



### Write or Wrong

Principles of andragogy notwithstanding, adults participating in writing classes find the greatest satisfaction when the teacher/trainer plays a strong role in instructional activities. *Writer's Update*, a newsletter for writing professionals, including trainers, found that adult writing students believe they benefit most from trainer-led lectures, demonstrations, discussions and critiques.

"Our survey shows that adult writing students like writing assignments, but don't care for—or may abhor—small group peer critiques of their work," ac-

ording to newsletter publisher Kimberly Edwards. Most survey respondents saw this activity as a waste of time, indicating that they enroll in classes "to hear from the teacher," not their peers.

The students approved of one-to-one discussion with a respected class member; sharing aloud experiences, successes and failures; and the appearance of panels and guest speakers.

For more information, contact *Writer's Update*, 4812 Folsom Boulevard, #250, Sacramento, CA 95819.

In an overall complimentary article concerning the status of Japanese-style management methods in U.S. organizations, *FORTUNE* magazine recently isolated four potential trouble spots.

■ *A resurgence of union resistance.* The article cites major problems at a General Motors plant where union committee members won office recently on an anti-employment-participation-group platform, advocating a return to the old-style adversarial relationship with management.

Another GM division, where union officials fear quality circles will usurp their role as workers' representatives, keeps its employee participation groups going by treading a fine line: The groups are forbidden to discuss contractual matters or productivity (the improvement of which might cut jobs, the rationale goes). Observers have pointed out the irony of quality circle-type efforts where participants cannot discuss productivity.

The article noted that General Electric, while experiencing considerable success in its approximately 1,000 quality circles operating throughout the country, is not even trying to establish circles in plants represented by the United Electrical Workers. This union, which also forced some Westinghouse plants to retreat from employee-participation programs, has called quality circles, "sinister devices for stealing jobs and getting workers to squeal on their fellows."

■ *Lack of management commitment.* *FORTUNE* points the finger at human resources departments, saying that, "hot with new gossip," HRD people "will come in and set up circles without securing commitment in deed, as well as word, from the managers who have to work with the circles' recommendations."

According to the article, Flying Tiger Lines air freight company experienced devastating results when it implemented major changes in the physical layout of some offices and hangars on the recommendation of a worker-management committee, only to have headquarters step in and rearrange the facilities again.

■ *Need for remedial education.* Some of

the most important techniques quality circles use to achieve high product quality are relatively simple statistical controls. When Hewlett-Packard attempted to introduce these controls into some plants, it found that American workers, in contrast to their Japanese counterparts, needed remedial math education before they could perform the calculations.

■ *Differing inventory control philosophies.* A widely lauded Japanese method for improving manufacturing operations, the "just-in-time" method of keeping inventories very low and, thus, very inexpensive, has caused problems for many firms that have tried to implement it. Leisurely railroad delivery schedules, improperly designed unloading and storage facilities, impractical plant locations and problems with suppliers have held up many U.S. companies' efforts to switch from traditional, fat "just-in-case" inventories to the slim "just-in-time."

The article appeared in *FORTUNE's* April 2, 1984 issue.

seen as experts on what is right, best or appropriate. They regard themselves as well-intentioned people, willing to help and advise others.

■ *Need for routine.* Contrary to the stereotype that top salespeople are impulsive and somewhat undisciplined, most like routine and hate having it interrupted. They prefer positive actions to positive thoughts because positive thoughts occur naturally after they've gone through their positive routines.

■ *Need for accomplishment.* Material comforts—a nice house, expensive clothing, a fancy car—are only the beginning. Money starts as a prime motivator, but top salespeople earn so much that it "loses the ability to inspire." The superstars constantly create new challenges, go after the "impossible sales," to maintain their enthusiasm.

■ *Need for stimulation.* Top producers are normally calm, relaxed people who thrive on challenge. They have more physical energy than most of us and welcome outside stimulation as a way to channel their energy in satisfying ways.

■ *Need for honesty.* The best salespeople have such a strong need to believe in the product that they will switch jobs if the company's reputation falls or they have serious doubts about a new product line. But they are not rigidly moralistic; experience has taught them to accept the imperfections, in people and products, of the real world.

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## What Motivates Top Sales Performers?

"If I could bottle it, I'd make a fortune overnight," signs the sales trainer, alluding to that special something that distinguishes top sales producers from the pack of competent, but not star-quality, salespeople.

