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# Models for HRD practice

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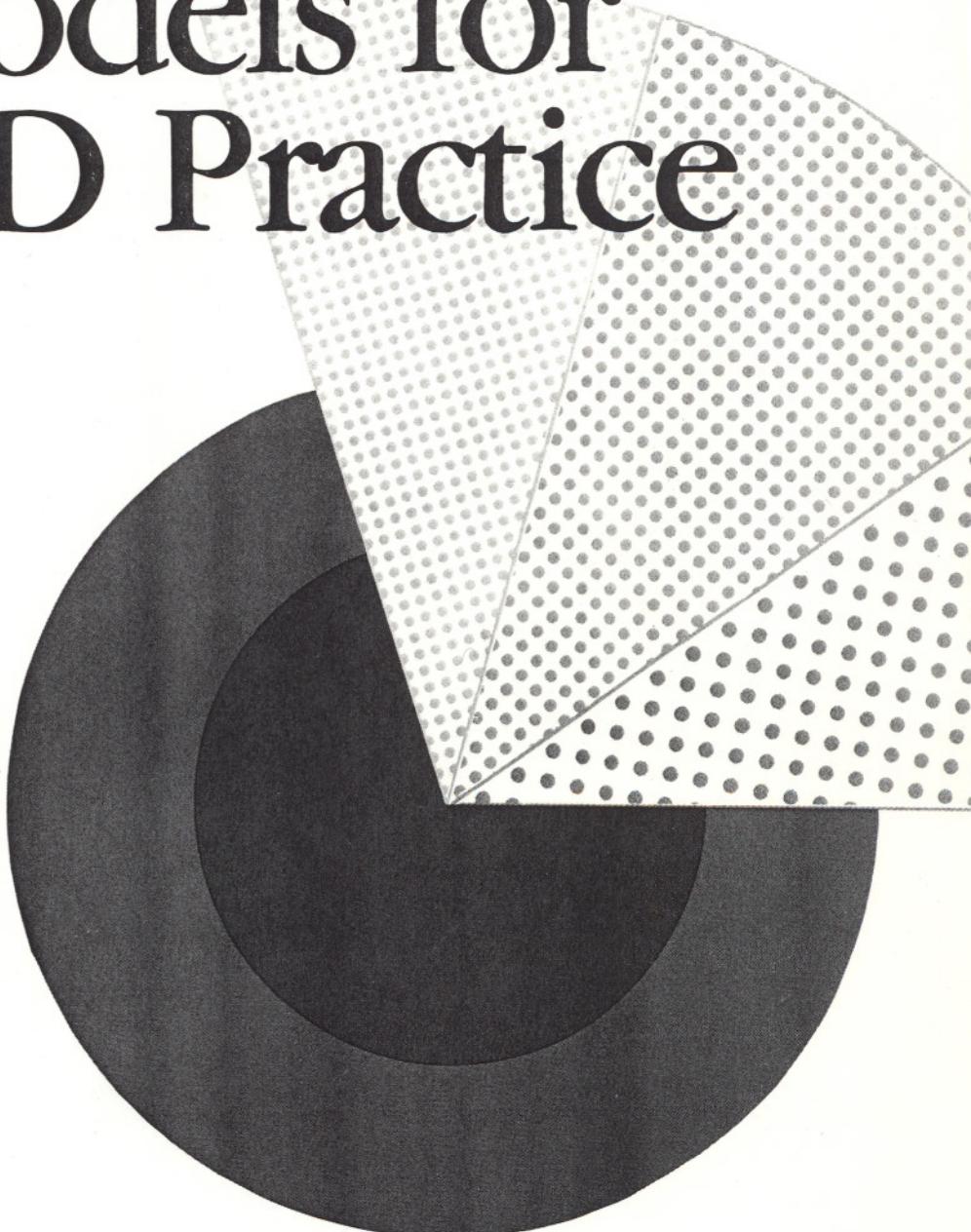
# Models for HRD Practice

By Patricia A. McLagan

*HRD in the '90s: What is it? Why is it important? What does it include? What constitutes quality? What competencies will people need to do HRD? Two years of research sponsored by ASTD have produced some answers to those questions. If your work affects the competence and performance of others, you will be interested in this summary of the just-published research.*

McLagan is chief executive of McLagan International Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota. She was the leader of ASTD's Task Force on Competencies and Standards, and is the author of Models for HRD Practice. Her work on that project, and the work of her professional staff, was done on a volunteer basis.

This article is a brief summary of Models for HRD Practice, available through ASTD Press for \$145 for ASTD members and \$165 for non-members. The complete publication includes the research report, the models, the practitioner's guide, and the manager's guide. See sidebar, "Models for HRD Practice: the Books," for complete descriptions of the four books.



