

# Would You Believe an Instructional Developer?

Gene Faris

Would you believe that in the not too distant future an issue of *Audiovisual Instruction*, under the section "Professional Placement—Positions," will include the following?

*Director of Instructional Development*—Person to work with faculty members in the development of instruction, including the analysis, design, and evaluation of instructional practices. Must be capable of guiding the activities of an interdisciplinary team in the performance of above tasks. Doctorate preferred with major in instructional development. Salary: \$20,000 for 12 months.

Believe it or not, the day is fast approaching when such a job description will appear in some professional journal. Whether it appears in AVI or not depends to a great extent on the focus of the media field in the immediate future.

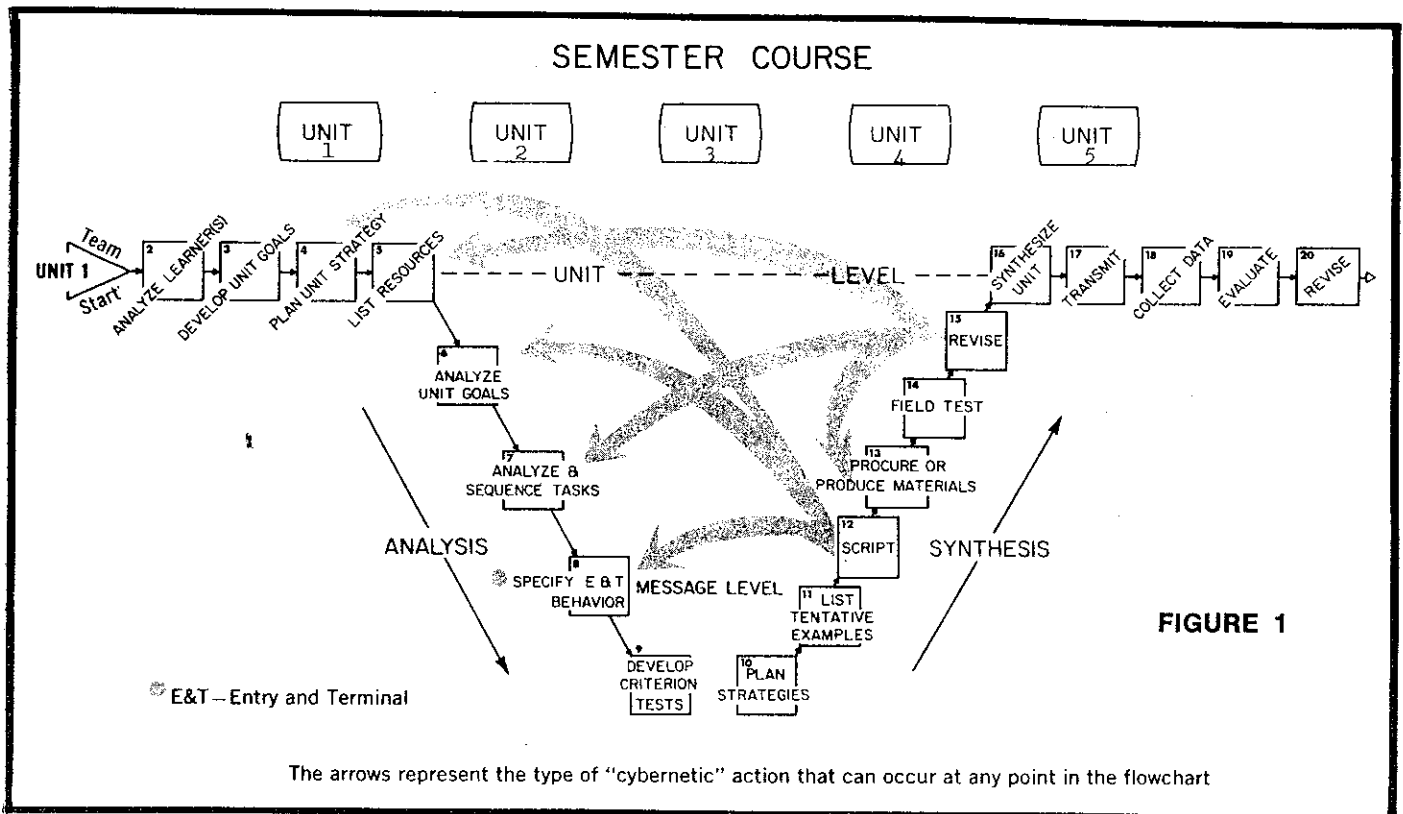
The need for a professional developer is certainly substantiated by the emphasis being placed on "development" at all echelons of our educational system. No less a person than R. Louis Bright, associate commissioner of education for research, United States Office of Education, in forecasting the future sees a significant

