

Professional Statement

Jennifer Wright

Introduction

Instructional Design and Technology is a broad field of study and practice in education and training. Instructional designers assist organizations, educational institutions, government, and business and industry keep their learners engaged in best practices for teaching and learning. Instructional Design and Technology includes priorities such as the following:

- Moving higher education classes to online formats
- Moving K-12 education to online formats
- Training and learning for Human Performance Improvement
- Training and learning for business and industry

As of March 2020, it became painfully apparent to everyone that one of ID's most significant responsibilities is to respond appropriately and swiftly to technological and educational needs. When millions of in-person school children and college students became overnight remote learners as the Covid pandemic rushed through the US closing facilities' physical locations, teachers, professors, and educational staff scrambled to piece together distance curricula and access that could educate and provide a useful learner experience as well as in-person teaching does. When many of these efforts—both synchronous and asynchronous—largely failed, and society realized that most schools were not prepared for designing and delivering high quality education remotely, I believe ID's true worth as a now indispensable part of our lives became obvious. Indeed, Instructional Design has taken a place in the spotlight where designers have always known it belongs.

Scholars and practitioners have been defining and redefining Instructional Design and Technology for decades, trying to capture everything ID does and can accomplish. In 2013, Robinson et al. wrote in an article about how to define the field and explain what Instructional Designers do that the job of instructional design is *facilitating learning*. The authors clearly distinguish this:

The current definition of educational technology explicitly adopts the term *facilitating learning* in order to emphasize the understanding that learning is controlled and owned by learners. Teachers and designers can and do influence learning, but that influence is facilitative rather than causative. The term *facilitating learning* is posited as the purpose of the field, not as the result of processes that are the *raison d'être* of the field. (p. 41)

Required competencies

The Association for Educational Communications and Technology have developed standards and indicators for Instructional Designers. These are competencies that practicing professionals

need to have and cultivate to be successful in the field. There are five standards, each supported by several indicators showing actions and skills which exemplify the standards. For example, Standard 1 is “Content Knowledge”, and the indicator “creating” includes creating instructional materials and learning environments (AECT Standards, 2012 Version). The remaining standards are “Content Pedagogy”, “Learning Environments”, “Professional Knowledge and Skills”, “Research”. While I have experience working and practicing within most of the standards thanks to my experience as a postsecondary instructor, as a professional Instructional Designer, more work in Content Knowledge in the areas of graphics and audiovisual technologies would be welcome. A specific example of this professional knowledge and practice I need is that with Universal Design in Learning principles. In my current position as a researcher in English Language Arts and cognitive learning map designer, I will be working more with UDL and audiovisual technologies as I collaborate to develop ELA learning maps and professional development training and tools.

Professional Development

To continue growing as an Instructional Designer and refining my skills and talents, I intend to remain a member in AECT and become more involved with committees and groups therein. I also intend to nurture relationships with my peers and practicing professionals I network with through my graduate program and activities in AECT. I plan to continue my mentoring relationship and to follow research and new ideas on LinkedIn, and keep up with reading scholarly journals.

My essential beliefs about education and instructional design include learner-centered designs, autonomous learning whenever possible, and the notion of the instructor as facilitator. The prevailing paradigms of ID&T—ADDIE, cognitivism, iterative practice, and constructivism (Reiser, 2018)—are those that align with such notions of teaching and learning.

Specific examples of instruction that I am drawn to include advance organizers, frequent and informal skills/comprehension checks, a reliance on self- and peer-assessment, and authentic activities as well as assessment. These teaching methods rely on valuing the learner and her learning more than oneself as an instructor or designer.

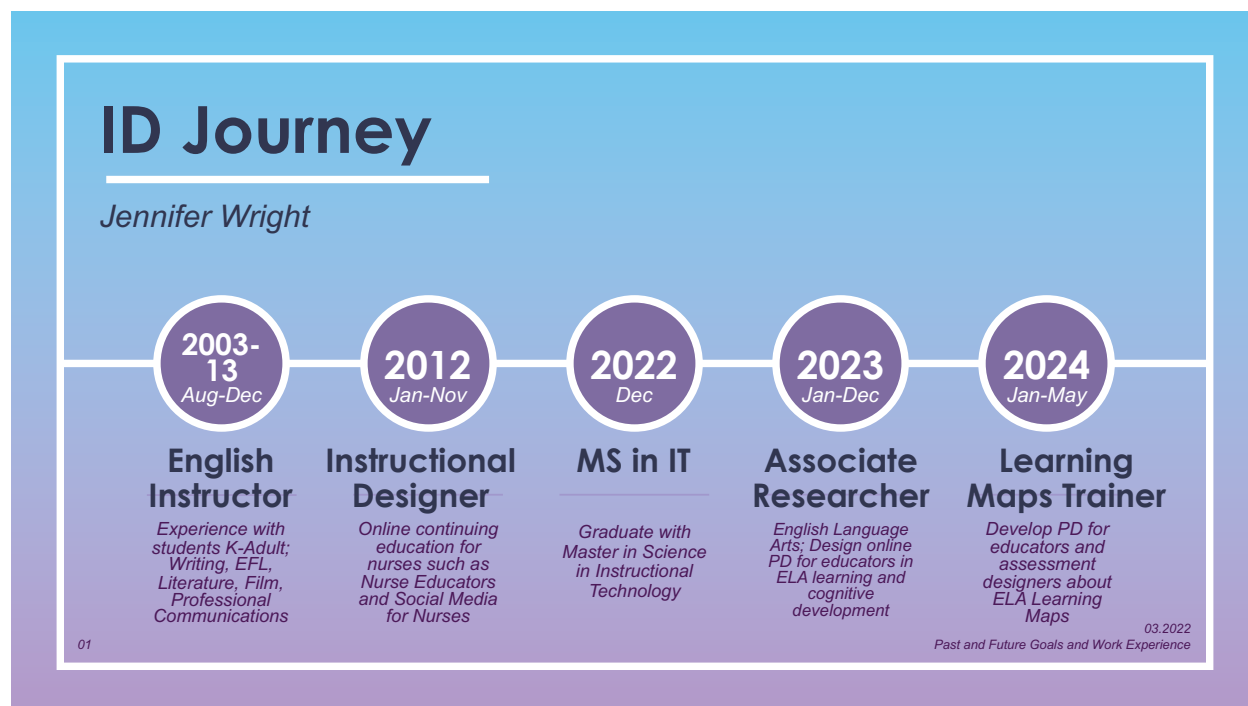
I believe that the current AECT definition does capture what ID&T is supposed to be and do. Reiser presents the definition:

Educational technology is the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using, and managing appropriate technological processes and resources. (p. 4)

I am attracted to this definition of the field because it incorporates “ethical practice”, “improving performance”, and “appropriate technological processes and resources”. I see improving performance as a key goal in ID&T, and ethical practice is always important to me. I

also completely agree that technology processes and resources have to be appropriate to the specific learning context and learner needs.

Striving to keep my career, study, and practice relevant and successful, I will have to stay current with AECT's activities, opportunities, work, and definitions. I will also have to remain dedicated to mentorships and work diligently on any contract opportunities that come my way.



References

- AECT Standards, 2012 Version. *Association for Educational Communications and Technology*. Retrieved October 9, 2020, from <https://www.aect.org/>.
- Reiser, R. A. & Dempsey, John V. (2018). *Trends and Issues in Instructional Design and Technology*. Pearson.
- Robinson, R., Molenda, M., & Rezabek, L. (2013). Facilitating learning. In *Educational Technology: A definition with commentary*. (Eds) Janazewski & Molenda. (pp. 16-48). Routledge.