide as an image and bring them into the IG into the lined note area. This makes it easier to update, since it isn't embedded in the content. Each slide is in line with the content where it is to be presented. Do not number your slides and do not refer to them by numbers, as future editing can cause serious reflow and continuity issues.

Once all the slides are in place and saved, review and make sure you have no more edits to make. You make the Participant Guide by simply removing all instructor content and slides from the notes, then adjusting the reflow of the content and lined areas.

- Click for *Content* -

- Click for *Build IG* -

- Click for *Slide Deck* -

- Click for *Add Slides* -

- Click for *Build PG* -

The IG is the anchor

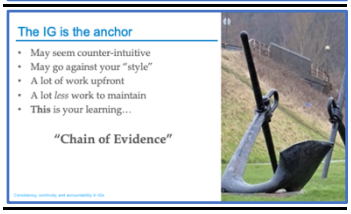
For some, it may seem unintuitive to build the slide deck after the Instructor Guide, then go back and put the completed slides into it. The first time you build an Instructor Guide, it will feel a bit more laborious. But you aren't building something to be used once, you are building historical documents that will need to be updated, maintained, and edited. Often. By building the IG in this order, you have a bit more work upfront, but a lot less work updating and maintaining your courseware.

Any edits, updates, or changes made should be made in the IG first. This is your living document; the final say on a subject. You should also ***never*** overwrite your IGs. Develop a versioning system, add a change log to the end of the IG, and always save a new version *before* you make any substantive changes to the material.

This is how to establish a chain of evidence in learning. This is the foundation for true accountability of the material, the instructors, the participants, and the agency as a whole.

A well developed, accurate, reviewed, and maintained Instructor's Guide is also a very powerful line of defense.

End of course questions – 10 minutes
Ask for questions and feedback from the participants.



Contact information

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-- End of course –

Change log:

Version	Date	By	Explanation
v20210920	9/20/2021	Rick J	Creation of IG and materials