IDeaL: Design for Learning

Newsletter of the Instructional Design & Learning SIG

http://www.stcsig.org/idl/newsletter

SIG MANAGER'S THOUGHTS

by *Jane Smith*, *SIG Manager*

Greetings SIG Members,

I often wonder what brings people into the field of instructional design, or any endeavor for that matter. How many of us purposefully sought out instructional design as a career in college or graduate school? How many of us fell into it either directly or through the back door? What keeps us here? And what are the aspects of it that truly float our boat? Are they the same ones that inspired us when we began, or have we found new ones? What happens when we've mastered all that excites us? Then what? Do/can we find another aspect or reach out to some new technology to keep us going? Or do we reflect on the skills and qualities that most define us and try to use them in a new way?

I asked myself those and many other questions this summer as I took a three-month sabbatical to practice the four R's: rest, relaxation, reflection, and reconnection. Reconnection – that's a good one. When I thought about reconnection, I realized I needed to reconnect with almost everything: nature, my friends, myself, and Spirit. I did spend time this summer doing all of those, yet less with my friends and more with myself and Spirit. In fact…

Let me start from a different perspective. How would you describe your life? Is it a road? A quilt? A picture? A diagram? I like to think of my life as a tapestry with many different threads. Some threads are quite

visible in the beginning of the tapestry, and others surface later on. They interweave and create an interesting pattern, which, when looked at closely doesn't always make much sense or maybe even seem attractive, yet when looked at from a distance form a beautiful, colorful tapestry reflecting the richness of my life.

Sometimes I've realized that a thread I thought long gone or useless has come to the forefront to be incredibly useful and prominent in a new situation. I usually marvel and wonder at the perfection of my life in having the past experiences to pull on when I need them. At other times, I see a new thread come in for a while only to go out quietly, almost without notice, as if it had a short-term job to do. And sometimes I've been so focused on weaving the "piece of the moment or period" that I forget to look at the entire tapestry and appreciate its beauty and perfection.

So with a sabbatical, I gave myself time to step back from the focal point and see the

(continues, next page)

SIG MANAGER"S THOUGHTS *continued…*

tapestry; yes, even look at the periphery to appreciate what has long since been forgotten, yet waiting around the edges for me to notice. Like a good, solid thread of quality, it has taken its place amongst the others at times as an aspect of my life or myself that contributed to the success of the main event, yet has never been the main event. But now it cries to be the main event.

I went into instructional design as a perfect combination of teaching and the creative pattern design I did while sewing my kids' clothes. I love it! It was perfect! Whenever I write audio, I feel as if I'm teaching. Then I went on to teach instructional design as a contract facilitator, and now I teach my own workshops. Again, I love it! Another thread came forth to join the picture – the thread of my early high school and community college teaching days. It's a natural thread in my world, my being, and my picture. And it's a strong thread. But as I examined my love of teaching, I realized that it has become (or maybe always was) an incredibly intuitive activity or space for me in which I am totally in the moment and in the flow. I love it! And I want more of it.

I've also come to realize that that same intuitive thread has supported me all my life, often taking a back seat to the logical, right brain, yet always supporting me in everything I do. Over the past ten to fifteen years, I've made friends with that intuitive side and become increasingly comfortable with that aspect of myself. In fact, it's when I'm in that space that I find my passion and feel most alive. And isn't that what we're all looking for – the moments or stretches of time when we're most alive, most ourselves?

And that, too, is interesting – "most myself." I used to think that being most myself was being intelligent, logical, organized, and responsible. Yet, now I find myself thinking that being most myself, and therefore living more and more in integrity, is about being and sharing the intuitive side.

What does that mean? Does that mean I won't do instructional design? No, for when I get an opportunity to do truly creative design and storytelling, I'm in my intuitive space. Does that mean I won't teach? Absolutely not; in fact, teaching is one place I'm at my most intuitive. Does it mean I won't manage projects? No, for in managing groups, we must use our intuition as much as or more than our planning skills. What does it mean then? It means that whatever I choose to do, or whatever projects I choose to do, I must have the opportunity to live in that intuitive space as much as possible.

It also means that I am adding another dimension to my "bag of tricks," as it were. A number of years ago, I took a lot of training in life coaching (and way back I almost got an MSW). I now plan to bring that thread of coaching to the forefront once again and weave it with my love of facilitating groups of all kinds to do group coaching, both locally and virtually. Some of you may think this addition constitutes a career change. On the contrary, it rounds out my career and my life so that I am living more whole-brained and more fully in my passion. It is like the day I arrived at my own home in Sedona, thinking I had reached the pinnacle of my life, the ultimate manifestation of a dream – only to realize three weeks later that it was just a step on the path like all other steps or just another thread in the tapestry. So now, an old thread, now brighter, bigger, and more real, has reappeared and been woven with the other threads in the tapestry to add a new place of being and a new vibrancy and passion to my life and soul.

Why am I writing this? I share this with you all because it's where I am. I share it because it's part of the human experience. I share it as a call for all of us to affirm who we are and what "floats our boat" and to find it and be in it. I share it because I must.

Best wishes to all of you on your paths – may your passion carry you far!

Jane Smith, IDL SIG Manager

THE EDITOR's WORD

by Robert Hershenow

Hello all,

I've been a member of the Philadelphia Metro Chapter since my family and I moved here from California almost five years ago. We were ready for an adventure, and when I was offered a transfer to the East coast we jumped at the chance to see things from a different perspective.

Of course we anticipated a different climate and landscape, new foods and cultural influences, and all that has been very exciting. But other things are subtle, and until we spent some time here their effects weren't apparent. For example, it's still unsettling that the sun *rises* over the ocean. I sometimes struggle with getting my bearings, and I think the fact that the shore (don't call it the beach) is to the east has something to do with that.

"Different" is the norm at this point in our lives, which keeps us on our toes. We're more aware of things that might otherwise pass by unnoticed. I've also developed a greater appreciation for the ways that cultural diversity can affect our understanding as we attempt to communicate; there is so much to consider beyond the obvious.

This issue features an article from Steven Baratz that takes a close look at Instructional Design, another introducing our new e-mail lists, and a third from Robert Brown about designing learning "safe havens." You'll also find profiles of STC award winners who were honored at this year's STC Conference, introductions from our new STC board members, and a roundup of upcoming SIG and STC events (including our second webinar on October 18!). Also news, opportunities, and an impressive list of new members. Please join me in welcoming them to our group!

FEATURE ARTICLE: What IS Instructional Design?

By Steven Baratz

You may be thinking about a career as an instructional designer, but still have questions about what this means. In a nutshell, instructional design is curriculum development – creating training materials. But, there's more to it; that's why this article was written – to examine what Instructional Designers actually do!

You'll also learn about the process of a typical instructional design project from start to finish, and the different roles and responsibilities involved. You'll gain a better understanding of this exciting profession and where to find further information.

Jobs in Almost Every Industry

Instructional designers create training materials. Professionals doing this kind of work include teachers, of course—from preschool through university and continuing education—but the field also includes many other job titles and types of work. Instructional design exists across most fields of human endeavor: in business, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, government agencies, and others. Think about where training and learning is needed (just about everywhere!) and you'll get an idea of how wide the field can be.

Instructional Design Is Curriculum Development

When you're reading a newspaper, web site or a brochure, you may be learning something—gathering and (presumably) retaining information—but these materials were probably produced by a writer. Instructional designers are needed when an organization has specific goals to meet, where structure and logical sequencing are required. This may fall under the general heading of Training. In the business world, it may be called Performance Improvement, meaning teaching people specific tasks they need to know in order to do their jobs better.

An employee's performance can be tested. Were the required skills transferred during the training? Did they learn it or didn't they? Testing (assessment) is an important factor in evaluating the teaching and instruction. It's not only a test of the learner, but it tests the instruction itself, giving valuable feedback to the test creators, to refine the instructional design for future use.

All of these tasks, from determining the needs and requirements of a project to designing the training materials and assessing the learners and the instruction, are part of an Instructional Designer's job. Many people enjoy working in this field because it requires developing and using many different skills.

"You Can't Get There From Here"

Creating instructional materials is a complex endeavor. How do you start? Fortunately, there are established road maps and guidelines that help lead the way. A typical development cycle follows a model commonly known as "ADDIE" (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation). Figure 1 describes the kinds of activities that occur during each stage.

Figure 1. The ADDIE Model: A General Outline of the Process

Analysis	Analyze the situation. Can the instructional issues be framed in terms of human performance? If so, what are the specific tasks that people need to do to reach the goals? If the goals are not task-based, are there are other ways to reach them besides training and instruction? The analysis phase looks at the big picture.
Design	Instructional strategies are planned and media choices are made in this part of the model. Perhaps you'll use video, a web site, computer-based training, or an instructor-led class. Maybe you'll create "blended learning" which combines self-paced, online learning with in-person classroom instruction.
Development	This part of the model is where the decisions made during the design phase are implemented and fleshed out. You contact subject matter experts to ensure that the information is accurate and complete. You may write, draw, chart, create audio, video or animation components, and put them all together.
Implementation	Often one module of a complex project will be completed and tested before continuing development of other modules. User (usability) testing with members of the target audience is conducted to see where improvements can be made. The product is then put into full production mode for completion. This may include training students and/or instructors in how to use the product (for example, a custom user interface for a new software learning tool might require training).
Evaluation	Evaluation means testing the learners and gauging the success of the instruction itself. Your assessments are both informal (based on observations during user testing) and formal (based on tests which are measurable and quantifiable).

