

# Wake Up!

## (And Reclaim Instructional Design)

The Internet doesn't instruct. Learning styles are irrelevant. The 'Nintendo Generation' learns the same way as the rest of us—and other heresies from instructional technology pioneer M. David Merrill.

**M** David Merrill is an increasingly vocal critic of what passes today for computer-based training (CBT) and multimedia learning. It is an unlikely role for the Utah State University professor of instructional technology.

Indeed, Merrill was a pioneer in the early days of CBT. He earned his Ph.D. in educational psychology at the University of Illinois in 1962, writing his thesis on an instructional system called Socrates—a contemporary of the legendary PLATO computer-based instructional system. In the early 1980s, Merrill led a team that developed the authoring system for the TICCIT CAI system. A reviewer at the time called it "the most advanced interactive video authoring system available." Merrill's component display theory and elaboration theory were featured in the 1984 *Annual Review of Psychology* as major contributions to instructional psychology.

Beyond his work as theoretician, researcher, and pioneering practitioner. He has authored 10 books, founded and managed three instructional technology companies: Microteacher Inc., and River Park Inc. In 1989 he was selected Person of the Year in

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