



A White Paper

Increasing Employee Performance Through the Affective Learning Domain

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If you find increasing the performance of your employees such as customer service, diversity, leadership or team building difficult to achieve and more importantly to sustain, a new approach supported by aligned and proven tools that embrace the affective learning domain may be the solution that you are seeking. Learning and educational researchers recognize that affective learning is critical to sustainable learning, but very few training and development approaches and programs include this learning domain within their solutions.

To better understand the affective learning domain, a quick review of Bloom's taxonomy might help.

Bloom's Taxonomy of the 3 Learning Domains - A Quick Review

In the mid-1960's, Benjamin Bloom identified three learning domains: cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Since each domain is a broad category, there exist sub-categories within each domain.

The Cognitive Domain involves knowledge. To master learning or the acquisition of knowledge requires individuals to travel through 6 steps: knowledge or the recall of facts; comprehension or the understanding of knowledge; application or using knowledge; analysis or distinguishing between facts and inferences; synthesis or creating new knowledge and evaluation or making judgements.

The Psychomotor domain revolves around physical movement and the use of motor-skill areas to transfer the knowledge into observable behaviors. To achieve success within this domain, individuals must master: perception; readiness to act; guided response mechanism; complex overt response; adaptation and origination.

The Affective Domain includes attitudes and emotions. Within this domain, there exist five sub-categories: receiving phenomena; responding to phenomena; valuing; organizing values and internalizing values.

Why Attitudes

During the last 4 years, ADVANCED SYSTEMS has conducted a survey of over 100 executives and human resource directors throughout the United States. The majority of these individuals have indicated that attitudes (79%) are the single greatest obstacle in creating an engaged learning environment. Yet, the majority of these same individuals, 90% admitted to including little to no time of their training in learning how to redevelop attitudes. Consequently, most of these programs were set up to fail on their very first day of implementation.

This reluctance to address attitudes in the corporate was addressed in "Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg-Adkins - Feb 2004." The authors reaffirmed that training professionals have shied away from the "affective domain" because of its complexity.

Why Emotions

Daniel Goleman in his book *Working with Emotional Intelligence* revealed that emotional intelligence is not actively developed in formalized learning, but is a key indicator that separates high achievers from lesser achievers. Emotional intelligence has been linked to the motivation for ongoing learning and can be identified as early as four years old.

In his book, Goleman defined emotional intelligence "as the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotion within ourselves and in our relationships." He identified five basic emotional and social competencies within emotional intelligence: self-awareness; self-regulations; motivation; empathy and social skills. Through his research, individuals with these competencies significantly outperform those in the workplace that lack these competencies.

Internalization within the Affective Domain

The complexity of affective domain lies within one of the sub-categories: internalization. Most learning is externally directed. However, to achieve sustainability requires internalization of both attitudes and emotions.

Internalization is a value driven process or what some may call What's In It For Me (WIIFM). Bloom recognized the importance of valuing within the affective domain. Valuing or values are present in 3 of the 5 sub-categories within the Affective Domain. As our training and development processes have expanded to include significantly more knowledge, the focus on the cognitive domain has expanded while the affective domain continues to diminish.

The Key - WIIFM

ADVANCED SYSTEMS has surveyed both adults during this same four-year period. This survey revealed that not one adult wants to be a failure and everyone wants to be a success. Also, the majority of these adults, 71%, believed that they lack the tools to maintain self-motivation or WIIFM. Self-motivation comes from internalizing those values that individuals deem important.

The Solution - Begin with the Affective Domain

Even though performance improvement consultants from Kirkpatrick to Hale speak to the affective domain, most training programs fail to build positive attitudes and emotions in such a way ensure sustainability. In 1988, Timothy T. Baldwin and J. Kevin Ford in "Transfer of Training," Personnel Psychology through a review of literature on the transfer of training discovered that very few companies actually know the measurable rate of improved job performance because longitudinal data was not consistently collected.

During the last 25 years, Resource Associates Corporation (RAC) has developed performance tools for corporate development and training that begin with the Affective Domain. By linking the Affective Domain to the Cognitive and Psychomotor through a structured goal achievement Action

Plan, individuals built their own WIIFM through a structured Goal Achievement Action Plan.

Breaking the Paradigm

By beginning to focus on the attitudes and not the traditional paradigm of behaviors, individuals begin to see what **THEY** need to do to get to where **THEY** need to go. The Goal Achievement Action Plan is the tool to maintain positive attitudes through consistent goal achievement. This tool also works with the inherent strengths of the individuals and not their weaknesses. For winning teams win because of the strengths of their team members not their weaknesses.

By using tools that recognize the Affective Domain and its impact on sustainable improved performance, allows the organization to construct a cohesive learning culture; to build an alignment from the top to the base of the organization and to promote a working "smarter" not harder culture. The embracing of sound educational and learning research including: spaced repetition; application driven exercises; highly interactive and facilitated group discussions and developing higher order thinking skills, helps to work with the natural learning styles of all involved.

The Choice Is Yours

If you or your organization truly desires to build sustainable performance improvement from top down and to demonstrate a positive return on your training or development investment, then maybe an aligned approach that begins with the Affective Domain is your solution. The choice is yours.