

"Technical Trainers are Incompetent!"

"Most Technical Training is Inefficient, Poorly Designed and Much Too Expensive"

By JEROME PELOQUIN

According to a recent survey by the Technical and Skills Training Division, 60 percent of our technical training members have been in their positions less than two years and 70 percent have never had any specific training in instructional technology: instructional systems design (ISD). Most technical trainers are still technical instructors. That is, they stand before groups of trainees in a classroom environment. Many trainers still depend upon unstructured on-the-job training to provide hands-on experience.

Most technical trainers become trainers by mandate, rather than by design. All too frequently, the education model, or the classroom comes first to mind. Time and again, it has been proven that the education model is seriously flawed for application in the world of work.¹ Training in the work world is essentially task-based or procedure-based training. Task analysis or the instructional system model is the most effective method for task and procedure training.

Without the knowledge of instructional technology, many trainers have been producing less than efficient and/or competent training. As I travel around the country running task analysis workshops for the Technical and Skills Training Division, it has

become clear to me that much basic information about both training and performance technology does not get through to the average technical trainer. As the Technical and Skills member of the Journal Advisory Board, I proposed to the Director and to the Executive Committee that this issue of the *Journal* be dedicated primarily to the basic skills necessary for the development of efficient and effective training in the world of work.



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Although this issue focuses on the basics, there are many powerful concepts and helpful tips for the seasoned professional as well. In "A Question of Performance" by Thomas Gilbert (pg.20), both beginners and seniors will have an opportunity to try their skills at solving a real-world training problem, using and learning about the power of performance technology. This is a two-part article (stay tuned for the October issue for the conclusion). In "Guiding Performance With Job Aids," Don Bullock (pg.36) explains the fundamentals of one of the most important tools available to the modern trainer... job performance aids! A number of case studies using the performance-based training method are also included for both the experienced and new trainer.

This issue of the *Journal* is broken into three basic sections or blocks. They are: performance engineering, instructional systems design and training strategies.

Performance engineering

The effective trainer realizes there is a big difference between "can't do" (lack of skills or knowledge) and "won't do" (lack of incentive, resources, management support). It is categorically

impossible to resolve a "won't do" with a training program. Performance technology provides trainers with a set of empirical processes for measurably improving the performance of individual workers or groups. The new trainer will want to review Ara Bouloutian's and Gerry Solomon's "Build a Performance System" (pg.32) before tackling Tom Gilbert's "A Question of Performance." The last article in the performance block is Don Bullock's "Guiding Performance With Job Aids." Many times workers cannot perform because they do not have access to good information. Clear, unambiguous procedure steps, logic trees and

help your training delivery, then Bob Frye's "A Message From a Computer" (pg. 84) could save you time, money and grief. Fred Clark's "How to Improve Technical Skills in an Urban Transit Environment" (pg.58) describes a massive technical training project which used both performance technology and the instructional systems design process to generate enormous on-the-job impact. Finally, a comprehensive article by Earl D. Heath from OSHA (pg. 74) provides comprehensive guidance to trainers and organizations regarding the training requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act. This

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job support materials, if feasible, are far more cost-effective than formal training program development.

Instructional systems design

Unfortunately, most training delivered in this country is designed without a clear idea of how the trainees will use their new knowledge in the world of work.² Without a detailed analysis of the job and tasks necessary to perform, it is unlikely that the training will be either efficient or effective. Mark Rosenberg's "The ABC's of ISD" (pg. 44) outlines the fundamental steps in modern training technology and discusses the instructional systems design (ISD) process.

Training strategies

If you've been eyeing the computer and the world of computer-assisted instruction (CAI) and wondering if the computer could

is much needed information and all trainers should read it carefully.

This *Journal* is intended to serve as a resource for all technical trainers. We've tried to take our own advice and provide job performance aids and comprehensive bibliographies or resource materials wherever possible. We intend this *Journal* to be used as a working document. Access to tools... this is the first step. Tell us what you think. Would you like to see more? If we are going to be effective and efficient we must provide practical support to you in the field. You, the reader, must be the ultimate judge.

References

1. Gagne, R.M. 69th Annual APA Convention, September 5, 1961.
2. Gilbert, T. *Human competence*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978.

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