ADDIE is only one of several models that can be used to help guide the process called Instructional Systems Design (ISD). This process may also be called Performance-Based Training (PBT), Criterion Referenced Instruction (CRI), the Systems Approach to Training (SAT), or simply Instructional Design (ID). Terminology varies, but the unifying keys are the need for and description of a process and a systematic approach. Look for these features in whatever process you follow:

- **Competency Based (Job Related):** Learners are required to master a Knowledge, Skill, or Attitude (KSA).
- **Sequenced**: Lessons are logically and sequentially integrated.
- **Tracked**: A system is established for efficient changes and updates to the training materials.
- **Evaluated**: Allows for continuous improvement and maintenance of training information.

  (source: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/sat1.html - why)

Whether you are a project manager or one of many contributors, you'll notice that the stages of your process will overlap. There isn't a clear-cut division of when one stage ends and the next one begins. Rather, while one stage is winding down, the next one is starting up. For example, after you've completed some initial research (Analysis), you may start designing some solutions (Design). When you've finished some overall decisions (Design), content creation can get started (Development). See Figure 2 below for an illustration of how this works over time.

Figure 2. Tasks Overlap During the Course of a Project
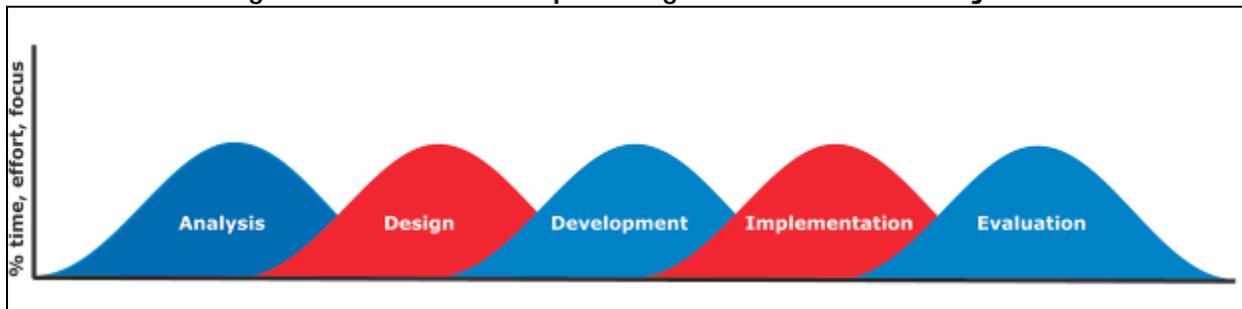
This overlap is normal and beneficial, but caution is also required. The further along in the process that changes are made, the more costly they become. The old adage "Don't change horses in the middle of a stream" lends a useful picture. You can imagine that if you were already in the Development stage and the training medium were changed from online to video, you might have to rewrite or discard much of what had already been created and completed. If you decide to go ahead with the new plan, you'll have wasted precious time, money, and effort. People's time is very expensive, and these kinds of decisions must be made in light of the overall schedule and budget. Some instructional designers choose to stay away from project management because it can be very stressful, yet when a solid process is followed, these kinds of costly mistakes can be avoided. It's especially important not to skimp or leave out the initial Analysis phase, sometimes called the Discovery phase. Many instructional designers consider this the most important and exciting period, when information is gathered and possibilities remain open.

What Do Instructional Designers Actually _DO?_

The answer is, "It depends." You may have one role with limited and specific responsibilities or you may have to wear all the hats, doing all the work yourself. It depends on the size and nature of the project, the kind of company or organization you're working for, and other factors.

Large instructional design projects may be handled "in-house" within a company or organization, or awarded to a small company specializing in instructional design and development of projects for other businesses and agencies. This small company could be _you!_ If you are an independent contractor, you _are_ your own business and responsible for everything. During each phase, you are _it_; the buck stops here! If you need help, you may hire subcontractors. You'll plan and monitor schedule and budget, making sure that timeline and finances are on target, you'll manage team members' work, and be responsible for quality assurance. Most independent contractors in any field spend several years working in an industry before striking out on their own. Instructional design projects are usually made up of small teams, with each person taking on a specialized role. At some point in your career, you may choose to specialize after finding which roles most appeal to you.

The following case study describes a company where training projects are usually completed by a small team of three people, each of whom has a different focus to his or her work.

Greenpoint Mortgage – A Case Study

Ani Mukerji manages training projects for Greenpoint Mortgage at the company's headquarters in Novato, CA. Training is used to bring new employees up to speed in how to do their jobs, but also to teach groups of employees how to comply with new regulations within the company or from state and federal agencies. A short training program might be designed to teach people how to properly fill out complex forms. Ani's rule of thumb is that an online learning module may be needed if the audience for a particular training is greater than five hundred. If the audience is fewer than five hundred, the company may seek a more cost-effective solution such as instructor-led training or perhaps a short set of printed instructions. A typical Greenpoint training project takes about two months. The first week is devoted to gathering requirements and determining if an online solution will be best. The main question instructional designers ask is whether the training need is a performance issue, and if so, what are the required behaviors the learners need to master to achieve the desired business goals?

> "Sometimes genius is mostly persistence."
> – Michael Allen, Allen Interactions, Inc.

To develop an online course, a typical Greenpoint team consists of three people: 1) the Instructional Designer, 2) the Online Course Developer, and 3) the Visual Designer/Flash Artist. Each of these has the same job title, "Instructional Designer." All of them will do some course development during the Development and Implementation phases, but their overall roles are different. The Instructional Designer mentors the other two team members and is primarily responsible for monitoring everything and reviewing progress at regular intervals. The Course Developer writes most of the content in collaboration with subject matter experts. The Visual Designer/Flash Artist is in charge of graphic design—the look and feel of text and graphics— making everything look good on the page. Flash is used to animate parts of the presentation so the learning module is more interesting, engaging, and interactive.

Subject Matter Experts

You're not expected to know it all! Instructional designers routinely consult with subject matter experts (SMEs) to get the information they need. An expert can be anyone from outside or within an organization—from a top executive managing a product line to someone working in the shipping department. You need to find out who knows what you need to know, and then work effectively with SMEs by being prepared. Value their time as you do your own. Do your homework and have specific questions prepared in advance. SMEs are often too close to the subject matter to be objective. It's your job to make their expert knowledge accessible to the neophyte. If the information is new to you, too, pay close attention to your own learning process. There may be background knowledge that SMEs take for granted that you need to include in the instruction. You are the advocate for the learner and the end user at all times, and this audience should always be foremost in your mind.

Specialized Knowledge Areas

Employers usually select candidates with experience and expertise in their particular area, and it's no different when they hire technical communicators such as instructional designers. It may help your career if you specialize, especially if you're interested in a particular industry or field. If

you have, for example, an interest in mechanical engineering, a related degree, or work experience, you might enjoy working for a company that develops Auto-CAD software—training their customers and sales team in how to use their product. Instructional designers can find work across most fields and industries, but there are a few broad areas in which many jobs are currently found, such as the burgeoning fields of health care, biotechnology, computer software, engineering, and education. Technology's role in our society is growing exponentially, as is the amount of knowledge and information produced by our society on a global scale. There will be a continued and growing need for people who can leverage this knowledge and package it effectively and attractively so that others can learn.

Instructional designers create target objectives by pinpointing essential tasks that meet business and organizational objectives. Their specialty is in understanding the process. They don't need to have a complete understanding of specialized subject matter to do their jobs well. That's what SMEs are for! Instructional designers must be curious about the world. If you love doing research and learning new things, you may well enjoy this profession. Jane Smith has been an instructional designer for over twenty years and owns her own company, JEM Communications (www.jemcommunications.com). She says: "I can learn anything well enough to teach it to anybody…The more industries I go into, the faster I am because systems tend to work the same way…What's kept me fresh and interested in the field is that I've moved from industry to industry. I'm never bored!"

Typical Routes into the Profession

There are no specific requirements for becoming an Instructional Designer. There are no State Licensing Boards as there are for doctors, lawyers, psychologists, or teachers—no credentials for which to apply or tests to pass. You can become an instructional designer by your own self-declaration! Having business cards printed is a good way to start because people will take you more seriously and you will begin to develop the mindset to help propel your career forward. Still, without specific work experience developing training programs, you'll have to create some samples to show what you can do.

When starting off in any field there's an initial "Catch-22"—it takes experience to get experience—but you can still start a portfolio. This is a collection of work, starting with one piece. A portfolio demonstrates your skills, preferably a broad range of abilities, and showcases what you want to do in the future. These projects may be personal (self-assigned), academic (fulfilling course requirements), or *pro bono* (done at low or no cost for non-profit organizations). Many non-profits will gratefully accept donations of services. They may even have a small budget for completing a specific project.

