

## PERSPECTIVES ON PRACTICE

### **“History, huh, yeah What is it good for? Absolutely nothing” ... or is it?**

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#### **Abstract**

Human resource development (HRD) professionals have an obligation to provide programs/products with the highest probability of success. The exclusion of workers' perspectives, from *their* standpoint, would seem to produce suboptimal results. Therefore, consulting workers' literature, labor and working class histories, management histories, and other sources that represent the workers' lived experiences would, on the face of it, provide additional data that would help gain insights into the root cause failure of past programs and increase the probability of success. These data sources also raise awareness of topics not typically found in a managerial discourse. Suggested sources are included.

With apologies to Edwin Starr (1970)<sup>i</sup>, I have co-opted and modified the opening lines of this Viet Nam War protest song, the first by the production company Motown. The notion of management history as relevant information is lacking in much of the field of management. Smith (2007) concludes, “we are diminishing the importance of history in our instruction and research and choosing ignorance of our intellectual heritage rather than learning from it” (p. 531). Fischer (1970) provides some additional justification on the value of historical research: it (a) helps clarify the context in which modern-day problems are situated, (b) suggests a course of action for the future, and (c) helps define who we, management employees, are.

At this point I will provide the reader with a brief overview of the arguments being made here. My basic tenet questions the professionalism of HRD scholars and practitioners who have not informed themselves of labor and working class history, of the writings of labor activists, or of current events from the lived experience and writings found in a labor and working class point of view. Note that I am asking the HRD professional to *inform him- or herself* of the issues. I am not advocating an uncritical acceptance of these points of view. I will argue that when HRD professionals view current issues of importance to the organization from both the management/organization points of view *as well as* from a worker's informed point of view, the project outcomes will have a higher probability of success. As an employee, the HRD professional<sup>ii</sup> is ethically bound, I would argue, to provide plans and programs that have the highest likelihood to improve the bottom-line. Second, I would argue that all histories or recounting of events is subject to bias and that if HRD professionals and scholars are only

Truty, J. D. (2007). “History, huh, yeah. What is it good for? Absolutely nothing” ... or is it? *New Horizons in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*, 21(3/4), 29-40.  
<http://education.fiu.edu/newhorizons>

informed via a single discourse, typically a managerialist one, the products of their labor will have a higher probability of being flawed. Third, I suggest that the worker's produced perspective has value. Often issues concerning the failure of management programs surface in workers' writings. It is not uncommon that these writings would be critical (some might opine that they are overly critical), which may contribute to their exclusion from the mainstream of managerialist writings. But in any event, the contribution of a failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA) is provided from the perspective of those being acted *upon* and adds a dimension that is typically lacking and could help in diffusing groupthink. Fourth, I argue that workers have power by virtue of knowledge they possess of the labor process. The field of management has long contested worker-controlled knowledge. This contestation has been mutually harmful to all parties. Fifth, I hold that approaching the literature bases of the labor and working classes as a new weapon in the hand of management is not the intent of this perspective. Finally, I conclude with a list of resources for those unfamiliar with labor and working class history.

### **Management, Labor, and Working Class History**

Herein, I would like to comment not only on management history but also on labor and working class history. Consider: if HRD has at its core the training, education, and development of the working people of an organization, then, I would suggest, it is reasonable that a diligent learning and contextual analysis would have to include the history (i.e., the experiences, of those working peoples). Lacking the perspective of those who actually *do* the work of organizations (working people) or informed by a perspective from those who *assume* they understand a working person's point-of-view, the project entered into by the HRD professional has an increased probability of failing to accomplish its objective. Some level of proof is contained in the accounts of workers' resistance that can be found in the justification of most new managerial programs. Also, with today's highly competitive global market place, programs intended to improve the efficiency of the organization via its most valuable assets, its people, would seem to require planning and execution that would insure the highest degree of success. Anything less would appear to be management malfeasance, a contravening of the Freidmanian moral principle of maximizing shareholder value. While this may be an extreme view for some, for others it is the corporation's *raison d'être* and, therefore, closely held.

