Career Pathway-Personal Reflection

Michael Oberlin

Purdue University

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With my background in music and the arts and my undergrad experience in Telecommunications, I am certainly attracted to working with multimedia instruction for my future career path. I enjoy working with computers and software programs alike, and competencies with technology and software programs are essential when it comes being an effective Educational Technologist. While it's refreshing to know that professional accrediting agencies such as the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) stress the importance that colleges and universities prepare individuals for their prospective careers, I firmly believe that one must have a passion with working with technology and looking at it than more than just a tool. New challenges will come about as trends change and technology improves however the combination of education and self-reliance can help Instructional Designers as they progress through their career. I found the materials shared in the online EDCI660 class to reflect some of these tools and how some of our faculty have used what we are learning in the real world.

In one of the videos, Dr. Anne Ottenbreit-Leftwich, presented the principle of technology integration. She spoke of how technology has the ability to increase the effectiveness of learning, and allows teachers to do something different that they wouldn't normally be able to do without it. I think this is one of the best things that technology in the classroom should be used for. Dr. Ottenbreit-Leftwich, showed an excellent way of how desired approaches of learning can be applied based on the desired outcomes and what specific format should be used to tie in with these. For example, if you wanted your learners to be more familiar with technology integration through an approach through information delivery, some of the appropriate formats might include websites, lectures, podcasts, and videos on YouTube. However, she did stress that we must consider application of technology based on whether the instruction is student-centered or teacher-centered. If the technology is not used in the classroom environment, the students may not relate as well to the subject matter.

After I started coursework at Purdue, I quickly became curious about how what I will learn may be practically applied in the business world. Erin Kenny presented some of aspects of this and how they may be used with retail companies and how one can utilize instructional design for performance improvement. I was certainly excited to learn that her firm, Tier 1 Performance Solutions, had a creative department which includes its own production studio. It is good to know that what I've learned about video and audio production is still alive in the real world and not just in the entertainment industry. Erin also stressed that's important to focus on the content and use a learner-centered approach. This would make sense in that the end product of instruction must be relevant to the desired goal and based on what a client actually wants. It would seem that the concept of "the customer is always right is somewhat synonymous with the concept that "the customer is always right." It was good to see how the process works from their clients SME to the final product. I also found it interesting that she mentioned that her firm will try to do something new if it's something the client wants. Erin gave some helpful advice on which courses served her best in preparation for her specific career. I have heard quite a bit about the importance of learning about human performance, and I would like to explore taking the course before I leave Purdue, specifically to reinforce the ideal that no matter what I do, I want to be helping people.

Something that has often entered my mind is where (physically) my degree may take me. One of course would assume that I must go wherever the job is. While the world of e-learning does offer the exception of not needing to be where you work and teach, I would hope to be in an environment where the option for face to face instruction is available. Dr. Dana Ruggiero expounded on some of her experience at Bath-Spa University in the United Kingdom and how the versatility of travel is still present in our field. The video also served as a good reminder of how the field of educational design is universal and not exclusive to the United States. Dr. Ruggiero mentions how Learning Design takes on a bit of a different meaning overseas. Instructional Design is taboo in a sense and she explains how the United Kingdom calls it Learning Technology, as it more closely aligned with behaviorism and teaching younger children. She further emphasizes that recognizing culture is the most important things to be aware of when working overseas. This is evident in how she mentions that the European Union (EU) allows individuals the option to stop their schooling at the age of 16. These individuals (up to the age of 24) are un-accounted for in terms of the European workforce. Dr. Ruggiero mentioned designing a game based program that helps gauge what these individuals do during this time period. There was even a mention of how one of the productive meetings in the culture take place during times of drinking at a bar. I must say that would be an aspect of a different culture that would be hard to get used to.

A particular video I found on YouTube (http://youtu.be/6xnoCL3-9EI) highlighted some of the main questions that you can expect when applying for a job in instructional design. Several of the questions seemed to be fairly common to any job, however, it would seem that a firm would have to have a good idea of what kind of person you are in a short amount of time. Any firm you work with are making not only an investment in you but it would seem that your style of instruction could potentially be interpreted by a client as the companies approach overall. I find this to be particularly important in our field as the way we develop our instructions ultimately shapes the employer. Since we are being relied upon for a final product we are also relied upon knowing the educational process. The video also asks how well we form relationships. This is something that I believe is often overlooked, specifically since we rely on communicating with so many, and we have to be flexible to different styles of work and, as mentioned previously, different cultures.

I cannot stress enough how I firmly believe that technology will never take the place of a human instructor, it is an undeniable fact that it will now have firm place in the field of instruction. With this in mind, I look forward to a career where I am creating and facilitating a learning environment through the effective use of multimedia and working directly with learners.