

Wednesday,  
October 22  
11 a.m.–1 p.m.  
**Turnip  
Rose**  
300 S. Flower  
Orange

## Improving Teamwork Through Improv Games

*With Denise Lamonte*

When was the last time you were stuck on a problem or your team was searching for a solution. What did you do? I'll bet you improvised. You thought creatively, stepped outside your norm, asked intriguing questions—leading you or your team to a new approach. Without noticing you were doing it, you used your human ingenuity and creativity to break through the barriers. You practiced a skill that has allowed humankind to advance beyond the use of stones into a world of infinite possibilities.

As the pace of our world continues to hasten exponentially and advancements in technology change the lives we live, we will be forced to seek alternative solutions and search new horizons. For those of us in the workforce, our careers and our organizations may not have any resemblance of the world we know today. Sir Ken Robinson, a renowned creativity expert, asserts 70 percent of the jobs in 2020 don't even exist yet. Being training and development professionals puts us in the driver's seat for this change. Will you guide your team and your organization into the future? Or will you be the one to watch the change happen?

Trainers are making a connection between the art of improvisational theatre and the skills needed for teambuilding. The qualities that make improv successful—trust, listening and awareness, accepting offers, spontaneity, non-verbal communication, and storytelling—can be applied to teambuilding exercises. When these qualities are explored through simple improvisational activities, corporate teams can discover how these same qualities can create a foundational framework for successful teamwork.

During October's Monthly Learning Event, Denise Lamonte will present approaches to help you learn the six principles of improv, experience improv activities that you can use in teambuilding, and identify the benefits of using improv for teambuilding. This session will be very hands-on and interactive—giving attendees the opportunity to experience some of these simple activities they can literally take back to the office today and apply. Debriefing of the activities will be modeled, and attendees will receive copies of the instructions for each activity applied in the session.

**Both online and printable registration forms  
for all events are available at [www.astdoc.org](http://www.astdoc.org).**



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# 2008 ASTD-OC Events Calendar

For additional details on all ASTD-OC events, please go to our website at [www.astdoc.org](http://www.astdoc.org), and select "Events Calendar."

**October 13, 2008 6–8 p.m.**

## **ASTD-OC Board Meeting**

The Board Meeting is open to all ASTD Orange County Members. Contact Linda Kulp at [President@astdoc.org](mailto:President@astdoc.org) if you are interested in attending.

**October 22, 2008 11 a.m.–1 p.m.**

## **Learning Event: Team Building Through Improvisational Games**

Learn the six principles of improv, experience improv activities you can use in team building, and identify the benefits of using improv for teambuilding. This session will be very hands-on and interactive—giving attendees the opportunity to experience some of these simple activities they can literally take back to the office today and apply. Debriefing of the activities will be modeled and attendees will receive copies of the instructions for each activity applied in the session.

**Location:** Turnip Rose, 300 South Flower, Orange

**Facilitator:** Denise Lamonte

**October 27–29, 2008 Three-Day Event**

## **ASTD National Managing the Learning Function Certificate Program**

This three-day program provides the critical leadership necessary to develop the learning function (its people and programs) and have a meaningful impact on the overall strategy in your organization. This interactive program includes self-assessments, small group case study discussion, best-practice review, and feedback on specific challenges participants face. To learn more, visit the website at <http://celebrityseries.astd.org/cone.html>.

**Location:** Scottsdale, Arizona

**Celebrity Facilitator:** John Coné

**November 4, 2008 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m.**

## **Organizational Development SIG Meeting**

The Organizational Development SIG's goal is to provide a forum for internal and external OD practitioners to network and learn from other professionals in the field. Visit the ASTD-OC website for updated information on this SIG meeting.

**Location:** Chapman University College, Irvine Campus, 7545 Irvine Center Drive, Suite 150, Room 11, Irvine

**SIG Leader:** Karen Carlsen (949) 930-3277, Sangeeta Gupta (714) 962-0190, [ODSIG@astdoc.org](mailto:ODSIG@astdoc.org)

**November 10, 2008 6–8 p.m.**

## **ASTD-OC Board Meeting**

The Board Meeting is open to all ASTD Orange County Members. Contact Linda Kulp at [President@astdoc.org](mailto:President@astdoc.org) if you are interested in attending.

**November 12–14, 2008 Three-Day Event**

## **ASTD National Training Certificate Program**

This three-day workshop is a practical, how-to overview of the entire training function. It provides new trainers with critical training skills and introduces seasoned practitioners to the latest techniques for delivering powerful training. To learn more, visit the website at <http://celebrityseries.astd.org/biech.html>.