Gene Faris is Professor of Education and Director, Instructional Development Project, Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University, Bloomington.

increase in development activities. Bright, speaking at the 1967 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, indicated that there is little chance that in the future educational research will attract government support "on its own merits." What will probably happen instead is that aid to research will "piggyback" on aid to development.

Associate Commissioner Bright went on to say that "Development is a new concept that is very different from research. It's not the search for knowledge. Rather it is devising a solution to a problem."

Are media specialists in the business of devising solutions to problems? The answer to this is certainly a resounding "Yes." In fact, many professionals in the field would be quick to indicate that they have spent 10, 15, or even 40 years devising solutions to instructional problems. This being the case, I say great, if the problems tackled have been significant ones and the resulting solutions worthy of note when evaluated in terms of student learning. Unfortunately when these two criteria are applied with much rigor, many of us in the media field strike out as instructional developers. In some instances we have made a hit and even scored a run; however, too frequently we have devised earth shattering solutions, based upon our hunches drawn



Reprinted from *Audiovisual Instruction*, November, 1968.

TABLE 1. COMPETENCIES AND AREAS OF STUDY FOR AN INSTRUCTIONAL DEVELOPER

**Competency**

**Areas of Study**

Application of System Design Concepts to Instructional Development

The study of the characteristics of a system approach to instruction and the application of systems methodology in instructional development. (ID)  
Internship in instructional analysis with emphasis on the first nine steps of the ID flowchart.

Analysis of Learners

Psychology or Educational Psychology with focus on the identification and analysis of learner characteristics relevant to the instructional task. Measurement procedures for identifying learner characteristics.

Specification and Evaluation of Educational Objectives

Programing with particular emphasis on writing behavioral objectives.  
Statistical analysis in discipline that is the "best fit" for the students. Options include Sociology, Psychology, Educational Psychology, Mathematics, and Business.

Analysis and Sequencing of Tasks

Specification of learner behaviors required to achieve objectives and the proper sequencing of these behaviors.  
Relevant principles extrapolated from the behavioral sciences for sequencing tasks in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

**Competency**

**Areas of Study**

Conceptualization and Application of Instructional Strategies

The theory and practice of curriculum development including theories underlying curriculum development and patterns of curriculum organization.  
Choosing appropriate strategies for differentiated learning situations.  
Electronic data processing and its application to the development of instruction.  
Instructional television design and production.  
Motivation, perception, and learning theory in the learning and communication processes.

Production of Stimulus Materials

Theory and practice relative to the application of graphic and photographic techniques in effective communication.

Application of Adoption Strategies

Study of proposed models for gaining acceptance of innovations in education.  
Application of management principles in the administration of Instructional Development program.

For those individuals with the aptitude to undertake a doctoral program in instructional development, the following competency would be added.

Conduct and/or Guide Research and Development Projects

Advanced research methods and design.  
Advanced statistics.  
Successful completion of a doctoral study.

from experience, to some trivial problems, or we have been confronted with some salient problems without being able to invent solutions of equal import. What, then, is demanded of the media field if we are to strengthen our position and provide the leadership we must in the development of instruction? What problems in our own house are in need of solutions?