If you want to get practice building web sites and feel this will help your instructional design portfolio, find an organization in which you are interested and offer your help. Make sure that the final product will serve your needs as well as theirs and provide a good showcase for your talents. An organization that has received such a gift will be happy to write a glowing letter of reference. Make sure they know in advance that you will be using their site for your own online portfolio. They'll probably be thrilled!

"If you haven't done any ID, pick a task from Word or something else to write a lesson on to show that you know what you're doing." - Jane Smith, JemComm

Work experience is more important than academic degrees. In lieu of work experience, you have your portfolio, large or small, which proves your abilities. Remember that a portfolio can be as little as one piece. You can get a job without an academic degree but if you come out of your degree program without samples to show, you may have trouble finding a position.

Most job descriptions list a Master's degree as preferred but not required. Some employers may require a Bachelor's degree, but few if any will ask for a particular major. Undergraduate programs in Instructional Design and Technology are rare; however, there are many excellent and well-established Master's programs at universities across the United States. Prerequisites vary, but you'll need at a minimum to demonstrate competent English writing abilities, and you must be comfortable using computers and basic software applications such as Microsoft Word.

Don't be put off by a long list of requirements in a job description. Often these are "wish lists" describing the perfect candidate employers don't actually expect to find. This perfect person probably does not exist. If you think you come close and are interested in the kind of work the company does, by all means apply! Inevitably, there will be a range of experience listed. Sometimes this is negotiable, other times it is used as a screening filter. Look at it as a request rather than a requirement and don't be put off if your experience doesn't match exactly. Years of experience can also indicate the job level and give you an idea what salary range to expect:

- Zero to three years is an entry-level or junior position
- 3–5 years is mid-level
- 5–8+ years experience may be sought for a senior-level role

Larger employers such as governments and universities may have more stringent requirements and have less leeway in evaluating candidates. Sometimes work experience can be substituted on a year-for-year basis for a degree. The converse is also true. The California Office of the Courts, for example, will accept any valid teaching credential in place of one year of work experience.

Where Are the Jobs?

Instructional design has much in common with technical writing, and they both rest comfortably under the broad umbrella of technical communications. The Society for Technical Communication (STC) is the leading professional organization for technical writers, yet many instructional designers belong as well. STC held its May 2006 annual conference in Las Vegas, with sessions entitled, "Creating Training that Adults Remember," "E-Learning Tools for the Web," and "Determining Instructional Methods," among many others, because technical writers are often called upon to create training and instructional materials. Some instructional designers may have "Technical Writer" or some other title under their names on their business cards.

This cross-over between fields is nowhere more evident than on Monster.com—arguably the most popular web site for job searchers. Monster is kind enough to offer similar job titles, so if you don't get enough results or you don't like what you see, you can try a different word combination. You'll have to read the job description carefully to find out what the work really entails. Look at the cross-pollination of job titles shown in Figure 3 (next page). A search for three different titles (Curriculum Developer, Instructional Designer and Technical Writer) yields many synonyms. Training Specialist is offered for all three and the word "Training" is a common theme.

Figure 3. Monster.com Suggests Alternative Wording

Curriculum Developer	Instructional Designer	Technical Writer
Training Specialist Course Developer Instructional Designer/Trainer Education Consultant Director of Education Educational Consultant Training and Development Specialist Education Specialist	Training Specialist Technical Trainer Training Manager Corporate Trainer Instructor Training Coordinator Director of Training Training Consultant	Training Specialist Technical Trainer Copywriter Writer Editor Project Coordinator Systems Analyst Business Analyst

Technical writing has been established and recognized longer than the relatively new fields of instructional design and educational technology. The U.S. Bureau of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* mentions technical writers under "Writers and Editors" but there is no listing for Instructional Designers. You will find Instructional Coordinators but this is not the same thing; they evaluate and recommend textbooks and curriculum for school districts.

Figure 4 compares keyword searches for a number of terms common to the everyday job responsibilities of Instructional Designers. Although a job search for Technical Writers shows more results than a search for Instructional Designers (1,197 compared to 262 on HotJobs) this is misleading, because there are more alternative titles for people doing instructional design than technical writing. However, there are more instructional design jobs than it appears. Both HotJobs and CareerBuilder returned over 100,000 listings containing the word "training." Because of naming irregularities, it's impossible to determine exact figures, but job options in the field of instructional design and training are much more diverse than for technical writers.

Figure 4. Key Word and Job Title Search at Four Web Sites
(nation-wide, last 30 days, 8/1/06)

	"Technical Writer"	"Instructional Designer"	"Curriculum Developer"	"Training"	"e-learning"	"Instructional"
Monster.com	1,000+	378	149	1,000+	821	1,000+
Dice.com	653	220	43	21,906	404	2,614
HotJobs.com	1,197	262	133	109,984	495	758
CareerBuilder	1,392	201	122	100,000+	388	200

"No More Boring e-Learning!"

"e-Learning" is now a generic yet still a relatively new term. The glossary at Hobson's MBA Central defines e-learning as "education using electronic delivery methods such as CD-ROMs, video conferencing, websites and e-mail…often used in distance-learning programs." Michael Allen, Chairman and CEO of Allen Interactions, calls for "No more boring e-learning!" and the exciting work his teams produce exemplify this credo (link to case studies).

In Michael Allen's "Guide to e-Learning," he writes:

> "Good design is essential for success but uncommon in e-learning. Perhaps this is because teaching is confused with presentation of information or perhaps because so much attention is given to technology that little remains for dealing with instructional concerns. Whatever the reason, good design can't be achieved without careful attention to learner motivation, user interface, content structure and sequencing, navigation, and interactivity…striving not only for accuracy and clarity, but also for highly motivating, meaningful, and memorable events."

Mr. Allen stresses the need to address the motivational component of teaching and learning in his "tongue in cheek" equation:

$$e = m^2 c$$

where
- e = the e-learning outcomes
- m = motivation
- c = content presentation

To create a successful "e-learning" product, you need not only good content, but you must help the learner become internally motivated. Structuring a lesson as a game with scoring and points is one example of how learning can be engaging and fun.

Instructional design is a challenging, creative profession where you are learning new things all the time. For more information, visit one of the web sites in the References section, or better yet, get involved with a professional organization in your area. Contact your local chapter of the Society for Technical Communications (STC) or the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) and attend a meeting. Networking with people already working in the field is an excellent way to get connected, stay in touch with ideas and trends, and find jobs.

As Confucius said, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." What's your next step into this exciting new career?

Professional Organizations

Society for Technical Communication (STC)
http://www.stc.org/

American Society for Training & Development (ASTD)

http://www.astd.org/astd
ASTD (American Society for Training & Development) is the world's largest association dedicated to workplace learning and performance professionals. ASTD's 70,000 members and associates come from more than 100 countries and thousands of organizations–multinational corporations,

medium-sized and small businesses, government, academia, consulting firms, and product and service suppliers.

International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI)

http://www.ispi.org/

Founded in 1962, the International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI) is the leading international association dedicated to improving productivity and performance in the workplace. ISPI represents more than 10,000 international and chapter members throughout the United States, Canada, and 40 other countries. ISPI's mission is to develop and recognize the proficiency of its members and advocate the use of Human Performance Technology.

Association for Educational Communications and Technology

http://www.aect.org/default.asp

The mission of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology is to provide international leadership by promoting scholarship and best practices in the creation, use, and management of technologies for effective teaching and learning in a wide range of settings.

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC)

http://www.iabc.com/

Founded in 1970, the International Association of Business Communicators provides a professional network of more than 13,000 business communication professionals in over 60 countries, largely for writers involved with internal and/or external corporate communications, public relations, and marketing. Trainers represent a small percentage of members.

Web Sites

"Instructional Design Models" by Martin Ryder, University of Colorado, School of Education
http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/idmodels.html

Instructional Systems Design Handbook
http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/sat.html

Wikipedia, "the free encyclopedia"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructional_technology

Internet Time Group, by Jay Cross
http://www.internettime.com/e.htm

Introduction to Instructional Design and the ADDIE Model, by Kevin Kruse
http://www.e-learningguru.com/articles/art2_1.htm

Certification for instructional designers
http://midsolutions.org/courses/MC76/Student%20Projects/ToniaChris/BI_Portfolio/certification_pro_con.html

U.S. Dept. of Labor – Occupational Outlook Handbook
http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm

Resources and links
http://www.alleni.com/resources/

Informational Interviewees

Linda M. Calderone
Senior Manager Technical and Regulatory Training
Charles Schwab & Co., San Francisco, CA

Jane Smith, CPT
Principal, JEM Communications
Sedona, AZ
http://jemcommunications.com/index.htm

Ani Mukerji
Training Manager
Greenpoint Mortgage Co.
Novato, CA

Jan Watrous-McCabe
Principal Technical Writer
HealthPartners.com

Books

Michael Allen's Guide to e-Learning, Michael W. Allen, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ, 2003.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Technical Writing, Krista Van Laan & Catherine Julian, Alpha Books, Indianapolis, IN, 2001.

Periodicals

Training Journal – a subscription-based, monthly UK-based magazine dedicated to training, published in the United Kingdom. "It aims to provide real workable solutions to everyday problems."
http://www.trainingjournal.co.uk/index.jsp

Designing Courses as Learning "Safe Havens"

by Robert Brown

The old self-deprecation, "I usually learn things the hard way," has been around forever, probably because we all feel the same way. Learning through making mistakes is a universal experience.

