

Men and women working together

I was intrigued by the Fitzgerald and Shullman article, "The Myths and Realities of Women in Organizations" (1984, April). The authors contend that false assumptions about women account for the absence of career development programs to meet women's unique needs. I believe that separate programs for women are detrimental to the full integration into and promotion of women within the work place.

The article discusses such problems as stereotyped ideas of women, negative evaluations of women who behave atypically (according to sexual stereotypes) and the different organizational reality faced by women managers. It suggests that since women must learn to cope with these problems, organizations need to institute large-scale, costly programs and policies to help women deal with them. Rather than developing mechanisms for helping women cope with such organizational realities, why not attempt to change reality through the cooperative efforts of both sexes?

My experience shows that separate HRD programs for women managers accentuate perceptions that women are deficient and unsuited for management. Separate programs based on gender, no matter how well-intentioned, create divisiveness that translates into a we-versus-them attitude. Women often report resentment, a feeling of being patronized or a sense of needing remedial attention. Frequently suspicious, men believe that women have special advantages in today's organizations.

A more effective approach is to have female and male employees work together to change assumptions and create an organizational environment where both groups share career opportunities, define work-place policies and contribute to the management effectiveness model. Alice Sargent's April 1983 *Training & Development Journal*

article, "Women and Men Working Together: Toward Androgyny," shows how organizations can use the best of the different behaviors women and men bring to the work place, rather than forcing women to adjust to an outmoded male model of management.

Male and female managers working together can reduce gender myths and stereotypes, improve colleague relationships and replace the idea of sex-role appropriate behavior with a flexible management style in which the situation dictates appropriate behavior. These programs are well received by both sexes and, because they avoid blame, defensiveness and remedial approaches, create an environment of equitable career opportunities for all employees.

*Cynthia Berryman-Fink
Program Coordinator
Communication Enhancement Training
Amelia, Ohio*

Evaluating Evaluation

Shocked, dismayed, horrified—this hardly describes how I felt when I read "Evaluating the Training Function" (February 1984). I haven't heard these ideas for 15 years. Unfortunately, some well intentioned but uninformed managers of training will probably decide that if this approach is good enough for Xerox, it is good enough for them.

I can't understand why Guilmette and Reinhart take such a simplistic, misleading, inaccurate approach to measuring the effectiveness of training. As I see it, they assume the following:

- *Training effectiveness is measured by training activity.* In fact, high activity with low effectiveness causes the demise of many training functions.
- *Most training is done in the classroom.* At least 80 percent of training needs are best solved outside the classroom.

- *Per-student costs and classroom hours are meaningful.* No way!
- *Development time has meaning.* What really has meaning is the delivery of the product when the users need it, not necessarily when they want it.
- *Trainers deliver most of the training in organizations.* They actually deliver about one percent, if that much.

Let's print something that shows trainers and management how to measure the real and complete effectiveness of training. Perhaps this could be based on the ASTD Competency Study.

*Dick Skinner
Training Director
Water Associates
Milford, Mass.*

An uneasy look at an uneasy look

A dialogue about something as popular as behavior modeling is extremely helpful. We need thoughtful challenges to current practice. But Perry and Reich's article, "An Uneasy Look at Behavior Modeling" (1984, March), concerned me for three reasons:

- 1) The language was not objective but extremely emotional. "Monkey see/monkey do," "skills," "behavior mimicking," "inherent flaws," "one size fits all" and "show and tell" are not the terms of objective analysis.
- 2) The article distorted current practice. Many of the concerns addressed by the authors have long been resolved in the application of behavior modeling. Most of the practitioners I know use video models as a beginning, not an end. They approach the process with a great deal of flexibility. Similarly, most find ways to provide variety and enrichment in modular sessions. Many trainers add theory and background information appropriate to the training group.
- 3) The article contains many unsupported assertions, declarative statements supported by little or no evidence. The entire article has only one citation. This contrasts with the highly empirical nature of research on behavioral modeling and makes the ar-

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article seem largely opinions and personal beliefs.