The story must begin in the workplace of the nineties. It is a context for managing and developing people that will require new assumptions, styles, and skills from everyone who does HRD work.

The 1990s organization probably will be a more flexible, participative one. It will be simultaneously tougher and more human. It will value both accountability and creativity and will more often seek competitive advantage

through people strategies. That is likely to be true because of changes in organizations, the workforce, and human resource management and development processes.

## The changing organization

Our research identified six major areas of organization change that will have significant effects on development-oriented practices in and around the workplace.

First, pressures for workforce productivity will intensify, with organizations and industries looking beyond obvious efficiency gains to more systemic and "breakthrough" ways of being low-cost producers of high-quality products and services.

Second, most of the experts who participated in the study predict that the pace of change will continue to accelerate. Cycle times will be reduced,

the useful life of information will shrink, work will change due to advances in technology, and time will become a more valuable resource. The bottom line is that organizations that work in less time will have a competitive advantage.

Organizations of the nineties will also continue to shift their focus to the customer and quality. That shift will be more than a fad or a fleeting tactic. It

will be pervasive because it is a key competitive characteristic. In tomorrow's superior organization, customer and quality focus will permeate the organization, with every employee clear about the value he or she adds in both areas for internal as well as external customers.

Fourth, in many organizations in the nineties, the arena for planning and action will be global. Markets, resource pools, competition, partnerships, or all of them will cross national lines. For some, competitors will be suppliers or even customers. Relationships, in short, will be complex and the boundaries will blur between the organization and its environment.

Fifth, business strategies will become more dependent on the quality and versatility of the human resource. Whether they rely on improved productivity, quality, or innovation, the strategies of the nineties will not be delivered if the organization's people aren't capable and committed. Organizations that apply only money and technology to problems, without bringing the people along, will not survive—especially in industries in which peoples' knowledge, attitudes, skills, and willingness to change are critical to competitive advantage.

Finally, work structure and design will change dramatically, building on changes that have already begun. Hierarchies will melt into, or be displaced by, flatter and more flexible organization designs. The boundaries between individual jobs will blur, with more team accountability and flexible, multi-skilled job designs. Autocratic decision structures will give way to more participative modes.

Some of those changes are already underway, and a few industries and organizations can serve as examples. But, by the end of the nineties—the end of the century—the workplace will be a different place, everywhere. The changes that organizations must make will only be successful if people change, develop, and grow, and if organizations as social systems can mobilize themselves to work in different ways.

### The changing workforce

ASTD's research identified four changes in the workforce that will stimulate new HRD responses.

First, the workforce of the nineties will be more diverse. In the U.S., it will be more female and non-white than male and white. Literacy gaps will

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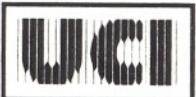


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widen, with increasing proportions of the adult population classified as "functionally illiterate" or unable to speak English. Add to that the diversity that comes from a multinational workforce and the challenges that relate to an older workforce, and it is clear: management practices, communication processes, and development issues will and must change.

Second, in the nineties more people will do knowledge work, which requires judgment, flexibility, and personal commitment rather than submission to procedures. In the future, most work will be knowledge work, because everyone—whether sweeping the floor or running the company—will be expected to generate and act on ideas for improvement. Creating competent knowledge workers is a key challenge facing tomorrow's organizations.

The third major workforce change reflects a value shift: people in the nineties will expect meaningful work and involvement. They will see their skills as resources to be used. They will have access, through technology rather than hierarchy, to more of the information they need to do their jobs. They will expect to participate in decisions as well as in the wealth they help create.

Finally, a shift is occurring in the nature of the contract between organizations and their employees. Merit is replacing loyalty as the basis of the bond. In the nineties, organizations must earn the right to "own" employees' relevant skills. By the same token, individuals must ensure that they have the competencies needed to meet the evolving needs of their organizations.

Most of the workforce of the nineties is in place now, at the end of the eighties. But that mustn't fool us. People's work and needs are changing. That, too, will affect the practice of HRD through the end of this century.

### Shifts in practices

Practices related to human resources are changing and developing, too, and will continue to do so in the nineties as individuals and organizations create new responses to the challenges above. Three shifts will be particularly significant.

First, we can expect breakthroughs in the ways that organizations evaluate the impact of human resource-oriented interventions: "What is the value of various training or on-job-

learning practices?" "What difference did team development make to the quality of the team's decisions and its ability to carry out the decisions?" "Did deliberate career-management efforts actually improve the timely availability of skills?" In the nineties we will be expected to ask those and even harder questions and to answer them with some rigor.

