AN OVERVIEW OF ASTD's 1979 TRAINING AND LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM . . .

WHEN TRENDS AND TECHNOLOGY TANGO

BY DUGAN LAIRD

Thank heavens someone gave ASTD's Fourth Annual Training and Development Symposium the theme *Trends and Technology for the 1980s*. That theme achieved two things.

First, it lent unity to the exciting differences developed by nearly 20 faculty members and more than 120 participants. And there were differences! At an opening night exercise to define the "perfect future," one team yearned for "a boss who understands what I am doing and who won't cut my budget." Another dreamed of the day when HRD would be a "professional career." Career Planning, Neurolinguistic Programming, Behavior Modeling and 9.9 Management — all were described.

Secondly, the theme suggests a solution for the old dilemma: training officers who see themselves as occupying cobwebbed cubicles down by the furnace room while they dream of membership in the power structure and being enthroned in panelled offices in the executive suite. The title of the Symposium, *Trends and Technology,* implies that the trip from the basement to organizational impact demands both analysis of trends and acquisition of technology. We can't just think vast thoughts . . . we must master specific techniques. As Emerson said (I hope it was Emerson!) "Build your castles in the air; then put the foundations under them." Technology is not a dirty word, and learning how to be an HRD specialist is not a socially obscene activity.

In fact, learning *how* is the essence of the first trend observed at the Symposium: the expanding role of Human Resource Development.

It really wasn't surprising recently to hear the son of an HRD director boast, "My dad develops human race horses!" That boy may be prophetic. Our role has expanded so much that ASTD now cites nine distinct activities of training and development:[1]

1. Analyzing needs and evaluating results;
2. Designing training programs and materials;
3. Delivering training programs and services;
4. Advising and counselling;
5. Managing training activities;
6. Maintaining organizational relationships;
7. Doing research to advance the field;
8. Developing professional skills and expertise; and
9. Developing basic skills and knowledge.

The basic question is, "Does each of us know how to do all nine things?" Just having HRD or Ph.D. listed after our names doesn't insure competence. We, and our staff, must acquire the technology.

Take another look at the last two items in that list. They should get top billing, because they're priority items. Carl Rogers has said, "The most useful learning is learning the process of learning — a continuing openness to experience, incorporating into oneself the process of change." During Symposium, Bob Dilts and Terry McClendon made poetry of this concept: "If I give you a fish, I satisfy your hunger; if I teach you how to fish, you have food for life."

To maintain this steady source of nutrition, we must pay attention to another trend: a potential collision course between the behaviorists and the humanists. Already their feuds have debilitated our energy and focus. The two groups agree on little except that each has the right answer about how to produce human behavior. This has caused problems for our organizations, our students and ourselves. (Take me: I've never quite decided whether to be a bearded pipesmoker with patches on my sleeves sitting in furnitureless circles — or a benevolent provider with an ample supply of corn and a hungry bunch of pigeons.)

I vibrate a lot to Rogers' idea that humans have a natural capacity for learning, and that learning happens best when they are free of external threats. Then, I look around and I see lots of people who have been taught to ". . . do only those things in which they see a personal payoff." (I'll bet you think B.F. Skinner said that. Actually, it was Eugene Kropowski, whoever he is.)

What we believe about these apparently polar approaches actually makes a difference in the way we design, relate to clients, learners and staff, and the way we manage the HRD function.

Lately, I've noticed a happy trend toward unity. I've found for myself that when I care enough for others to give them what *they* want instead of what *I* want for them . . . well, we all grow together. Skinner himself implies that love involves giving others the reinforcement we've learned they like, and vice versa. Could it be that in a few years we will all be preaching the doctrine of Facilitative Reinforcement? What a trend that would be!

