to establish a structure for identifying relevant research activities and results, (3) to provide direction in stimulating topics for conducting research, and (4) to establish a vehicle for communicating relevant findings.

Users of the research agenda will include:

- the Research Committee, in selecting topics for conference presentations and invitational seminars;
- research and development organizations, in identifying studies currently in progress in areas of common interest;
- graduate students, in deciding on topics for research projects and dissertations;
- funding groups, in determining priorities for grants and contracts.

Establishment and maintenance of the research agenda will be a dynamic, evolutionary process in which potential users will participate. The first phase of the process will result in the publication of an initial list of issues or problems and questions which require investigation. This first phase will be conducted in conjunction with the Third Invitational Research Seminar to be held in November, 1980.

Eventually? . . . that part is still unclear. One possibility the Committee projects is the design and implementation of a mechanized information system which would allow for comprehensive listings of references related to items listed on the research agenda, efficient and up-to-date maintenance of the agenda, and easy information access and agenda searches by users of the research agenda. — *Donna McNamara*

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASTD

Mac McCullough
ASTD Director of
Professional Development

At the 1979 National Conference in St. Louis, I met with a group of ASTD chapter presidents and described my appointment to the newly created position of Professional Development Director of ASTD as equivalent to being appointed staff physician for the American Medical Association. That was said only partly in jest. Can you imagine what your own HRD job would be like if all of your company's employees were trainers of one sort or another?

This article presents a brief status report on what has been happening during the past year. It also is a follow-up to an article appearing in the May 1979 special "Professional Development Issue" of the *Training and Development Journal* in which I tried to answer questions about my ideas and plans for professional development. On rereading that article I found that my ideas hadn't changed too much and my plans had been carried out to a large extent.

The first thing that impressed me after joining ASTD was the sincere and vocal interest in professional development on the parts of the Board of Directors and the professional staff. Equally impressive (or maybe depressive) was the fact there was little or no agreement among them as to what should be done, how, by whom and in what priority order.

PD Action Plan

Therefore, it seemed an appropriate starting point was to develop a professional development plan upon which people could agree. This took awhile, but was worth the effort. The Board of Directors endorsed a *Proposed Professional Development Plan* at its June meeting. It was converted into the *1979-80 Action Plan for Professional Development* and sent to all chapter presidents in the fall of 1979.

The Plan was based on seven premises:

1. ASTD is not in a professional development crisis requiring a "quick fix," but needs a thoughtful long-range effort;

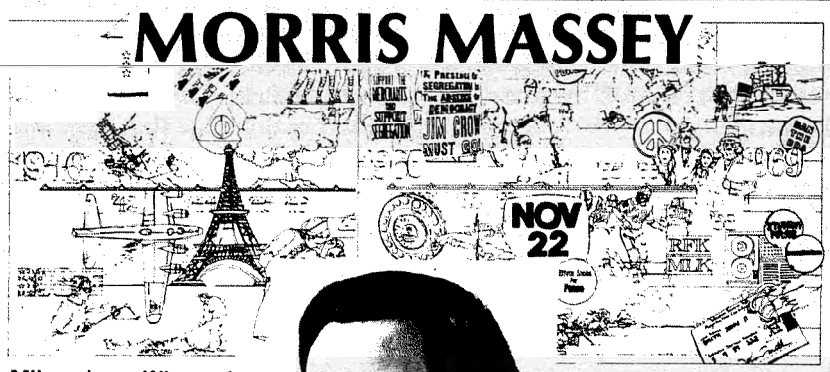
Mac McCullough

2. A variety of approaches are needed, but initial emphasis will be on enhancing basic training and development skills;
3. There are data and systems existing in ASTD that can be used to determine members' needs;
4. Understanding, concurrence and involvement of ASTD members is essential;
5. The Director of Professional Development should manage and be held responsible for the plan;
6. Professional development activities are primarily a service to members and should not be considered a major income producer; and
7. No additional permanent staff would be needed to execute the plan.

The first goal of the plan was to provide a program upon which future efforts could be built. I think that has been accomplished. A number of the actions proposed in the plan have been carried out and are described in more detail in this issue of the *Journal.* For example:

- The plan called for holding a conference of HRD academicians and for conducting follow-up activities. The article in this issue by Ellis Berne and Elizabeth Olson describes that conference. Follow-up activities have been started including a special meeting of interested HRD professors during the ASTD National Conference in Anaheim.
- The plan called for starting work to establish an HRD "body of knowledge." One step in that direction is the bibliography appearing in this issue under the title "Best Known HRD Works of the 1970s." From this list we plan to develop an HRD "work authority" to help us better categorize the field.
- The plan called for using the ASTD Institutes and the National Conference as professional development vehicles. The overview by Terry Broomfield and Dick Ragan shows how we see the Conference

MORRIS MASSEY



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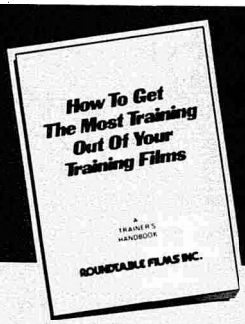

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as such a vehicle. We have used the Nine Activity Areas identified by the Professional Development Committee as our guides.

- The Plan called for contact with and assistance to ASTD chapters and regions. This has been accomplished through written communications and personal visits. And it should be enhanced by the work of the Society's Chapter Programming Task Force.
- And, the plan called for the ASTD Professional Development Committee to critically review and monitor professional development efforts. This task is covered by Bob Luke's report on page 32.

ASTD — At the Crossroads

I think considerable progress has been made this year. The items mentioned only cover those efforts which are amplified more fully in this issue of the *Journal.* Other committees, task forces, divisions, regions and chapters are heavily into professional development activities. We will continue to press ahead for more and better professional development opportunities for our members by further implementation of the Action Plan during the remainder of 1980.

However, ASTD is at a crossroads and faces a tremendous challenge. We need to reevaluate who we are, where we are going and what kind of society we want to be five years from now. This will require us to better define our markets, our customers and our driving force.

This is necessary for many reasons, but one of the most important is so that our scarce professional development resources can be better focused on areas where they will do our members the most good.

The ASTD Board of Directors, with the assistance of the Strategic Planning Committee, is tackling this critical task. So, while we will continue to implement the current Professional Development Action Plan, we also will be preparing longer ranged plans based on future decisions by the ASTD Board of Directors. — *Mac McCullough*