John W. Gustad, past chairman of the NEA Committee on Teaching of the Association for Higher Education, has identified one of the basic problems, if not the most pressing one, confronting the media field. In the March 1964 issue of the *NEA Journal*, Gustad observed:

At one time or another, radio, motion picture, filmstrips, TV, language labs, and teaching machines have been hailed as the saviors of education. So have large classes, small classes, seminars, tutorials, independent study, years abroad, work-study programs, midwinter reading periods, and year-round operation. None of these is either as bad as detractors assert or as good as zealots claim. *Lacking an adequate theoretical framework* in which to place these innovations, the pendulum continues to swing wildly from euphoria to cynicism. (Italics added.)

The need for such a framework, as called for by Gustad, is especially crucial if this new kind of professional, an instructional designer or developer, is to become a reality. What does such a person do? What training and competencies should he possess? Such questions must be answered within some theoretical framework or model.

This was a problem I faced in attempting to structure an Institute under Title VI B of the Higher Education Act. As proposed, the Institute was to focus on the improvement of undergraduate instruction, with "instructional developers" guiding the activities of teams of faculty members in the systematic study of the instructional process. Cognizant of the necessity for a conceptual framework to guide the activities of both faculty members and the neophyte instructional developers, Richard Stowe, assistant director of the Institute, and I designed the flowchart or model shown in Figure 1.

This flowchart was utilized to guide the activities of the Indiana University Faculty Development Institute during the past year. Although a detailed rationale for the sequence of steps in the flowchart is not required here, an explanation of the overall schema suggested for the development of instruction is needed.

Note that the flowchart begins with a single discrete unit from a semester course. Although we typically hear individuals talk about analyzing, revising, or developing a course, the position taken here is that the course must be broken down into smaller segments for effective development to take place.

In the Faculty Development Institute, the maximum segment (unit) analyzed consisted of approximately 18 hours of student learning time. The 18 hours included both in-class and out-of-class time. The entire unit is subjected to intensive analysis through Block 9, and the components are then synthesized into a final instructional segment. Much of the actual analysis and synthesis goes on at the "message level" (message here

is roughly the equivalent of one confrontation with the learner). When a number of messages have been completed, validated, and revised, they are then synthesized into an integral unit. An important feature of the flowchart is the provision for feedback loops (suggested by the arrows on the chart). From any block the team may "loop back" to any prior block to correct errors, strengthen its analysis, or make needed revisions.

Field testing the instructional development flowchart came during the Faculty Development Institute, and two questions of particular interest emerged. One of these focused on the "powerfulness" of the flowchart to develop a validated instructional unit. It will suffice to say at this point that the staff and participants were, in most cases, extremely happy with the utility of the flowchart for developing instruction. The second question dealt with the competencies an instructional developer should possess to coordinate the efforts of an interdisciplinary team as they worked through the flowchart. The answers to this question were most enlightening.

Eight doctoral students in the Educational Media Program at Indiana University, under the guidance of the Institute director and assistant director, served as the instructional developers for thirteen faculty teams during the development of thirteen units of work. Although the students performed well in this new role, it became clear early in the project that new skills and knowledges were demanded of these students that they had not developed during their doctoral programs. The consensus of all concerned held that the role played by the students was significant and that an interdisciplinary training program should be established to train instructional developers. It appeared from this experience that the disciplines to be drawn upon in such a program would include the behavioral sciences, curriculum, measurement, media design and technology, system design, and management.

Following this lead, an interdisciplinary program has been established in the Educational Media Division at Indiana University to train instructional developers. The program is designed to develop the competencies in individuals that will enable them to guide a team of teachers and specialists through the flowchart presented in Figure 1. The competencies deemed necessary to accomplish this feat, according to our present thinking, are presented in Table 1 along with broad curricular areas in which the students will receive their training.

Should the media field include a specialist in instructional development as presented here? Initial reactions of students and professional educators, both media and nonmedia oriented, have been overwhelmingly in favor of the program. In fact, the reinforcement has been so strong that I am prompted to start a campaign to change the name of DAVI to AID (Association for Instructional Development), or some similar name that would emphasize the increasingly important role of the media specialist in the design of instruction.