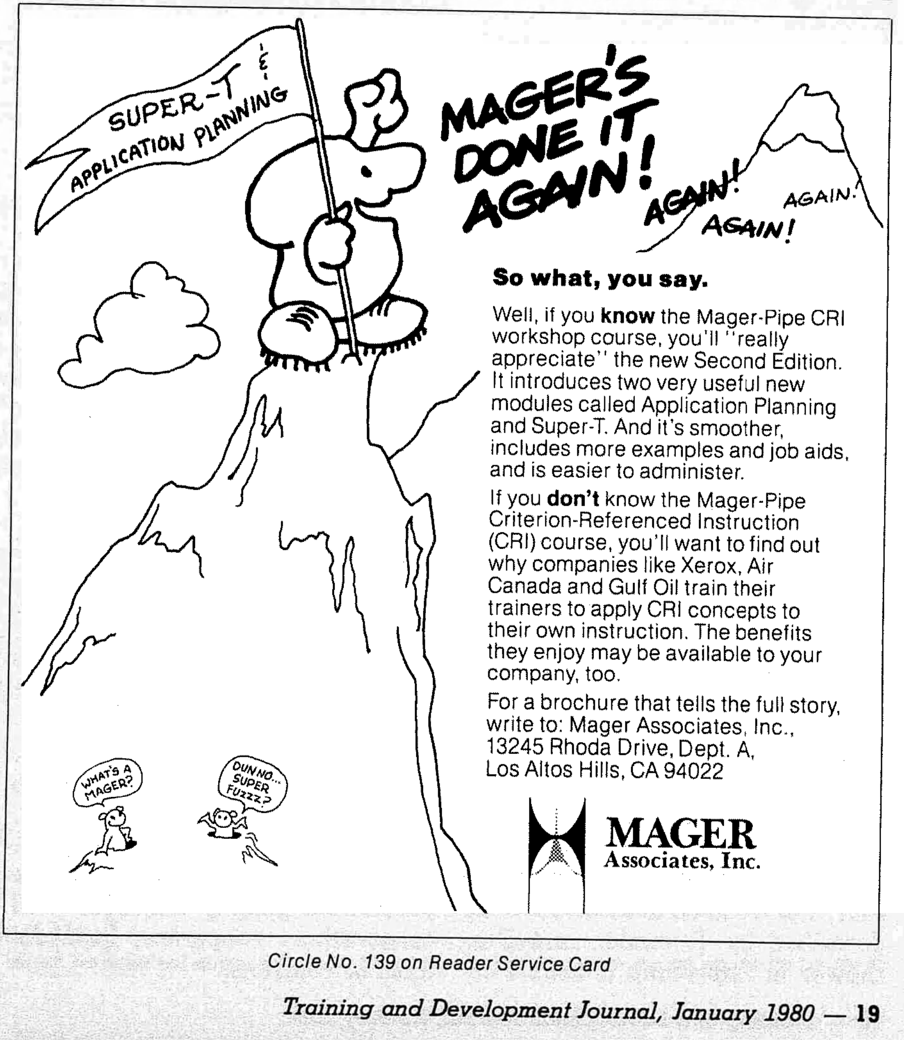
Right now we can also witness another trend: the development of the HRD career professional. This was one of the "team dreams" at the Symposium; but in a real sense the career option exists right now. When we do career planning for our staff, there are lots of ways to grow, right within HRD. When we interview new candidates for our staff, they have credentials. They know Maslow and Knowles, and understand value systems and organizational behavior.

What a nice change from the days when we assumed that the best welder would make the best trainer of welders! Today, we see more agreement that new trainers need instructor training and that old timers need new methods. Today we can acquire and utilize necessary new skills: acquiring and managing power, team building at all levels. There is even evidence that HRD directors are becoming CEO's (read one of the autumn, 1978 issues of *Fortune*). If this is to happen frequently, or if HRD officers are to be permanent members of the organizational-influence group, then we must look at more than just our own function. We must escape the HRD incestogram. Fortunately there is an observable trend toward more frequent and more meaningful interaction with the organization we serve, and with the world beyond.

When we do that, we're immediately confronting one trend: a little thing called a recession. HRD practitioners at the ASTD Symposium report budget cuts of anywhere from five per cent to 40 per cent. To cope, we need a solid value system, keeping high priority programs and using care not to lose those high-talent, high-technology newcomers who recently joined our staff!

The current recessionary period may be temporary, but we will most likely experience future periods of economic instability. Thus prudent HRDers are part of another increasingly visible trend: cost-effective management of the HRD function. Look at the most secure people in our profession. They are secure because they secure hard data to answer two questions:

1. Does the performance problem cost enough to be worth solving?
2. Does the effort we envision cost less than the savings/profit we would get from all those people behaving in the "right way"?