**Location:** Las Vegas, Nevada

**Celebrity Facilitator:** Elaine Biech

**November 13, 2008 7–8:30 p.m.**

## **Career Management SIG Meeting**

The Career Management SIG provides professional career coaching for those wanting to remain current in managing their careers or those in the midst of a career transition. The new leader is Karen Moraski, owner of KM Training and Coaching in Irvine. Karen has over 12 years experience as a project consultant for Right Management, the world's largest career coaching and outplacement firm.

**Location:** Whole Foods Cafe, The District at Jamboree and Baranca, Tustin

**SIG Leader:** Karen Moraski, [karenmoraski@yahoo.com](mailto:karenmoraski@yahoo.com)

**November 19, 2008 6–8 p.m.**

## **(Third Wednesday—due to the Thanksgiving holiday)**

**Learning Event: New Perspective on the Future of Learning**

Not only are we unique as individuals, every situation, moment, or project is equally unique. If that is so true, and if that has been so long the case, why do we live in a world designed on the assumption that there are large groups of people that are very similar? As various models to categorize us into a certain generation, personality style, or learning type, we find ourselves designing our training on those assumptions. This appears to be at odds with the way that we view the world. Hear Wayne Hodgins' theories on the future of training, and how to accomplish a training design that can be delivered to a broad audience, but still be unique enough to meet each individual's needs.

**Location:** Doubletree Club Hotel, 7 Hutton Centre Drive, Santa Ana

**Facilitator:** Wayne Hodgins

# Leadership Index

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Linda Kulp • (714) 573-6804

**Past President** •  
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PresidentElect@astdoc.org  
Anthony Harmetz • (714) 392-4409

**Secretary** • Secretary@astdoc.org  
Kathy Harcharick • (949) 837-3896

**Chief Financial Officer** •  
CFO@astdoc.org  
David Comstock • (949) 250-2033

**Member Operations Vice President** •  
Membership@astdoc.org  
Kelly Villamil • (714) 560-5599

**Vice President of Programs** •  
Programs@astdoc.org  
Linda Wallace • (949) 551-1483

**Vice President of Continuing Development** •  
ContinuingDevelopment@astdoc.org  
Denise Lamonte • (714) 342-9733

**SIGs Vice President** •  
SIGs@astdoc.org  
Janet DiVincenzo • (949) 854-3714

**Communications Vice President** •  
Communications@astdoc.org  
Paul Venderley • (949) 230-8478

**OrangeSpiel Manager** •  
GetPublished@astdoc.org  
Steve Belisle • (562) 596-7882

**E-Newsletter Coordinator** •  
E-News@astdoc.org  
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### Orange County Chapter

9852 W. Katella Avenue, #187  
Anaheim, CA 92804

Phone: 714.527.4785  
Fax: 714.527.4210  
Email: ocoffice@astdoc.org  
Website: www.astdoc.org



Learning Events held monthly. Information is available in the Orangespiel and at [www.astdoc.org](http://www.astdoc.org). ASTD-OC presents topics pertinent to maximizing human potential. Guests welcome!

**Change of Address:** If you have a new address, please send your changes to the ASTD-OC office.  
*All changes must be received in writing.*

#### Membership Information

New Member: \$120 (\$100 dues + \$20 one-time processing fee)  
Renewal: \$100 annually  
Student: \$65 annually (Must prove current full time status. Exempt from processing fee.)  
Company: \$350 (+ \$20 one-time processing fee)

*Checks, money order, Visa, MasterCard and American Express are accepted as payment.*

In the spirit of diversity and in accordance with state and federal guidelines, the Society supports the principles of equal opportunity.

## Use the Orange County Chapter Code - CH8091

### Don't forget your CHIP! Support ASTD-OC!

Every time you register for an ASTD conference or workshop, renew your ASTD International membership, or make a purchase on the ASTD International website, be sure to look for a field called "Chapter Code" or "Source Code," and enter CH8091.

Our chapter will receive a portion of your expense to help with our operating costs, keeping membership fees low!

# President's Message

This is the time to exercise your voting privileges, right now for ASTD-OC and later for the Presidency of our great country. What a wonderful privilege this is—your chance to have your opinion voiced and counted for the new leadership. I ask you to think about “leadership” and what your definition is of it. Then apply that definition to yourself. Are you a leader? I suggest that you are or have been. At some point in our lives, all of us assume a position of leadership to someone or some organization. While most of us may not aspire to be the leader of the United States, there are ample opportunities out there in which to grow and exercise our leadership skills.

