

Home-Grown Excellence

After two consecutive years of winning accolades in the general magazine category of the American Society of Association Executives' prestigious Gold Circle Award program, *Training & Development Journal* and ASTD were well represented again this year by two members of our National staff: *Journal* Associate Editor Geraldine Spruell and ASTD Manager of Expositions Kathy Hightower. Spruell was awarded a Gold Circle Certificate of Merit in magazine feature writing for her article, "Making It, Big Time—Is It Really Tougher for Women?" (August 1985). And in a brand new category, Hightower was selected as the first exposition professional to receive the Award of Excellence in conventions and expositions. Each winner, it should be noted, hangs her hat in ASTD National's Communications Division.

The Writing Book Anyone Can Use

For too long, books that teach people to write leave readers in a sorry state of mind: still mystified by the process. But rather than blame yourself for failing to get the message (the kind of self-flagellation encouraged, ironically, by wise but too often ungenerous editors and writers who have set out to get you writing), take a more positive approach: blame those unenlightening books and

find one that works.

As Herbert E. and Jill M. Meyer suggest in their refreshingly useful *How to Write*, the most affordable fast-read yet on the subject, "You want to begin thinking about writing not as a mystical art form that depends utterly on born talent or inspiration, but rather as a series of decisions, steps, and techniques that you can master and whose final result will be the clear, successful product you want."

The Meyers, he a former *Fortune* magazine associate editor and Reagan administration official, she a former teacher of English as a second language and writing, have taken their own advice in explaining their concise, three-step method to get you organizing, turning out drafts, and polishing your finished product. The beauty of their approach lies in its applicability to *any* kind of writing, be it novels or business memos. In fact, their method turns out to be the rules every writer follows to succeed, rules too often overlooked or padded beyond recognition in previous writing books.

As an afterword to their 102-page writing handbook, the Meyers apply their lucid style to answer some of the most common questions all writers face at one time or another, including: How do I maintain concentration? What is the first thing I need to do to get started? What about length? Do I need to summarize at the end?

For example, in answer to the question of how to end a piece of writing, the Meyers give advice typical of their style: "We wrote back in Part Two that when you suddenly find yourself stuck, it's a signal that you might have the wrong outline. That's quite true. But when you suddenly find yourself stuck *after* you've covered all the points in your outline, it's a signal that you've reached your final destination. In this case, being stuck isn't at all a cause for concern; it's a cause for celebration. You've finished the job."

For information contact Storm King Press, P.O. Box 3566, Washington, DC 20007; 202/944-4224.

Call for Papers

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc. (LEA) has launched a newsletter of interest to HRD professionals, *Technology and Learning*, to begin publication this month. A bimonthly, this newsletter will be distributed as an information source and networking facilitator to teachers, researchers, and school administrators who use or are interested in using new technology in the classroom.

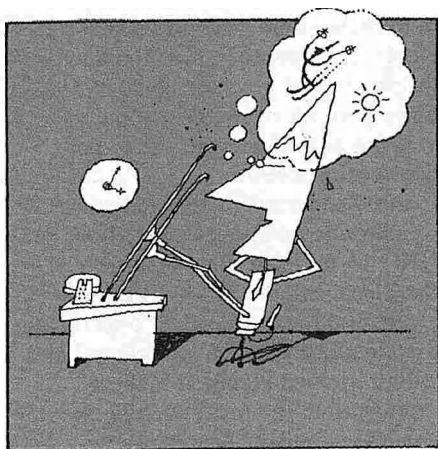
LEA is now soliciting articles and announcements. Articles can range from six to twelve pages, typed, double-spaced, and can be in the form of a report (of one's own work, about research or teaching programs, about a new type of hardware or software and how it can be used in the classroom, etc.) or an opinion piece (how different types of technology should be used for learning, where research efforts should be placed, how the structure of schooling should be changed to incorporate new technology, etc.). Writing style can be informal, but ideas must be concise and to the point (provocative articles are also welcome). The firm stresses that the newsletter will not report on technology for technology's sake but in the framework of how it can be used to enhance the quality of education in ways different from traditional curriculum material.

LEA is also after reports on conferences, publications, and announcements of articles for the preprint market. What's more, if you are a student, LEA suggests reporting on your thesis topic for their "Student's Corner" column, a way, perhaps, of putting you in touch with other graduate students working on similar topics. Finally, teachers using technology in the classroom are invited to write about their methods and concerns for the "Teacher's Corner" column.

The above can be submitted to Julia S. Hough, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc., 6012 Greene St., Philadelphia, PA 19144; or call 215/844-6751.

For Executives Contemplating the Entrepreneurial Life

One out of three terminated executives (a growing group thanks to downsizing and merger mania) considers starting a business rather than seeking another corporate position, according to Steve Harrison, president of the New York outplacement consulting firm of Lee Hecht Harrison, Inc. "As recently as just five years ago, most executives thought that going into business for themselves after losing a job was tantamount to failure," he said, "But today, being an entrepreneur or independent consultant is widely accepted and, to many, seems more desirable than working for a large organization."



Harrison is quick to acknowledge, however, that the entrepreneurial option is not meant for every out-of-work executive. "Of all the executives who consider their own businesses, less than half have a real chance of succeeding. When we explore this with one of our candidates, we go over all the factors—financing, up-front money, marketing, setting up an office or business site, legal aspects, taxes, support systems, and personal style.

"At the same time, we encourage these executives to pursue a parallel track of obtaining another job, perhaps with a smaller company. What's critically important is that we help them determine what is feasible and what is fantasy."

