This reflection focuses on Jennifer Randall`s seminar on her company named Maestro E-learning. This talk provided important insights into what an instructional designer does in the private sector which ranges from working with the content expert to meeting with the client. Besides, listening to a person who hires instructional designers and work with them was beneficial in the sense that the speech gave clues on what they require from the instructional designers. In the remaining parts, the reflection descends to particulars of these points.

First of all, Jennifer Randall`s talk implied that being an instructional designer especially in the e-learning sector is an ill-structured job. The presenter mentioned that it is a challenge to attack learning in an online environment is a challenge in order to go beyond the traditional view of e-learning. One of the reasons for this is that people in the sector and clients do not know how adults learn and most of the products are based on this lack of knowledge. To me, this suggested it is not only knowing how to design instruction simply but it is also knowing how to design instruction to foster learning, which requires know how people learn. Second, she stated that since instructional designers cannot be knowledgeable about all the content areas they deal with it is important for instructional designers to work closely with content experts in order to create effective instructions. Finally, it was clear from the talk that instructional designers working at the company also meet the clients. This appears to have two reasons: 1) to prepare something that would meet the needs of the client most; 2) clients may not have a clear idea of what they really want. Therefore, the odds seem to be that instructional designers may encounter many problems during these processes, these could be interrelated, and time constraints may entail relatively quick solutions.

The speech also included what happens at the beginning of a project especially on the part of an instructional designer. The storyboard examples and the planning cards that are stuck on the walls in the company building were amazing since they highlighted the precision of the planning process before they actually develop online modules. It was also interesting to learn that the company shares the storyboards with the clients as well. The four stages of developing e-learning products (align, discover, develop, engage) was awesome in that they are collaborating with the client. It was also surprising to me to see that how much importance they give to the alignment stage in which they and their clients get to know each other more. Discovery is the phase in which Maestro E-learning crew discovers not only the actual purposes of the client but also their needs. One eye-catching aspect of this stage is the backbones that are skeletal diagrams organizing content thus constituting the first step of the overall planning. Besides, these are also the spring boards to create storyboards that are the basic planning level. When the pure content is turned into learning, it is the development state in which Jennifer Randall`s company designs the instruction on the basis of the needs of the client. Even though these steps seem to be quite different from those we have been learning through the classes so far, it was interesting to observe that they actually express formal aspects of instructional design in more understandable and umbrella terms like discovery instead of needs analysis, task analysis or determining objectives. I really found this intelligent since all this information is shared with the client so Maestro E-learning conveys what it is doing in simple terms to the clients instead of bombarding them with instructional terminology.

Finally, the example projects Jennifer Randall talked about also were also informative from some perspectives. First, some of them were quite complex that required high technology while some others appeared to have been produced through simpler technologies. However, all of them had a common point: generally a self-paced environment, easy navigation, low visual search, appealing outlook and concise content. One can also detect this when s/he examines the example projects posted on the company`s website. To illustrate, I was a little bit bewildered when Jennifer Randall introduced the Milky Way project since the main focus was to instigate leaners appreciation. So, it is not only about what yogurt is etc. but also includes attitudinal learning that is supposed to promote appreciation on the part of the learners. The other examples example, video conferencing aimed at helping people to go through initial calls easily appeared to be like a cartoon first but the content was related to the needs of the client. In other words, instructional designer was able to turn a topic like how to make initial calls into an enjoyable learning environment and it included a context as well in which learners have a reason to make calls. After and related to the projects, the speaker also mentioned that new technologies demand new approaches to e-learning since the capabilities of each technology may be different from the other ones. This point was also obvious in the projects presented as well.

All in all, it seems that an ill-structured job environment in which you need to deal with a lot people ranging from content experts to clients as an instructional designer. This seems to require talent in that an instructional designer needs to be able to deal with multiple projects and people at the same time, and bring a new approach to every learning situation in order to make it not only appealing but also effective. Consequently, it is not surprising that upon a question she received, the guest speaker emphasized that they are looking for talented instructional designers.