Why then, are we so afraid of making mistakes? I submit that the culprit is our social environment, our perfectionist culture. At an early age, we internalize the feeling that we will be ridiculed if we make a mistake. We are socialized to feel shame for anything less than being perfect.

The tragedy of this is that our greatest teachers are our own mistakes. If we constantly avoid risking failure, we will never learn, grow, or excel.

Because of this, instructional designers should strive to construct a learning experience that counteracts this pernicious fear of failure. The learning experience must challenge the students; otherwise, they will not learn anything. At the same time, however, students must feel comfortable enough to risk a wrong answer or make a mistake without fearing that they will be ridiculed by other classmates or the instructor, or that their supervisor will receive a less-than-stellar report about class performance.

This article describes how instructional designers can employ four key enablers in their course design that will help foster a positive learning experience for students and diminish the students' fear of failure. I call this creating a learning "safe haven."

The Four Key "C" Enablers

There are four key enablers that instructional designers can integrate into course designs to help foster a learning "safe haven" for students:

- Conversation
- Confession
- Coaching
- Collaboration

Conversation – One way of fostering learning through mistakes is to structure your course design so that it allows the instructor time for short conversations or debriefs at intervals during the course. The instructor can facilitate the discussion by asking students to recount what they did right in the exercise, what mistakes they made, and what they could have done better. Discussion can also center on what was easy and what was difficult. If the instructor starts these discussion sessions early in the course, it helps establish an atmosphere of trust and sets the tone for the entire course. One technique I use towards the end of a course is to bring in a panel of experts as a bonus addition to one of these debriefs. These experts are typically those involved with the development of the product or process being taught, such as programmers, customer support staff, the HR manager, company founder, and so forth. This gives the students an opportunity to engage with someone besides the instructor, and many times, issues and concerns are expressed that the students were previously unwilling to share.

Confession – (This enabler is not so much a design element in your course, but rather a best practice that should be stressed during the train-the-trainer sessions.) Instructors can also encourage trust by discussing issues and mistakes they themselves have made when going through the class the first time. An instructor can also overtly exhort the students to take risks, by saying things like, "Go ahead! Bang on this computer, you won't break it!" or "The only dumb question is the one not asked." I have worked for many years with an instructor who is very adept at this. He has a real gift for disarming his students by telling them funny stories about all the mistakes he's made using the software they are learning. The unspoken message behind his self-deprecatory humor is that the best way to learn the software is to be unafraid of making mistakes.

Coaching – As students are working on the practice exercises, it is tempting for an instructor to jump in and help a struggling student by solving the problem for him or her. A better instructional technique is to encourage students in a certain direction and then give them additional study time to solve the problem on their own. If, after a few minutes, the student is still on the wrong track, a good instructor can intervene and help the student. Good instructors never spoon-feed solutions, but rather help students figure out the right approach on their own. As an instructional designer, you can structure the course to allow time for this. You can also design exercises that have built-in decision points that provide the instructor coaching opportunities. Besides the regular step-by-step exercises common in much training, I like to provide case study skills practices where, using the skills they have just learned in the regular exercises, students apply them to different scenarios. Besides reinforcing skills, these practices also provide the instructor with more coaching opportunities.

Collaboration – Another key enabler for letting students learn from their mistakes is encouraging collaboration, in either pairs or small groups. Collaborative pairs or groups are usually better problem-solvers than individuals. Moreover, students who are reluctant to share that they are struggling may be more apt to share in a smaller work team or with another partner. As an instructional designer, you can design group or pair exercises, or include them as an option. Several years ago, we were instructing a class of Japanese students. We knew their English language skills were limited, so during the first morning of the first day, we went very slowly, pausing every few minutes and asking them if they understood what we had just taught. Invariably, everyone would look up at us, smile and say in unison, "Yes, thank you very much." We continued this way until our first break. Instead of leaving the room and taking their break, however, the students clustered around one of their peers who had the best English proficiency. They started peppering him with questions in Japanese,

and he reviewed with them the material we had just covered. Seeing this, we immediately changed our course structure, and gave the students permission to collaborate on each exercise instead of working individually. It took a bit longer to get through the course, yet by collaborating, the students were able to accomplish together what would have been difficult or impossible on their own.

Conclusion

While much of the responsibility for fostering a safe learning experience lies within the instructor's provenance, the instructional designer also plays a key role.

Instructional designers should always keep in mind the social and emotional barriers to learning, and then work to mitigate these barriers in their course design. Just as architects and engineers keep safety paramount when designing buildings and bridges, instructional designers must keep the idea of a safe learning experience, or learning "safe haven," paramount when designing their courses. By structuring their courses to include facilitated conversations or debriefs, by building in time for instructors to discuss their own experiences and to coach their students, and by having students collaborate in pairs or teams, instructional designers will help the instructors establish a learning experience where it is safe for students to actively engage in learning and to risk mistakes.

Robert Brown, principal of RDB Consulting, provides training and performance support solutions for rapidly emerging, technology-driven companies. Robert is a senior member of the STC Lone Star Community in Dallas, Texas, and has been a member of the STC IDL SIG for two years.

Greetings from the STC Board Newbies

— LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

By Mark Clifford, Char James-Tanny, Mike Murray, and Jeff Staples, members of the STC Board of Directors

With this year's STC elections, the four of us now have the opportunity to represent you on STC's International Board of Directors. This is an exciting time for STC with a host of initiatives being formulated to keep the Society moving forward and to enhance an open dialog between all members of the Society.

This article provides a brief introduction for each of us, including our duties on the Board and a bit of personnel insight. Photos are included so you will recognize us at STC events.

Mark Clifford, STC Second Vice President

Hello one and all.

After ten years on the administrative council of the UK chapter, and last year as an assistant to the STC President (Suzanna Laurent), I have to admit to some trepidation when running for second vice president! Yes, you can change the world – but STC? Well, the next three years will be interesting!

WORK ACTIVITIES

Since completing my engineering publications apprenticeship with British Aircraft Corp. (BAC) in the mid-70s, I have worked as editor, writer, manager, and recruiter, primarily with publications consultancies and service companies. I have lived and worked across Europe, working with Dutch, Belgian, French, and Swedish companies, holding board-level positions with three of them. Somewhere in there, I graduated from the University of Luton's Business Program.

I currently run my own information design and recruitment company, which provides consultancy, resource, and ID solutions for European clients from offices in the UK and France.

STC DUTIES

As this year's Second Vice President, my responsibility is leading the Marketing area initiatives.

Marketing STC and our members to the world is one of our key strategic goals. STC is poised to put technical communication, both for its practices and its practitioners, firmly back on the business agenda. The new STC strategic plan is designed to market our profession by communicating directly to those that use or buy our services. At the same time, it addresses the individual need for continuing professional growth.

I have committees working on developing interests with a variety of other organisations, gaining society-level sponsors, and publicising our achievements. All of these have a huge impact on getting our message out.

PERSONAL BITS

When I'm not involved at work or with STC, I like to escape by going bird watching – especially in coastal areas and wetlands. It's a very relaxing and fascinating hobby. I'm not a 'twitcher' so you won't find me dropping everything and rushing off to find a rare bird!

In quieter moments, I'm an armchair historian. I read military histories and biographies. My passion is the Napoleonic period in Europe, in particular Wellington's campaigns in Portugal and Spain.

I have three grown children and a six year-old granddaughter who has me wrapped completely round her little finger.

Cheers!
Contact Mark at 2vp@stc.org or mark@cliffordsells.com.

CHAR JAMES-TANNY, STC SECRETARY

Hi. :-)
I'm Char James-Tanny, the new Secretary for the STC, and I'm really excited about the things the board has planned for the upcoming year.

At last year's conference, I decided that I would invest two years in making STC a premier organization—one that every technical communicator would want to belong to. With my election, that's been extended a bit, as the Secretary has a two-year term. (This just gives me more time!)

WORK TASKS

I'm basically the geek on the board. :-) I want technology to make my life easier, and I plan on bringing it to the board to make their lives easier.

Last year's board did some amazing groundwork for us by creating the Interim Strategic Plan and new organizational chart (both available at www.stc.org). We get to take it to the next step by implementing those pieces.

STC DUTIES

My job as Secretary is to record the minutes, notes, action items from all meetings, and support all committees. I have big shoes to fill: Lori Fisher did an awesome job during her term, and she also paved the way for some of the changes I want to make.

One of the things that I'm going to implement is a Web-based Communication System (or, as I fondly refer to it, the WCS). WCS will initially be available for board and committee members, but I hope to eventually open it to the membership. (It will probably take us a couple of months to get it installed and set up correctly.)

I'm one of the proponents of certification, at least until we get more information. I think that certification could be a valuable benefit for members, and I'm in favor of anything that brings value.

