

The below notes are from the DCO's observation of training on 19 Sep 11.

Subject: Dangers of Few DSs/cadre at Training

Team,

So there I was making what I thought were intelligent training comments to this company commander about the training we were looking at when he told me he only had 8 DSs in his company. The dynamic of trying to get training to the highest level shifted to one of survival. Not the best for the Training LOE in our campaign plan. With are manning taking some hits, we need to be ready to do the best training we can--no stacking arms.

Here are some indicators that your leaders may want to look for:

1. An E-7 is the 1SG. Not ideal and a possible sign that the DSs are not as well-supervised or controlled at training. You may have the best E-7 in the world, but the diamond helps keep everyone in line. You may want to give extra attention to this company.
2. DSs giving extended classes to the whole platoon in the field. I watched a DS talk for about 30-40 minutes to platoons in the field, because they are at 1:60 and it is too hard to do breakouts at the squad level. One DS did it anyway and made it work as well as expected, but the Soldiers are on their own when they break out--one DS can't watch 5-6 squads of 9 at the same time or multiple different stack teams.
3. Soldiers in a perimeter for extended times. Again I watched Soldiers prone on the ground for 45 minutes--there was no one to do any concurrent action. At least consider letting them watch the training instead of staying in a perimeter where they see nothing.
4. Soldiers don't get the necessary repetition of the training events--poor for muscle memory and training different positions in things such as a stack. Because the flow is so slow with one overworked DS, the Soldiers do not get repetition on the training event. Consider focusing the cadre on the main event--the key task of the day and let other cadre or Soldiers move Soldiers to that activity or conduct concurrent training.
5. Encourage your cadre--I watched the 6 available DSs work very hard to train the Soldiers as well as they could. Lower DS numbers and diversions to 1SG will cause us to do training as smart as possible.
6. You can't really afford the weak or new DS. Every DS regardless of MOS needs to be able to jump in and teach the tasks in a dynamic manner.
7. Pre-teach as much as you can, so Soldiers spend their time on the training event instead of listening to a class while in the field. Try to cover some of the basic introductory material ahead of time, so Soldiers are not starting with a blank slate in the field--this is hard to do with few cadre but will help you in your 1:60 class where learning is difficult.

Having Battalion Commanders/CSMs discuss techniques with Company Commanders and 1SG will help everyone.