### **History as an Interpretive Discipline**

History is a qualitative social science. Historians and their products are subject to the centrality of interpretation, the use of descriptive data, and the emphasis of context (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Therefore, if history is an interpretive art, as Maxwell (2005) suggests, it not only must represent the meaning that actors place on the events in which *they* have participated, but it must also represent the interpretation of events and the assignment of meaning that *others* have participated in (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003). A logical extension of this line of thought is that those who write history influence the creation of history. The events that shape the world in which business operates and in which the HRD professional is employed are subject to the same influences of interpretation. Therefore, the manner in which a discourse is created is a function of the events the creator(s) have participated in and/or the points of view the creator(s) are exposed to. The place from where the HRD practitioner/scholar views the world, that is, one's standpoint, influences how one socially constructs the world<sup>iii</sup>.

### Current Perspectives in HRD

The discourse within HRD is predominantly shaped by business and management literatures. HRD is a management function<sup>iv</sup> that principally is concerned with the educative arm of the firm, with the expressed purpose of improving the productivity<sup>v</sup> of the employee by training him or her to efficiently perform the current task, educating the employee for some future task, or preparing the employee through developmental processes for some unknown future state (Nadler, 1970). Productivity improvement is not the exclusive domain of the HRD professionals. It is shared with others whose field of practice could be organizational development (OD) or organizational behavior (OB), to name just two. What makes HRD unique within the organization is the responsibility for translating the strategies, philosophies, visions, and cultures directed at individual employees into actual concrete training products intended for changing employee behavior and, to a limited extent, the mental attitudes with which the employee interacts with the job and the organization. Therefore, one could construct the notion that the work of the HRD professional is deeply embedded in “manufacturing consent” (Burawoy, 1979), that is, providing an illusion of choice while actually constructing and highly restrictive work environment where the participation of workers creates consent and, therefore, minimizing conflict between management and labor. Given the nature of a capitalistic democracy grounded in the mantra of free enterprise, this function may not seem problematic. Indeed, it may even appear valorous.

### Seeing Another Perspective

It is not beyond reason to expect that non-management workers may have a different perspective of the work world than management workers. In many organizational cultures where there are structure and positional authority, power is perceived as behaving in a zero-sum game so that power gained by A is at the expense of B. Much of management literature, as it pertains to the management of employee output, seems to position management as the endower of empowerment, the instigator of involvement, and the conveyor of commitment. The notion that these are management responsibilities and tasks insinuates that the power to release the commitment of employees, to allow workers a level of involvement, or to grant empowerment, rests in the class of employee known as *management*.

Authority and power have context also. At the work site, those who are performing the task, those who produce the actual product or service that is sold and from which all profit is generated, have power and authority (if you don't think so, ask someone who has managed people in an environment where quantity, quality, cost, and timeliness of a good or service is closely measured). Management and business leaders, while not openly referring to this perspective in mutualistic terms, have recognized this phenomenon; and there has been a series of attempts to co-opt this power. The famous story of Schmidt frames the efficiency movement at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Are you a high priced man?” Taylor (1967) asks Schmidt, and from that followed the “principles of scientific management” (Taylor, 1967, p. 44). Mayo (1960) concludes that merely paying attention to the workers is sufficient to improve their output, and thus is born the human relations school of employee management. Jacoby (1997; 2004) tells of the use of welfare capitalism and bureaucratic systems that attempt to transfer power and authority from the workers to management. In the struggle between labor and management, the

rights of management have most often centered on the issue of who controls the knowledge of production (Harris, 1982). And while it is a humorous quip, “the manager’s brains are under the worker’s cap” (the origin of this anecdotal quip is unknown to me though I have run across it in cartoon form), there is ample evidence, as witnessed by the continuum of programs intended to engage, attach, empower, and involve the worker, that the struggle continues and the costs/causalities of failed programs are mounting.

### **What Might It Mean?**

The lessons of history, especially labor and working class history, are available for the HRD professional if one is willing to look toward a history that has been given voice by workers. With a perspective seen through the eyes of the workers, the HRD professional can expect to gain higher probabilities of success while attempting to institute workable solutions to improve worker productivity. I can argue that managers know this to be intuitively true because of the parade of programs designed to involve the worker in the production process (e.g., engagement, empowerment, involvement...). It is important to realize that this vision cannot be granted to the HRD professional as a function of management interpretation, business or management literature, or the consultant. There might be those who would argue that the past experiences of a young manager during a summer internship could lend that perspective. It may be suggested that a non-management job during the college years or some other process of passing through the management hierarchy on one’s way to the executive suite could provide that vision. Or, being part of what McKenna (2006) titled his book *The World’s Newest Profession: Management Consultants in the Twentieth Century* (less reverently, Micklethwait (1996) refers to consultants as “witch doctors” in the title of his book) gives them an insight into the day-to-day of the working classes’ lived experiences. While those highly filtered experiences may contain a scintilla of insight, these interpretations are likely skewed and representative of a managerial view of labor. The difference in this view is how the environment is decoded and how the distribution of benefits is determined because just as the corporation is a profit-seeking, profit-maximizing self-interested “person,”<sup>vi</sup> it is often overlooked or dismissed as counter-productive that workers embrace these attributes, too. Why is the maximization of shareholder value unquestioningly considered a desirable goal while the maximization of wages for working peoples<sup>vii</sup> is often framed as requiring a defense or justification (framed as inflationary, framed in the language of anti-organized labor rhetoric)?

