

Corporate Training Observation Instrument

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Education never stops. At least, it shouldn't. A common misunderstanding is that once an individual graduates from college (regardless of the degree), that individual has attained mastery and the season of learning is complete. This could not be further from the truth. Once this graduate gains employment in whatever field he/she chooses, they will find that their education has just begun. Life is just one educational experience after another. One area where education is a constant is in the area of corporations.

Corporations could encompass almost any company that exists today. Therefore, training in a corporate environment could be anything from a Fortune 500 investment firm to a small business in rural Arkansas and everything in between. When engaging in corporate education, one will see a vast range of individuals receiving the training. Where most education frameworks (Danielson and Marzano) deal with K-12 interactions, corporate training covers the age range of anyone that has decided to enter the workforce. This could be a 15 or 16-year old getting their first job all the way up to a 65+year old looking for something to do in retirement. Both of those individuals need to be educated according to the company's rule, regulations and policies.

With this in mind, training in a corporate environment must be age agnostic. Therefore, any training developed needs to be applicable to a wide range of individuals with varying backgrounds and for a culturally diverse population.

Theoretical Basis

The basis for this observation instrument comes from an adaptation of the Danielson Framework. Pulling from Danielson (2007), we look less at Domain 2 (The Classroom Environment) and more at Domain 1 (Planning and Preparation), Domain 3 (Instruction), and

Domain 4 (Professional Responsibility). Since corporate training does not utilize consistent classroom environments as training could occur in classrooms, on job sites, virtually, or any number of other settings, it is not as much of a concern when evaluating the instructor. That's not to say that the environment of the training is not important; it is. Rather, most of the time, the environment is out of the control of the instructor and, therefore, the instructor should not be evaluated based on it.

Further information was gleaned from the Byrne et al. (2016) study focusing on training corporate entrepreneurs. Specifically, the planning and preparation portion of the framework. This study highlights the importance of setting instructional outcomes when developing a learning plan for corporate training.

Additionally, the need to tie instruction to corporate goals is also a need within the corporate training environment. According to Brown et al. (2004), each course developed should support the corporate strategy. Not only does this help align all students within the company under the same goal, it also helps to get support and buy in from corporate leadership around training initiatives. Nothing can happen from a training perspective without leadership support.

Domains/Components

As mentioned previously, parts of Domains 1, 3, and 4 from Danielson's Framework are included in this observation instrument. Specifically, the following portions of the stated domains with an additional domain for use in corporate training:

- Domain 1: Planning and Preparation
 - Demonstrating Knowledge of Content
 - Setting Instructional Outcomes
 - Designing Coherent Instruction

- Domain 2: Corporate Strategy
 - Inclusion of Corporate Goals
 - Incorporation of Corporate Strategy
- Domain 3: Instruction
 - Using Appropriate Techniques
 - Engaging Students
- Domain 4: Education
 - Professionally Development

Model in Action

Now that we have seen how the observation instrument was developed and what it consists of, it is time to see what it “looks like” and “sounds like” in a training setting.

Domain 1: Planning

Demonstrating Knowledge of Content

First and foremost, the corporate trainer needs to have an in-depth knowledge of the content that they are presenting. Whether instructor-led training (in-person or virtual) or pre-recorded video presentations, the instructor must have a firm grasp of the content presented. This can be seen via submitted course outlines and scripts prior to development of the curriculum. This can also be “heard” through various interactions with the curriculum development team.

Setting Instructional Outcomes

Trainers must go into their sessions with defined instructional outcomes. Occasionally, ad-hoc, spontaneous system overviews are conducted and recorded to demonstrate new concepts or systems. This is then considered “training.” However, there is no instruction outcome tied to

it. It is merely information; not instruction. Developing and conducting training with defined instructional outcomes is a must in increasing effectiveness and efficiencies of corporate training. Again, this can be seen and heard in the instructors submitted training plans and their work within the training development teams.

Designing Coherent Instruction

“Design” and “Coherent” are valuable words in this component. As discussed earlier, many forms of corporate training are rushed, ad-hoc and spontaneous. Training must be crafted or designed to meet a specific need. And that training needs to be coherent. This goes on to being able to properly define the audience that will be participating in the training. Is this session for everyone in the company? Or is it for a specific set of individuals? The training will need to be tailored for the audience for it to be understood by that audience. This, again, can be seen and heard by the instructor’s submitted plans and their work within the training development team.

Domain 2: Corporate Strategy

Inclusion of Corporate Goals

Goals are big in corporations. Meeting certain sales goals. Meeting certain production goals. Meeting certain diversity goals. Goals are key. Therefore, instruction needs to make sure it is adhering to and advancing existing corporate goals. Development of instruction that includes corporate goals will be evidenced by materials that explicitly state those goals. You will see portions of the training discuss how the current content points to a specific goal for the company. This can be heard by the instructor and students discuss specific company goals.

