Masters Handbook

Instructional Technology

Last Revised: April, 23 2015

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Welcome…

to the Instructional Technology master's program in the College of Education at the University of Wyoming. We are excited to have you as colleagues in our program and look forward to collaborating with you in the future. This handbook is intended to be a general orientation to your program. It provides resources that will help you navigate your graduate experience. Frequently refer to this guide as you progress through your program.

You may also want to visit the program website to keep up-to-date with department and program news. You should also obtain a copy of the graduate bulletin. It is your responsibility to become familiar with the rules, regulations, and procedures involved in graduate work.

Program Faculty

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Research Interests: Satisfaction, communication, interaction, community, and interventions in the online environment; student-centered learning environments; and mobile technologies

Dr. Tonia Dousay
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Research Interests: Multimedia design, message design, visual literacy, instructional design, learning games, and children as designers

Dr. Kay Persichitte
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Research interests: areas of technology integration that include combinations of people, processes, and devices to support/enhance/extend teaching and learning for all ages as well as applications of change theory to educational contexts.

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Research Interests: Electronic portfolios, inquiry and reflection, technology integration in K12, instructional technology, games and virtual environments

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Your Advisor

You were assigned an advisor upon entrance to the graduate program based on matched student and faculty interests. Common interests help create a positive work relationship, promote research collaboration, and streamline work. However, it is your responsibility to build a relationship with your advisor. Setup an appointment to meet your advisor (e.g., face-to-face or via telephone). You may also establish meetings to discuss research ideas, course offerings, and professional goals.

Explore the research interests of your advisor. She/he will likely become your committee chair. Summary interests are located in this guide and on the program website. Individual profiles on the site contain links to recent publications and additional information. Examine and discuss these resources with your advisor. S/he will help you select yearly goals, complete your electronic portfolio, and navigate your graduate program.

Selecting a New Advisor

At some point you may need to change your advisor. Changing advisors is normal and should not cause feelings of failure, frustration, or stress. During your first year, familiarize yourself with as many faculty members as possible.

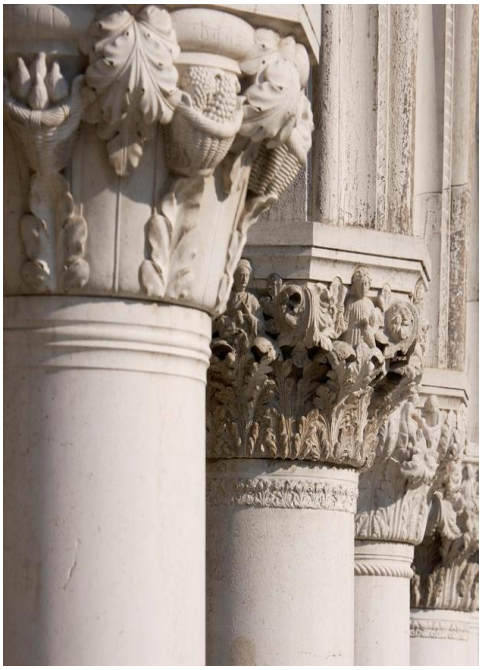
To switch advisors, you should first inform your current advisor about the idea. Based on this meeting, setup meetings to speak with prospective new advisors from your program and articulate why you would like them to be your advisor. Remember, they may be unwilling to serve based on current work and advising loads. When a faculty member decides to serve as your new advisor, notify your former advisor, contact the office manager, and submit the Committee Assignment/Change Form.

Developing Advisor Relationships

Your advisor wants you to succeed but will not force you to do anything. Take initiative to build a successful relationship.

- Don't wait for your advisor to come to you. Schedule an appointment when you have questions, want to discuss ideas, or want to prepare for program exams.
- Schedule appointments in advance, be courteous, and thank your advisor.
- Show commitment to your professional development. Follow through when you say you will do something.
- Consider how your research interests align with those of your advisor.
- Be receptive to constructive criticism.
- Do your homework prior to confronting your advisor. Check University, college, and program websites, contact office managers, and ask other students.

