



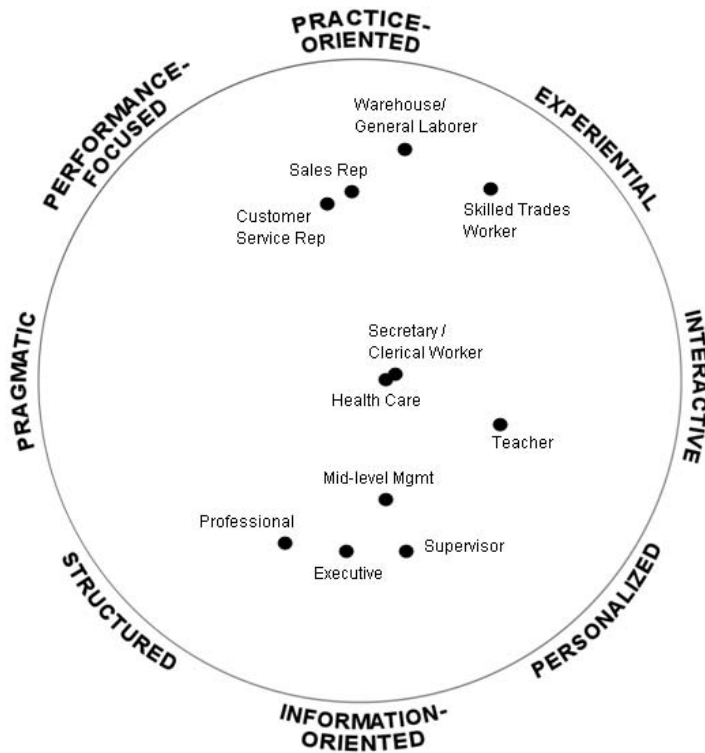
Everything DiSC Pulse: Taxonomy of Training

As a trainer, you're probably asked to wear a lot of training hats. Depending on your organization, you could be working with line staff one day and then middle managers the next. So, are you treating labor different than management? We asked 2,996 people to describe their most recent training experience. Did it involve a lot of physical activity? Did the session include humor? Did the instructor use a lot of examples? Our hope was to find patterns that could help explain the variety of approaches that different trainers and programs take to learning.

We found eight basic categories that helped describe the approach that a given training session was using.

- **Practice-Oriented:** focused on providing participant with the chance to have practice with the specific skill being taught, often involving a lot of physical activity.
- **Experiential:** focused on providing the participant to explore the topic being taught, often with a very hands-on approach.
- **Interactive:** focused on interactive activities like small groups and in-depth discussions.
- **Personalized:** focused on adapting to the learners needs and making the experience more pleasant (e.g., allowing questions and using humor).
- **Information-Oriented:** focused on feeding information that the participant is expected to absorb and reflect upon, often emphasizing more theoretical issues.
- **Structured:** focused on creating an experience that is clear, organized, and well-paced.
- **Pragmatic:** focused on having a well-defined, focused purpose and drawing connections between learning and the participant's everyday work.
- **Performance-Focused:** focused on ensuring that learning is mastered and transferred back to the workplace (e.g., testing on learning).

Interestingly, these eight categories were related to each other in a specific pattern, as shown on the model below.



Categories around the circle that are adjacent to each other have more in common with each other. So, for example, the same way that red blends into yellow on the color wheel, “practice-oriented” blends into “experiential”. The opposite is also true. Categories that are further apart have less in common. For example, a training session that is focused on “pragmatic” concerns tends to be less “interactive”, allowing less time for open-ended discussions.

As you can see in the center of the circle, we also were able to map specific occupations within the model. For instance, we found that sales representatives, on average, were more likely to have training that was practice-oriented. Executives, on the other hand, were more likely to have an information-oriented training experience.

When we look at the placement of the different occupations within the model, a few trends become clear. Most notably, people who are in management or white-collar positions tend to receive training that is more structured, information-oriented, and personalized. People with more hands-on or customer-facing jobs tend to receive training that is performance-focused, practice-oriented, and experiential. Teachers, on average, had training that leaned a bit toward the interactive side, while secretaries, clerical workers, and health care workers tended to receive training that was fairly balanced.



Although it makes some sense that those in management or professional careers would be plotted toward the bottom of the model, we do wonder if they are missing out on some important aspects of training. Would their training be even more effective if they were asked to practice the skills they learned or if it included experiential activities that allowed them to encounter an issue in a more dramatic fashion. We suspect that trainers may shy away from such activities for fear that they can come across as silly or pandering. But when done with finesse, they can be powerful experiences for people in these occupations.

Looking at the other side of the model, we wondered if those people in sales, customer service or more blue collar professions would benefit from information-oriented training that incorporated some more conceptual ideas? This type of training could give them a better look at the big picture and how their work contributes to it. Training that encouraged them to explore ideas is more likely to produce workers who can innovate and problem solve when things don't go according to plan—something that benefits everyone—regardless of their position—in an organization.

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