### By the end of the century, the workplace will be a different place, everywhere. The changes will only be successful if people change, develop, and grow

Second, we can anticipate greater sophistication and variety in HRD tools and theories. Artificial intelligence, advances in computer applications, and better applications of lessons from anthropology, psychology, sociology, and education will play roles. Also, savvy practitioners who are listening to their organizations' needs will con-

tinue to create and share new approaches, techniques, and ideas.

Finally, we are moving into an era of systems solutions where the concern is to resolve issues or make real changes, not just to implement programs. Problem solving and change usually require multiple and diverse actions (such as training, plus policy change, plus job redesign). Improving quality, for example, or focusing on the customer, or increasing productivity require more than single responses. Single responses may be effective in the short term, but ineffective or even disastrous in the long. Most of the important changes in the nineties will and must be treated systemically. HRD will evolve the analytical tools and solutions to meet that need.

### Enter, a new era of HRD

All of those changes have major implications for human resource development in organizations of the nineties. In the nineties' environment, there will clearly be great economic and personal value in being able to optimize the performance of individuals, teams, and entire organizations.

But what will HRD in the nineties

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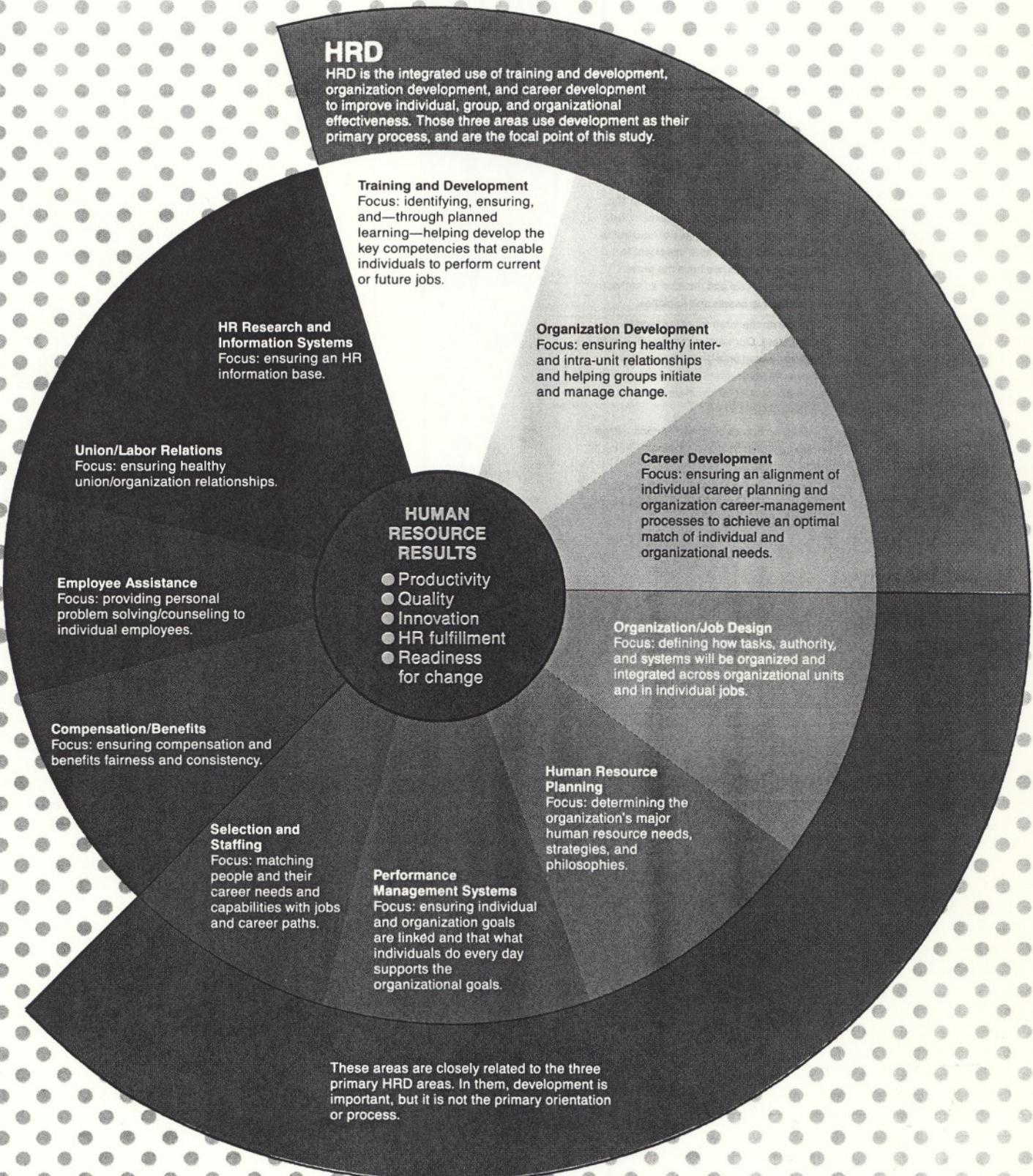
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# Human Resource Wheel