Harrison uses a "multi-track" approach to help them find new positions. "Many options," he explains, "have to be considered: working in a similar or different industry, going with a smaller

company, switching careers, moving to a different area, as well as the entrepreneurial option.

"We often encounter executives who began working for a company right out of college or graduate school and for the first time are faced with the need for career planning and contemplating life goals."

After considering the options, executives still intent on starting a business are offered workshops and, in some cases, office space and support services while the new enterprise gets off the ground. But Harrison stresses "reality testing and counseling to assess whether an individual possesses the instincts, resources, and stamina to succeed. Entrepreneurial counseling is not available to everyone in our program. In fact, we don't publicize the workshops. We selectively 'recruit' for them."

Some laid-off executives, of course, consider a 180-degree shift and weigh business ventures based on "hobbies, tastes, and fantasies," said Harrison. "We call this the 'Bob Newhart Syndrome'—the executive who wants to buy a New England country inn, or a ski lodge, or even a Caribbean guest house. We encourage them to visit similar enterprises and talk to the owners or operators about such things as laundry, cleaning, advertising, building maintenance, the local bank, and property taxes. And we want them to include their spouses on the exploratory visit.

"In many cases, the business plan is not really thought out. The underlying problem is often that the individual simply does not want to work for somebody else ever again. If this is the case, it is a problem that can be dealt with, and the person can ordinarily be persuaded to give up on the dream business and begin the serious work of getting a new position."

Journal Cited

HRD researchers should take note of these two developments:

■ *Training & Development Journal*, now covered in the *Social Sciences Index*® and *Current Contents/Social and Behavioral Sciences*, will be included in *Current Contents/Health Services Administration*, the latest edition of *Current Contents*®, to be introduced this year by the Institute for Scientific Information, Philadelphia.

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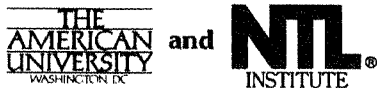


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In June 1987, The American University and NTL Institute will begin the 16th Class of a Master of Science in Human Resource Development.

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■ *Training & Development Alert*, a newsletter published by Advanced Personnel Systems in Roseville, California, will now carry abstracts of *Journal* articles (these in addition to abstracts of other U.S. HRD publications).

Labor, State, and Training Combine to Fill Empty Classrooms

Colleges and universities have long opened their classrooms to companies that need space to train their employees, but the New York State government has added a new twist to the concept. In a move that helps fill some of the empty classrooms the baby boom generation left behind, the state and its employee unions have combined to create a program in which thousands of the state government's professional employees can attend job-related classes for credit during regular work hours, often at a local college campus.

Currently, 28,000 employees, represented by the nation's largest union of professionals, are participating in 960 courses in the state's Public Service Training Program (PSTP). The \$9 million program was funded and created by the Governor's Office of Employee Relations (GOER) and by the Public Employees Federation (PEF), AFL-CIO, representing the state's 54,000-member Professional, Scientific, and Technical Bargaining Unit. The program will continue through the life of the present collective bargaining agreement, which expires March 31, 1988.

"What is unique about this program is that rather than reinventing the wheel, it taps the resources of the fine array of academic institutions that we have here in New York State," said GOER Director Thomas F. Hartnett. Some of those schools are Columbia University, Cornell University, Fordham Law School, The Rochester Institute of Technology, and Syracuse University. "Education," said PEF President Rand Condell, "is a key PEF issue, and this program will be a cornerstone of our future efforts in this area."

The program is broken down into three components:

- a standardized public administration curriculum offering graduate and undergraduate degree credits in supervision and administration;
- workshops designed to keep employees current in their fields;
- a mixture of graduate and undergraduate courses aimed at building individual expertise in particular job specialties.

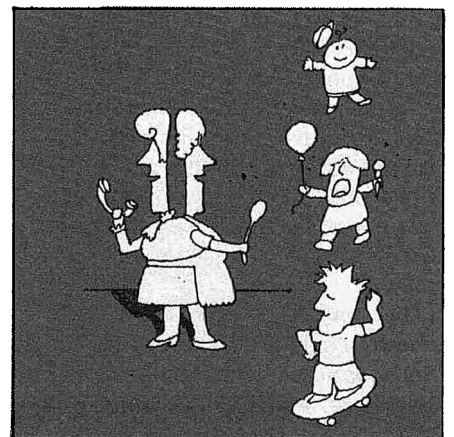
Some of the nearly 100 program courses offered last fall had a distinctly HRD cast: "Stress As a Component in the Management Process," "Street Drugs and Mental Illness," "Information Systems for Public Organizations," and "Administrative Decision Making."

To get into the program, eligible employees must choose from the course catalogue published prior to each semester. Applications are reviewed by PSTP agency representatives from both labor and management. Selection criteria include the individual's need for the course and the relationship of the course to the individual's job. The only extra expense

Working Mothers

Mothers in the work force (in millions):

	1960	1970	1985
With children under 3	1.6	2.3	4.6
With children 3-5	1.3	2.3	3.6
With children 6-17	5.1	7.6	11.8



to employees is the cost of required books and materials.

Future plans for the program call for a number of refinements. While certificates and degrees are not offered presently, that may change. Courses are being created along occupational lines so that in the future employees will receive a certificate when they complete a particular sequence of courses. As a corollary to the program, the state is developing a Training Resource and Counseling Network that will provide a computer link between geographically dispersed agencies and departments. The network is planned to include individual PSTP and other training course profiles for all state employees, and ready access to available courses.

For information call Daniel R. Perkins, State of New York Governor's Office of Employee Relations, at 518/473-8766.



"In Practice" is edited and written by Robert Bové. Send items of interest to: In Practice, Training & Development Journal, 1630 Duke St., Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313.

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