When reading from a labor perspective, there is a noticeable inclusion of how working women and men utilize their power and authority in the creation of profit (for both the corporation and themselves). The quality of work life (QWL) movement<sup>viii</sup> of the 1970s/1980s was, from many working people’s perspective, a new concept of labor-management cooperation. Quality-of-Work-Life-type programs were heralded in both the popular and academic press as the salvation of the American economy. Worker perspectives of QWL contain sufficient evidence (from the workers’ standpoint) that the benefit of cooperating with management did not protect/preserve their jobs (restructuring, downsizing, and off shoring of jobs) and that the financial benefits were disproportional to the knowledge contribution by the different parties (Parker, 1985; Parker & Slaughter, 1988; Rinehart, Huxley, & Robertson, 1997). In short, the labor perspective questions the distributive justice of the American business enterprise. Although mainstream writers might have ignored these questions of distributive justice, they were never-

the-less issues of continued resistance and were contained within the writings of workers' literature.

Continuing on--when reading the work of labor historians, or labor writers, there is a theme (among many) that emerges. It is the struggle for workers to maintain a level of autonomy in their work, that is, a notion that their skills have value and that their perspectives on the process of production have a currency that is not easily transferred or replaced (Brody, 1993; Burawoy, 1979; Juravich, 1985; Montgomery, 1979; Parker, 1985, 1994; Parker & Slaughter, 1988).

There are specific areas that are cogent today and that may be informed by a reading of the past via a labor perspective. As an example, the entire area of labor-management cooperation has been intensely contested since the late 1960s. The decreasing levels of corporate profitability and an association between inflation, wages, and productivity were propagated within the press in this era<sup>ix</sup>. Worker productivity reportedly was declining; and given the inflationary times, attention was focused on workers, especially the youth (Rukeyser, 1969; Seligman, 1969; Swerdloff, 1969) and organized workers (Burck, 1969, 1970a, 1970b, 1971; Davenport, 1971). This attention stimulated government hearings (*Improving National Productivity*, 1972; United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Banking Housing and Urban Affairs. Subcommittee on Production and Stabilization., 1973; *Worker Alienation*, 1972, 1972) and gave rise to what I referred to above as the QWL Movement<sup>x</sup>. The origin of this program was the recognition of certain management practices that had created a mind- and body-numbing work experience. This was highlighted by the 1972 strike against the General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio<sup>xi</sup> (Aronowitz, 1973). The solution was a process of empowering workers to participate with management in the redefining of workers' jobs, thereby improving the quality of the work life of employees. The QWL program was intended to reverse, via the improvement in workers' productivity, the alarmingly increasing rate of foreign manufacturing incursion in automotive, steel, and electronics industries and the impact that would have on the American economy. The method drew on a philosophy similar to the general works councils of the Second World War where labor and management *co-operated* the enterprise in recognition that, as attributed to Benjamin Franklin when he signed the Declaration of Independence, "We must all hang together, or assuredly we shall all hang separately"<sup>xii</sup> ("Hang Together"), thereby creating a sense of joint destiny.

There have been many contributions on the topic of QWL (and under that broad umbrella, employee empowerment, labor-management cooperation teams, team building, jointness, and employee involvement to mention the most notable) by both business consultants and academics. Additionally, a series of enlightening perspectives were written by labor activists of the era. These contributions provide an insight as to how workers are responding to that activity, from an insider's point of view. It is a point of view that is rationalized without censorship from management, paid consultants, or business school academics. That is not to say that the labor position is correct in and of itself or represents all of labor. Nor is it to say that a labor position is monolithic. But it is a perspective that provides insight from the lived experiences of workers on how they are responding, how they interpret the activity, what they fear from the implementation, and how they may sabotage that effort. One also gets a worker's

perspective on how to improve the situation. This is a key insight that is missed if the HRD professional does not avail him- or herself of the workers' literatures.