Program Pillars



Instructional Technology programs build upon four pillars or foundations to help students become well-rounded professionals. These include educational foundations, learning and development, technological understanding, and research and scholarship.

Educational foundations focus on the socio-cultural analyses of education in your program area. Foundations include the philosophical and historical perspectives that shape your field over time. They also include relevant theories and rationales that influence past and present research and inquiry.

Learning and development includes conceptual analyses of human development, learning theories, principles, practices, and/or models that apply to knowledge or skills acquisition.

Technological understanding involves the conceptual analyses of information access, technological skill, literacy, and/or procedures for use in your program.

Research and scholarship involves advanced work in research necessary for understanding, analyzing, and interpreting data and research design. This area also focuses on skills and expertise in conducting, synthesizing, and disseminating original research.

As you begin your graduate experience refer to these pillars frequently. They lay the foundation of your electronic portfolio, periodic assessments, and professional development.

Masters Work

Graduate study in instructional technology at the University of Wyoming aims to provide a balance between theory and practice. Attention is directed toward the union of learning that is required by circumstance (requisites) and learning that enriches life. Our nationally recognized graduate program offers courses that prepare individuals to work in diverse areas. To accomplish this, we focus on the following outcomes:

1. Academic Knowledge: Students will demonstrate a deep understanding of education and related fields and a broad understanding of various methods of inquiry in education.
2. Practical Competence: Students will demonstrate competence in several methods of inquiry.
3. Reflective Inquiry: Students will demonstrate the ability to guide their own scholarship, foster ethical and professional research and practice in education, as well as demonstrate a reflective and analytical stance towards scholarship in general.
4. Democratic Commitment: Students will demonstrate commitment to diversity in education and an understanding of the relationship between the university and the complex process of democracy and a commitment to pursue this process with a focus on access to quality education for all learners in their own professional work.
5. Professional Engagement: Students will demonstrate deep intellectual engagement with education as an area of scholarly inquiry. In doing so students will belong to and participate in national/international scholarly associations and make evident benefits and contributions that result from these memberships.

Residency Requirement:
Masters students are required to attend a Capstone Defense at the University of Wyoming during their final year in the program. This event takes place during a weekend at the end of Spring Semester. You are encouraged to make travel arrangements in advance of the date in case of inclement weather. You are also encouraged to attend a capstone defense prior to enrolling in the course to build community, familiarize yourself with the process, and gain academic advice from program faculty.

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Professional Organizations

One purpose of your graduate program is to help you transition from a student into a professional colleague. As you complete your program, you will experience some of this transition. Active participation in professional organizations can accelerate this process and help you form networks that span the globe.

Several organizations emphasize instructional technology, including:

- Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE)
- Association of Educational Communications and Technology (AECT)
- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Association for Talent Development (ATD)
- International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI)
- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
- International Visual Literacy Association (IVLA)
- Northern Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (NRMERA)
- Professors of Instructional Design and Technology (PIDT)

As a graduate student **you are required to join AECT each year for the duration of your program**. You are encouraged to attend and present at their annual international conference. You are also encouraged to attend conferences from one or more of the other organizations listed above. They each focus on particular aspects of instructional technology and you might find one or two that best fit your professional needs and interests.

Course Requirements

Master of Science in Education: Instructional Technology

Effective with Admission for Spring 2015

Complete one of the following:

	EDRE 5530	Introduction to Education Research (3)

Complete the following 24 hours:

	ITEC 5000*	Intro to the Field of Instructional Technology (3)
	ITEC 5010	Instructional Technology (3)
	ITEC 5020	Technology and Distance Education (3)
	ITEC 5160	Introduction to Instructional Design (3)
	ITEC 5320	Message Design (3)
	ITEC 5350	Multimedia Development (3)
	ITEC 5550	Theory of Change (3)
	ITEC 5560	Design/Development of Instructional Systems (3)

Complete 6 additional hours, three of which must be in ITEC

Complete the following:

	ITEC 5090	Master's Capstone (3)

Total Hours: _____
(Must equal 36 hours or more to graduate with MS in Instructional Technology)

* Formerly ITEC 5870: Seminar in Instructional Technology

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Events Timeline

Students seeking a Master's Degree from the College of Education are expected to complete their degree within two years of entrance. Although individual abilities and situations may vary, below is a timeline highlighting program milestones to fulfill this goal.