PERSONAL BITS

Because I run my company out of my home, I tend to keep fairly weird work hours. I'm online as soon as I wake up, and I tend to work nights after my son has gone to bed. I am typically not available most weekdays from 3:30 pm until 8 pm, because my son, Jesse, has a life. ;-)

He is a member of the North Shore Swim Club, and he's been swimming competitively for two years. He also plays soccer and belongs to two teams: one travel and one intramural (that I coach). He's my joy in life, even as our house fills with pets of all kinds, including dogs, a cat, parakeets, a cockatoo, a parrot, and a fish tank. Because my husband works nights (in addition to running the other half of our company), Jesse and I spend a lot of time together, and I wouldn't miss it for the world.

I love to cook and bake. My favorite gifts are kitchen tools and gadgets. I use my time when flying to catch up on TV shows that I haven't had a chance to watch (we have Tivo, so I pull them onto my laptop) and read.

You can reach me at stc@helpstuff.com.

MIKE MURRAY, STC DIRECTOR

An enthusiastic "Hi" to all of my STC teammates around the world. Several folks asked me to run for Director, and I am extremely glad that I did. My best friends are in STC. I *love* this organization.

WORK ACTIVITIES

In my 28th year with Lockheed Martin, my current role is as the principal writer in the corporation's Enterprise Information Systems (EIS) organization, the only virtual organization in the company. I specifically

support the marketing activities for these products and services. Many years of virtual communications experience add another important qualification to my STC resume.

My years at Lockheed Martin follow 10-1/2 years in the U.S. Air Force, which also exposed me to international cultures.

STC DUTIES

I am a strong "people person," and I was pleased when STC President Paula Berger assigned me to the Communities area along with fellow directors Sherry Michaels and Beau Cain. The Communities committee includes the Leadership Community Resource (LCR), Virtual Communities, and Community Recognition.

In addition, Paula asked me to be the Board of Directors representative on a task force that will develop a new community business model. The task force will consist of 10-12 leaders from communities of various sizes and types around the world AND our new Executive Director Susan Burton, an amazing lady!

I do a lot of mentoring, both individuals and groups, and am especially good at examining an organization and zeroing in on what its leaders need to do to strengthen it.

PERSONAL BITS

Outside of work and STC, I love sports announcing. I regularly announce for various organizations, including Dr. Phillips High School (football and basketball) and Rollins College (volleyball and basketball). I am especially proud of my support of Dr. Phillips High School, where I have announced for the entire 20 years of its existence. The school inducted me into its Hall of Fame in 2001. I am also the part-time stadium announcer for the Osceola Outlaws, a professional team in the National Indoor Football League.

For several years in a row, I have received the national President's Volunteer Service Award, which goes to individuals who demonstrate a sustained commitment to volunteer service each year. My service in

Central Florida has involved restructuring and strengthening youth organizations such as Pop Warner Football, Little League Baseball, and Cub Scouts.

I have been married for 38 *wonderful* years to my best friend Kay. We live in Orlando with our delightful dog Butterscotch, a Schnauzer-Poodle mix. She cuddles, hugs, kisses, loves to play and have her belly rubbed, and *loves* to swim in our pool. Wait, maybe that's Kay I just described. No, it's definitely Butterscotch. ☺ We have two adult sons and five wonderful grandchildren.

I love people and would love to hear from you at dirmm@stc.org.

JEFF STAPLES, STC DIRECTOR

Hello, Members. After much deliberation (and extreme indecisiveness), I submitted my "packet" for nomination for Director. Needless, to say I was surprised to win the election, and wondered if it was the right decision/result. However, once I began reading/hearing all the activity with the STC leadership, I became excited and was happy to learn that everything wasn't just "status quo." Everything is basically wide open, and it's an opportunity for the members and the STC leadership/management to continue and enhance this organization as the premier leader in technical communication.

WORK ACTIVITIES

In my career life, I am generally a "commodity" writer, often focusing on formatting and making the document "look pretty." But that's okay, because this type of writer is still in demand. And in whatever we do, being professional and good at our work brings recognition to our profession. And, in with the basic writing tasks do come some exciting tasks, such as working on a safety survey and then formulating the mechanics to get it live on the web.

STC DUTIES

I am one of the first two directors to be elected from the entire STC membership. This kind of created a gray area in what my responsibilities as Director would be. However, STC President Paula Berger took care of that. <grin>

The new STC org structure assigns each Director to a strategic area. I consider myself fortunate to have landed in the Communications area along with Director Cindy Currie. This area holds great potential in all areas of STC communication but especially in the areas of Member Communication and the STC website and publications.

PERSONAL BITS

In December '05, I began what has become a regular yoga practice. I originally began practicing for back problems and overall mental health, and it has helped in those areas. However, I have come to learn that yoga helps basically all parts of the body. For example, when you perform a twist, toxins are squeezed out of your internal organs (similar to squeezing water out of a sponge). Then, when you release out of the twist, the organs are ready to absorb fresh blood.

In addition, I enjoy independent and foreign films and books out of the normal fare, such as those by Ayn Rand and Philip Roth.

Drop me a line at dirjs@stc.org.

New IDL SIG Email Lists

By Robert Hershenow, Managing Editor

The STC is considering changing all e-mail lists from Lyris to Mailman, and asked IDL to be the second SIG to pilot its use. So we've recently switched our Announcement and Discussion email lists to Mailman, which offers (among other things) much better access to archived content. In this article I'll explain what our email lists are, and show you how to customize Mailman to get the most out of this service.

WHAT'S AN EMAIL LIST?

To paraphrase the STC Online SIG definition, an email list is a set of email addresses which a special web server, called a list server, uses to send messages posted by subscribers to all of the other subscribers.

The IDL SIG has two email lists: an Announcement list and a Discussion list.

Our **Announcement** list lets a few administrators send messages to all the subscribers on the list. Subscribers cannot reply to the Announcement list. We use this list to tell SIG members about upcoming events and pass along important news. These announcements will be limited to an average of one per week.

You can "opt out" of the Announcement list by clicking the link at the bottom of a message. While we don't recommend taking that step (you'll miss out on important information that may not be otherwise available to you), receiving these emails is each member's individual choice.

Our **Discussion** list, on the other hand, lets any subscriber post a message to the list so that all subscribers receive it. (If you're not a list subscriber, you can't post a message.) An email discussion list is often referred to as a "forum" for subscribers to talk about a particular topic area. Each topic discussed is often called a "thread." The Discussion list is designed for collaboration, and in the short time since IDL switched to Mailman we've

enjoyed several very spirited and informative discussions.

GETTING AROUND IN MAILMAN

To post a message, read archived messages, and manage your account options, go to http://mailman.stc.org/mailman/listinfo/stcidlsig-l (**Note:** This link also appears at the bottom of each Discussion list e-mail). Here's what you'll find on that page:

- Discussion List Archives – A collection of prior postings to the list

- A link (stcidlsig-l@mailman.stc.org) to post a message to the list which—just like any other e-mail address—will open a new message window in your e-mail program. When you write your message and click Send, the server will deliver it to all the other list members.

- A form to fill out if you want to subscribe to the list. You must be an IDL SIG member in good standing in order to subscribe. This is a hidden list; the member roster is visible only to the SIG's list administrators. You can enter a password, or allow the system to generate one for you. You can also choose to receive the list as a "digest" or compilation of all the day's messages in one e-mail, rather than receiving each message as it comes in.

- A form that lets administrators access the member list

- A text box at the bottom of the page in which to enter your subscription e-mail address to change your subscription options, get a password reminder, or unsubscribe from the list. Enter your e-mail address in this box, and click the button marked "Unsubscribe or edit options". On the next screen you can do three things: enter your password to log on and change your options, click the "Unsubscribe" button to leave the list, or click the "Remind" button to have your password mailed to you.

When you log on, you can change your name, your e-mail address, or your password, and tailor the delivery of your e-mail messages. Each of the delivery options are explained in some detail, so I won't go into all of them here. The big ones that you should know about are digest mode (one compiled message each day), putting your account on "hold" (no deliveries while you're on vacation, etc.), selecting whether to receive copies of your own posts to the list, and whether to receive an automatic monthly password reminder.

If you find the messages distracting, set a rule in your e-mail program to route them to their own folder, where you can browse them later. Or choose digest mode for just one big message each day.

We'll be sending weekly tips about all of these features (as well as some we didn't mention). If you need help with Mailman functionality, or if you'd just like to read more about it, you can find extensive user documentation here: http://www.gnu.org/software/mailman/users.html

Beth Bailey, Sylvia Miller, and Jane Smith have invested many hours in ironing out the bumps to make this pilot launch a success, and they deserve special mention for their efforts. Thanks also to everyone who patiently helped us through the first couple of days, when the server was slow and it was hard to tell what was going on. The overall response has been tremendous and very lively, and both the IDL SIG and the STC are learning a great deal from this pilot. So remember – even if you don't feel like posting, you can learn a lot (and have a great time) reading the discussions. We'll see you around the Discussion list!

IDL SIG Leadership Among
New STC Associate Fellow Honorees

Editor's Note: This is the second part of a two-part article that showcases members of the IDL SIG community who were honored at the 2006 STC Annual Conference in Las Vegas.