Labor, especially organized labor has been portrayed in a negative light by the popular press (Martin, 2004). Organized labor is seen as an enemy of a productive free-market state. It is often framed as socialist and anti-American. In the post-war anti-communist era as well as the current political environment, this polarization has been useful to quiet dissent and discredit other actors. This portrayal, therefore, questions the value of labor/worker literature. When reading the works of Mike Parker (1985, 1994; Parker & Slaughter, 1988) or the journal of the Midwest Center for Labor Research (*Labor Research Review*), for example, there is a healthy dose of critique/criticism but also the rational notion that workers need to preserve their jobs and that the business should provide those jobs. These sources are actively involved in providing solutions that typically are not found in management journals or readily among the consultant bestseller list. A reasonably intelligent person would believe that not every solution is the best, or even practicable, regardless if that solution came from labor, management, academia, or consultancies. But ignoring a set of solutions out of hand would seem not to be in the best interest of the firm. Rather, it could be construed as being in the best interests of certain individuals within the firm. And if I were allowed a bit of hyperbole, knowingly ignoring the labor literature would seem to be management malfeasance.

### **Reflections on HRD**

Please note that it is not my intention to value one set of perceptions over another. The focus of this discussion is in the relevance of reading workers' history and perceptions of the workplace as *their* lived experiences. HRD interventions are intended for change. The change is intended to alter the current status quo and to move the organization, via its people, to a new set of behaviors and/or attitudes. These new behaviors and/or attitudes are intended to improve the performance of the organization, typically judged by improvements to the bottom line(s)--the ultimate purpose of a business in a capitalistic society. An HRD professional, typically within the ranks of management, would need to suspend judgment as he or she attempts to understand the perceptions of workers. What is gained could be the difference between failed and successful programs. It is important, like any other failure analysis (which is precisely what is being performed at some level within the organization because the status quo is no longer acceptable to the senior levels of management, and thus the desire for change), that the data be collected from all sources and evaluated within a relatively objective framework<sup>xiii</sup>. The exclusion of a labor or managerial perspective will only lead to partial solutions--and sub-optimal ones at that. If the HRD professional is truly professional in her work and he does due diligence, there will be an honest effort to understand the subject at hand - the workers.

### **A Closing Note**

HRD professionals are not typically sitting at the table of corporate power<sup>xiv</sup>. Therefore, while the HRD professionals may not be the creators of policy, they tend to be the interpreters and implementers of policy. This is a powerful (and dangerous) position from which they can choose to be normative or transformative (within reasonable limits). If they are to create programs with the intention of improving the outcomes of labor, then understanding labor's

locus of resistance is central. Understanding resistance is not meant to defeat resistance through a force of power (it is well known that the laws and courts in the United States have long ago established the rights of management and the concomitant legitimate control of the shop floor) but rather to reform the energy of resistance to a process of *co*-creation. This notion of *co*-creation is a process where the lived experiences of the workers, as expressed by the workers, are included in the establishment of work processes.

It is in this area of HRD, wherein the true interests of management and labor can come together, that the strongest ties between adult education and HRD can exist. In the past century, the idea of industrial democracy has taken on several and different meanings. The view with which I closely associate was proposed by Irving Bluestone<sup>xv</sup> and his son Barry (1992). Industrial democracy was a two-track process. The first was a tactical track, and it dealt with conditions of work at the site of labor. Labor had a responsibility to improve their efficiency at work. This was done via cooperation with management and the sharing of workers' insights and knowledge to convey that labor and management *are* in it together. In many cases these are worthwhile activities and do improve the working lives of employees. The second track was a strategic track. It proposed that the benefits that are accrued to society via the efforts of the working classes be equitably shared. It also involved an "Enterprise Compact" (Bluestone & Bluestone, 1992, p. xiii) that broadened labor's involvement in the inner working of corporate strategic decision-making in such areas as outsourcing, support of trade treaties, and restructuring. This second track is involved with institutional change, altering the balance of power. While there has been a broad acceptance by many for the first track, there has been a quiet resistance to the second.

