

NATIONAL CONFERENCE AS A PD OPPORTUNITY

Terry Broomfield
1980 Conference
Design Chair

Dick Ragan
1981 Conference
Design Chair

If you have never been to an ASTD National Conference and Exposition you don't know what you are missing. It is an exciting, exhilarating, exhausting, extraordinary experience. It has elements of a country fair, a circus, a political convention, a class reunion, and an old-fashioned revival.

But while all that is true, the National Conference has another dimension. For many it provides an outstanding professional development opportunity. We have worked together as chair and vice-

chair for the 1980 Conference and Exposition being held in Anaheim, CA, April 26-May 1, 1980 and will work together as chair and helpful supporter for the 1981 Conference and Exposition to be held in Boston, May 17-21, 1981. We know the effort, care and concern that goes into making the Conference a vehicle for professional growth.

One of the first responsibilities a Conference chair faces is to choose a Committee that will represent as many segments of our ASTD membership as possible. Traditionally, the Committee is made up of individuals representing the Divisions and Caucuses, Special Interest Groups, Exhibitors, Regions and Chapters and the membership at large.

Once assembled, objectives are

set, duties are assigned and work begins. Proposals are made for the overall design and theme. In 1980, the Committee chose "Professional Development Today . . . for Tomorrow" as a Conference theme. The 1981 Committee will have that task as an early agenda item.

Topics and speakers are chosen to fit into the general scheme. Speakers are judged against strict criteria which set high standards for excellence. In 1980 a special effort was made to encourage more of our members to be presenters. We received approximately 90 responses to a notice in the *National Report* and 22 of our speakers were identified through that means. For 1981 we hope that number can be increased. We again will use the *National Report* to make this opportunity known to

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all ASTD members.

Finally, everything comes together. A program is designed. Speakers are prepared. Publicity is sent out. Participants register. And the Conference begins.

With more than 100 concurrent sessions, 30 Special Interest Group meetings, 40 Division and Caucus-sponsored activities, plus all day workshops and general sessions, the attendee faces a challenge. But by a careful and honest appraisal of where you are professionally and where you would like to be, that challenge can be met.

Some attendees use the *Self Assessment Instrument* developed by ASTD's Professional Development Committee to help them decide. Others talk with their bosses or peers. Many, we hope, use the objective setting forms provided in the conference registration materials. A few will simply work their way through the Conference brochure, picking the opportunities that seem to best suit them. And, we are afraid a sizeable number may not be giving much thought to their choices at all.

Getting the most out of an ASTD National Conference requires work on the part of participants if they want to have a meaningful professional development experience. All those adjectives and descriptors used in the opening paragraph of this article can get in the way if you have not done your homework.

Whether you are interested in sharpening a particular skill (like evaluation techniques), or expanding your knowledge of a particular subject area (like organization development), or hearing from noted authorities in the field (like

Knowles, Laird, Kirkpatrick, Lip-pitt) it requires advanced planning. But if you do a good job, in addition to having an exciting, exhilarating, exhausting, extraordinary experience, you can make the American Society for Training and Development Conference an outstanding and rewarding pro-

fessional development opportunity.

To those of you who attended the National Conference in Anaheim, we hope it was that way for you. And to all who will attend the Conference in Boston, we urge you to start preparing now. — *Terry Broomfield/Dick Ragan*



**Terry
Broomfield**

Bob Luke
1980 ASTD Professional
Development Committee Chair

The ASTD Professional Development Committee's thrust for 1980 is to continue the job of identifying the core body of human resource development knowledge and competencies; and linking employers, practitioners and academics together in the pursuit of shared goals.

Building on the recent ASTD-sponsored study of HRD practitioner activities (see May 1979 issue of *Training and Development Journal*), John In-galls (Competency Development Corp.), Ellen Weisberg (Arthur Young and Co.) and Dick Indelicato (Office of Personnel Management) are preparing a model to identify core competencies needed for effective performance of the various activities. The information can help highlight targets for professional development workshops, institutes, publications as well as contribute to university curricula, and aid employers in the selection of practitioners.

With the assistance of 100 ASTD leaders, Steve Wahl (Pepsi-Cola Co.) has identified the most widely known HRD books published since 1970 (see bibliography in this issue). This is a first step in his

effort to identify core theories, concepts and methods. These would be taken from the indices of the books and cross-indexed so discussions and definitions of core terms can be easily located. This is envisioned as an on-going activity with periodic revisions planned.

The enthusiasm generated by the invitational conference on academic preparation of practitioners in HRD (also discussed in this issue) has sparked considerable interest in additional conferences. A number of conference participants will be meeting as an advisory group to the committee at the ASTD National Conference in Anaheim. Betty Olson (American National Red Cross) is developing several formats for use in future conferences. Examples include a structured sharing by selected professors of models, issues, programs, placement procedures; and an employer/practitioner/professor workshop to discuss ways to work effectively. One or more such conferences will be implemented this year.

The Professional Development Committee is actively discussing certification and licensing and will continue to do so throughout the year.

An important outcome of all of the above will be a five-year *professional development policy* recommendation authored by Clint Wallington (Rochester Institute of Technology). It will be submitted to the ASTD Board of Directors at its August meeting. — *Bob Luke*

PD — IDENTIFYING KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCIES



**Dick
Ragan**



**Bob
Luke**