The article concluded with a discussion of "three major design limitations of behavior modeling," which deserve some comment. Discussing what they call "inappropriate use of media," the authors argue that because supervisory training teaches only verbal skills, video is unnecessary and distracting. They propose the use of scripts that can be read and analyzed. The idea that behavior modeling teaches only verbal skills illustrates the naivete of the writers. Supervisory training is far more than teaching oral or written communication. The supervisor's general demeanor, thought processes, observational powers, physical behaviors, body language and tone of voice also are involved. The authors' statement that "films and tapes are glamorous but not the most effective media for shaping verbal skills" is not supported by any research they cite, and is contradicted by the one book they reference.

The second major design limitation they note is "improvisation acting versus role playing." They advocate role playing because information about the objectives and goals is given to both parties. In improvisation, information is withheld from one person to make the situation more realistic, and the authors criticize improvisation on the grounds that it is superficial and the situation is contrived and unrealistic.

The authors' experience is contrary to that of most people who have used both role playing and practice or rehearsal. Conventional role playing suffers from many ills. Participants never have enough information about the situation. There is no model or sample to follow, and people frequently flounder around. The content is artificial because it has no real bearing on the day-to-day work life of the people involved.

Behavior modeling rehearsal sessions, on the other hand, involve actual situations that participants face on the job. The supervisor plays himself or herself and, therefore, understands the situation completely. Participants are encouraged not to "act."

The third design limitation noted by Perry and Reich involves the issue of skills versus attitude. They believe management education should focus on attitudes. Most modern textbooks of social psychology clearly point out,

however, that changing attitudes by first changing behavior is far easier than addressing attitudes directly. We have tried to approach attitudes through sensitivity training, T-groups, encounter groups, etc., but research shows that all these have had only a fleeting impact on attitudes and virtually no impact on behavior. And, the authors say, because participants go through the practice process "neither believing it, not internalizing it," they forget the lessons quickly. This is contradicted by all the evidence that has been collected on the process for the past 20 years.

Behavior modeling is not the final answer to all training requirements. It must be evaluated and challenged constantly. Unfortunately, articles like this one offer only confusion.

*Jack Zenger
President
Zenger-Miller Inc.
Cupertino, Calif.*

Coloring

Having been a student of physiological psychology, I was drawn to Elizabeth Lean's article, "Color Me Training" (1984, March). It was a thought-provoking article that made some good points.

The article's layout reinforced two of those ideas—that color has to be relevant to the topic in order to increase learning and that the use of color in materials for adult learners may be more of a marketing device than a learning tool. I easily located the article because of the clever use of color in the background of the text, but I found those same dashes of color not only *not* useful to my learning but even distracting.

*Robert A. Orr, Jr.
Metuchen, N.J.*

The Human Touch

One of the themes of the April issue was of particular interest to me. Having worked in a variety of settings, I agree that a training facility can contribute to the success or failure of a training program. But the

negativeness or positiveness of the influence does not depend on the facility's "poshness." More expense does not necessarily result in a better learning environment, as a number of the articles in the issue pointed out.

Another important environmental factor, one I'm surprised Finkel ("Where Learning Happens") didn't mention, is the quality of the center's staff. A group of people who know their jobs and know the training business so well that they can anticipate a leader's needs and understand his or her idiosyncracies turn an edifice into an environment that truly facilitates the learning process.

*Harold Scharlatt
President
Training and Development Associates,
Inc.
Lexington, Ky.*

A complaint and a threat

I consider myself a competent trainer, but I also recognize the need to update my skills. My membership in ASTD is not merely for prestige. I sincerely wish to improve my training abilities, but the *Journal* has not been much help over the last two years.

A basic training skill is the ability to communicate ideas and concepts so that learning is enjoyable and the material is clear. But the language of the *Journal* is stilted, and the articles often contain unnecessary, unusable theory that seldom relates directly to my needs. Unless the *Journal* includes more useful-in-the-classroom material, this will be my last year as a member of ASTD.

