Book Reviews □ Gary J. Anglin, Editor

Designing Effective Instruction (3rd ed.).
Gary R. Morrison, Steven M. Ross, and
Jerrold E. Kemp (2001). John Wiley &
Sons, Inc., 2001. 369 pp. $73.95. Soft cover.
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□ Just as the practice of instructional design has
evolved over the years, so have books about in-
structional design. Two areas of significant
change within instructional design concern (a)
instructional approaches and (b) the use of tech-
nology in learning and instruction. Instructional
approaches have in general become more
learner centered and increased in both variety
and complexity in response to changing require-
ments and trends in schools and the workplace
(Anglin, 1999; Jonassen, Hernandez-Serrano, &
Choi, 2000). Technology has changed where and
how learning can be supported. Both areas of
change make instructional design a more chal-
lenging and complex enterprise. The third edi-
tion of *Designing Effective Instruction* responds
explicitly to these changes and provides an up-
to-date resource to support the training of
professional instructional designers. The sub-
sequent sections of this review provide a
description of this recently revised textbook
from both a teaching and a learning perspective.

Strengths and weaknesses of the book, as well as
related books, are discussed in this review.

Target audience

The primary audience for this textbook is
graduate students taking courses in instruction-
al design. In a 2000 poll conducted by ITFORUM
(see http://it.coe.uga.edu/it-
forum/polls/poll4.htm) that included 134
responses from professional practitioners,
academics and graduate students, this book
ranked second to *The Systematic Design of In-
struction* (Dick, Carey, & Carey, 2000) and ahead
of *Instructional Design* (Smith & Ragan, 1999),
Principles of Instructional Design (Gagné, Briggs,
& Wager, 1992), and *Making Instructional Design
Decisions* (Seels & Glascow, 1998) in terms of ap-
propriateness for a basic or introductory instruc-
tional design course.

Approach and Assumptions

The approach taken to the design of instruction
in *Designing Effective Instruction* is somewhat
eclectic, by the authors' admission, consistent
with their notion "that there is never one perfect
approach to solving an instructional design
problem" (p. v). The authors argue that an in-

structional design (ID) model should be flexible and include heuristics that can be modified according to local circumstances and requirements. The model adopted in this volume meets these criteria and is arranged around four fundamental components: (a) learners, (b) objectives, (c) methods, and (d) evaluation. These central components respond to basic ID questions: For whom is the instruction intended? What are the desired learning outcomes? How is the content best learned? How is the learning to be evaluated? These fundamental issues are elaborated in an ID model that includes nine elements: (a) instructional problems, (b) learner characteristics, (c) task analysis, (d) instructional objectives, (e) content sequencing, (f) instructional strategies, (g) message design, (h) instructional development, and (i) evaluation. These elements are used as an organizational framework for chapters and to help learners keep specific processes and issues in context of the big picture. Surrounding these core elements are circles representing formative evaluation and revision as well as project management, including planning, implementation, support services, and summative and confirmative evaluation. In short, the book is informed by a rich ID model.

Associated with this model are a number of premises that the authors make explicit in the first chapter:

1. ID requires attention to both systematicity and specificity.

2. ID usually starts at the course development level.

3. An ID plan is developed for use by an ID team.

4. An effort should be made to provide for a level of satisfactory achievement for all learners.

5. The success of an instructional product depends on the accuracy of information flowing into the ID process.

6. ID focuses on the individual learner rather than the content.

7. There is no single best way to design instruction.

Most of these premises can be found in other texts, although the emphasis on the learner is probably more evident in this book than in others included in the ITFORUM poll mentioned above. It is worth noting that the model used in this book has been so well received that it will be included in the forthcoming revision to *Survey of Instructional Development Models* (Gustafson & Branch, 1997).

Organization

This book, now in its 3rd edition, begins each of its 15 chapters with interesting real-life examples taken from real-world problems. The examples are eloquent and intriguing. The book can be considered a three-section text. The first section introduces the reader to the field of ID (Preface and Chapter 1). The second section familiarizes the reader with the nine elements of the ID process (Chapters 2 through 9). The final section highlights the evaluation, planning and revision processes (Chapters 10 through 15). There is a brief glossary of important ID terms at the end of the book. In addition, the appendix includes a completely worked example of ID documentation, providing students with a concrete elaboration of the products of various ID processes.

This book is well written and easy to read. Each chapter follows a consistent pattern. At the beginning of each chapter the reader is presented with a real-life scenario, generally relevant and intriguing to those new to the world of ID. This introductory section is completed with a series of questions that provoke thought and focus attention on problems relevant to the chapter. Following the introductory section, there is a diagram of the ID model highlighting the particular focus of the chapter.

Consistently placed throughout the volume are strong visual components to help focus the discussion. Each chapter typically consists of a discussion of key issues that are highlighted in various tables and diagrams. In short, there are strong visual components to help focus the discussion, consistently placed throughout the volume. In addition, clear and concise chapter summaries containing numbered lists reiterate the main concepts. Following the summary of

key concepts, a concluding section—ID Process and Application—provides students with a practice situation. The application questions are usually followed by answers, allowing students to check their own understanding and progress. An especially interesting application-answer sequence occurs at the end of Chapter 4 when the reader is asked to write a task analysis for the creation of a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich. The book's example is nearly three pages long. This application shows that even a common task can have several components and steps, and can be deceptively complex to a novice.