## The components of HRD work

Our research identified 74 key work dimensions for the entire HRD field. We present them as "outputs," the products, services, or information that are the heart of the HRD field. Here are some of the outputs:

- research designs;

- plans to market HRD programs and services;
- resolved conflicts for an organization or group;
- changes in group norms, values, or culture;
- recommendations to management regarding HRD systems;
- definitions and descriptions of

- desired individual or group performance;
- program or intervention designs;
- print-based learner material;
- instructor and facilitator guides;
- presentations of materials;
- facilitations of group discussions;
- individuals with new knowledge, skills, and attitudes;

## Why Johnny can't lead:

Some people, valuable people, couldn't lead a horse to water. Let alone entice it to drink.

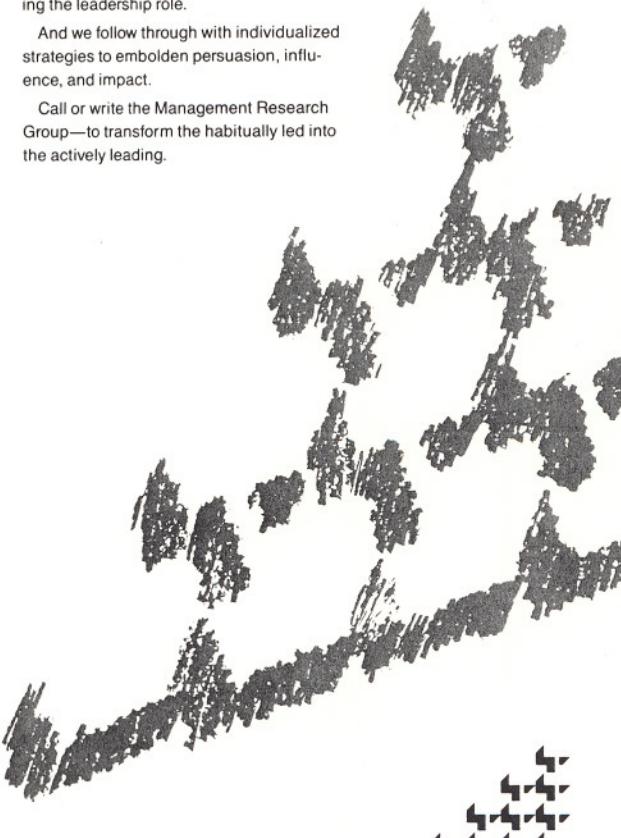
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## Key HRD Outputs by Role

### Administrator

Provides coordination and support services for the delivery of HRD programs and services.

Outputs: facility and equipment selections and schedules; records of programs and clients; logistical support and service to participants; on-site program support and staff management; functioning equipment.

### Evaluator

Identifies the impact of an intervention on individual or organizational effectiveness.

Outputs: evaluation designs and plans; evaluation instruments; evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations; evaluation processes; evaluation feedback.

### HRD Manager

Supports and leads a group's work, and linking that work with the total organization.

Outputs: HRD staff work direction and plans, and performance management; resource acquisition and allocation; linkage to other groups or organizations; HRD budgets and financial management; HRD department work environment, strategy, structure, and long-range plans; HRD policy.

### HRD Materials Developer

Produces written or electronically-mediated instruction.

Outputs: graphics; video-based material or live broadcasts; audio- or computer-based material; print-based learner material; job aids; instructor and facilitator guides; hardware and software purchasing specifications; advice on media use.

### Individual Career-Development Advisor

Helps individuals assess personal competencies, values, and goals;

- career guidance and counsel;
- individual career assessments;
- evaluation designs and plans;
- HRD department strategy.

The list of 74 is not exhaustive, but it does include the outputs that experts have identified as the most critical contributions across the HRD field. The entire list appears in the box, "Key

HRD Outputs by Role," grouped into eleven roles. The roles are functional groupings of outputs that may or may not describe individual jobs. We use them for convenience to help "chunk" the outputs, but we encourage individuals and organizations to use the entire list of outputs as a menu for identifying their own work emphases.

and identify, plan, and implement development and career actions.

**Outputs:** professional counseling or referrals; career guidance and advice; feedback on development or career plans; support for career transitions; transfer of development or career-planning skills to learners; provision of career-development resources; behavior change from a counseling relationship; individual career assessments.