When you choose to become a leader, you join a great profession with other leaders. However, making that choice means having to give up some of the rights we enjoy as followers. By that, I mean, in part, assuming responsibility in your role, not blaming others for mistakes, and not avoiding issues—since as the leader you must have the courage to deal with them. Courage is the ability to stay focused on your goals and remain optimistic, regardless of what is going on around you. Courage is a critical part of becoming a successful leader.

Our Orange County Chapter of ASTD is looking for members who desire to become effective and successful leaders. It's a great opportunity to learn new skills and practice them as you develop in your leadership role. Accepting one of the leadership positions means accepting responsibility for all the activities associated with a particular position as well as being a func-

tioning member of the leadership team. Even if you feel you are not ready to manage a complete function such as a Board position, you may choose to accept leadership for one of the individual programs included in this area.

Whether you are in a leadership position at work, home, or special outside group, your effectiveness depends on your willingness to develop your skills and continue to learn. Our chapter can offer you an opportunity to be in a leadership position that has direct influence throughout Orange County. When taking on such a trust, it's important to be the best you can be. Otherwise, why do it. It means stepping out of your comfort zone and being willing to accept the challenges that will present themselves. When you do this, you are continuing to learn and grow. If you desire long-term success in your professional or personal life, you've got to step into the unknown and commit to being a life-long learner and what better way to learn than to take on a leadership role.

You have the power today to make changes that will support your future success in whatever lies ahead. Are you ready to accept the challenge and step out of your comfort zone? I encourage you to strongly consider this. We have a few open spots for our Board positions in 2009. Please take a look at the positions offered and carefully consider how you might benefit ASTD-OC and how filling one of those positions might also benefit you.

Your Learning Partner,

Linda Kulp  
President  
ASTD-OC

# Trainer's Casebook

## Case of the Cut Classroom Time

The strawberry blonde entered the conference room in a whirlwind of paperwork and loan files. “They need escrow training,” she said, matter-of-factly. “And we can't wait a few weeks for them to get it.”

Staci was referring to the series of escrow classes that I currently train. These courses had begun as a single day of training. However, as the depth and complexity of the subject matter became more and more apparent, one course became a series of five classes spread over two months. The series had been popular throughout the company. Practically every department that handled communication with the customer required its staff to attend the courses, with measurable results, except for the Staci's department.

**How do you balance a client's request to cut training, and still maintain the quality of the program you have been asked to facilitate?**

The strawberry blonde was a recurring client who had recently become in charge of creating loan modifications for our company's customers. These programs required a deeper knowledge of the customer's account—specifically, escrow.

To complete a Loan Modification course, representatives need to determine if an escrow account should be created for the loan. An escrow account will be necessary if property insurance or property taxes ever were unpaid. To recognize if this is the case, the representatives needed to understand the fundamental rules surrounding the escrow account, and they had to have the ability to interpret a complex computer system to see how the rules for escrow applied to the customer.

The needs assessment came in the form of my discussion

**TRAINER'S CASEBOOK continued on page 7**

# Spontaneous Creative Combustion

by Wayne Hodgins

For the next few decades at least, we will find that one of the greatest sources of innovation, new ideas, and inspiration will be the developing regions of the world. This is due to:

- The benefit of starting with a clean slate and having no pre-existing infrastructures, customs, and behaviors to overcome.
- The driving force of necessity, which, as the saying goes, is “the mother of invention.”
- The fact that creativity and innovative thinking lies within all 6.6 billion of us on the planet!

I’m interested in looking at these developing regions, not only for the innovations and ideas emerging from them, but also to study these unique environments to better understand their essential elements. By understanding them, we might be able to replicate and share, and thus raise, the volume of creativity, innovation, and invention to all new heights. We certainly have plenty of problems that are begging for creative solutions!

By paying attention to the characteristics of innovation, invention, and the like, we can work to find more ways to increase exponentially the volume and diversity of inventions, innovation, and discovery to match the world of exponential change (and its accompanying challenges) that we are now living in.

It seems to me that most things are the result of the environment and conditions we are in at the time, and I think this holds true for something as fleeting as creativity. So I’m wondering, “How can we better understand the environments and conditions that seem to spark the most creativity?” Based on this understanding, we could create more of such environments—ones that are enriched with these characteristics and bring out the creativity, innovation, and inventiveness more often and for many more people than the current and historical norm.

