INITIAL REFLECTION PAPER ANALYSIS

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The focus of this analysis is to realize current competencies relative to marketability in the field of instructional design (ID), specific to the domain of government military training. Key to this understanding are current and visionary insights relative to experts in the field, competencies gathered through scientific analysis; and knowledge, skills, and abilities as noted by current job postings of potential employers.

Several video lectures are overviewed relative to trends and requirements of a good instructional designer. Robert Reiser, Ph.D., a well-known forerunner in the field of Instructional Design identifies *Ten Trends to Instructional Design*. Reiser’s list is particularly interesting; as out of the ten, only three trends: Performance Improvement, Constructivism and Learning Sciences can stand alone without the use of technology, whereas seven trends: Knowledge management, Performance Support, Online Learning, Social Media, Educational Games and Mobile Learning; require the platform of technology for the Instructional Design in demand by employers (Kofarski, J. 2012). The implication is that learning trends are gearing towards an increase in the use of online learning platforms and that instructional design positions will be on the rise for developing instruction on such platforms.

While the bigger picture of skills for the instructional designer must support software design on technology-based platforms, other experts consider more how the role of the instructional designer applies to real world application in terms of abilities and knowledge. Educators and experts in the field of ID reveal some basic “Rules of Thumb” in the video Instructional Design Rules of Thumb: Learning from the Pros – Part 1 & 2 (CYork, 2012). In these video lectures there is a commonality in the response of the experts that place key components to effective ID are relative to the analysis portion of the design phase, to include investigation (talk to the right
people, ask the right questions) into gaps to information, constraints, and the ability to perform a thorough needs analysis. “The effective designer keeps both the customer and student in mind and maintains scope with customer demands” (CYork, 2012). In translation, to be proficient in this field one must possess both effective investigative and more importantly effective communication skills to get to the heart of the learning performance problem and have a knowledge base in learning theory to provide optimal solutions to a clear process with recommendations to the client (CYork, 2012).

Allison Rosset supports the same importance to ID in her video lecture (LearningTechUK, 2013). Rosset’s emphasis is clear to the importance of analyzing what the learner needs to know to improve performance. In other words, relevant information is key to this analysis and the design of learner feedback and self-assessment are essential capabilities of an effective designer. Rosset’s video lecture provides emphasis to the importance of leveraging on-demand learning technology and blended learning platforms. Another skill emphasized by Rosset, is the ability to design instruction for on-demand learning and performance support with the designer acquiring knowledge of performance strategies to facilitate this type of learning.

The video overviewed of both Allison Rosset and Robert Reiser is visionary to the role of technology and its influence to competencies required for the instructional designer. In narrowing the focus of such competencies to the domain of military training, the 2015 Army Learning Concept, 2010, is consistent with the expert’s views; where on-demand learning capabilities, are necessary for crises, job performance, or competency of a skill. These mediums are necessary to provide relevant information to complete a task, training or mission in remote locations.
In Robert Reiser’s, video lecture of *Ten Trends to Instructional Design*, Constructivism and Performance Improvement are noted as learning processes to facilitate learning. These approaches can be utilized with technology and according to the Army 2015 vision will be utilized in conjunction with portable technologies to facilitate problem centered learning, the ability to track your own progress, create self-structured learning and content, and remote learning and collaboration from peers (2010).

The trend to incorporate instruction to portable or remote technology requires the instructional designer to hold competencies with multimedia applications to create instruction for such platforms. Certain aspects of multimedia design for learning draw from cognitive approaches, so a strong knowledge of Cognitive Theory may be well supported as a competency as well. (Ritzhaupt, A., Martin, F. & Daniels, K, 2010, p. 425). Specific to research conducted in 2010, job requirements for instructional designers require knowledge and expertise in the following multimedia platforms:

“Knowledge of bitmap image software (e.g., Photoshop),
Knowledge of vector image software (e.g., Illustrator),
Knowledge of video software (e.g., Premiere),
Knowledge of audio software (e.g., Audacity),
Knowledge of screen recording software (e.g., Captivate or Camtasia),
Knowledge of web authoring tools (e.g., Dreamweaver) as noted by Ritzhaupt, A., Martin, F. & Daniels, K. (2010), p.425.”

Wakefield, J., Warren, S. & Mills, L., 2012 support that instructional designers must be technologically oriented to leverage learning design through a variety of web-authoring tools of
derived through a sample size of fifty-nine job postings, where forty different tools are specified by employers. In addition, this study found that fifty percent of the job postings require applicants to be familiar with learning management systems (LMS) specific to the platforms of Blackboard, Moodle, Lectora, and Articulate (Wakefield, J., Warren, S. & Mills, L. 2012, p. 3130). More importantly, the research of Wakefield, Warren and Mills, 2012 is well aligned to the video lecture Instructional Design Rules of Thumb - Learning from the Pros - Part 1-2, where the findings supported key competencies to the instructional designer to be skilled in Communication, Management & Leadership, Planning & Problem Solving, Creative Design & Development, be knowledgeable of trends in instructional design (p. 3130).

In utilizing the collected materials, a self-assessment of existing competency to Instructional Designer marketability include knowledge of learning theory, communicative & interpersonal skills, professional work experience that extends to Design & Development, Planning and Problem Solving. Competencies that require personal attention extend to the most popular forms of web-authoring software and a design portfolio, as well as completing a Masters of Education in Instructional Design and Technology.
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