End of Second Year: Defend Capstone project before committee

- Complete Capstone Projects
- Apply for employment (if applicable)
- Committee Formed

End of Semester

- Complete portfolio goals

End of 1st Year: Advisor reviews portfolio and helps student develop goals for second year.

- Complete portfolio goals
- Review job postings (if interested in new positions)

End of 1st Semester

- Explore interests of faculty members
- Develop/refine research ideas
- Develop portfolio goals

Admission: Create a portfolio in Google Sites, share it with the program, and begin developing goals for first year based on admissions documents and advisor feedback.

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Retention Policies

Students should be self-directed. Your acceptance in a graduate program does not guarantee your fitness to remain in that program. Faculty members are responsible to ensure that only those students who continue to meet academic program standards and make adequate yearly progress toward degree completion are allowed to continue. Faculty members seek to identify and provide help students may need as well as recognize outstanding student achievements.

Continuous Registration:
Students are required to demonstrate annual academic progress. A component of this progress requires you to complete a minimum of 12 credit hours per year towards your program of study. Under some circumstances (e.g., work schedule, family situations, travel) you may be unable to enroll in courses for a semester. During these times you should enroll in one credit hour of continuous registration. These hours do not count towards graduation but will keep your status active in the program. You are allowed to enroll in **a maximum of four credit hours of continuous registration**. Exceptions to this rule are made on a case-by-case basis with your advisor. If you require additional time away from program courses, you should petition for a leave of absence from the university. If you do not enroll in classes for a 12-month period, your status will be deactivated, you will be dismissed from the program, and you have the option to reapply to the program for readmission.

Coursework:
You are expected to earn a minimum grade of "B" or “S” in each graduate-level course you take. If a student borders on making unsatisfactory progress (as evidenced by grades and/or less than average evaluations by department faculty), they meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the problem(s), review appropriate measures of correction, and establish a timeline for change. However, severity of the problem(s) may not allow for this method and informal methods are not procedurally required. The program defines "unsatisfactory" performance in graduate-level course work as a grade of "U" or "F" in any course or more than two grades below a "B." Obtaining one course grade of “F” or “U,” more than two course grades below a “B,” a cumulative GPA lower than a “B” average, or failure to meet all requirements of a remediation plan will result in program dismissal. Students who have been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance in graduate-level course work will not be allowed to take courses in the program as unclassified students.

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Professional Conduct:
In addition to maintaining high scholastic standards, you should develop professional skills necessary to work effectively with a variety of people. The faculty expects you to:

- Commit to personal growth and professional development
- Care about others
- Receive and give constructive feedback
- Apply skills covered in course work

Further, you are expected to adhere to the codes of ethics of your professional associations (e.g., Association for Educational Communications and Technology). Examples of behavior that may evidence professional impairment include but are not limited to:

- Violation of professional or academic standards such as plagiarism
- Inability or unwillingness to acquire or manifest professional skills or understandings at an acceptable level of competency
- Behaviors that can reasonably be predictive of poor future professional functioning (e.g., extensive tardiness, excessive late work, unwillingness to accept feedback)
- Disrespect shown towards faculty, staff or other students

Members of the faculty evaluate student performance on an ongoing-basis. The faculty makes judgments as to students' professional conduct based on observations of course performance, evaluations of students' oral and written work, and performance in internships (if applicable). Formal evaluations are also conducted at key stages of the student's program. When, in the professional judgment of a program faculty member, a student is not meeting professional guidelines or meeting university standards, the faculty member will consult with the department head to determine appropriate actions. Actions may include (but are not limited to) formal reprimand, unsatisfactory grades, a mandatory leave of absence, additional course work, formal probation, encouragement to withdraw from the program, or formal dismissal.