## Spontaneous Combustion

We could use a favorite analogy of mine to help us with this—that of spontaneous combustion. In my own layman’s terms, spontaneous combustion is when fire unexpectedly and unintentionally breaks out without any apparent cause of ignition, such as sparks or flames. I learned about spontaneous combustion firsthand in some of my former lives when I was a mechanic, a woodworker, and an industrial technology teacher, and I became critically aware of the fire hazard posed by leaving oily rags, sawdust, paper, etc. lying around or in open waste containers. But as I’m often wont to do, I inverted this negative and dangerous characteristic into a powerfully positive one and abstracted it into a conceptual model. What I really took away from it was a fascination for indirect causation that still sticks with me today as you’re about to see.

From what I’ve been able to read and research, we (scientists) still don’t fully understand spontaneous combustion. What we do know are the conditions that make it more likely to happen, such as the presence of chemicals (oil, resin, varnish combined with flame supporting materials such as rags, sawdust, paper and oxygen). The simple preventative solution, therefore, is to make sure things like oily rags are stored or disposed of in sealed containers to cut off the air/oxygen supply.

## Brains on Fire! Spontaneous Cognitive Combustion?

I’m sure you can see the connection here to creativity, which seems to me to be a form of spontaneous creative or cognitive combustion—when a sudden creative thought that just comes to you, an unexpected “Aha!” moment bursts into flame without any apparent cause.

Now, what if we want to purposely cause a chemical spontaneous combustion? What if we want to have a fire break out without directly causing it, such as by lighting a match? In a lab, we can do so by carefully controlling a set of conditions (types and amounts of flammable liquids, supporting materials, etc.) and creating an environment (temperature, oxygen, humidity) that raises the probability of spontaneous combustion. We may not know just when or where the fire will begin, but we can expect it will happen somewhere in the experimental container relatively soon.



I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this. What are the conditions, materials, and environments leading to spontaneous cognitive combustion? What are those essential elements that can reduce the amount of "flapping" we do and increase our innovation, invention, and creativity?

At a very general level, some of this can be addressed by thinking differently, outside the proverbial box so to speak, being contrarian, converting the negative energy of naysayers into positive energy that drives you to succeed all the more. But let's try to go further.

To help us do so and to use this opportunity to start a few "fires" on this topic ... I'm sure we've all suffered from bouts of what might be called "creative constipation" when, try as we might, we just can't seem to squeeze out a new creative thought, solve a problem, or otherwise "hit the wall" ... I thought that Robert Lucky put it well in his *IEEE Spectrum* article (Jan. 2007) called "Great Thoughts" where he posited:

"There is a theory of creativity that holds that creativity is most often the product of the unexpected intersection of two previously unconnected thoughts. If you are thinking very hard about one such thought perhaps you are suppressing the other thoughts which could connect with it."

This leads to the often observed benefit of taking a break, going for a walk, or otherwise distracting yourself from the problem at hand. However, it is the theory on creativity that I most strongly concur with—the notion that there are very few truly new ideas. Rather, we are constantly building from and upon previous and existing thoughts and ideas. The new idea springs from the intersection or collision of two or more previously existing but unconnected thoughts.

Consider, as an example, *mashups*. While the term, mashup, is somewhat new, the concept is neither new nor complex. In simple terms, a mashup is a unique assembly of bits and pieces from more than one source into a single integrated whole. Even more simply (and a surprisingly robust metaphor for it) is that mashups are like Lego blocks; you have a lot of small components that can form almost infinite numbers of assemblies to create just about anything you can imagine.

With mashups, the "bits and pieces" or individual Lego blocks are pre-existing things that can come from any source and often from multiple sources. Furthermore, these "bits and pieces" can truly be just about anything and everything, from content to code to hardware to events to teams. Discover innovative ways to combine these bits and pieces and ...

### ***Inspiring Combustion: Why Wait?***

One of the most common and rewarding comments I receive from many of you after my talks and postings is that they help you connect a set of dots/thoughts that you knew about and that were previously "out there" but which had not been con-

nected the way I strung them together. A "necklace for the mind" as one most complimentary person put it to me. I take these as the highest compliments I can receive—to have helped to cause (in my own direct fashion) some spontaneous cognitive combustion in others. I'd be honored to be regarded as a cognitive pyromaniac and can only hope to continue to cause and stoke more "fires" and "fan the flames" of global creativity.