In the May edition of **IDeaL: Design for Learning**, an article highlighted SIG leaders **Jane Smith** and **Jackie Damrau** being elected as STC Associate Fellows. These are just two of eight IDL SIG members who were given special recognition at the 2006 STC Honors Banquet last May in Las Vegas. In addition, the following CIC SIG members were honored:

- **Sandy Balkema** – *Associate Fellow*

- **Chopeta Lyons** – *Associate Fellow*

- **Robert Krull** – *Associate Fellow*

- **Ann Wiley** – *Fellow*

- **Rebecca Burnett** – *J Gould Award*

- **Helen Grady** – *Associate Fellow and J Gould Award*

WHAT DO THESE HONORS MEAN?

Being elected as a **_Fellow of STC_** is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an STC member. It means that the member has **attained the highest level of distinction in the field of technical communication**. This ranking is codified in the STC Bylaws as follows:

> *Fellow. The rank of fellow is conferred only upon associate fellows who have attained such eminence in the field of technical communication that the board, by a two-thirds vote of all members, deems them one of the select few who have distinguished the Society and the profession.*

> Associate fellows may not apply for the rank of fellow; they must be nominated by a committee of fellows. The rank of fellow is bestowed upon an individual only once. Fellows retain the rank as long as they remain members of the Society.

The **_Jay R. Gould Award_** for excellence in teaching technical communication honors the distinguished teaching career of Professor Gould, whose academic mentorship of technical communication students guided many men and women into the profession.

The award honors excellence in teaching that becomes true academic mentorship: the personal and professional concern that the best teachers extend to their students beyond the demands of the classroom and beyond even graduation as former students continue to grow throughout their professional careers.

To be eligible for the award, a nominee must have been a member of the Society for Technical Communication for ten years and must have been involved in post-secondary education for at least fifteen years.

As mentioned in part 1 of this article, being elected as an **_Associate Fellow of STC_** is the second highest honor that can be bestowed upon an STC member. It means that the member has **attained distinction in the field of technical communication**. This ranking is codified in the STC Bylaws as follows:

Associate fellow. The rank of associate fellow is conferred only upon a senior member who has attained distinction in the field of technical communication. Senior members may not apply for the rank of associate fellow; they must be nominated by a committee composed of fellows and associate fellows. A senior member may be elected an associate fellow if the member (1) has been active in the field of technical communication at least fifteen years, (2) has been a member of the Society at least ten years, and (3) has (a) been responsible for important work in the field of technical communication, (b) done notable original work that has contributed to the advancement of technical communication, or (c) made a significant contribution to the Society.

The rank of associate fellow is conferred only by a two-thirds vote of the entire board. The rank of associate fellow is bestowed only once upon an individual. Associate fellows retain the rank as long as they remain members of the Society, unless elevated to the rank of fellow. Not more than three percent of the Society's membership may hold the rank of associate fellow at any time.

HERE ARE REFLECTIONS FROM THE HONOREES

To celebrate the occasion, *IDeaL: Design for Learning* caught up with these honorees to get their perspectives on these wonderful honors.

ANN WILEY – STC FELLOW

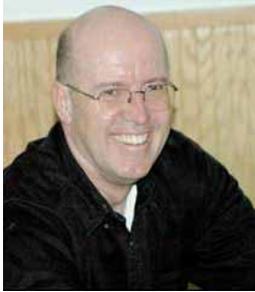**IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be elected a Fellow of STC?**

Ann: I appreciate the Fellows Nominating Committee's recommending me for election to Fellow, and election by the Board. This is really an honor bestowed by the members of STC, and that makes it particularly meaningful.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Ann: In commemoration of my election I have begun a long delayed project to inventory the papers of the late Russell and Ruth Terry, Fellows of STC, and my papers related to the Rochester Chapter. I am having previously published material scanned, beginning with the newsletters. Everyone can follow this project at http://www.annlwiley.com/RR_arch where material will be posted as everything comes together. I've also started making a list of everybody I know whom I can nominate to be an associate fellow, and I plan to make as many of those nominations as I possibly can, every year from now on.

IDeaL: Design for Learning: Is there anything that you would like to add?

Ann: I would like to add that the IDL SIG is a really great organization, in my opinion the best professional organization dedicated to instructional development. So I'm especially happy the group has a new Fellow, along with our great new Associate Fellows, Jackie and Jane.

ROBERT KRULL – STC ASSOCIATE FELLOW

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be elected an Associate Fellow of STC?

Robert: It is an honor to be recognized by the field in this way. So many people contribute to the STC and the profession that it is wonderful to be considered a peer among others who have been chosen for Associate Fellow.

IDeaL: Do you happen to know whether you were nominated by your landlocked community or by IDL?

Robert: I was nominated by someone outside my immediate community and not by IDL directly.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Robert: I would have loved to have been at the conference to celebrate there but, as it was, I took several breaks while grading finals to think about the award and smile a lot.

IDeaL: Is there anything that you would like to add?

Robert: The Associate Fellowship is not something that one can aim to achieve directly, so it is particularly gratifying when it arrives because others think one's work has been useful.

CHOPETA LYONS – STC ASSOCIATE FELLOW

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be elected an Associate Fellow of STC?

Chopeta: It is a great honor. My membership in STC has often rewarded me through the information opportunities accessible through Intercom, the Competitions, and professional development at conventions, both local and national. I am truly delighted to have been nominated by my peers and elected as an Associate Fellow.

IDeaL: Do you happen to know whether you were nominated by your landlocked community or by IDL?

Chopeta: Geographic community. It was a surprise, actually.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Chopeta: Went out for dinner with family and friends.

IDeaL: Is there anything that you would like to add?

Chopeta: My genuine appreciation for all the work the National Office does and my gratitude to my chapter for nominating me.

HELEN GRADY – STC ASSOCIATE FELLOW AND J GOULD AWARD

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be elected an Associate Fellow of STC?

Helen: Being elected as an Associate Fellow is such an honor because I view it as being recognized by my peers for my contributions to the field of technical communication. I began my career as an analytical chemist, then parlayed that experience, along with my academic training in biology, to become a technical editor for a large environmental research company in Research Triangle Park, NC.

Ten years later I joined Mercer and for the past 16 years I have had the pleasure of working with an incredibly talented group of colleagues. These colleagues, Marj Davis and George Hayhoe in particular, were instrumental in encouraging me to join and become active in STC. My involvement in STC conferences and the Mercer student chapter of STC has been extremely rewarding and professionally enriching.

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be selected for the J Gould Award?

Helen: While it is an honor to be recognized by peers, as a teacher there is no greater honor than to be recognized by my students. Although I did not begin my teaching career until my mid-30s, I knew as soon as I set foot in the classroom that I had found my vocation. My philosophy of teaching is influenced by the 10 years I worked as a technical communicator in industry prior to joining Mercer. This experience as a practitioner enhances my current role as teacher and mentor because I am firmly convinced of the connection between theory and research on the one hand, and practice on the other. I believe the students appreciate this perspective and my efforts to ensure that they have an opportunity to apply the theory they learn in the classroom to real-world projects.

One of my greatest pleasures as a teacher and mentor is to contribute to the personal and professional growth of my students. I take great pride in seeing the students achieve both personal and professional milestones and strive to encourage them to participate in professional societies such as STC. I know first hand what a positive impact membership in STC has had on my professional growth and, therefore, encourage students to participate in Mercer's student chapter and to attend STC conferences. It is a real privilege to work with such talented students, without whom this award would not be possible.

IDeaL: Do you happen to know whether you were nominated by your landlocked community or by IDL?

Helen: For the Associate Fellow, I was nominated by George Hayhoe. For the J Gould award, Dr. Marjorie Davis, Professor and Chair of Mercer's Technical Communication Department nominated me.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Helen: We had a wonderful celebration at the Awards Banquet during the STC Conference in Las Vegas. Ten of my former and current students were able to attend, along with colleagues, friends, and family.

REBECCA BURNETT – J GOULD AWARD

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be selected for the J Gould Award?

Rebecca: Teaching technical communication is one of the most important things we do, both in academic classrooms and workplace training and development. I feel honored to receive an award for my mentoring, books, websites, and ongoing classroom practices that encourage my students to do their best work -- and I'm humbled to receive an award for their many achievements.

IDeaL: Do you happen to know who nominated you?

Rebecca: I was nominated by two of my former PhD students -- Donna Kain and Katherine Miles.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Rebecca: I was lucky that Deborah Bosley also won a J. R. Gould Award this year, so part of our celebration included driving to Red Rock Canyon (with her husband and my partner) to see the dramatic red sandstone formations. And, naturally, we went to dinner and a show in Las Vegas.

IDeaL: Is there anything that you would like to add?

Rebecca: Everything that STC does to acknowledge and make connections with the academic side of technical communication moves the profession and discipline forward. Integrating workplace practices, teaching, and research strengthens all of them.

SANDY BALKEMA – STC ASSOCIATE FELLOW

IDeaL: What does it mean to you to be elected an Associate Fellow of STC?

Sandy: It is, of course, an extremely great honor to have been elected an Associate Fellow of STC. I used to consider it one of those unreachable (or at least unlikely) professional recognitions.

