

Michael Molenda

Mike Molenda's career at Indiana University was geographically close to his birthplace in South Bend, but far from the world of his parents, neither of whom had formal schooling beyond the eighth grade. Mike's mother, Helene, made sure that he received the best education available in Milwaukee, at Marquette University High School and Marquette University. With a degree in radio-television mentored by Professor Ray Bedwell, he competed successfully for a National Defense Education Act (NDEA) doctoral fellowship to study instructional technology at Syracuse University.

Mike credits his mentor at Syracuse, Donald P. Ely, with helping him gain another step up the ladder, a Ford Foundation internship at the National Education Association in Washington, D.C. in 1965, at the height of President Lyndon Johnson's monumental education initiatives. He found that it was an exciting place to be and fortunate time to be there! Through his work as a Washington intern Mike gained visibility and made contacts that helped him contribute at the national and international levels for the rest of his career.

One of those contacts was Robert O'Kane, dean of the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). In 1968 he offered Mike a position as director of a new instructional media center that was to be built in the coming year. Going to Greensboro directly from his doctoral studies at Syracuse, Mike got a postdoctoral education on-the-job, figuring out how to do audiovisual facilities planning, curriculum and course development, and administration of a growing media center. Fortunately, he again benefited from sterling mentoring, this time by Professor Mary Frances "Frankie" Johnson, whom he recalls fondly as a flawless colleague and superlative professional.

Mike's work at UNCG brought him visibility in the major professional association, the Department of Audio-Visual Instruction (later the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, AECT). An Indiana University professor, Mendel Sherman, served as AECT president in 1965 (Mike's internship year), his Syracuse mentor Donald Ely served as president in 1966, and another IU professor, Robert Heinich, served as president in 1971.

Through these professional relationships Mike was invited to join the Instructional Systems Technology faculty at Indiana University in 1972. The department was at that time recognized as the Mecca of the field, so he did not hesitate to accept. For the next 10 years he worked closely with Bob Heinich, teaching courses related to applications of media in education and co-directing the School of Education's instructional development center.

The most important project during this period was the creation of a two-day workshop on Evaluation and Change Management as part of the nationally distributed Instructional Development Institute. This workshop featured many innovative hands-on activities for teachers, including the large-scale *Diffusion Simulation Game*, which was recognized by the National Society for Performance and Instruction (NSPI) as a finalist for Instructional Development Product of the Year in 1977. It became widely used at other universities in instructional technology graduate programs and continues to be used today. It also spawned a dozen variants including *Spiegeldorf*, used for many years at IU in modern European history courses, and *Making Change*, currently distributed by The Network, Inc.

Mike's second decade at IU featured the publication of a textbook with Bob Heinich and James D. Russell of Purdue University, *Instructional Media and the New Technologies of Instruction*. To the surprise of everyone, including the publisher, when the book reached the market in 1982 it immediately became the most widely adopted textbook for instructional media courses, displacing two rivals that had shared the market for a generation. The book has gone through eight editions and continues to be widely adopted. In such a rapidly changing field, the content has evolved greatly, but the book continues to be highly regarded for its clarity and exemplary pedagogical design. The first edition won the Publication of the Year award from AECT and NSPI, and in 2004 it was recognized as Outstanding Book in Educational Technology and Teacher Education by the teacher education division of AECT.

Mike served a term as department chair in 1988-91, a crucial time for the instructional systems technology department, as the last of the old guard were retiring, requiring replacements to be found and curriculum to be restructured.

His work brought him international attention, leading to consulting and lecturing in the Netherlands, Spain, Venezuela, Peru, Puerto Rico, Swaziland, Japan, China, Indonesia, and many of the countries in the Middle East. Beginning in 1992 he was involved more intensively in Korea, collaborating with Professor James A. Pershing in a five-year project of summer institutes for Korean training managers.

His standing in his field is acknowledged by the number of commissions he has received to author encyclopedia articles—nine in the past decade. During this period he also co-authored an annual review of the state of instructional technology for the *Educational Media and Technology Yearbook*.

All of this work was really an extension of teaching, which he always gave top priority and approached with enthusiasm and a high degree of organization. In recent years he has focused on the department's core courses, the first ones taken by new graduate students, and a doctoral reading seminar, the last course taken by doctoral students, thus offering graduate students a "Molenda sandwich," a chance to benefit from his mentoring as he had benefited from his mentors.

With Mike's retirement we are all losing a great store of knowledge and information, as well as a reliably entertaining outlook on our profession. An avid record keeper and a consummate storyteller, Mike has been the go-to guy in the department for anyone who wants to unearth a fact, track down a person or a reference, or be regaled with tales about anyone and everyone in the field. He has also been an institution in his own right, conferring no small measure of distinction on the department by virtue of his national and international profile as the field's quintessential generalist. Mike plans to continue playing an international role in the instructional technology field after retirement, having recently accepted the challenge of founding and editing a new journal, the *Asia-Pacific Cybereducation Journal*. He will remain in Bloomington where his wife, Janet Stavropoulos, practices law and where his two grown sons and stepdaughter enjoy returning to the family nest.

Elizabeth Boling