What about YOU? Take a few minutes—you deserve the break—to think back to times when you have been particularly creative, inventive, or inspired or a time when your brain was otherwise "on fire." Look for some patterns. What are their commonalities? In particular, I encourage you to focus on the overall "environment" you were in at those times, such as colors, sounds, furniture, views, movement, other people, time of day, lighting, what you were doing just beforehand, and so on. Please share (we've linked the online version of this article to a Message Board entry at [www.astdoc.org](http://www.astdoc.org)) the essential elements of creativity you come up with.

Here's to creating a world of spontaneous cognitive combustion for all of us.

### **About the Author**

*Wayne Hodgins, strategic futurist and "corporate evangelist" at Autodesk, Inc., brings keen foresight and thought-provoking perspectives on human performance improvement, knowledge management, learning, and the general nature of design to a broad range of corporations and organizations worldwide.*

*With over 30 years of experience in business and education, Wayne has played a key role in working with educators and trainers throughout the world on new learning models, learning management systems, and the role of technology in learning. Wayne is credited with creating the concept of Learning Objects. A highly sought-after speaker, Wayne uses his unique ability to put together eclectic combinations of existing elements into new models that are easily understood so that others become inspired and enabled to use this new information to design their own future. This November, he'll be web casting the keynote speech for the ASTD-Orange County Monthly Learning Event.*



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# Focus Group Results

Throughout the year, we've conducted a needs analysis asking our members how we could better serve their needs. This summer we brought many of the suggestions we had heard to a group of 20 volunteers and other members to narrow the list down.

Below you will find five ideas the group consensus indicated we should develop over the next few years. Listed in no particular order, they include:

- **Transition Workshop** – Create a low-cost, half-day workshop to provide resources and information and to answer questions about conducting a job search in the training and development field.
- **Mentoring Program** – The ASTD San Diego chapter has generously offered to show us how to use its successful mentoring program through which approximately 20 mentor-mentee teams work together on a specific issue for 6 months each year.
- **Structured Networking** – In addition to the many less structured networking opportunities ASTD-OC currently provides, our members are requesting some more structured networking interactions.
- **Two-Track Workshop System** – Each year, ASTD-OC hosts workshops on topics of interest. There was much interest in a two-track system for workshops. One track would feature nationally renowned training and development figures such as Jim Kirkpatrick or Marcus Buckingham. The second track would feature exceptional figures, who are less well-known, in a more informal setting and at a lower cost.
- **Facilitate Quick Connections** – Many of our members are interested in quickly connecting with people willing to talk with them or provide their perspective on topics of immediate concern. Suggestions include developing or enhancing our online networking groups and/or improving the functionality of our online membership directory, Find-a-Trainer.

We will likely not implement all of these ideas in 2009, but we will be able to implement at least 2 or 3. Please let us know which of these initiatives are most important to you by emailing us at [PresidentElect@astdoc.com](mailto:PresidentElect@astdoc.com). And while you are at it, please share any other feedback or suggestions you might have.



# Trainer's Casebook

Continued from page 4

with Staci. Her employees needed to be able to complete two forms that focused on the status of the customers' escrow account and the amount required to pay for the customers' escrowed bills. It should take 20 minutes to complete each form accurately.

"We just don't have the time to take these people off the floor for days of training," Staci asserted. "They're already backlogged as it is. They need to be able to do this, and now."

The strawberry blonde blew out of the conference room as she had come in—leaving behind a list of things her employees needed to know and one basic demand. I was being asked to train a new department on escrow—in a few hours.

Staci had a valid concern. To devote days of training to prepare employees for the completion of a few forms did not appear to be the best use of anyone's time. However, if these employees received incomplete training, they would undoubtedly turn in inaccurate and incomplete forms, which would negatively impact the representative's ability to get an approved loan modification. Neither alternative was ideal.

*For this Trainer's Casebook, we ask "How do you balance a client's request to cut training by a few hours (or a few days), and still maintain the quality of the program you have been asked to facilitate?" Give us your response in the ASTD-Orange County LinkedIn Discussion Group, where this casebook article will be posted. You can also respond by sending an e-mail to [GetPublished@astdoc.org](mailto:GetPublished@astdoc.org), with "Trainer's Casebook" in the subject line.*

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# Is Your ASTD-OC Profile Part of Your Hub and Spoke Strategy?

By Mel Aclaro

“Hub-and-spoke” is a term describing a model for driving web traffic to a central site. The concept is to create a central website (the “hub”) that describes the value proposition about you, your business, or some other cause that’s important to you. Then, to cast a wide net by establishing a presence at multiple satellite sites (“spokes”) with links back to your hub.