SUPER-T &
APPLICATION PLANNING
MAGER'S DONE IT AGAIN!
AGAIN!
AGAIN.
AGAIN!
WHAT'S A MAGER?
DUNNO... SUPER FUZZZ?

So what, you say.

Well, if you **know** the Mager-Pipe CRI workshop course, you'll "really appreciate" the new Second Edition. It introduces two very useful new modules called Application Planning and Super-T. And it's smoother, includes more examples and job aids, and is easier to administer.

If you **don't** know the Mager-Pipe Criterion-Referenced Instruction (CRI) course, you'll want to find out why companies like Xerox, Air Canada and Gulf Oil train their trainers to apply CRI concepts to their own instruction. The benefits they enjoy may be available to your company, too.

For a brochure that tells the full story, write to: Mager Associates, Inc.,
13245 Rhoda Drive, Dept. A,
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022

MAGER
Associates, Inc.

Circle No. 139 on Reader Service Card

"Individual HRD officers are using research which is more than just asking people what they think and then counting the answers."

As Bob Blake explained to Symposium participants, "There is pain in this process. But that pain should not deter us from the effort!"

Thank goodness there is another visible and related trend: *research-based HRD*. Even though Jan Margolis reported the sad news that research and development is down as a percent of our gross national product, we see more operational research in the HRD decisions. Individual HRD officers are using research which is more than just asking people what they think and then counting the answers.

Of course what we need isn't research for the sake of research: a corollary of Murphy's Law says that if a research project isn't worth doing at all, it isn't worth doing well. So much for "research" that merely asks what people think. We can use more help from academia — not just in statistical methods, but in the very content of those ritualistic theses and dissertations. We can use more resources like Ruth Sizemore Houses' *Training and Re-entry to Work, The Problem of Role Conflict* (University of Georgia, 1979). We also need more in-program research about entering skill and knowledge levels of individual students, as Blake and Mouton, and Pat McLagan did so well at the Symposium.

Above all we need research within our organizations. We simply must determine the survival rate of behaviors acquired in our training. We must contrast the behavior of our graduates with the behaviors of the untrained. Gordon Lippitt has mentioned the father who, when his wife gave birth to twins, baptized one and used the other for a control. Control groups are difficult to design and maintain, but until we have them we will never evaluate training on productivity bases. We need to do that, and we need to avoid the trap described by Rummler and Brethower in *Improving Human Performance Quarterly* (Fall-Winter, 1976): "If perfect laboratory type evaluation can't be done, the organization falls all the way back to happiness index."

Finally, we need to look outside our profession as well as outside our organization to respond to another trend. Government is having more and more to say about how we manage human resources and their development — or had you noticed? Jan Margolis cited this as one significant cause of our decreased national productivity. She cited glum statistics on units-per-worker and the U.S. position in the international perspective. Also, we should not forget that over half our population is currently supported by public funds, either as employees, representatives, veterans, pensioners or prisoners.

This government intervention may stem in part from the naive belief of elected officials that if the world isn't right they can fix it by passing a law. Like the control-centered manager: "If people don't do what they oughta wanna, add a regulation." We therefore face:

- Potential taxation of in-plant training;
- Tax credits for hiring people from "target" groups (handicapped, welfare incumbents, veterans);
- Job training quotas;
- Prescribed legal lengths for certain training;
- Testing for hiring, promotion, demotion, membership, referral, retention, licensing and certification;
- Laws governing the testing for hiring, promotion, demotion, membership, referral, retention, licensing and certification; and
- Mandated training with instructional criteria: "Whom to train, what to teach and how often to do it" (*ASTD National Report*, 5/12/78).