Computer Requirements

Many courses offered through our programs are taken at a distance using Internet technologies. Currently, our programs use Canvas as our course management system to deliver instruction. Faculty and staff are not required to provide technical support for your equipment. However, they will do their best to help you access course content and resources. To ensure that you can access and respond to course assignments and discussion you must have up-to-date computer equipment with high-speed Internet access.

Hardware
You may use either a Macintosh or Windows based personal computer during this program. The list below provides minimum requirements for selecting a computer.

Macintosh
Must run OS X.8 or later

- 1.4 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor or better
- 4 GB RAM or greater
- 128 GB hard drive or larger

Windows PC
Must run Windows 7 or later

- 1.4 GHz dual-core Intel Core i5 processor or better
- 4 GB RAM or greater
- 128 GB hard drive or larger

Other courses may have additional hardware requirements (e.g., headphones, microphones, etc.).

Internet
Because several courses are offered in an online format, you are required to have reliable access to a high-speed Internet connection (e.g., broadband, DSL, satellite). Phone and cable companies are the most common carriers of these services but you may have to find alternative options depending on your residence. You will need a speed of at least 256 kbps for this program but faster speeds (1.5-15 mbps) are recommended.

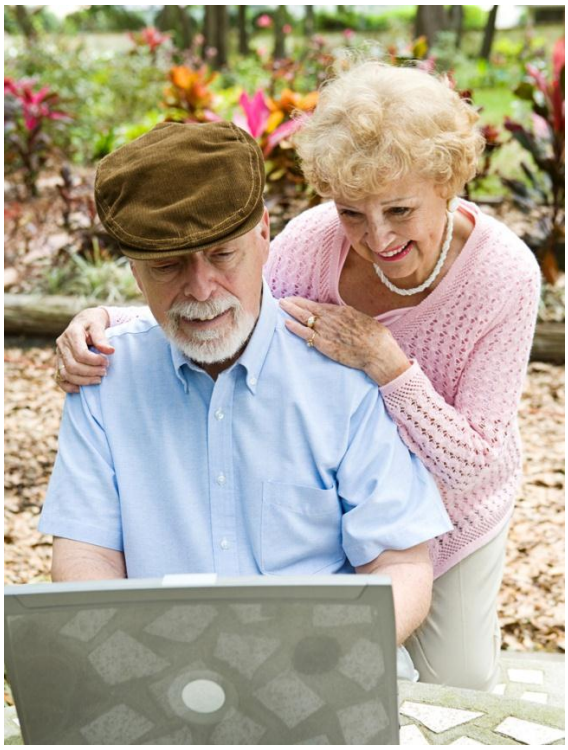
Remotely Accessing Campus Computer Labs
University students can remotely access campus computer labs to freely take advantage of software offerings that may be difficult or costly to acquire otherwise—including SPSS. Directions for remote access are found at http://microlab.uwyo.edu/UWSremote/

Software
You will use a variety of applications during your program. Below is a list of required and suggested titles.

Required Software

- *Microsoft Office*: (Mac and PC) This is the industry standard office application (word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation suite). All assignments should be submitted in a format that is readable in MS Office. Free versions of MS Office are available through the University of Wyoming. See http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/SOFTWARE/students/

Other courses may have additional software requirements



Suggested Free Software

- *Audacity*: (Mac and PC) A voice recording application. Use it to create podcasts or other voice messages. See http://audacity.sourceforge.net/

- *Mozilla Firefox*: (Mac and PC) An alternative to Internet Explorer for browsing the Internet. It provides more customization and security than Microsoft's browser and allows you to run Zotero (see below). See http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/

- *Skype*: (Mac and PC) This download allows you to freely communicate via voice and/or video with others over the Internet. See http://www.skype.com/

- *Zotero*: (Mac and PC) A reference management application that lives in the cloud. It helps you collect, organize, and retrieve research resources. See http://www.zotero.org

Research Software

- *SPSS*: (Mac and PC) This application helps researchers collect and examine data for quantitative and statistical analyses. A student version is available for reduced price through the University of Wyoming. See http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/SOFTWARE/students/

- *NVIVO*: (PC only) This application helps researchers collect and examine data for qualitative analyses. A student version is available for reduced price through the manufacturer's website. See http://www.qsrinternational.com/

Electronic Portfolio

Throughout your program you will develop an electronic portfolio in Google sites or similar application. Several online tutorials exist to help you use these tools. The purposes of this portfolio are threefold: 1) to promote student reflection, inquiry, and professional development, 2) to facilitate student accountability and assessment, and 3) to implement program reform and revision through student feedback. The following section describes what to include in your portfolio.