Viewed another way, the spokes are where you engage target niches. It’s where you interact with your target audience in places they like to hang out. Ideally, you’ll interact with them in ways that are consistent with that site’s online culture. And, by adding value to its members through active contributions to discussions that go on there, you eventually generate interest for your profile.

At some point, some members will become curious. They’ll want to check the profile you’ve established at that satellite. On your profile, they may choose to click the link that takes them to your main site. At your main site, your value proposition should be prominent to give more information about what you stand for, along with any calls to action you want them to consider.

As the theory goes, by making that opportunity available in another setting, you both stand a better chance to learn more about mutual opportunities you might each be able to fulfill.

I’ll save for a future article my thoughts about the different ways you might think to participate in different online communities. For now, I’ll ask you to consider the last time you facilitated an opportunity to let me, or others in our little niche at ASTD-OC, get to know *you* better.

Within our local “spoke” of training and development professionals, is there a local profile I can go to find out about you? If it exists, can I find it? If I find it, will it have current information, or will I have wasted my time? If I find it, does it invite me to participate in discussions in which you also participate on other sites?

As a member of the ASTD-OC Chapter, one of many

benefits you have is the ability to create an online ASTD-OC member profile. Using category and keyword searches, this profile becomes available to the rest of us via the Find-a-Trainer feature on the ASTD-OC home page.

If you haven’t logged in to update your profile in the last two or three months, chances are, there’s some tweaking needed. At the very least, revisit the keywords section of your profile. Make sure the list of keywords include the latest projects you have accomplished, any extracurricular activities you’ve since taken up, or any new areas of professional interest you’ve established.

If you’re a new member and haven’t yet created your ASTD-OC member profile, take time to do it today. Simply login and click “My Profile.” The Contact Information page will appear. After completing it, I’d encourage you, whether a veteran or a new member, not to stop there.

At the very least, click the sections for Categories and Keywords. Populate those sections with information that’s relevant to your current role, projects you’re involved in, and interests you champion. You don’t have to be grammatically correct; keywords won’t show anywhere else on your profile page. Rather, they remain “in the background.” They are visible only to our search engine and designed to maximize the chances of you showing up in search results from member queries.

Finally, here’s another point of encouragement. Somewhere on your profile, whether in the Additional Info section or, if your subscription allows, in the sections titled Background or Philosophy, you should consider listing any other professional social networks in which you’re active.

For example, if you’re active on LinkedIn.com, place a link to your LinkedIn profile. Some of us are active in discussions at the ASTD-OC Group on LinkedIn and on Facebook. If you’ve joined those groups (free, by the way), let us know by posting it somewhere on your ASTD-OC member profile.

For my part, if you have questions and I can help, drop me a note. I’m easy to find, just click “Find a Trainer” on our home page and search for keywords, “Mel Aclaro.” Or, you can also try: “social network guy,” “linkedin,” “facebook,” “twitter,” “twitterhead”... well, you get the picture.

*Mel Aclaro is the Director of Content and e-Learning Solutions for Realty U, and the Website Manager for [astdoc.org](http://astdoc.org). You can review his Member Profile to see an example of how he maximizes the potential of the Find a Trainer member benefit.*

# The Staggering Failure of Public Schools

By Teresa Shuff Trujillo

I was not surprised by the April 1, 2008 headline stating our schools are failing. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance released a report on high school graduation rates in America's 50 largest cities. New York and Los Angeles are graduating less than half of their students, and Detroit is only graduating one-out-of-four. The complete report can be found at [www.AmericasPromise.org](http://www.AmericasPromise.org).

Locally, 13 of the 27 school districts in Orange County did not achieve their annual yearly progress measurements under the No Child Left Behind legislation. Statewide, the California High School Exit Exam led to approximately 26,000 more drop outs last year when it became a prerequisite to a high school diploma. The 2007-2008 drop out rate for California is roughly equivalent to the population of Fullerton. 126,000 California students did not complete high school.

Many of the social reforms we have seen in our schools was long overdue. Separate but equal schools are neither separate nor equal. More than 60-years-ago, the wisdom of the courts were used to begin desegregation right here in Orange County with the Mendez v Westminster case. The landmark Brown v. Board of Education followed eight years later. But schools remain a system of haves and have-nots.

"About 58 percent of students served by the urban districts within the largest metropolitan areas graduate, compared with 75 percent in nearby suburban communities," states the report prepared by Christopher Swanson of the Editorial Projects in Educational Research Institute. "The more typical situation, however, is characterized by sharply lower rates of high school completion for the city districts." The report was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the America's Promise Alliance.