I am a member of several professional organizations, many of them related to my academic position as a professor of English. However, over the years, my continued membership in STC has been the most meaningful and significant to my professional development and my career. I have made life-long friends through the West Michigan Shores chapter. These friends have taught me a great deal about the field, kept me current with the trends, have hired and taught my students first as interns and then as employees, and have simply been great friends. A few even hired me as a faculty intern (during a sabbatical) and did their best to teach this teacher new tricks.

Thus, being nominated by my chapter colleagues and friends was simply awesome. Working (and playing and partying) with all of them resulted in MY getting an AWARD? Wow. That's just plain cool.

IDeaL: Do you happen to know whether you were nominated by your landlocked community or by IDL?

Sandy: .My chapter nominated me.

IDeaL: How did you celebrate receiving the good news?

Sandy: Quietly, actually. Because the official ceremony was only a couple of days following our university's graduation ceremony and a couple of weeks before my son's high school graduation, I couldn't attend the conference. My chapter colleagues made a minor fuss at our April meeting, but kept the celebration quiet, at my request. My family was sufficiently awed by my beautiful plaque. And I impress my students with it (it's hanging on my office wall at school).

Calendar of SIG Events

October 18, 2006: Webinar on Accelerated Learning Techniques with Maggie Haenel and Beverly Tester.

October: SIG Scholarship announcement and applications out.

November: discussion calls on topic TBD. Stay tuned for more information.

December 15, 2006: SIG Scholarship applications due.

February: SIG Discussion calls on topic TBD. Stay tuned for more information.

March: Webinar on topic TBD. Stay tuned for more information.

March: SIG elections and member survey

May 13 – 16: International Conference in Minneapolis, MN. SIG Activities will include meeting and reception, luncheon, progression, and possibly other events to be planned.

Tips & Hints

Do you have a short tip or quick reference guide that you use when designing instruction or when teaching? Send your tips or hints to newsletter@stcidlsig.org .

MEMBER NEWS

By Sylvia Miller, SIG Membership Manager

I love being with achievers, don't you? Here is what some of our members have been achieving:

ADP
In March 2006, ADP took part in an industry study entitled "Training as an Integral Part of the Customer Experience." The Client Training group of Major Accounts Services was very excited to be part of the case study to talk about their Learning Management System from SABA. To read the case study, go to
www.saba.com/customers/case_studies/centra/files/ADP_CS.pdf.

In addition, the Training & Performance Systems (TPS) department at ADP in Parsippany, NJ submitted a web-based training (WBT) to the STC Williamette Valley Chapter 2005-2006 Online Communication competition. ADP's winning entry, titled "Getting Started with Pay eXpert," won a Merit award, taking third place in the competition last fall.

The WBT assists new clients in preparing for their class by introducing them to ADP's payroll process. It also allows the clients to become familiar with the Pay eXpert product's interface and to try some basic keyboarding skills. This builds the clients' confidence and comfort level with the application. The audience is typically not computer-savvy

clients, so this tutorial allows them to get some practice using a browser and clicking on buttons on the interface.

Big congratulations to the TPS Getting Started Team, which included STC members Liju Huang, Jane Romanasky, and Nancy Kennedy!

Paul Sinasohn

In the midst of a massive beta release, Paul Sinasohn created two critical ILT (instructor-led training) presentations, each about two hours long, in a total of three working days. Paul says that both were extremely well-received by internal clients and external customers, and noticed (in a good way) by company executives. And equally importantly, he discovered three potential security holes that no one else had noticed. Quips Paul, "I love tight deadlines and lots of pressure." Good work, Paul!

Karen Takle Quinn

This past June, at the International Conference of Special Librarians, Karen Takle Quinn, Ph.D., was awarded the 2006 SLA (Special Libraries Association) Member Achievement Award for her many years of contributions to and achievements within the field. This award included her years as a professor, researcher, and instructor in the field. It also included recognition of the graduate level internship program she designed and managed at IBM for several years. Nice work, Karen!

Lee Tesdell

Lee Tesdell, whom you've heard about before in our newsletter, just published an article in the ATTW Bulletin with his colleague, Dr. Wanda Worley. Members of the Association of Teachers of Technical Writing, they have been teaching technical communication courses both online and face-to-face. Their research looks at time and effort in the two teaching environments. You can view the article at the following URL:

http://www.unlv.edu/faculty/nagelhout/attwbulletin/fall2006/Teaching.htm

Also, Lee is supplementing his university's LMS, Desire2Learn, with blogs and Macromedia Breeze. He finds that an LMS, while a good foundation for teaching online, does not have all the functionality he needs to make his online courses effective. Therefore, he supplements with a blog (they "blog" the chapters in the textbook), and he uses Macromedia Breeze for the virtual (synchronous) class meetings. He made a presentation on this topic at the Great Plains Alliance for Computers and Writing annual conference last April 8th at North Dakota State University. His paper was titled, "Desire2Learn and teaching writing courses online: How can we use new media effectively?" His co-authors were Gretchen Haas, Gretchen Herrick, and Arlandis Jones, all colleagues of his at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

Danielle Schechter

Danielle Schechter, a student member of the IDL SIG in Seattle, graduated this spring with an AA in Technical Communication (TC) from South Seattle Community College and has been accepted into the TC program at the University of Washington. In addition, at the beginning of the summer she received an award from Giant Campus for Outstanding Contribution to the Curriculum. She works there as a camp director for Cybercamps during the summer, and as a curriculum consultant during the school year. As a result of her efforts, Cybercamps offered programs in both Computer Audio and Video to students all over the country this summer. She also created an asynchronous online class in Flash and graphic design, teaching teens how to create their own games. Keep up the great work, Danielle. We look forward to hearing more from you in the SIG!

Janet Clifford

Janet Clifford, president and owner of KC Custom Design in Concord, MA, was recently recognized by the National Association for Professional Organizers (NAPO) for providing

project management and instructional design support for their new course titled *Starting Out as Business Organizer*. Congratulations, Janet, and thanks for introducing us to the name of another professional organization. It's nice to know there is such an organization! Learn more about Janet at www.kccustomdesign.com.

Janice Watrous-McCabe

Janice Watrous-McCabe of Health Partners Support Center shares the following helpful information:

I have upgraded to Adobe Captivate 2.0. This is the first version upgrade since the product's introduction. Although it has been always great for creating simulations, it has some robust new features that make life much simpler as an e-learning development tool. You can now hide layers (as you can in most image editing programs) for ease of editing rollovers. No more trying to move layers from the front to the back so you can edit! There are also basic formatting tools for text boxes, you can indent, outdent, add numbers and bullets. Really a nice improvement!

There is now an easy-to-use branching tool as well that makes creation of scenarios much easier. Customized playbars are now possible, and there are enhancements to SCORM publishing. Thanks for sharing this helpful information, Jan!

Elizabeth Pilgrim

Elizabeth Pilgrim of Toronto, Canada graduated in the spring from Humber College's Teacher/Trainer of Adults Certificate program with honors. She was hired by BOC Canada Ltd. last January, when she was still one credit short of her certificate, as a technical writer to write training chapters for their Integrated Management System. Congratulations, Elizabeth. It sounds like you're really "off to the races!"

Your C.A.R. Stories

I started off by saying we have some absolute winners in our SIG, and now you know why!

A personal coach speaking at my recent local STC chapter meeting encouraged us all to track our C.A.R. stories. Those are documented accounts of a Challenge, Action, and Result that we can share with our supervisors at performance review time. He suggested saying something like the following to our supervisor: "In anticipation of my review next month, I thought you might like to see what I consider to be my most important accomplishments this past year." What a great idea this is! Of course, it might help you earn a raise at performance review time, plus you could pull it out on those days when things aren't going well to lift your spirits. But best of all, it will help you remember those accomplishments so you can just copy and paste your description in an email to me for future publication in this column! Keep those great stories coming.

Be sure to check out our list of new members who joined us over the summer. See pages 18 and 19.

SIG NEWS

It has been a busy few months and a big thanks to those of you who answered the call to become a part of the leadership team by serving on a committee!

A new initiative this year is the Community Outreach Representative (COR) program. Aparna Garg in the India chapter has stepped up to be manager of the COR group, a vital link in sending the message of the IDL SIG to local chapters around the globe.

By now, you have received notification of our first webinar of the year. Look for more webinar and discussion opportunities as the year progresses! Webinars and discussions for our membership are designed to provide you with information and skills in IDL, one of the goals we have established for the 2006-2007 year.

Lots of work is going on with the website and there is more to come. Chris Emanuelli has done a terrific job in updating registration capabilities for webinars. He and Nina Murdock are working to enhance your website experience through redesign and a more robust resource section. If you have any resources you feel would benefit our members, be sure to pass your suggestions along to Chris or Nina. There could be some recognition in store for you!

Speaking of recognition, you will find the IDL SIG Recognition Policy in this issue of the newsletter. Be sure to take a few minutes to read the policy and be recognized.

A new brochure about the IDL SIG is in the works, so let us know if you would like to receive an electronic copy of the brochure to use in your local chapter.

The Program team is already at work on the 2007 STC Conference. When you attend the conference next year, you will have many opportunities to attend sessions focused on instructional design.

By now, you have seen a new look in our discussion board. We have moved from Lyris to Mailman. A big benefit will be the ability to search archives for topics of interest. There was some pain involved as we made the first transition with our Announcement List, but that hurdle has been crossed and we can look forward to a more robust discussion board over the next year.