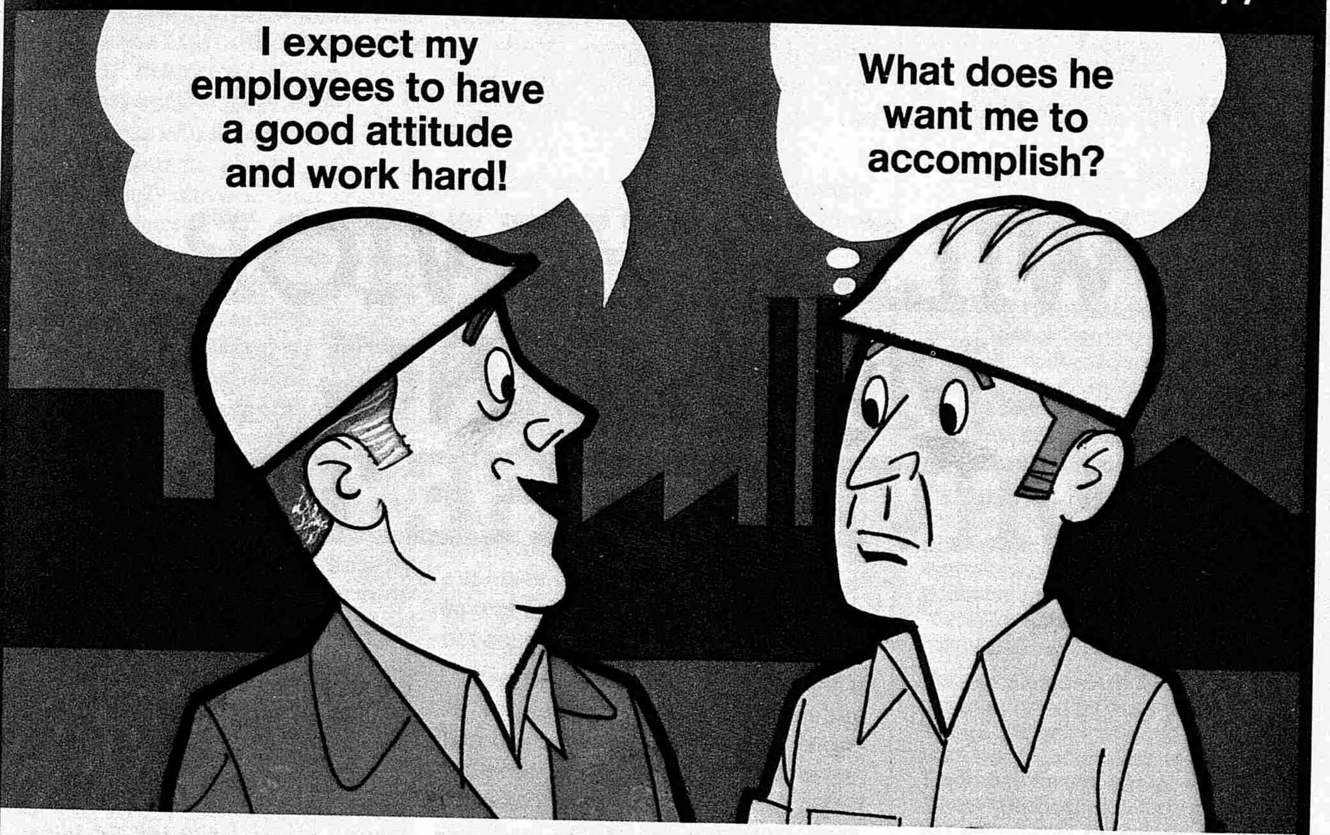
The trend is clear; our response pattern is getting obscure. Will corporations cooperate, compromise or confront?

The Sears Roebuck & Co. position deserves scrutiny and analysis, not just because it is interesting. Their countersuits, and their willingness to cancel large contracts with federal customers may be precedents. At least one "compliance coordinator" in another organization has been told, "Your new role is not to comply; it is to find ethical ways to impede this intolerable intervention." If that position spreads, the behavioral objectives of our management training will alter significantly. As always, our role as consultants to our organization will require us to report trends, and to devise technologies to implement strategies for whatever position our management may take.

Those trends were treated formally and informally at the Symposium. John Ingalls told one session, "Behavior modification may be unnecessary. I can always change my own behavior." It's a vital concept; each of us has more control over our own behavior than we have over that of anybody else. Certainly we make the critical decisions about our own growth. We need to acquire a technology for an effective response to every trend — or else at the 1989 Training and Development Leadership Symposium some team will wistfully report that it's dreaming of a future when the boss understands what they do and that the budget won't ever get cut again!