I agree with the major tenants of the report. But, there are other subtler issues affecting educational outcomes. Much of it has to do with the social expectations and messages which have been developed by the community, parents and employers.



First there is the marketing messages that career educators have seared into our collective conscience. This marketing has been so successful that most of us take it for granted that you have to graduate from college to be successful. This belief affects how we hire, train, promote and retain our workforce. But, what is the truth, and how do we separate truth from the wishful thinking of the education marketers?

The staggering truth is that only one in four Americans will attain a bachelor's degree. So, it is not just our high schools that are failing—it is the whole pre-school through college education system.

The U.S. Departments of Education, Commerce, and Labor keep extensive records on education and the workforce. All of these statistics are available on their websites.

Here is a thumbnail sketch of education outcomes:

- **75% national high school graduation rate** according to the 2004 U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics
- **65.5% of high school graduates enrolled in college** in 2006 according to the Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics
- **52% college graduation rate after 6 years** of college according to National Center for Education Statistics, US Dept Ed Placing Graduation Rates in Context NECS 2007-161 October 2006
- **26.5% is the percentage workers who are college graduates** according to the U.S. Department of Labor Statistics.

There are nearly 16 million high school students in this country, but only 3.9 million seats at 1308 degree granting institutions recognized by the US Department of Education. The reality is that there is only one seat for every four students at a university.

Truly understanding these numbers is sobering. It is also imperative that employers design their hiring needs around the available workforce.

Vocational education was winnowed from school budgets because the emphasis was to insure that every student was going to receive a college prep curriculum thanks to the No Child Left Behind legislation. It is much more expensive to provide vocational education than it is to provide a college prep curriculum. Vocational education requires a lower teacher to student ratio, large workshops, expensive equipment, and higher insurance.

Local school districts were eager to abandon vocational education and adopt the message that college as the means to a secure future for their graduates.

There is yet another point where the message and reality are very far apart—the new economy requires an educated workforce.

The U.S. Department of Labor reports that only 30% of the job titles in their database require a college degree. This does not mean that 30% of the available jobs require a degree, just 30% of the job titles. And many of the job titles that don't require college degrees are well-paying careers that benefit from on-the-job training and apprenticeships, in other words—earn while you learn opportunities!

Many trades have trouble recruiting young people. But, who will be our auto mechanics, plumbers, construction workers, soldiers, police, firefighters, skilled labor, and other workers—all the foundations of our economy that don't require a college degree?

At some point three-out-of-four young citizens realize that they won't achieve a college degree. This is where local business can step in and improve the outcome for students in our community. Reaching out to middle school and high school students with career days, field trips and open houses at our businesses may entice them to pursue jobs and careers in their neighborhoods. This is good for business and good for the community. Reaching out to teachers with classroom resources is another way to bridge the real world versus the school room.

Education is the greatest equalizer in our society. Every student who earns their way to college with hard work, good grades, and a winning attitude should be rewarded with an admission to college. But the Manhattan Institute for Public Policy Research reports that only 32% of students leaving high school are qualified to attend four-year colleges. They are reporting on academic preparedness—not the social, emotional, or financial preparedness to attend college. It is time to view K-12 public education as an entry into the economic engine. It means that the emphasis must be placed on preparing our youngest community members with a skills set that will prepare them for life—not just for college. To do this employers will need to reach out to educators and partner for success.

*Teresa Shuff Trujillo is the president of Book Workshop, Inc. in Fullerton, California. She has working in the printing and publishing industry for over thirty years. She helps writers achieve their publishing dreams through free monthly writer's gatherings and critiques and a variety of publishing services. Teresa's e-mail address is Teresa@MyBookWorkshop.com*

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# Are Women Being Heard?

## What Men and Women Can Learn From Each Other

by Dana Bristol-Smith



Only 8 Fortune 500 companies are run by women, and a total of 16 Fortune 1000 companies have women in the top job. Michael Kinsman of the San Diego Union-Tribune reports that women hold just 15.7 percent of top management jobs in Fortune 500 companies. There are many reasons, theories, and opinions as to why women still lag behind men in the top jobs.

What's happening in conference rooms and at companywide meetings? When women speak, are they being heard? Some women don't think so. Several women I recently spoke with are in the scientific field, a field dominated by men. They felt their biggest challenge was being heard, and sometimes the same information presented by a man to the same audience would be heard and listened to with more respect and perceived credibility.