*Roger E. Long
Training Director
Spartan Aluminum Products, Inc.
Sparta, Ill.*

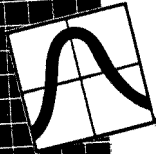
Editor's reply

We haven't had a comment about the *Journal* being unreadable and impractical for almost a year, and we were beginning to think that our work to correct those problems was perceived by the readers. Clearly in your case we still aren't doing enough.

Frankly, we think if you compare a 1982 *Journal* with a 1984 issue, you

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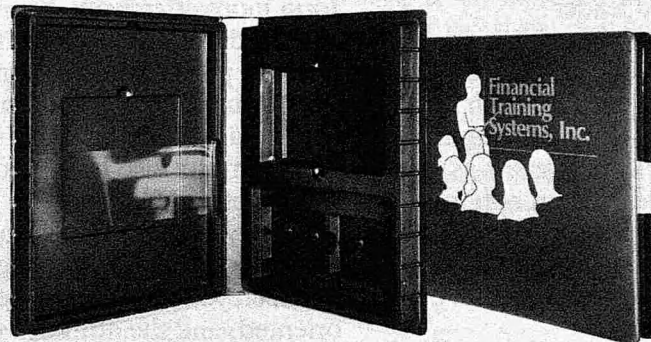


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will see a big improvement in readability and a better editorial mix in the direction of practical articles. Note the monthly Practicum column, for example, and the bi-monthly Four-by-Four, which presents a problem and offers sixteen suggestions from four expert practitioners for dealing with it.

In Praise of the Whole Person

Thank you for the breath of fresh air. David Meier's article, "Imagine That" (1984, May), presented the redemptive factor that has been missing in the evolution and growth of the training resource.

We have been so obsessed with training for external skills and knowledge that we have forgotten the imaginative and creative dimension of the human person. It is as if we tried to divide a human being into parts and to address only one part at a time. A whole person learns just as a whole person teaches—body, mind and spirit. It is foolish to reduce the human personality or to consider fantasy and imagination an obstacle to business and personal development.

Pioneers dream dreams and build on images.

Virginia Lee
Training Manager
The East New York Savings Bank
New York, N. Y.

The May *Journal* is a very special issue that breaks through some traditional barriers and moves the whole field of training and development into a new plane. The issue welcomes back wholeness into a profession that has often worked against it.

I was particularly touched by Ruth Gentilman's introduction—possibly the best piece in the issue. What touched me was her spirit, her openness and her gift for verbal expression. She has broken new ground for the *Journal* and its readers by writing about a subject that is not "trendy" in the superficial sense but that heralds a new and

important stage of being for all of us.

Why not follow through with an ASTD-sponsored seminar or institute that would help train people in the use of imagery in training and development? Something like this is sorely needed and would help build a longer term structure on the solid foundation you have laid.

David Meier
The Center for Accelerated Learning
Lake Geneva, Wis.

Computers are tools

As a Certified Data Processor turned trainer who moonlights as a freelance writer, I found your April 1984 editorial somewhat disturbing. After all, the computer does not attach itself to a dot matrix printer, nor does it run a substandard word processing package by itself. The writer is responsible. If more editors voiced their annoyance at dot matrix print as you have, writers would have to quit using the printers.

The same can be said for technologized training. Substandard training can be delivered in any medium. *Trainers* are responsible for ensuring the quality of the training package. If we refuse to buy inferior training programs, the sellers will either change their wares or go out of business.

Guaranteeing quality in writing, training or any other activity using computer technology is still a human responsibility. The computer is only a tool. Do you blame the hammer when you miss the nail and hit your hand instead?

Nancy Blumenstark Mingus
DP Training Consultant
Williamsville, N. Y.

The eye-squinting quality of much dot matrix output certainly deserves a reader's lament. But manuscripts without page numbers? "Perfect-looking" manuscripts that are "content free"? Blaming the computer for these problems is the high-tech equivalent of killing the messenger.

I would be far more worried about a 11