Development Purposes
Professional development: With help from your advisor you should establish goals every semester within your electronic portfolio and document your progress towards their completion. Goals should align with program pillars. Meet with your advisor each year and discuss/revise these goals. As you take courses, engage in professional development, and progress through your program, collect evidence to document progress towards meeting these goals.

Because students in your program reside throughout the world, electronic portfolios are also intended to help you form and sustain a community of learners. Share and review each other's portfolios to identify goals and trajectories, provide guidance and support, and strengthen professional networks.

Accountability: Electronic portfolios will also be used programmatically to monitor your progress, provide guidance, and assess performance. Your advisor will critique your portfolio each year as you complete your degree. During these sessions, s/he will ascertain your progress in the program, goal attainment, and needed supports.

At the completion of your courses, your committee will review your electronic portfolio as part of a Capstone Defense to determine if you have sufficiently mastered program-specific content. Individuals with unsatisfactory portfolios may be asked to take corrective measures (ascertained by the committee).

Electronic Portfolio Sections

- Introduction
- Resume
- Personal Learning Philosophy
- Course Timeline
- Summary of Goals and Achievements
- Evidence of Goals and Achievements
- Annual Personal Evaluation
- Annual Program Evaluation

Program Reform: Lastly, faculty members within your program will gain valuable insights and feedback from your electronic portfolio to improve course and program procedures.

Eportfolio Sections
Although faculty members appreciate the uniqueness of portfolios to document goals, achievements, skills, and learning experiences, they require particular sections to facilitate programmatic and evaluative purposes. Barriers to creativity and self-expression can be overcome through presentation style, selected evidence, and personal reflection.

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Introduction
The introduction is the first page people see when they access your eportfolio. You should provide a brief introduction of yourself as well as a professional photograph. Use this page to concisely indicate your career objectives and the degree you are seeking.

Next introduce your eportfolio. Highlight one or two major goals that you accomplished during your program and indicate how they influenced you and your career aspirations. You may also want to indicate how your eportfolio demonstrates knowledge and skill to satisfy job searches, promotion requirements, or other professional objectives. Make sure your introduction is concise; it should introduce, not supersede other sections.

Resume
Include an up-to-date resume that highlights professional accomplishments and summarizes educational experiences. You may want to include a PDF version of this document.

Resume Information

Include the following information:

- Professional address
- Education
- Honors and awards
- Certification(s)
- Research interests
- Professional experiences (including time frames and brief descriptions)
- Skills
- Other pertinent professional experiences

Learning Philosophy
This section should briefly (within 2-4 pages) articulate your personal philosophy(ies) of education and learning. One way to construct a learning philosophy is to write down a list of your professional beliefs, values, and attitudes as they relate to education and learning. Do you notice any patterns, contradictions, or specific conditions that define your thoughts? What learning theories most closely relate to your philosophy? How do proponents of these theories view education and learning? Do you agree with them? In what way does your philosophy differ from theirs? Once you have identified these ideas you can write your own philosophy.

How does your philosophy manifest itself in your work and professional career? If you altered or changed your positions during the course of your program indicate why and how you changed. Will these changes influence your future work? If so, how will they manifest themselves in your professional life? Additional things to consider include the social and or political implications of your teaching philosophy. Do many professionals share your views? How are your views considered on a national and international level? How might your beliefs influence the way you are treated in your profession?

Make sure that you use a few references to support your learning philosophy. These references need to be primary sources and most of them should be refereed sources. You may also include books. Please do not use Web sites. Make sure that all in-text citations and your reference list at the bottom of your page are formatted according to current APA guidelines.