#### Instructor or Facilitator

Presents information, directs structured learning experiences, and manages group discussions and group process.

**Outputs:** learning environment; presentation of material; facilitation of structured learning events (such as case studies, role plays, games, simulations, and tests); facilitations of group discussions; facilitations of media-based learning events (such as videotapes, films, audiotapes, teleconferences, and computer-assisted instruction); test delivery and feedback; group members' awareness of their own group process; feedback to learners; individual action plans for learning transfer; individuals with new knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

#### Marketer

Markets and contracts for HRD viewpoints, programs, and services.

**Outputs:** positive image for HRD products, services, and programs; plans to market HRD products, services, and programs; HRD promotional and informational material; marketing and sales presentations; contracts or agreements to provide services; sales or business leads.

#### Needs Analyst

Identifies ideal and actual performance and performance condi-

tions and determines causes of discrepancies.

**Outputs:** strategies for analyzing individual or organization behavior; tools to measure individual, work-group, or organizational performance discrepancies; recommendations for needed change in individual, work-group, or organizational performance; definitions and descriptions of desired individual or group performance.

#### Organization Change Agent

Influences and supports changes in organizational behavior.

**Outputs:** teams; resolved conflicts for an organization or groups; changes in group norms, values, or culture; designs for change; client awareness of relationships within and around the organization; plans to implement organization change; implementation of change strategies; recommendations to management regarding HRD systems.

#### Program Designer

Prepares objectives, defines content, and selects and sequences activities for specific interventions.

**Outputs:** program or intervention objectives and designs.

#### Researcher

Identifies, develops, or tests new information (such as theories, research, concepts, technology, models, and hardware) and translates the information into implications for improved individual or organizational performance.

**Outputs:** concepts, theories, or models of development or change; HRD research articles; research designs; data analysis and interpretation; research findings, conclusions, and recommendations; information on future forces and trends.

## HRD Ethical Issues Areas

- maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality;
- saying "no" to inappropriate requests;
- showing respect for copyrights, sources, and intellectual property;
- ensuring truth in claims, data, and recommendations;
- balancing organizational and individual needs and interests;
- ensuring customer and user involvement, participation, and ownership;
- avoiding conflicts of interest;
- managing personal biases;
- showing respect for, interest in, and representation of individual and population differences;
- making the intervention appropriate to the customer's or user's needs;
- being sensitive to the direct and indirect effects of intervention and acting to address negative consequences;
- pricing or costing products or services fairly;
- using power appropriately.

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The variety of output combinations for individuals and HRD organizations is virtually infinite. The roles are intended to enhance our understanding of the field and to make it easier to manage and use the research results. They are not intended to dictate job content or constrain HRD organization design.

## Quality requirements

Our research results do more than just list HRD outputs. They also pre-

sent experts' descriptions of the standards, or "quality requirements" for each output. For example, the research concludes that, "Resolved conflicts of an organization or group" are high in quality when:

- real conflicts are addressed;
- solutions are implemented and monitored;
- all affected parties are willing to work toward a resolution;
- group performance is enhanced.

"Program or invention designs" are high in quality when:

- sequencing of content and methods reflects an understanding of the audience and of adult-learning principles;
- design supports the organization's business plans and objectives;
- content is technically up to date and relevant to the objectives;
- design supports the desired organizational values and culture;
- they reflect an understanding of the application environment;
- they are developed with input from key stakeholders;
- learning resources and methods are

## HRD Competencies

### Technical competencies

Technical competencies are functional knowledge and skills.

1. Adult-learning understanding: knowing how adults acquire and use knowledge, skills, and attitudes; understanding individual differences in learning.

2. Career-development theories and techniques understanding: knowing the techniques and methods used in career development; understanding their appropriate uses.

3. Competency-identification skill: identifying the knowledge and skill requirements of jobs, tasks, and roles.

4. Computer competence: understanding or using computer applications.

5. Electronic-systems skill: having knowledge of functions, features, and potential applications of electronic systems for the delivery and management of HRD (such as computer-based training, teleconferencing, expert systems, interactive video, and satellite networks).

6. Facilities skill: planning and coordinating logistics in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

7. Objectives-preparation skill: preparing clear statements that describe desired outputs.

8. Performance-observation skill: tracking and describing behaviors and their effects.

9. Subject-matter understanding: knowing the content of a given function or discipline being addressed.

10. Training and development theories and techniques understanding: knowing the theories and

methods used in training; understanding their appropriate use.

11. Research skill: selecting, developing, and using methodologies such as statistical and data collection techniques for formal inquiry.

### Business competencies

Business competencies have a strong management, economics, or administration base.

12. Business understanding: knowing how the functions of a business work and relate to each other; knowing the economic impact of business decisions.