The essence remains uncaptured, but we may be getting closer. In their March 1984 issue, *Psychology Today* published an excellent summary of studies of top sales producers' behavior in four categories: closing sales, consultive sales, relationship sales and display sales. Profiles of several thousand top producers identified seven motivating factors\* common to all four categories:

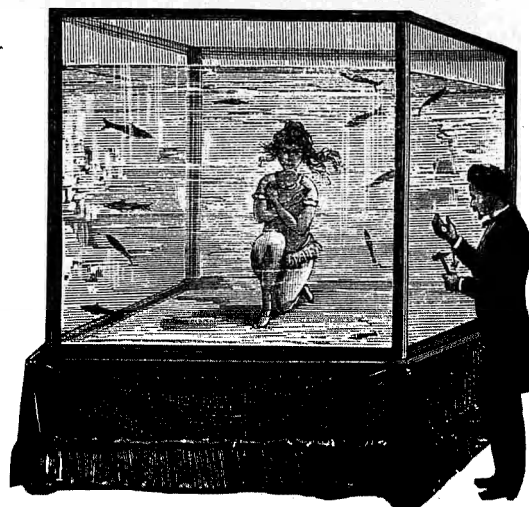
■ *Need for status.* The best salespeople seek recognition as proof of their ability and importance. They enjoy power and authority, and are strongly aware of image and reputation.

■ *Need for control.* Successful sellers like people, enjoy being with them and delight in influencing them. But they seldom care deeply whether others like them, a trait that enables them to use emotion without falling prey to it.

■ *Need for respect.* They want to be

"Take the great many people who've dealt with computers now for a long time—for example, MIT seniors or MIT professors of computer science—and ask whether they're in any better position to solve life's problems. And I think the answer is clearly no. They're just as confused and mixed up about the world and their personal relations and so on as anyone else."

*MIT computer scientist Joseph Weizenbaum, in "Computer Worship," published in the April issue of Science 84 magazine.*



## Odd Jobs

By now you probably can recite the frequently published list of "jobs of the future." Positions in computer sciences, robotics, genetic engineering, environmental science and health services are noted most frequently.

But are "armed courier" and "exotic welder" on your list? *The Futurist* magazine recently published a more adventurous list of "Occupational Titles of the Future," with those and other curiosities such as shyness consultant, treasure hunter, plant therapist, house- and pet-sitter, hibernation specialist and ocean hotel manager.

An interesting facet was the high percentage of future jobs relevant to the human resource development profession. Among them:

- artificial intelligence technician;
- benefits analyst;
- career consultant;
- certified alcoholism counselor;
- color consultant;
- community psychologist;
- executive rehabilitation counselor;
- hotline counselor;
- image consultant;
- job developer;
- leisure counselor;
- relocation counselor;
- retirement counselor;
- wellness consultant.

## Training Wins in Improving Productivity

"By far the most successful program is training," is the conclusion of "The Industrial Relations Dimension of Productivity," a summary report prepared by Robert B. McKersie and Janice A. Klein for the Committee on Economic Development.

"By far the most successful program in the human resource area, and indeed across all of the programs, is training," the report states. "All but one corporation [surveyed] mentioned it as a key program, and twelve placed it in the top three for effectiveness."

Table 1 lists the various productivity programs in use, and their effectiveness, as rated by 29 corporations responding to McKersie and Klein's survey.

The data were published in ILR Report, New York State School Industrial Relations, Room 194, Ives Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853.

**Table 1—Productivity Improvement Programs and Number of Times Specific Programs Were Mentioned**

	Used by Corporation	Most Effective Top Three	Least Effective Bottom Three
<b>Management Methods</b>			
Practices/tools	13	8	1
Job/organization redesign	21	6	3
Absenteeism control/employee assistance	23	3	11
Flexible hours	16	—	8
<b>Training</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>—</b>
<b>Involvement</b>			
Quality circles	19	3	3
Labor-management committees	12	3	2
Opinion survey	17	1	8
Communications program	5	1	—
Employee involvement	6	4	—
<b>Reward Systems</b>			
Wage payment system	14	6	2
Awards/suggestion programs	10	3	3
<b>Productivity Bargaining</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Technology</b>			
Office automation	25	4	5
Manufacturing automation	18	12	—
Other new systems	7	6	—
(29 Respondents)			

## Living with the New Nuclear Industry Training

A new federal regulation, mandated by Congress and soon to be issued for public comment by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, will be the driving force behind training at nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities over the next several years. The regulation is part of the government's effort to ensure the safety of nuclear power plants, which was accelerated following the 1979 accident at Three Mile Island.

Comprehensive training programs and formal licensing examinations are longstanding requirements for key personnel at nuclear power plants. What is new is the requirement that all personnel performing safety-related functions receive training, and that a systems approach to training (SAT) be used. The scope of training, and the rigor with which job-related programs are developed and maintained, must be increased greatly.