Other organizational features distinguish this volume from other ID textbooks. There are a number of highlighted sections called "Expert's Edge." These sections provide students with anecdotes and other tidbits that draw on real-life examples from professional practitioners. These contributions are somewhat uneven in terms of quality and relevance, although the attempt to bring models and theory closer to daily practice is definitely worthwhile. Some information in particular "Expert's Edge" sections is vague, and the reader may have a hard time connecting the discussion to the anecdote. For example, in Chapter 5 (Instructional Objectives), "Expert's Edge" discusses a company's struggle with changing from a top-down platform approach to a product-component team approach. It takes five lengthy paragraphs to explain the context of the situation at hand, and then in the final four short paragraphs of this particular story the focus shifts to modules and content rather than to the learner, and objectives that would be more consistent with the authors' outlook and overall approach. In any event, such additions do generally serve to remind the reader of the need to be flexible and adapt to local circumstances.

Strengths

As already noted, this volume emphasizes a focus on learners throughout and also includes relevant material pertaining to technology. An added bonus is that the book comes with a trial copy of Microsoft Project™. Although the text itself does not go discuss the relevance and use of the software in detail, the tool is clearly ap-

propriate for the ID model presented, with the management circle encompassing all of the components and elements. Moreover, a completely worked example of an ID project represented in Microsoft Project™ is available from the authors, providing a very nice supplement to the textbook. It is our understanding that subsequent editions of this volume will include that worked example on the CD-ROM as well.

The overall language used and the many everyday examples included make this textbook very accessible for those new to ID, including those for whom English is not their first language. Controversial issues are usually identified and the terminology is generally consistent. Using consistent terminology is a particular challenge for our discipline, in which multiple uses of the terms *design* and *development* can be found. Furthermore, the use of charts and diagrams to explain and exemplify the written text is a benefit to the beginning instructional designer. The concise summaries at the end of each of the chapters provide an excellent review and the application questions allow readers to assess their own progress.

Weaknesses

Although there are visual elements to help keep readers oriented and focused, the headings in several chapters are not always clear, and occasionally are misleading. More clearly distinguishable headings and subheadings would enhance the readability. Furthermore, charts are labeled as if they correspond to sections, but often, this is not the case. It would be less confusing to readers if charts were not numbered as if they were closely associated with specific sections within a chapter. Other visual and organizational features might make the book even more accessible, such as color coding the outside edges of chapters.

Even though the terminology remains fairly consistent throughout the text, the glossary of terms has only 3½ pages. Because this book is intended for beginning instructional design students, a longer list of terms with more complete elaborations would greatly benefit those readers, especially nonnative English speakers.

Most of the examples come from business and industry. It would be helpful to include more examples from higher education and school settings.

Related texts

As indicated earlier, this volume was ranked the second most appropriate of the five most commonly mentioned volumes in the 2000 IT-FORUM poll. In our judgment, *The Systematic Design of Instruction (Dick et al., 2000) is the closest contender in terms of overall quality and accessibility for students. That recently revised volume of the classic in the field has large margins that allow students to take notes. Furthermore, there is a clearly presented ID model around which the volume is organized, as is the case with the volume under review. The Dick et al. volume (2000) also includes strong visual organizers, including flow charts and tables of objectives. Transitions between sections in The Systematic Design of Instruction* are distinctively marked. Other possible advantages are the inclusion of a rich set of real-world examples and a more complete set of suggested readings at the end of each chapter. It is no surprise that these two resources were so closely ranked in the IT-FORUM poll (the ITFORUM rated the earlier, 1996, version of *The Systematic Design of Instruction*).

Another ID textbook worth considering is Smith and Ragan (1999). Older, but still relevant, is the classic *The Principles of Instructional Design* (Gagné et al., 1992), which should be considered a desirable volume to include in one's professional library. The Seels & Glascow (1998) volume includes a comprehensive glossary and an explicit elaboration of both instructional systems design (ISD) and constructivism, with an attempt at a positive reconstruction of both concepts. There are also many visually oriented organizational tools in this volume, including a semantic network at the beginning of the book.

Related volumes worth some consideration include *Designing & Assessing Courses & Curricula* (Diamond, 1998) and *Mastering the Possibilities* (Shambaugh & Magliaro, 1997). Should there be a desire to supplement a primary ID text with supporting volumes, then we strongly recommend one or more of the following:

- *Instructional Design Competencies: The Standards* (Richey et al., 2001)—a recent update by the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction (IBSTPI) with an elaboration of modern instructional design practices.

- *Instructional Design: Principles and Applications* (Briggs et al., 1991)—an excellent collection of essays, valuable for the reference library.

- *Survey of Instructional Development Models* (Gustafson & Branch, 1997)—an overview of a variety of ID models, further reinforcing the need for practitioners to be flexible and adaptive, as advocated by Morrison et al. (2001).

Summary

We have used *Designing Effective Instruction* in introductory ID courses and experienced its use from both the instructors' and the learners' perspective. Our overall conclusion is that it is highly usable and accessible to beginning ID students, including those whose first language may not be English. The ID model presented is clear and the focus on the learner throughout is appropriate and in line with current research emphases and trends. The inclusion of Microsoft Project™ makes a clear and concrete statement that ID can benefit from technology, not only in the delivery of instruction, but in the planning of structured learning activities and in managing instructional development efforts. □

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