



# Trends and Issues in Instructional Design and Technology

*By Robert Reiser, John V. Dempsey*

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Written by the leading figures in the field, this book clearly defines and describes the rapidly converging fields of instructional design, instructional technology, and performance technology. The book discusses the trends and issues that have affected the field in the past and present, and those trends and issues likely to affect it in the future. It includes writings from Walter Dick, Marcy Driscoll, Don Ely, Kent Gustafson, David Hawkrige, Mike Hannafin, John Keller, David Jonassen, David Merrill, Charlie Reigeluth, Rita Richey, Allison Rossett, Bob Reiser, and Jack Dempsey.

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**Bibliography**

- Sales Rank: #3643395 in Books
- Published on: 2001-08-23
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.13" h x .75" w x 7.50" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 415 pages

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## **Editorial Review**

### From the Back Cover

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### About the Author

**John V. Dempsey** is Professor and Chair of the Department of Behavioral Studies and Educational Technology and Director of the Online Learning Lab at the University of South Alabama. He has taught a Trends and Issues course for ten years. Dr. Dempsey has written numerous journal articles and chapters and coedited a book entitled *Interactive Instruction and Feedback*. A practicing instructional designer, he most recently completed an educational web site for the national weather service (NOAA) and is developing a series of educational CD-ROMs involving environmental education topics. Increasingly, his academic and professional interests focus on technology-based learning environments, but they are prone to drift hither and yon.

**Robert A. Reiser** is Professor in the Instructional Systems program at Florida State University. He joined the Florida State faculty in 1976, after getting his doctorate in educational technology from Arizona State University in 1975. He has written two books and more than forty journal articles on instructional design and technology. In recent years, his research interests have focused on techniques for evaluating educational software and examining and improving the planning practices of teachers. Dr. Reiser is currently the principal investigator on a Knight Foundation project designed to promote the use of technology as an integral part of instruction practices in middle schools. In 2000, he was the sole recipient of the University Distinguished Teacher Award, the highest teaching award at Florida State University.

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This book is intended primarily for readers who plan to become, or who already are, professionals in the field of instructional design and technology. Many texts in this field focus on the skills needed by instructional designers and technologists. However, we believe that professionals in this field should be able to do more than just perform the skills associated with it. They should also be able to clearly describe the nature of the field, be familiar with the field's history and its current status, and be able to describe recent trends and issues that are having, or are likely to have, an impact on the field. The purpose of this book is to help readers attain these goals.

Together, the two editors of this book have a total of approximately forty years of experience teaching a course on trends and issues in instructional design and technology. Practically each time one of us has taught a course, we have revised it in some way to update the content and/or improve the instructional methods we have employed. Indeed, in both our cases, the trends and issues courses we teach today look very different, in terms of both content and instructional strategies, from the ones we taught ten years ago. Moreover, the changes we have made have resulted in each of us teaching a trends and issues course that students are very

enthusiastic about, in terms of both what they learned and the ways in which they went about learning. In this volume, we have tried to incorporate the content and instructional strategies that have made our own trends and issues courses successful.

## Content

This text, which includes chapters written by many of the leading figures in the field, is organized into six sections. The first section of the book, entitled ***Defining the Field***, focuses on foundational issues. Terms such as *instructional technology*, *instructional design*, *instructional media*, and *instructional design and technology*, each of which has long held different meanings to different people, are discussed and defined. The distinguishing features of the instructional design process are also described. Moreover, to enable readers to understand how the field has progressed, a history of the field is also presented.

Entitled ***Learning: Foundations and Trends***, the second section of the book describes the theories of learning and instruction that have long served as the basis for much of the practices in our field. It also discusses issues related to learner motivation, instructional strategies, and learning styles. This section also examines changing views of learning and instruction. It describes constructivism and situated learning theory, contrasts positivist and relativist views of learning and the design of instruction, and discusses the renewed interest in teaching problem-solving skills to learners.

The third section of the book, ***Performance Technology***, focuses on how the performance technology movement and related concepts, such as employing non-instructional solutions to solve performance problems and focusing on organizational results, have changed the nature of our field. Non-instructional solutions such as electronic performance support systems and knowledge management systems are described, and recent thinking in the areas of evaluation, return on investment, and diffusion and adoption are discussed.

There are many types of settings in which instructional designers and technologists work. The fourth section of the book, ***Trends and Issues in Various Settings***, focuses on the professional activities that are taking place in business and industry, the military, health care, public schools, higher education, and the international arena. The impact our profession has had on instruction, learning, and performance in each of these settings is discussed, as are suggestions for how we might increase that impact in the future.

The fifth section, ***New Directions in Instructional Design and Technology***, focuses on how current events, such as the recent interest in using the Internet and the World Wide Web for online learning, are changing the nature of our field. Also discussed are predictions about future changes in our profession that are likely to occur as a result of recent developments both inside and outside of the field.

Students in our field are obviously interested in job opportunities, and many of those who are already in the profession are interested in trying to advance their careers. In light of these interests, the sixth section of the book, ***Getting an IDT Position and Succeeding at It***, focuses on what it takes to get a good job in the field of instructional design and technology and on some of the actions and skills that will help to increase an individual's likelihood for success within the profession. Included with this discussion is a description of the major journals and professional organizations in the IDT field.

## Pedagogical Features of This Text

With regard to instructional strategies, this book includes a variety of features designed to help readers learn about the nature of the field and the trends and issues affecting it. The book includes an **Introduction**, which provides readers with a description of the purposes of the book, and an **Epilogue**, which concisely

summarizes the key ideas that have been addressed. Each section of the book begins with a **Section Overview** that focuses the reader's attention on the topics that will be covered in that section and attempts to show how the chapters in that section are related. Each chapter starts with an **Editors' Introduction**, which highlights the key points that will be covered and indicates how the chapter is related to other chapters and/or the theme of that section of the book.

Each chapter uses what we think is one of the most effective instructional tools we have employed in our trends and issues courses: a series of study questions designed to facilitate learning. Two types of study questions are provided for each chapter. At the beginning of each chapter, a series of **Knowledge and Comprehension Questions** require students to identify key ideas presented in the chapter and demonstrate their understanding of those ideas. At the end of each chapter, a group of **Application Questions** requires readers to go beyond the information provided in the chapter and use other resources, such as the Internet, print materials, fellow learners, and professionals in their field, to generate answers or solutions to the questions and problems that are presented.

In our own trends and issues courses, we use the study questions for two important instructional purposes. First, we strongly encourage our students to use the questions to help them attend to, understand, and reflect on some of the key ideas presented in the materials we have asked them to read. Second, we use the questions as points of discussion when we have our students meet in small collaborative groups to discuss the readings and when we hold large group sessions, during which time the small groups share and discuss their conclusions with the rest of the class. This combination of instructional strategies has proven to be a very effective and popular learning tool. We strongly believe that instructors, students, and other readers will find the questions provided with each chapter to be as beneficial as the two of us and our students have found them to be.

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