

Letters To The Editor

Jacobs Goes Beyond Von Haller Gilmer

Dr. Von Haller Gilmer's article* regarding the Training Director and the Psychologist is interesting but narrow in scope. Narrow because he appears to over-emphasize the role of the psychologist. There are a number of other social sciences that can achieve similar results.

It is my belief that the complexity of the situations facing us require a discipline that is broader in scope and in methodology than psychology or any particular social science.

The Behavioral Scientist seems better able to fill the role that I have in mind. The Behavioral Scientist may have started out as a psychologist or sociologist but is not confined to the limitations of any one of these social sciences.

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*"The Third Crisis in Industrial Training,"
p. 4, Sept. 1962 *Journal*.

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Computer vs. Non-Computer Games

Your September issue contained an article by Lawrence Steinmetz which indicated, based on a survey of participants' reaction, that non-computer man-

agement games are better training tools than computer ones. I agree with this conclusion, would like to suggest a few possible reasons why it is true today, and a hope that it will not be true in the future. My remarks are based solely on personal experience in using games, and on having been involved in the development of five computer games and four non-computer games.

Computer games have been generally more time consuming, taking perhaps a day of "play," while a few hours will often suffice for a non-computer game. In a course of finite duration, the more time spent on the game the less time spent on instruction and critique. The greater time usually results from a greater complexity, but there is a tendency to make computer games more complex than is justified on the basis of the educational objectives. I have always enjoyed the ease provided by the computer for adding features to a game.

Building a computer game is an enjoyable and challenging job in itself, irrespective of training needs. It is possible that non-computer games have more often been designed with a clearly defined educational objective. This has been true of all of the non-computer games I have worked on, but only true of one of the five computer ones.

Computer games have usually been more fun to play, and have been used often solely for demonstration, or even entertainment. There are unfortunately

too many people who have had their only experience with management games in non-educational situations.

Management games are an educational tool, and are to be used when appropriate. The question of computer versus non-computer game should be answered in terms of cost and convenience. Since a computer does only what you tell it to do, and since the participants should not be concerned with the mechanics by which data is being processed, it seems to me that there is no reason why computer games should not

always be "better" than non-computer games. The computer takes care of clerical tasks, provides speed, accuracy and flexibility, and, if educationally desired, the possibility of more complexity.

Whether computer or non-computer, the educational validity of a game depends on how it is used. To quote Mr. Steinmetz: "Gaming is a training device, and, unless instruction and critique are given, the device becomes valueless."

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S/Gordon M. Bliss, *Executive Director*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 26th day of September, 1962.

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