Course Timeline
You should indicate your timeframe for completing all degree courses by your first eportfolio review. This list may change but it will help you plan your degree. The timeline should identify the degree you are seeking. List any courses taken prior to program admittance that were

accepted to fulfill program requirements. Indicate the institution, year, and semester (or equivalent) they were completed.

Your timeline should then list all Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters between program admittance and expected graduation. Group semesters by year. Indicate within each semester what courses you will take to complete program requirements.

Summary of Goals/Achievements
Your goals and achievements make up the backbone of your eportfolio; all other documents draw support from your goals. Given their importance, you should develop goals in conjunction with your advisor at the beginning of the semester.

These goals should correspond to professional interests that caused you to pursue a graduate degree. If this is your first semester in the program, the documents that you submitted for entrance are an excellent starting place to review and examine potential goals. If you were previously admitted to the program your goals should be based on results and feedback of previous semesters.

Regardless of your length of stay in the program, all goals should align to the four program pillars. Within each of these areas you should identify goals that will help you to develop professionally as well as prepare you for successful program completion.

Documenting and reflecting upon your approach to achieve these goals will drive eportfolio development throughout your program. These goals will also help you and your advisor identify experiences that suite your interests and drive your professional agenda.

Once a goal is attained, you should concisely summarize how you attained it—reserving details, evidence, and continued reflection to later sections of your eportfolio. If you do not attain your goal(s) you should summarize why you were unable to achieve it; please include whether or not you want to attain this goal in the future, how you plan on attaining it, or why you decided to discard it. This section should be brief, about two paragraphs for each goal. Additional details for your goals will be provided in the next section.

Sample Artifacts

This list is not exhaustive but should give you some ideas.

- Course papers and projects
- Pilot studies
- Case studies
- Applications/illustrations of learned concepts
- Professional certificates and credentials
- Course evaluation summaries
- Professional Publications
- Professional presentations
- Awards and recognitions
- Reflections on work experiences
- Peer and self evaluations
- Student work samples
- Lesson plans
- Video-taped performances
- Photographs
- Grant applications

Evidence of Goals/Achievements
This section provides details regarding the extent your goals were accomplished. Create a separate page for each program pillar and a subpage for each goal within the pillar.

Documentation in this section should also provide an impetus for future goals. As you gain experience in the program pillars through courses, professional experiences, and research, what new questions do you have? How might you go about answering those questions or accomplishing new goals? Remember that one purpose of the eportfolio is to help prepare you professionally. Documentation included in your eportfolio should clearly articulate knowledge and skills acquired through your program.

To help you show development and synthesize previous learning, this section should include artifacts and reflections that make up the core of evidence regarding your professional skills and expertise.

Keep in mind that artifacts help you to tell a story about your goals and accomplishments; they are not the story. You must provide a reflective narrative regarding the mastery of your goals in each program pillar—using artifacts to support your assertions, highlight details, summarize claims, and provide evidence. Be sure to tell us **why** you selected each artifact (it is a required element). Reflect and tell us what you learned, if it was difficult, how it may have changed your perspective or reinforced your belief(s), or anything that will give us insights into your thinking, philosophy, etc.

Personal Evaluation

This section should include a thoughtful reflection regarding your performance during the previous year. Base it on goals you established and your ability to meet those goals. Be honest and direct. Were you pleased with your overall performance? What strengths do you have? What personal limitations challenged or impeded your progress? How and to what extent did you overcome these limitations? What do you need to be successful in the future?

This is also a space to go beyond your stated goals and address other life events that are important to understand your performance during the year.

Program Evaluation

Similar to your personal evaluation, this section is meant to review the program's abilities to meet your goals and expectations. In what ways did programmatic elements help or hinder goal attainment? What strengths and weaknesses does the program have? What might we do to better support your professional development? What would you like to see more of in the future? What would you like to see less of?

