

LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

STLD Column by Bentley Miller



Some Reflections on Success — and its Rewards

That's a phrase that we are all familiar with — either from the days of our youth or, for those of us who are past the age generally associated with this yearly ritual, something that we associate with our children.

But there is a large and growing segment of the population that we don't consider when we think of the phrase "back to school" — the teachers, instructors, professors.

By the time most of you read this, several weeks of the 13-week Fall/Winter semester will have passed and most of the assignments facing students for the remainder of the term will have been assigned. I too will have taken on a rather large assignment that carries a great deal of responsibility, being an instructor.

Returning To My Alma Mater

As many of you who read this column already know, I am a graduate of the Radio/Television Arts course at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto, having graduated some 11 years ago.

Last year I was fortunate enough to

be asked to return to my alma mater to be an associate instructor, teaching with Dr. Robert Gardner. The course, Broadcasting 302-Advanced Television Laboratory, was designed for third-year graduating students. Its main objectives are to:

- 1.) build on the creative and operational skills developed in second year;
- 2.) develop the organizational and managerial abilities which are fundamental to a complex production;
- 3.) form an understanding of what it means to work as part of a production group, rather than purely as an individual; and
- 4.) come to an appreciation of what it means to function with considerable autonomy within a carefully structured environment.

Lessons Learned

It is with great pleasure that I can relate that most of the objectives of the course were realized last year, and the course was a success. More importantly, the students were successful. I think, without exception, the students gained valuable experience through this process. In a small measure I was able to contribute to the success of the

students as they moved towards the working world.

How does one measure success?

There are many methods of measuring success, some quantitative and others qualitative. In this particular instance I think that both methods of measurement are appropriate as they are both required to adequately measure how well the students learned the different crafts that comprise television production.

Academically the quantitative method of measurement is the measure that counts the most. But, as is often the case in life, it is the qualitative measure that will stand you in good stead.

Often-times in this world great emphasis is placed on what grade you got, or how much money you earned, or what status you have achieved. But I think it is just as important — if not more so — to take a look at what you have learned about yourself, your craft, your fellow workers; how you take all of the collective experiences that you have had and use them to better yourself and more effectively contribute to the lives of others. I think that this course, to a considerable degree, achieves those goals as well.

The course is something of a trial by fire because, by any standard, the administrative demands are heavy. This type of situation demands a lot from people, and in most it brings out the best in them.

There are other means by which to measure success, such as the degree of new confidence and enthusiasm that students felt approaching lighting situations that would have confounded them at the beginning of the term; the free exchange of information about particular production problems such as lighting, sound sets, wardrobe, etc.

Due to the nature of this business a myth has arisen; many people believe, wrongly I might add, that you get work by keeping what you have to yourself, by not sharing it with others. I don't think anything could be further from the truth.

Once you reach a certain level of competency the thing that separates you from the next person capable of

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