Getting a Job in the Field of Instructional Design and Succeeding at it: Reactions to the Papers

Editor's note: The following article originally appeared in JID, vol. 10, no. 1. Due to production errors in the original printing, we have chosen to reprint the article.

Robert M. Gagné
Learning Systems Institute
206 Dodd Hall
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306

There are several themes that run through these accounts of jobs in a variety of settings. First, I would like to say that the reflections, the problem analysis, and the advice given are generally excellent. The contributors to this special issue have each realistically described the job situation with which they have had experience. Their comments are both authentic and insightful. To the extent that they can inform about useful procedures, and help to establish salutary attitudes, these comments should be highly valuable to students of instructional design.

We are told that instructional design is not a part of the established order, either in industry or universities. In industry, as we are all aware, training itself has always taken a back seat to production and marketing. Even more naturally, then, the improvement of procedures of training occupies a place rather far down the totem pole of operations. This reminds us, at the very least, that training improvements that contribute to the lowering of costs and the increase of profits are bound to command greatest attention. The pill that will replace a two-week training course will obviously be a runaway best-seller.

In universities, economics shows itself not through profits, but through concern for job security in a highly labor-intensive occupation. Here the uphill

Training has always taken a backseat to production and marketing and is far down the totem pole of operations.