We always welcome your ideas and your involvement. Feel free to contact Jane Smith at manager@stcidlsig.org or Jan Watrous-McCabe at secretary@stcidlsig.org.

IDL SIG Recognition Policy

The IDL SIG recognizes the contributions of the membership in those areas that support IDL SIG goals:

1. Build the instructional design skills of members at all experience levels, leveraging the knowledge of experienced members to deliver formal and informal guidance to the community of practice.

2. Provide a forum and mechanism for the free exchange of knowledge, ideas, and skills.

Committee chairs recommend members they feel have provided outstanding support of these goals in the following categories:

- Outstanding article for newsletter
- Quality and frequency of contributions to the discussion list
- Contributions to the web site, particularly the resource sections
- Speakers at IDL SIG events

The number of members recognized in each category is at the discretion of the committee chairs.

In addition to recognition of contributions that support SIG goals, individual members who have demonstrated outstanding foundational support of the SIG through their volunteerism will receive recognition. There are two categories of recognition available:

1. Society-sponsored Distinguished SIG Service Award (DSSA) recipients are selected by vote of the Leadership Council. Guidelines and application for the DSSA will follow existing Society procedures.

2. SIG Manager's Award recognizes the contribution of one outstanding member during the manager's term of office. The SIG Manager selects the award recipient.

The SIG Manager and DSSA awards are given annually at the STC conference. Other categories of recognition are awarded annually at the conference or by mail, at the discretion of the committee chair.

Innovating the Future: The IDL SIG Scholarship

By Ginnifer Mastarone

Again this year, the IDL SIG will offer a **$500.00 scholarship** to a student in instructional design that can be used for tuition, the textbooks, or attendance at the STC Annual Conference in Minneapolis, MN. Undergraduate students in their third year of study and graduate students who are pursuing a degree or certificate in Instructional Design are eligible for this award. If the recipient chooses to go to the conference, he/she will also have the opportunity to network with and be mentored by instructional designers from the IDL SIG, both national and international. Applicants will be asked to submit a brief article that describes an ID project that they were involved in or a summary that describes ID research that they have completed or hope to complete in the future

On October 15th, application materials will be posted on the IDL SIG website. Applications will be accepted through December 15th. The recipient will be notified in late January. Watch our Announcement list for a posting of further details.

STC Mission

The mission of the Society for Technical Communications is to create and support a forum for communities of practice in the profession of technical communications.

SOCIETY NEWS

Intercom Online

The new Intercom Online is now available on the STC Web site at www.stc.org/intercom.

World Usability Day is November 14.
STC is looking for participants and organizers
http://www.stc.org/wud/

54th Annual STC Conference
Call for Proposals - http://www.stc.org/cfp/

Coffee, Croissants, and Q&A
Take advantage of this rare opportunity to share a light breakfast with STC's new Executive Director, Susan Burton, and the presidential chain: Paula Berger (President), Linda Oestreich (1st Vice President) and Mark Clifford (2nd Vice President).

More STC News: http://stcsig.org/idl/rss.php

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

STC offers several opportunities to learn and improve your knowledge in technical communication and instructional design. Check out some of these opportunities to update your skill set, have fun, and increase your earning potential!

STC Telephone Seminars

A telephone seminar is much like a large conference call in which the speaker makes a presentation over the phone. As a participant, you simply dial the 800 number from your phone, enter your personal identification number, and you're connected! You then sit back and listen to the presentations and join in the lively Q&A discussion that follows.

TIME

All seminars are held from 1:00 - 2.30 pm US Eastern Time

UPCOMING SESSIONS

October 25, 2006   Presenter: Holly Harkness
Ten Ways to Increase Your Value as a Technical Communicator

November 8, 2006
Presenter: Whitney Quesenbery
Choosing the Right Usability Technique (to answer the right question)

November 22, 2006
Presenter: Robert Dianetti
Selling Technical Communication Services-Both Inside and Outside Your Organization

December 6, 2006 Presenter: Maggie Haenel
Creating Training that Sticks

COST

With a telephone seminar, the cost is per site, not per person. Train as many people as your conference room can hold — for one flat rate!

Members: $99 / Non-members: $149

FOR MORE INFORMATION…
http://stc.webex.com/

IDL SIG Telephone Seminar

October 18th, 2006 - 1:00 pm (Eastern)
Presenters: Beverly Tester and Maggie Haenel
Accelerated Learning: The Extreme Training Makeover
Duration: 1.5 hours

To Register, please visit:
http://www.stcsig.org/idl/webinar/

YOUR LETTERS

Were there articles that you found helpful? Is IDeaL: Design for Learning serving your needs? Is there an article or feature that you would like to see in the future?

Share your thoughts about the newsletter or give us your suggestions on how we can improve the newsletter by sending your letters to newsletter@stcidlsig.org.

SIG LEADERSHIP TEAM

The SIG's Leadership team members include:

SIG Manager: Jane Smith
Asst. SIG Managers: Karen Baranich, Jackie Damrau
Communications: Elizabeth Bailey
Community Outreach Representative Manager:
Aparna Garg
Conference Activities: Karen Baranich
Membership: Sylvia Miller
Newsletter: Robert Hershenow
Nominations & Surveys: Mark Hanigan
Programs: Jennie Achtemichuk
Public Relations: William Huscher
Scholarships: Ginnifer Mastarone
Secretary: Jan Watrous-McCabe
Treasurer: Jeanette Thomas
Web Manager: Nina Murdock
Website: Chris Emanuelli
Member at Large: Gene Holden

New STC IDL SIG Members – June, July, August 2006

Anitha	Abraham	Jill	Cooper	Patricia	Hendricks	Michael	Morgan	Cory	Spanier
Madhavi	Adimulam	Rita	Cooper	Leslie	Hennis	Eriko	Motoyama	Steven	Stauss
Lisa	Albright	Lori	Corbett	Frederick	Highland	Margaret	Murphy	Denice	Swinnen
Stefanie	Andersen	Bassem	Costandi	Rachel	Holloway	Steven	Murphy	Gary	Teedesco
Kimberly	Andrews	Tony	Cullen	Michael	Hu	Jamie	Muzzana	Ruchka	Tekkeveetil
Caroline	Angleson	Brian	Davis	Krista	Hunt	Bridgette	Nabors	Shalini	Thakkur
Pamela	Arkebauer	Jenet	Doubrare	Susan	Hurley	Sheela	Nath	Helen	Von Holten
Robert	Ashley	Kimberly	Dvorak	Archana	Isaac	Amanda	Netzke	Julie	Vouri
Ann	Azroff	Karen	Eddleman	Cynthia	Jackson	Lindsey	Nix	Kevin	Wall
Joan	Baxter	Deborah	Edwards	Christine	Jarvis	Robert	O'Leary	Joanne	Ward
Joy	Becker	Debra	Elley	Tammy	Johnson	Katherine	Olson	Lori	Weickle
Don	Benesh	Jerri	England	Laura	Johnston	Kristin	Payne	David	White
Katherine	Bennett	Wesley	Etheridge	Mali	Jones	Lorna	Peck	Shannah	Whithaus
Larry	Bielawski	John	Faber	Marija	Jovanovic	Diane	Perkins	Carol	Widstrand
Susan	Binford	Cherie	Fairburn	Nga Si	Lau	Brad	Petak	Leah	Williams
Peter	Brennan	James	Fales	Robert	Lee	Laurie	Peterson	Mary	Williams
Stewart	Brouillette	Elaine	Farrand	Evelyn	Lee	Karrie	Porter	Christine	Wilson
Robert	Brower	Sarah	Fernandez	Alice	Lee	David	Scott	Amy	Winkler
Janet	Brown	Judith	Flack	Cynthia	Leipman	Shannon	Scott	Polly	Wise
Steve	Brown	Sean	Fuller	Debra	Leissner	Scott	Shaffer	Terri	Wood
Betsy	Bruce	Harish	Gandhe	Ann	Marcus-Quinn	Summer	Shidler	Kristi	Yager
Melody	Brumis	Amabel	Garcia	Lauren	May	Sabrina	Shields-Cook	Tatsu	Yamamoto
Stephanie	Bryant	Josh	Geller	Timothy	McCollough	Cheryl	Shimamoto	Elizabeth	Yandell
Robert	Burch	Barbara	Goergen	Michael	McComber	Valerie	Simpkins	Andra	Zamacona
Vickie	Camgros	Kathy	Graf	Kelly	McCurry	Kathleen	Simpson	Blaise	Ziemian
Richard	Carruth	Mark	Grausam	Stephen	McDermott	Nagendra	Sitharamaiah	James	Zipf
Kristine	Caruso	Pam	Greenfield	Gene	Mikulka	Valeri	Slebi	Jan	Zwilling
Susan	Codone	Larry	Gruseck	Maria	Mitchell	Annie	Smith		
Kimberly	Coles	Bee	Hanson	Nick	Moeller	Chris	Smith		
Kristine	Conley	Steve	Hargreaves	Gayle	Monroe	Krista	Smith		
Pamela	Conrad	Ashlee	Hartman	Brenda	Moore	Sherry	Snider		