As with your personal evaluation, be prepared to defend and discuss your statements with your advisor and committee. Although you should not shy away from giving or receiving criticism, make sure that your comments are based on constructive feedback as opposed to anger, spite, or blame placing.

Sample Eportfolio Goals

Educational Foundations

- Write a 3-5 page reflection paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) that describes how instructional design impacts your profession. Provide evidence of the design process in your work.
- With adequate permission, conduct a front-end analysis on a problem facing an organization. Gather information to determine the causes of the problem and whether they can be reduced or eliminated with instruction. If the problem is instructional based, determine the audience for instruction, their needs, and tasks associated with the need. Develop instruction to meet these tasks and reflect upon your work in a 2-page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines).
- With adequate permission, identify a problem facing an organization and design, develop, and implement instruction to reduce or eliminate that problem. As part of this process, design a 1-2 hour lesson (including assessments), select or develop all resources needed to complete the lesson, obtain feedback on your implementation from members of the target audience, and revise your instruction based on feedback received. Write a 2-page reflection paper about the experience (adhering to current APA guidelines).
- With approval from your advisor, read two to three works deemed foundational to your field. Write a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) that describes how these works shape current practice.

Learning and Development

- Write or revise a personal learning philosophy (3-5 pages) for your eportfolio. Support your claims with citations from relevant literature (adhering to current APA guidelines). Articulate how your philosophy is manifested in your profession. If your personal learning philosophy has changed from what you included in your eportfolio, rewrite it. Articulate how and why you changed your philosophy over time. Be sure to keep both philosophies in your eportfolio for reflection purposes.
- Identify 2-3 job postings that fit your professional interests. Write a 3-5 page paper that compares your preparation with the job expectations and highlights what you plan to work on over the next year to make yourself more marketable for similar positions.
- Distance education is evolving rapidly; tools and environments once dreamed of are now commonplace. Write a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) describing how you will use distance tools to promote education. Include examples and utilize peer-reviewed sources to support your claims. If your views of distance education have changed during the program, articulate how and why they changed.

Technology Understanding

- Review others' eportfolios and provide feedback about their work in our program site. Write a 2-page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) summarizing what you learned. What ideas did you gain? How might you incorporate them into your own professional development?

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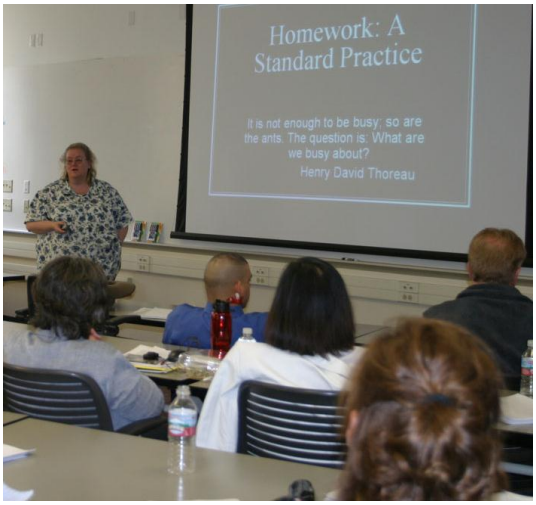
- Acquaint yourself with the University library. Complete an annotated bibliography in a reference management package (e.g., Zotero, RefWorks, EndNote) with a minimum of 15 peer-reviewed sources and 5 additional sources related to a research topic of interest. Identify what databases and search terms you used. Include a copy of your annotated bibliography in your eportfolio and write a brief reflection paper indicating what you learned about library research and your topic during the process.
- In a 3-5 page paper (adhering to current APA guidelines) define the term "technology" and trace the history of the definition through the field. Use sources to support your claims and conclude your paper by creating your own definition and identifying how it influences you professionally.
- Develop a multimedia resource and write a 2-page reflection paper describing how you adhered to principles of message and instructional design in the planning, development, and evaluation of your resource.
- Develop an online learning resource or environment. Write a 2-page reflection paper describing how you adhered to principles of community formation and instructional design during the planning, development, and evaluation of your resource.