Well it seems that both women and men can learn from each other when it comes to giving presentations. Dave Zielinski in the May 2004 issue of *Presentations Magazine* explored this subject in depth in his article "From the Playground to the Podium What Men and Women Can Learn from Each Other."

I'd like to share with you Dave's conclusions and my thoughts on what men and women can learn from each other in the presenting arena.

### What Women Can Learn From Men

#### 1. Quash the qualifiers

Dave: Women often soften their statements by using qualifiers such as *I sort of thought*, *in my opinion* or *this might be a better way*. Compare these statements: *In my opinion, the project will work better if we bid separately*, versus: *The project will work better if we bid separately*. The latter is more powerful.

Dana: Please remove the word *like* from your vocabulary in inappropriate places. For example: *The real estate market in this area has appreciated like 25 percent in the last year*,

versus: *The real estate market in this area has appreciated 25 percent in the last year*.

#### 2. Go by the numbers

Dave: When organizing a message, many men like to announce a number before each point: Point 1 is X, Point 2 is Y, Point 3 is Z. This isn't always good in personal conversation, but it works well in presentation settings where audiences have less patience for rambling or digression.

Dana: This is a great tactic for keeping both the presenter and the audience on track. It also helps in the development of a presentation to prioritize and organize your information.

#### 3. Accessorize minimally

Dave: Because women have more clothing options than men, the odds are greater they'll make apparel decisions that distract an audience. Presentation coaches suggest simple but classy attire and the minimal accessorizing.

Dana: Remember you want to keep your apparel a step up from your audience. If you are being brought in as a subject matter expert, be sure to look the part. Audiences make very quick judgments on your credibility from your appearance alone.

#### 4. Grab authority and keep it

Dave: Whether it's true or not, many men seem more comfortable with authority than women. Women who want to be perceived as more authoritative should minimize the factors undermining authority—digression, indecisiveness, equivocation—and learn to be assertive in a way that radiates confidence.

Dana: Speak clearly and directly and project confidence with your voice. If you believe and know what you have to say is important, your audience will too.

### What Men Can Learn From Women

#### 1. Temper the talking head

Dave: Replace the monologue with dialogue. Energize the audience by asking questions and getting feedback. Have a conversation with the audience; don't lecture.

Dana: Change the dynamic every few minutes. Go from telling a story, to having interaction, to showing visuals—keep it moving.

#### 2. Use inclusive language

Dave: Women tend to use words such as *we*, *our*, and *us*. While men tend to say *I*, *me*, and *mine* more often. Check your ego at the door and get better results.

Dana: Also remember to be inclusive by making eye contact around the room, one person at a time.

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# Return Service Requested

## WOMEN continued from page 11

### 3. *Cater to the audience*

Dave: Men more often present from their own perspective of what they think the audience should know, rather than thoroughly researching what the audience wants to learn or hear. Men are also slower to shift gears if they sense they are losing an audience. Women, it seems, are better at accurately gauging the emotional temperature and interest level of a room.

Dana: Amen to that!

### 4. *Emote every now and then*

Dave: No matter how the genders evolve, females will probably always be more comfortable expressing their emotions than males. But times have changed for men. Crybabies aren't exactly in vogue, but displaying honest emotions is now associated more with inner strength rather than with weakness.

Dana: Remember Mayor Rudy Giuliani after 9/11? He was strong, clear, and certainly emoting. Rather than coming off as weak, he portrayed strength, compassion, and believability. These are very important qualities for a leader. If you can tap into the emotions of your audience, you will always have a better connection. Speak to their hearts and minds.

### 5. *Don't drone*

Dave: Whether it's to avoid showing emotion or seeming too enthusiastic about something, men are the champions of vocal monotony in the presentation world. The answer isn't to talk more like a woman—but the least you can do is be a less boring man.

Dana: We all want to hear speakers who are passionate and enthusiastic about what they present. I'm not suggesting that men become cheerleaders. However, a little enthusiasm, a smile, and some energy in the voice will do wonders. See if this helps: Imagine a recent sports game you attended and think about what you would tell your best friend about the game. I bet you'd have some enthusiasm and energy in your voice.

The bottom line is there's a lot we can learn from each other!

### About the Author

*Dana Bristol-Smith is the founder of Speak for Success, an organization that works with companies that want their people to communicate with confidence and credibility. Dana can be reached at [dana@speakforsuccess.net](mailto:dana@speakforsuccess.net) or by phone at 760-726-5272. For other communication resources, please visit: [www.speakforsuccess.net](http://www.speakforsuccess.net)*