Early Exposure to Educational Technology Leads to Career in Instructional Design

“I part of the transition through graduate school is believing in yourself, being confident in your area of expertise, and setting yourself up for lifelong learning.”

David Stone, Ph.D ‘12/M.S. ‘05

Interest in educational technology led to IDT degree
I started my career as a lab manager while I was an undergraduate at Southern Polytechnic State University (now known as Kennesaw State University's College of Engineering and Engineering Technology), providing faculty with technology and development training. As the dot-com boom surged in the early 2000’s, there was a big rush to use technology to enhance teaching/education, so I began building websites to support these activities. After receiving my bachelor’s degree, I started working at the university’s Center for Instructional Technology; that’s when I realized I needed to earn an Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) master’s degree. I had a good grasp of technology, so my main goal was to understand the theory and research based practices regarding the use of technology to facilitate education.

Diverse student body and experiences were invaluable
Since I was clear on my goals, I worked with faculty to choose courses that made sense for me. My classmates worked in the corporate, technology, and education fields, so that provided a neat mix of people, experiences, industries, and education. I continued working while in the program - which was extremely beneficial because I applied what I learned in class to my job. In addition, I conducted international research with the University of China regarding Second Life, virtual worlds, and second language instruction. All these experiences diversified my graduate student experience and provided ample research opportunities as well.

Excellent leadership and research opportunities
After completing my doctoral degree, I joined Penn State University as the director of Collaborative Programs. In this role, I’m responsible for building academic programs across 20 campuses and collaborating with faculty and administrators to determine how to improve multicampus degree programs. My dissertation topic looked at organizational change factors and online learning, so it directly helped inform the kind of work I do, specifically being able to pull people together to work through transition.

According to CNNMoney/Payscale’s Top 100 Careers With Big Growth

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS

$60,000
Median Salary

$97,000
Top Pay

+12%
Greater than National Average Pay Rate in Atlanta