Research and Scholarship

- Read 5-10 recent publications of your advisor (listed on the program website) and write a 3-5 page paper indicating how your interests align with theirs.
- Locate a peer-reviewed, professionally relevant research article on a topic of interest and write a detailed article critique. Summarize the main points of the article, identify key players associated with the study, and discuss the appropriateness of the research methods, literature review to establish a need for the study, adequacy of the findings, and relevance to the field.
- Demonstrate mastery of APA formatting to create appropriate headings, in-text citations, and reference lists.
- Write a literature review on a professionally appropriate topic of interest. Use at least ten peer-reviewed sources to support your claims.
- Get involved in a research project with either your advisor or another program faculty member. Summarize and reflection upon your work in your eportfolio. Include timelines, milestones, work samples, and so forth to illustrate your work.
- Attend a regional or national conference. Summarize and reflect on the sessions that you attended and indicate how the experience influenced you professionally.
- Submit a proposal to a regional or national conference and write a reflection about how the experience influenced you professionally.
- Present at a regional or national conference. Include your presentation materials and write a reflection about how the experience influenced you professionally.

Capstone Project



During your final semester, you will enroll in a capstone course and prepare your capstone project. All courses in your program should provide grounding in appropriate theories, principles, and skills for this course. The capstone project provides an opportunity to integrate and apply prior learning by developing decisions regarding specific case and research studies.

Capstone students develop three reports for presentation at the Capstone defense. These reports include: 1) an electronic portfolio, 2) a team case study, and 3) an individually generated literature review.

Reports will be evaluated in terms of their general acceptability before your committee (consisting of two program faculty members and one external faculty member). However, "general acceptability" does not guarantee successful performance at the oral examination. Allow for adequate time to complete your capstone project. Although your committee wants you to complete your work in an efficient and timely manner, they require a high quality project. There may be occasions where you are asked revise your presentation, writing, analysis, and data interpretation. To help you maintain balance in this portion of your life, set small goals that lead to your final capstone project. Developing support groups with other graduate students will also assist you in writing and research.

Capstone Defense:
The capstone defense consists of the following components:

- The team presentation regarding a case study obtained and analyzed one week prior to the defense
- The individual oral examination of your electronic portfolio and literature review

The oral examination is a professional discussion focused upon the written materials you provide. Our program uses a team approach to ensure that you have an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues prior to the examination. Examination discussions are framed by the work you have completed. You may bring notes and other materials if you wish.

Graduation and Beyond

The conclusion of your graduate work can be stressful. Not only are you finishing your capstone project and planning for a defense, but you may also be applying for jobs or promotions, anticipating future moves, and establishing yourself in a professional community that extends beyond the university. Obtaining a masters degree is hard work. Getting this far is reason to celebrate. Take the time to enjoy the moment and reflect on your accomplishment.

If you are looking for employment when you conclude your degree, learn how and when positions are posted for your field. Identify the positions you would like to obtain. Try to do this early in your program. Carefully review position postings and become familiar with the required and desired qualifications for appointment in your field. As you enter the last year in your program, consider applying for one or two of these positions to become familiar with the process. You will also need to think about how will you organize your resume to position yourself for the posting and who will complete letters of recommendation. Most search committees expect you to offer references from faculty members and colleagues who can speak to your leadership experience, problem solving ability, and potential to implement change.

Above all, do your homework before you apply for positions. Learn about the organization's stated mission, values, and operational goals. What is its leadership structure, primary programs and services, reputation in the community and state, primary business clients and partners, and history and viability of its main funding streams? You may not be able to acquire current or complete information about each of these conditions. Remember however that employers are searching for leaders who will add value to their organization. You can only discuss your potential value if you are familiar with the organization.

Additionally, consider whether you are a good fit for the position? Are you a good fit for the working environment? Would you enjoy living in the community? As a general rule it is best to apply for positions that you would accept. Doing this research in advance of an interview will set you apart from other candidates. When you receive telephone and onsite interviews you will have an opportunity to ask informed questions. Have your own questions for the hiring committee. Above all, don't get discouraged if you do not receive an offer.