Given the tension between labor and management, which has been with industrialized societies since their inception, it may be tempting to the HRD professional to delve deeply into the literature of labor and the working classes with an eye toward learning how to incorporate what has been learned for the overwhelming benefit of management. While this cannot be prevented, it was not my intention. With my own special brand of naiveté, it was my hope that this perspective would further a mutualistic outlook of the world of work. As Phyllis Cunningham, one of my professors, once said to me, "we make space where we are." For the most part HRD professionals are situated in the business world, and in that world there is an expectation of ever increasing profits. For one class of workers (management) to disproportionately benefit from the labors of another (workers) would not seem to contribute to a socially just world. Therefore, while it may be entirely unrealistic to expect the HRD professionals, on their own, to alter the culture of business, it is clearly within the realm of possibilities that the HRD professionals can learn from the writings of the laboring and working classes. What has been learned can contribute to the designs of programs with an intent to produce a more equitable and socially just work world. An empathetic reading (recall that managers are workers, too) of these literature bases with an eye towards understanding the critique can lead to programs that are truly beneficial (within a frame of distributive justice). Incremental change, while not revolutionary, is certainly a way to "make space."

### **Where to Look for Material**

It is fairly certain that labor/working persons' literature will not be found in the same arena as management literature. It will usually not be found in business schools or in their

journals. Typically the websites of the major unions are rich with information (e.g., <http://www.aflcio.org> or <http://www.seiu.org> ). “Labor notes” (<http://www.labornotes.org>), a labor newsletter, has a worker’s perspective of many current issues. There are several labor journals, including: *Labor Studies Journal* (<http://www.uale.org/ljs/ljs.shtml>), *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* (<http://www.dukeupress.edu/labor/>), *International Labor and Working-Class History* (<http://www.newschool.edu/gf/history/ilwch/>), *Labor History* (<http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/0023656X.html>), *Labour/Le Travail* (<http://www.cclh.ca/llt/>), *Mexican Labor News & Analysis* ([http://www.ueinternational.org/Mexico\\_info/mlna.php](http://www.ueinternational.org/Mexico_info/mlna.php)), and *New Labor Forum* (<http://www.newlaborforum.org/>). More prominent labor and working class authors include Stanley Aronowitz, Kevin Boyle, Kate Bronfenbrenner, David Brody, John R. Commons, Melvyn Dubofsky, John Dunlop, Leon Fink, Jack and Phillip Foner, James Green, Herbert Gutman, Eric Hobsbawn, Tom Juravich, Alice Kessler-Harris, Nelson Lichtenstein, Seymour Lipset, Staughton Lynd, Joseph McCartin, Ruth Milkman, C. Wilber Mills, David Montgomery, Bruce Nelson, Bruce Nissen, Selig Perlman, E. P. Thompson, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and Robert Zieger... and this is not an exhaustive list. Within the academic management sphere, there is a group of critical management scholars. While these academics are not strictly from the ranks of labor, they support views critical of established management practices and the established social order. These academics are associated with the Academy of Management and have formed an interest group within the Academy<sup>xvi</sup>.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that the forced preference of one view over the other is not my intent. It is one *with* the other that will bring a strong objectivity to the work of the HRD professional. My point is also that exposure to a labor and working class perspective of the work world will influence the thinking of the HRD/manager and in time create a perspectival shift, that is, a making of space where equity for the working classes is a natural phenomenon. It would not be the first time that I was branded as an idealist. I would comment, in my defense, that the pragmatics of the past century have not brought the labor-management accord/compact any lasting resolution. Perhaps it is time to be a bit idealistic; and let’s give learning through labor and working class history a chance....

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### Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Edwin Starr performed “War” in 1970 after being originally released by the Temptations. The song was written by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong in 1969 and is considered to be an obvious anti-Vietnam War song. After several requests, Whitfield recorded the song as a single with Starr so as not to alienate the more conservative Temptations fans (“War (Edwin Starr song),”; Whitfield & Strong, 1969). For the complete lyrics to the song, see [http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/edwin\\_starr/war.html](http://www.oldielyrics.com/lyrics/edwin_starr/war.html)

<sup>ii</sup> I would assert that the scholarly practice of HRD must include these points of view if only to prepare the HRD practitioner/scholar for his or her new/continuing role. And to be included would mean that an academician would need to be well versed in the topic. Otherwise he or she too would be less that professional in one’s career.

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<sup>iv</sup> Not all HRD professionals are managers. I would argue that all HRD professionals are, in some more or less fashion, the handmaidens of management. That is, they are tied to a management perspective, and the output of their effort (work) is either tacitly or implicitly acceptable only if codified by the managing hierarchy. The emphasis here is on the HRD professionals whose responsibilities include the interpretation of the cultural/working environment, the creators of materials intended to support, enhance, or radically change the environment, and those who do the research and suggest changes to the environment. For the

most part, it would exclude those whose job responsibilities require them to *only* deliver the prepared texts.