To senior power plant managers the

regulation may seem one more burden for enterprises already in financial difficulty. To those who supply training, whether in-house trainers or vendors, the regulation is an exciting opportunity to expand activities and test new techniques.

The challenge for vendors, trainers and managers alike is to make sure the regulation works to the advantage of all. Effective training could and should lead to a more skilled work force, increased production and a reduction in downtime. No manager would object to those outcomes.

The key to meeting this challenge successfully will be the flexible, context-sensitive manner in which the SAT requirement is interpreted. Formal acquiescence, a concern for the letter and not the spirit of the law, will lead to bulky documentation but not the desired results. The new training, like an alien graft, will be an irritant that invites rejection.

To be effective, the new training systems must be integrated fully into the larger systems in which they operate. Each step in the proposed

SAT process should be interpreted creatively, to match the needs and realities of the organization.

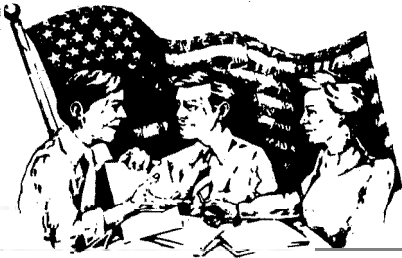
This is the spirit in which General Physics instructional experts and power plant specialists are approaching the regulatory challenge. Our approach:

- promotes interaction of training and plant personnel in identifying needs and formulating goals.
- ensures that existing resources and materials are used, when possible.
- evaluates the effects of plant concerns and constraints on all facets of training program design and implementation.
- establishes procedures to facilitate regular review and update of training programs.
- trains instructors to develop and implement in-house training programs.

Carefully considering the way things are in the organization, not the way someone says they are or thinks they should be, will allow trainers to use the systems approach to training to develop cost-effective training programs.

In short, SAT should not be simply

# AMERICAN MANAGEMENT IS ROLLING UP ITS SLEEVES TO MEET INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION



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an exercise in training systems technology. It should embrace a concern for the social and organizational systems the training is designed to serve.

Submitted by Sarah Lutterodt  
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## Training Replaces Pirating

Four major telecommunications companies have formed a consortium to promote high-quality technical education and remedy a severe shortage of trained employees in the high-growth telecommunications industry.

The four firms, GTE Sprint, Pacific Bell, Rolm and American Satellite, have cooperated to develop the Telecommunications Technician Training Program at San Mateo's Skyline College in Northern California. The program was founded on the belief that tomorrow's industry advances depend on the highest quality technical education today.

"Until this program came along, firms in our field had to pirate away from each other if they wanted high-caliber workers," according to Bob Windham, manager of technical training for GTE Sprint. "We were robbing each other, and it wasn't profitable for any of us. Through this program we are bringing highly capable individuals into an industry that has been steadily outgrowing its supply of technicians."

The companies made an initial investment of \$90,600 and have continued to support the program through grants and contributions of personnel, time and state-of-the-art equipment.

The courses are offered in computer-assisted, video interactive formats individualized by the faculty. Basic Skills for Telecommunications; Fundamentals of Transmission and Carrier Systems; Fundamentals in

Switching and Data Communications; and Directed Work Experience in Telecommunications are the current offerings. Graduates qualify for such entry-level positions as network repair technician and customer service technician.

Advanced telecommunications courses will be added soon, to create an A.S. degree program qualifying graduates for positions as field support technicians and network management technicians.

In addition to supplying a larger, better trained and more productive work force to the industry, the program reduces costs of the participating companies' in-house training and recruitment programs.

The Skyline program has been noticed by other industry groups, and may serve as a model for future industry-education partnerships. "It is designed to be transported easily to other locations and situations," said Skyline College president Donald J. MacIntyre, referring to the courses' media-based format.

## Can HRD Be Funny?

Research conducted recently by ASTD concerning products and services members would like best found a book, *The Lighter Side of HRD*, to be among the most popular items. Now the society is canvassing its 23,000+ members for potential materials for the book, which would be published during 1985.

The 10 people who submit the most contributions ASTD chooses for publication will receive a free copy. All contributors' names will be published alphabetically in one section of the book.

Send your funniest HRD-related stories, jokes, riddles, puns, one-liners, cartoons, anecdotes, misprints, etc. to Humor, ASTD Publications Department, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20024. Sorry, they can't be returned.

Please send items of interest for *Practicum* to Elizabeth Lean, Training & Development Journal, Suite 305, 600 Maryland Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20024.