Dugan Laird, Decatur, Ga., has been active in employee training and development since 1952 when he became an instructor for United Airlines. Later, as a supervisor and training manager, he designed and conducted programs and workshops, finally administering a training function in a data-processing department. He is a consultant, writer, speaker and seminar leader. His most recent book is *Approaches to Training and Development* (Addison-Wesley, 1978). In 1976, the American Society for Training and Development awarded Dr. Laird the Torch Award, and they honored him in 1971 for contributions to the field.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROBLEM #2


I expect my employees to have a good attitude and work hard!
What does he want me to accomplish?

PROBLEM: LACK OF SPECIFIC GOALS OR STANDARDS. An employee has no way of knowing exactly what is expected by the supervisor unless specific performance standards are understood.

SOLUTION: PerforMax®

PerforMax teaches supervisors how to compare actual performance with specific goals and standards during feedback and appraisal discussions. Employees who know what they are supposed to accomplish will be more likely to improve productivity. PerforMax overcomes such appraisal problems as lack of immediate feedback and insufficient planning of discussions.

PerforMax is a highly flexible, modular training system designed for in-house administration by your organization's instructors. Interaction Management technology is used to develop practical skills. A unique management reinforcement workshop assures active management involvement because managers assist supervisors in diagnosing problems and planning solutions.

PerforMax®

For additional information call or write:
DEVELOPMENT DIMENSIONS INT'L.
250 Mt. Lebanon Boulevard
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15234
Tel: 412/344-4122

Please send:
- ☐ **Free Catalog**
- ☐ **Conference Schedule**
- ☐ **Please Contact Me**

Name ____________________
Title ____________________
Company ____________________
(Please use full name)
Address ____________________
City ____________________
State ____________________ Zip __________
Tel. No. (______) ____________________
(Area Code)

Circle Reader Service No. 129

TD-PIP2-10

"IT APPEARS THAT BEHAVIOR MODELING'S STRENGTHS WILL ENABLE IT TO BE A USEFUL INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY FOR MANY YEARS."

WILL BEHAVIOR MODELING SURVIVE THE '80s?

BY JAMES C. ROBINSON

During the ASTD Fourth Annual Training and Development Leadership Symposium, an experienced training director asked me, "Don't you think behavior modeling is only a fad that will be here today and gone tomorrow?" Of course, my immediate reaction was to say, "Well of course not. It's a sound learning technology that will be around for years."

Instead, I decided to restrain my reflexes and probe to find out what made this training director feel that behavior modeling may be only a fad, similar to so many others that have hit the training profession. In response to my queries, she expressed the following observations:

"It has the mystique of being new and different. Even though Mel Sorcher was experimenting with behavior modeling in General Electric in 1970, very few people were familiar with the process until Arnie Goldstein and Mel Sorcher published their book *Changing Supervisor Behavior* in 1974.[1] And most of the training community did not know about behavior modeling until the last half of the '70s.

"In addition, all the behavior modeling practitioners, including you, have emphasized that behavior modeling is different from other methods of learning. You've said that one of the reasons it is successful is because it is different. A characteristic of a fad is that it is new and different.

"In 1970, Mel Sorcher was beginning his work in General Electric with a few supervisors. In 1972, behavior modeling was being implemented in Agway Inc., AT&T and IBM. As late as 1975, when the first *package program* was put on the market, only a few thousand supervisors and managers a year were being trained using behavior-modeling technology. Now in 1980, over 500,000 supervisors, managers and employees of all kinds will be trained using behavior-modeling technology. Another characteristic of a fad is rapid growth. Certainly behavior-modeling falls into that category.

"My last concern is the bandwagon effect I see taking place. It now seems that seminars on behavior modeling are being conducted at all the major conferences. There are more and more articles being written on it. Arnie Goldstein has even come out with a self-help paperback on behavior modeling.[2] A lot of training professionals are now being attracted to the technology and want to get on the bandwagon."

Her observations were keen, her arguments were forceful, and her concern was legitimate. So it seems appropriate to take stock of behavior modeling at the end of its first decade and assess whether it is a learning technology which will be utilized in years to come — or only a fad.

The Pros and Cons

Let's look at what seem to be behavior modeling's strengths:

Research base: It is one of the best-researched technologies in adult education. It is the most thoroughly researched supervisory and manager development technology. Mel Sorcher's research in General Electric indicated that su-