<sup>v</sup> Productivity has many technical, economic, and political meanings. I am using the term in a broad manner (i.e., the amount of goods and services produced per unit of human effort).

<sup>vi</sup> The Supreme Court granted the notion of corporate “personhood” in 1896 in the case of *Santa Clara vs. Southern Pacific Railroad* <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=118&invol=394>. It has created precedent and is now settled law. For a better explanation of this event, its creation and implication, see Beatty (2007, p. 148).

<sup>vii</sup> This is not referring to CEOs and others who form the economic elite.

<sup>viii</sup> Over the decades since the inception of QWL this movement has adapted, adopted, and transformed into jointness programs, empowerment, and employee engagement programs to mention the most famous. In each of these programs, the intent is to gain the willful cooperation of workers, have them cease their resistance to management initiatives, and improve the cost structures of the business through the workers’ knowledge of the system under their control. A central aspect of these programs is the creation of an emotional connection between the worker and the organization so as create a sense that the plights of the worker and the organization are one and the same. Minimized in these programs is the recognition that while their plights *may* be intertwined, the outcomes are disproportionately distributed. Since the 1990s, the connection between the worker and the organization is being replaced with an emotional attachment among workers and workers and managers (i.e., with personal connections). This shift gained popularity when organizations changed their positions with regard to loyalty *towards* the employee.

<sup>ix</sup> There are many theories as to the origin of this profitability decrease. Most of these explanations rest on the economic policies of the Johnson administration in its determination to fund the war in Viet Nam and, at the same time, the domestic social programs of the Great Society. These policies exacerbated inflation and simultaneously spurred organized labor to demand increased wages. The wage increase was not being offset by the increase in workers’ productivity; therefore, the lack of productivity squeezed profits. This was occurring when the baby-boomer generation was coming of age at a time of great civil unrest, generational conflict, racial tensions, and a rise in feminism and anti-war protests. A counter theory is proposed by Robert Brenner (2006). He posits that it was the international capitalist competition that drove profits down and not the loss in worker productivity.

<sup>x</sup> Also the National Committee on Productivity (NCOP) was created that was intended to further research in the field.

<sup>xi</sup> This strike was not about wages but about work conditions. The Lordstown plant was producing the Chevrolet Vega, a compact car that was intended to stem the tide of lost market share to foreign manufactures. The plant was designed to produce 100 cars per hour, a rate 60% greater than the most modern domestic manufacturing plants. This meant that a typical assembly line worker’s job was 36 seconds in duration and repeated over 680 times in an eight-hour shift (30 minute lunch and two 20-minute breaks; Aronowitz, 1973).

<sup>xii</sup> Not knowing the exact origin of this quote, I did a Google search and found two slightly different quotes with two different attributions. One is, “If we do not hang together, we shall surely hang separately.”--attributed to Thomas Paine from the website

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<http://www.Thinkexist.com> ("Thomas Paine Quotes,"). The other cited in-text came from the website <http://www.ushistory.org> ("Hang Together").

<sup>xiii</sup> An interesting theoretical construct has emerged within the discourse of Standpoint Theory. That construct is labeled "strong objectivity," a mid ground between logical positivism and a rejection of grand unifying theory. Strong objectivity grants the existence of several standpoints and embraces similarity and/or apparent contradictions in the formation of a broader world view. For more on this topic, see Harding (2002, 2003, 2003). An online copy of *Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology* can be found at <http://www.gendersee.org.mk/files/harding.Objectivity.pdf>

<sup>xiv</sup> Yes, there are exceptions in the form of Chief Learning Officers (CLOs) and other powerful agents that have a direct interest in the work of HRD, but typically those that are directly responsible for executing programs are not the ones who have conceived of them or the ones who have ultimate approval power.

<sup>xv</sup> Prior to his death in 2007, Irving Bluestone was a United Auto Workers vice-president (GM Division), the personal assistant to Walter Reuther until the time of his death in 1970, and a major influence in the creation of Saturn Corporation. His son Barry is a political economist and author (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; Harrison & Bluestone, 1988).

<sup>xvi</sup> For more information see <http://group.aonline.org/cms/> ("Critical Management Studies - Interest group"). There is a web portal rich with links and other information on critical management: <http://www.criticalmanagement.org/index.htm> ("Critical management").

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