

11 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Training

SUBJECT : Attendance at University of Michigan Seminar on
"Managing the Programmed Learning Effort,"
28 - 30 August 1967

1. The Seminar in "Managing the Programmed Learning Effort" at the University of Michigan was most worthwhile. Twenty-three persons were enrolled, four from Canada. The remainder represented business and industrial firms except for myself and two military officers, Marine and Army. Emphasis in the course was on:

a. Where to use PI? - PI is not considered as a panacea for all training problems - it should be used as another training tool on a highly selective basis - criteria to be used in making this determination were discussed.

b. Should PI be off-the-shelf, developed in-house or developed under contract? There are pros and cons for each - again criteria were examined to assist the manager in deciding which avenue to follow.

2. Representatives of three user firms explained in detail how they use PI in their training programs. The firms were General Motors Institute, Ford and Upjohn Pharmaceuticals. In each case these firms use PI for special training problems rather than as a substitute for their conventional formal training programs. They find PI especially good as a training device when their target population is broadly dispersed or so large as to make classroom training impossible. Each has used a combination of off-the-shelf items, in-house development and contractual arrangements. Each has full-time "professional" programmers to do the work.

3. Like most training of this kind, the greatest good comes from the exchange of ideas with other participants. Representing as disparate a cross section of business and industry as they did made for a fine exchange of thoughts and practices. In addition, the course moderator Paul Herrick and Geary Rummler, both of the University's Bureau of Industrial Relations Staff, kept the sessions on track and provided substance and fine leadership for discussion. Rummler, of course, is one of the leaders and authorities on Programmed Learning.

4. Several things came out loud and clear during the two and a half-day program:

a. The sense of urgency to employ PI is leveling off as mature understanding is achieved of what PI is and can do.

b. All participants, like myself, were present looking for answers (most of which we got).

c. Small PI projects are more effective than large projects, e. g. complete courses.

d. Our approach in training instructors to do their own program writing is unique but none-the less appropriate if such trained instructors are provided an opportunity to put their education into practice.

5. My one-day visit to the Railroad Retirement System in Chicago netted very little except to note the way in which one programmed instruction effort is administered. Students are oriented to the use of their programs in a group and thereafter set their own pace with requirements for pretesting and posttesting for each unit of instruction. The education officer feels that their use of PI has been effective in saving student and instructor time while improving the quality of learning and performance.



STATINTL