



Capital One training center



Flight simulator

Educational Facilities



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The traditional view of “chalk and talk” educational facilities is increasingly out of touch with today’s reality – what today’s students need and where they need it. Progressive organizations within the area are challenging the traditional view of education and training in/with state-of-the-art facilities that truly support the needs of today’s learner.

Sixty years of generational change and considerable advances in (pedagogical and adult) learning theory has resulted in increased demands for training that simulates the environment or activities that the learner will encounter after training. Learners, especially adults, expect to be able to apply their newfound skills immediately in the work environment.

TRAINING IN FLIGHT

Nowhere is this more prevalent than in aviation. Several flight-training companies have chosen to locate learning centers in the Metroplex. Facilities such as FlightSafety International’s expanding center next to DFW airport are used to train pilot and maintenance crews in how to operate highly sophisticated aircraft using advanced training and simulation systems (including eerily accurate full motion flight simulators). Center manager, Dan MacLellan says that the learning environment is so effective that, “An experienced pilot can become fully qualified to operate a fast business jet without setting foot in the actual aircraft.”

A CAPITAL IDEA

Closer to earth, local corporations increasingly find that educational investments should involve creating

environments that allow the workforce to develop/maintain skills and practice for situations they are likely to face in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Capital One Financial Corporation (which has been recognized by *Training magazine* as one of the top companies in the nation for employer-sponsored workforce training and development practices) houses a state-of-the-art facility inside its Plano Town Center (featured in photo). It includes more than 20 training and conference rooms and a variety of support technologies.

The center enables the Fortune 500 company to provide all of the training benefits employees typically receive from third-party providers in the comfort and convenience of their own facility and at a lower cost. “Our associates appreciate that they can receive world-class training right here,” says Dan Mortensen, Senior Vice President, Corporate Real Estate, Capital One. “The ability to provide our award-winning training and development offerings in our Plano facility also reduces costs for the business, so it really benefits everyone.”

Tour a local college or university and you may see the rows of desks facing a chalkboard and stacks of books in libraries replaced by environments that encourage collaborative or cooperative learning and help students learn information literacy. Today’s student doesn’t need to work to find information anymore. The “Google generation” must instead make sense of the overwhelming sea of data available at the click of a mouse.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

To meet the need for information literacy and collaborative learning, new classroom environments, such as the Steelcase Learning Lab™ contain multiple projectors across walls, mobile white boards, collaborative table layouts and access to the Internet. These environments facilitate learning that meets the demands of today’s business. Richland College has five of these labs and is planning to add more, and more colleges are following suit. More and more it is an analytically driven world, and the benefits of employee retention and improved performance in these collaborative environments have been clearly established.

Some progressive DFW school districts are also challenging the traditional notion of educational facilities for K-12. The Frisco ISD Career and Technical Education (CTE), for example, houses multi-media and video production facilities, a simulated courtroom environment and restaurant-quality kitchens together with student-staffed fine dining open to the public by appointment. Remarkably, in addition to a diploma, media students can earn recognized certifications in industry standard software platforms.

World-class training companies, businesses and educational institutions continue to challenge the traditional notions of educational environments, and there is opportunity for real estate professionals to create and modify facilities to meet the demands made possible by these new ideas •

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