13. Cost-benefit-analysis skill: assessing alternatives in terms of their financial, psychological, and strategic advantages and disadvantages.

14. Delegation skill: assigning task responsibility and authority to others.

15. Industry understanding: knowing the key concepts and variables that define an industry or sector. They might include critical issues, economic vulnerabilities, measurements, distribution channels, inputs, outputs, and information sources.

16. Organization-behavior understanding: seeing organizations as dynamic, political, economic, and social systems that have multiple goals; using that larger perspective as a framework for understanding and influencing events and change.

17. Organization-development theories and techniques: knowing the techniques and methods used in organization development; understanding their appropriate use.

18. Organization understanding:

knowing the strategy, structure, power networks, financial position, and systems of a specific organization.

19. Project-management skill: planning, organizing, and monitoring work for purposes of delivering a specific output.

20. Records-management skill: storing data in an easily retrievable form.

### Interpersonal competencies

Interpersonal competencies have a strong communication base.

21. Coaching skill: helping individuals recognize and understand personal needs, values, problems, alternatives, and goals.

22. Feedback skill: communicating information, opinions, observations, and conclusions so that they are understood and can be acted upon.

23. Group-process skill: influencing groups so that tasks, relationships, and individual needs are addressed.

24. Negotiation skill: securing "win-win" agreements while successfully representing a special interest in a decision.

25. Presentation skill: presenting information orally so that an intended purpose is achieved.

26. Questioning skill: gathering information from and stimulating insight in individuals and groups through the use of interviews, questionnaires, and other probing methods.

27. Relationship-building skill: establishing relationships and networks across a broad range of people and groups.

- appropriate for the objectives;
- they include a plan for evaluation;
  - they can be achieved within time and budget constraints;
  - they are sequenced appropriately;
  - they promote learner participation;
  - they include an implementation plan and methods for monitoring the implementation;
  - they are written clearly and understood easily;
  - they identify support roles and actions that must be taken in order to ensure application of learning on the job.

28. Writing skill: preparing written material that follows generally accepted rules of style and form, is appropriate for the audience, is creative, and accomplishes its intended purpose.

#### **Intellectual competencies**

Intellectual competencies are knowledge and skills related to thinking and processing of information:

29. Data-reduction skill: scanning, synthesizing, and drawing conclusions from data.

30. Information-search skill: gathering information from printed and other recorded sources; identifying and using information specialists and reference services and aids.

31. Intellectual versatility: recognizing, exploring, and using a broad range of ideas and practices; thinking logically and creatively without undue influence from personal biases.

32. Model-building skill: conceptualizing and developing theoretical and practical frameworks that describe complex ideas in understandable, usable ways.

33. Observing skill: recognizing objectively what is happening in or across situations.

34. Self-knowledge: knowing one's personal values, needs, interest, style, and competencies and their effects on others.

35. Visioning skill: projecting trends and visualizing possible and probable futures and their implications.

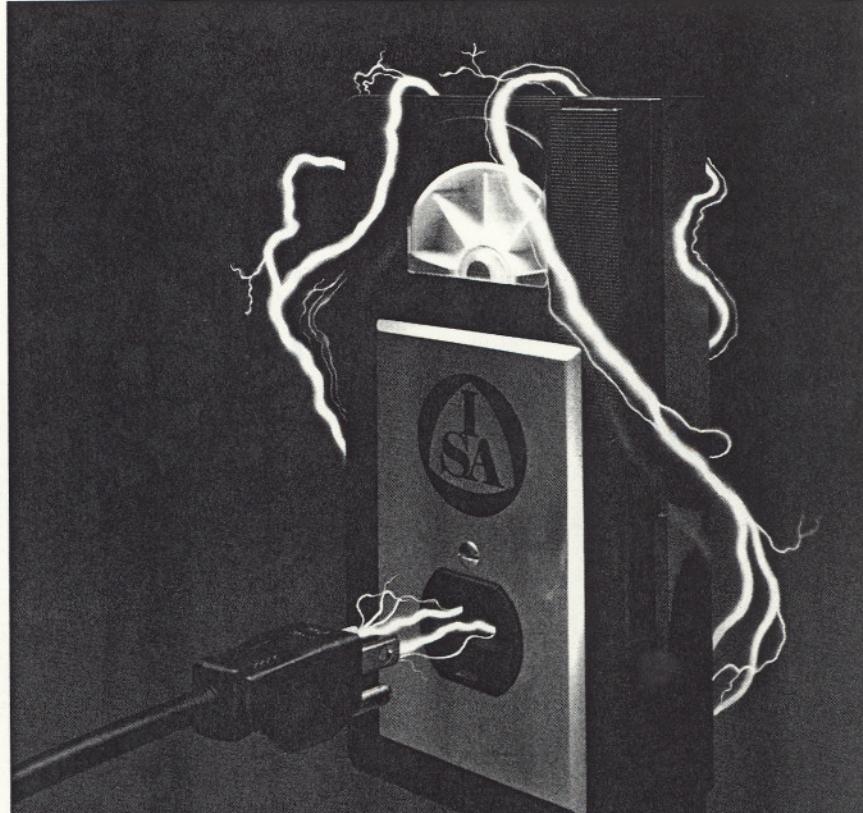
"Career guidance and counsel" is high in quality when:

- it is responsive to the client's needs;
- agreed-upon levels of confidentiality are maintained;
- it adapts to the style and individual approach of the client;
- it recommends alternative courses of action;
- the advisor is perceived as credible and having integrity;
- it establishes trust and rapport;
- it maintains professional standards.

Those and the quality requirements

for the other outputs are a checklist to use in developing or evaluating the HRD outputs. Each of the 74 has from three to 15 quality requirements. Their purpose is to guide judgment to ensure:

- responsible actions by all practitioners;
- that the organizations' needs are met;
- consistency in quality of outputs across practitioners;
- a common vision of quality among all who practice HRD.



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Individual situations may require that additional requirements be met, or that some requirements be considered more critical than others. In a high-judgment field like HRD, such flexibility is inevitable and even welcome. HRD work cannot be prescribed as a cookbook or set of procedures. But, our research presents the opinions of HRD experts regarding the quality requirements of each major HRD output. The quality requirements can be used to guide and nurture high-quality HRD performance in the years ahead. We hope they will.

## Ethical requirements

*Models for HRD Practice* also treats ethics in HRD as a key area for "standards" or "quality requirements." High-quality HRD work is ethical work. Our research identified 13 areas where ethical dilemmas are likely to arise in the course of HRD work in the future. It did not attempt to describe what to

do when such dilemmas arise; unless a legal or professional code applies to a specific situation, HRD practitioners must use judgment in resolving ethical issues.

The 13 areas of ethical challenge for HRD identified in the research are

situations when the 13 issues arise, the proper course of action is less clear. When there are no clearly relevant laws or professional codes, people must be ready to use careful analysis, judgment, and the open involvement of others to ensure the most ethical outcomes.

## Competencies for HRD work

*Models for HRD Practice* also presents 35 competencies that enable HRD practitioners to do HRD work. They are the technical, business, interpersonal, and intellectual knowledge and skills that experts predict will be important across the full range of HRD work in the nineties. Again, individuals and HRD organizations may only require a subset of the competencies, depending on the range of HRD work that they do. The 35 competencies are another menu that describes important HRD work dimensions. They are listed in the box, "HRD Competencies," page 56.

## Research Methodology

By Deb Suhadolnik

*Suhadolnik is director of research for McLagan International Inc.*

*Models for HRD Practice* is the result of a research effort that was designed to:

- produce a model for HRD practice over the next three to five years that is future-focused, describes the work and competency requirements for individuals in various HRD roles, and defines standards or quality requirements for HRD work;
- build and expand on the results from *Models for Excellence*, ASTD's 1983 study of the training and development field;
- incorporate input from a variety of sources, but rely primarily on role experts for the identified HRD roles.

The models were constructed in four major phases, outlined below.

### Phase 1: preliminary HRD models

The results from *Models for Excellence*, ASTD's 1983 competency study, were reviewed and revised to update the results and reflect the change in the scope of the study from training and devel-

**Flexibility is inevitable and even welcome. HRD work cannot be prescribed as a cookbook or set of procedures**

listed in the box, "HRD Ethical Issues Areas," page 55. In some cases, when issues in the areas arise, the proper response is clear, as in the case of copyright violations or the use of psychological tests by people without proper credentials. But in most HRD

opment to human resource development (HRD). Reviews were done independently by the following three groups:

- the Competencies and Standards Task Force, a group of 22 prominent individuals in the HRD field selected to assist and support the development of the models;
- ten members of ASTD's Organization Development Professional Practice Area;
- ten staff members from McLagan International, trained and experienced in constructing performance models for human resource professionals.

The revisions suggested by those groups were merged and integrated to form updated lists of future forces affecting individuals in the HRD field, HRD roles, outputs for HRD roles, and competencies necessary to produce those outputs. The task force and McLagan International staff members also generated quality requirements for each output and identified major ethical issues and considerations that face individuals in HRD.

A questionnaire on the models resulting from the merged data was sent for review to 12 recognized ex-

perts in organization development and career development, to ensure adequate coverage of the OD and CD areas, which were not included in the 1983 study. The revisions suggested by that group were incorporated into the models. The result was preliminary models for HRD practice.