Incorporation of Corporate Strategy

Goals are what the company wants to do; strategy is how it plans to accomplish those goals. Just as goals are important to include in training, so is the inclusion of the corporate strategy. Students need to understand how this training will help to meet those corporate goals. This can be seen and heard in the training sessions, again, by examining the training materials to see how the strategy is tied to goal and it can be heard through discussions of these strategies.

Domain 3: Instructing***Using Appropriate Techniques***

Determining the best way to educate a group of diverse students is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Depending on the class, students may react differently to techniques used in other classes. For example, a group of sales representatives will react differently to training techniques than a group of software developers. However, it's important that both groups understand the same material. In this respect, the trainer needs to exhibit an ability to "read the room" and adjust the techniques when needed. To evaluate this, it requires multiple interactions and observations of the training in multiple environments.

Engaging Students

A disengaged student will not learn. Period. It is the duty of the instructor to make sure all students are engaged in the learning. This can be difficult in some learning environments at a corporate level. Many times, training is handed down as a mandatory requirement for each student. This can be difficult when competing with an employee's time. If the student is trying to multi-task while in training, then the training was a waste of time. All too often, students will show up to training with their laptops and not pay any attention to the instructor, but rather are frantically trying to meet company deadlines for their work. Part of this component is on the

instructor and part of it is on leadership to make sure those in attendance can focus on the instruction at hand. Instructors must make it a point to include the students in the learning. This means refraining from long, boring lectures. Evidence of this can be seen by instructors interacting with each student and pulling them into the instructions. It can be heard by student discussions.

Domain 4: Education

Professional Development

As was stated at the beginning of this paper, learning is a life-long experience. Not only should employees at a company continue learning as it relates to their job role and position within the company, so should training continue to work on and develop their skills as an instructor. The realm of corporate training has changed throughout the years to mirror that of academic education environments. Companies have a need to train on a global scale and need instructors that can incorporate the use of global training techniques to do so. This requires education for educators. Instructors need to develop a skill set of training techniques and a pedagogical approach to multiple forms of corporate education. This can be seen in the instructor's goals for yearly professional development. It can be heard in the instructor's work with the training and development team's approach to new learning practices.

Conclusion

As different as K-12 education and corporate education is, they still share some similarities. Particularly in how we can evaluate and observe the instructors in their respective environments. The Danielson Framework provides a good foundation for developing an observation instrument for Corporate America; however, it does not cover everything. And all that Framework does not fit in corporate training. There are areas of corporate training that can

only be understood within the corporation delivering the training. As long as those areas are being covered, the instructor can rest assured that they are setting up the students for success.

When learning is a life-long pursuit, there will always be a need for educators.

References

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Tables

Observation Instrument

Domain 1: Planning

Component	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Demonstrating Knowledge of Content	Curriculum plans exhibit a high degree of content knowledge.	Curriculum plans exhibit a basic understanding of the content but does not show how it connects to various other areas.	Curriculum plans contain various errors about the content in question.
Setting Instructional Outcomes	Curriculum plans contain detailed instructional outcomes crafted for each audience of each training session.	Curriculum plans contain high-level instructional outcomes but are not specific to the audience.	Curriculum plans do not contain instructional outcomes.
Designing Coherent Instruction	Curriculum plans include instruction tailored to the anticipated audience that encourages depth in the subject.	Curriculum plans include instruction tailored to the audience with a high-level overview of the content.	Curriculum plans do not demonstrate audience or topic depth considerations.
Additional Feedback:			

Domain 2: Corporate Strategy

Component	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Inclusion of Corporate Goals	Instructor includes corporate goals in training content and how this training is meant to accomplish and support those goals.	Instructor includes corporate goals in training content but does not show how the training supports those goals.	Instructor does not include reference to corporate goals.
Incorporation of Corporate Strategy	Instructor includes corporate strategy in training content and how this training is part of that strategy.	Instructor includes corporate strategy in training content but does not show how the training is part of that strategy.	Instructor does not include reference to corporate strategy.

Component	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Additional Feedback:			

Domain 3: Instructing

Component	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Using Appropriate Techniques	Instructor interacts with the class in a manner suitable for the audience. Exhibits ability to adapt when instruction is not connecting with group.	Instructor interacts with the class in a manner suitable for the audience but does not adjust when needed.	Instructor conducts a “one-size-fits-all” approach to instruction not considering techniques based on audience.
Engaging Students	Instructor engages each student in the learning process and includes everyone. All students are attentive and responsive to training.	Instructor engages some students in learning. Other students are seen multi-tasking and not taking part in training.	Students are not engaged. Instructor is merely covering the content.
Additional Feedback:			

Domain 4: Education

Component	Proficient	Basic	Unsatisfactory
Professional Development	Instructor has developed an educational goal to learning new about new technology and pedagogy for corporate and distance education.	Instructor is aware of new technology and pedagogy but has not developed a plan to learn about or incorporate it into their skill set.	Instructor has developed no goals of future education in the area of corporate training.
Additional Feedback:			