### Phase 2: first-draft HRD models

The roles and outputs in the preliminary model were further clarified and refined through a sorting exercise performed by the task force and 12 ASTD chapters. The groups were given a list of the identified HRD roles and a separate list, in random order, of the outputs identified for each role. The groups were asked to sort the outputs into the most appropriate HRD roles. Revisions to the roles and outputs—suggested by the sorting exercises—were made to the preliminary model, resulting in the first-draft HRD models.

The task force also revised the quality requirements for each output to reflect changes made to the outputs as a result of the sorting exercises.

## **Creating HRD's future: uses of Models for HRD Practice**

The outputs, quality requirements, ethical challenges, and competencies that ASTD's research has produced provide models for HRD practice. The models should be especially valuable as HRD practitioners tackle the issues of the nineties. The field needs agreement and a common language on what constitutes professional practice. But, that consensus must be used in a way that supports creative action and continuous improvement in all areas of HRD practice. That is a paradox we must treasure and live with.

Through *Models for HRD Practice*, we now have standards and a common language, but individuals and institutions must use judgment and flexibility in applying the information it contains.

Suggested uses:

- for practitioners—job design, performance self-management, com-

petency assessment, career planning, professional development, and assuring ethical behavior;

- for HRD managers—designing the HRD organization, staffing, assessing, and developing HRD staff, managing staff performance, ensuring ethical conduct, career advising, and organization development of the HRD organization;
- for academicians—course and curriculum planning, learner assessment, student advising, faculty management and development, and establishing research agendas.

The models for HRD practice are meant to be used by everyone who does or influences HRD work. Many challenges lie ahead that require higher levels of professionalism and contribution of HRD. The models provide a common language and guidance to help meet those challenges. They are the gift of many research participants to the HRD field for the future.

## **Phase 3: second-draft HRD models**

Seven hundred and five role experts identified for the HRD roles completed questionnaires for their particular roles. The role experts were asked to respond to the first-draft model for their roles by:

- rating future forces on expected impacts on HRD specialists;
- choosing the most appropriate quality requirements for the outputs identified for that role;
- rating the importance of and level of expertise required in 37 different competencies;
- rating the relevance of various ethical issues for the role.

The role experts were also encouraged to edit or add to the existing lists of future forces, outputs, quality requirements, competencies, and ethical issues.

Analysis of the information provided in the role-expert questionnaires suggested revisions and additions to the models, but very few deletions. As a result, the task force decided to eliminate items from the first-draft models only if they were redundant or confusing. The revisions and additions suggested by the data analysis were made to the

first-draft models, resulting in the second-draft HRD models.

## **Phase 4: final-draft HRD models**

Four hundred seventy-three role experts completed a second role-expert questionnaire that asked them to review and respond to the second-draft HRD model for their particular roles.

The information provided by the role experts in the second role-expert questionnaire was analyzed; modifications were made to the second-draft HRD models on the basis of that information. Specifically, the final HRD models consisted of

- future forces rated by 50 percent or more role experts as having high potential impact on the HRD field or a specific HRD role;
- quality requirements for each output chosen by 50 percent or more of the role experts;
- competencies given the highest importance rating by at least 50 percent of the role experts;
- ethical issues chosen by 40 percent or more of the role experts (a 50-percent cut-off point for the ethical issues resulted in too few issues to be of practical use).

## **Models for HRD Practice: the Books**

*Models for HRD Practice*, available through ASTD Press, includes four books:

### **The Research Report**

This book describes the research methodology and detailed findings of the two-year study of future HRD work, standards, and competencies. It is a technical report that can be used for further research and analysis, and as a reference for specific study processes and results.

### **The Models**

This book presents the conclusions of the study in non-technical terms. Its intent is to teach about HRD as defined through the research, and to help people learn how to apply the models' language and insights in their own work and life. *The Models* is also the major reference referred to in the practitioner's and manager's application guides (see next items).

### **The HRD Practitioners' Application Guide**

This book presents information, guidelines, and worksheets to support HRD practitioners in seven uses of the models: competency assessment, job design, performance self-management, career analysis and planning, professional development, documenting HRD accomplishments, and ensuring ethical behavior.

### **The HRD Manager's Application Guide**

This book includes recommendations and guidelines to support HRD managers in designing their organizations, staffing, managing performance, ensuring ethical conduct, and supporting professional and organizational development.

### **Ordering Information**

To order, call ASTD Press at 703/683-8129. *Models for HRD Practice* costs \$145 for ASTD members and \$165 for non-members. Additional materials to support the use of the models will become available through ASTD in the future.