

Educational Developer Statement | 2021

My work as an educational developer began as a graduate student learning about instructional design, learning theory, and pedagogy. Educational development was the creative task that truly fed me throughout each librarian role I took on. Eventually, I found my way to an instructional specialist role, where I am privileged to have conversations with, and walk alongside faculty, as they build their courses.

Theoretically, I am grounded in methods created by Wiggins and McTighe, Dee Fink, and Dick and Carey. I deeply value the use of backwards design, especially asking what are the essential understandings we need students to know? What are the essential questions we need them to grapple with? I also appreciate the Dick and Carey model of truly ascertaining who are students are, what do we need them to know, what do they already know, and how can we tell? Finally, Dee Fink's work in designing for significant learning allows me to explore the various dimensions of learning and take each one into account as I am building a course with a subject matter expert. In my practice as an educational developer, I use these structures to have conversations about the learning environment and culture of the classroom. I want to cultivate brave spaces where faculty feel comfortable talking with me about challenges they face, risks they want to take, and their hopes and dreams for their courses and students.

My strengths as an educational developer include deeply listening and empathizing with instructors. I became an educational developer during a global pandemic, and at a research university where many are, at best, uncomfortable teaching in a blended, hybrid, or remote format. My ability to listen to faculty concerns, empathize, and empower them to make choices that are the best for them and their students is something I pride myself on. I also provide meaning and context for my recommendations via research-based knowledge and my own personal experience as a faculty member. I highly value research within the scholarship of teaching and learning, educational psychology, cognition and behavioral studies, as well as the library and information literacy literature. I consult the literature regularly, educating myself about foundational applications as well as innovations in teaching and learning. My ability to synthesize and present my findings in a way that is accessible to subject matter experts is a major part of my work, and another strength. Finally, this work is not done in a vacuum; rather, relationships must be built and trust must be earned over time. I am particularly adept at brokering relationships and partnerships, and collaborating with others. My goal at my institution is to build a network of folks who do this work, in order to strengthen our work as a collective for our institution.

I have seen both tangible and intangible results and impact of my efforts in my current role as an educational developer. I have directly consulted on 60+ courses through synchronous and asynchronous individual consultations, as well as stewarded 15 faculty/librarian pairs through a course design process to integrate information literacy into the fabric of those courses. I have received positive direct feedback on resources and presentations I have delivered, including a contact time estimator that has been widely circulated within the university, as a whole, to help instructors plan their courses

for the semester. Another faculty member, in response to my presentation on writing effective learning outcomes, stated “I used to think learning outcomes were pedantic, but after learning more about why I should use them, I now understand and find them to be really useful. I will now use learning outcomes in all of my courses.”

The work I do is certainly not done in a silo, and I could not accomplish most of what I do without the assistance and guidance from close partners. My goal is to continue to nurture these partnerships as I grow in my educational developer role. I work with another instructional specialist in my department, and together we plan on developing a lab for pedagogical innovation for the school of arts and sciences at my institution. We want to empower faculty to continue to take risks while providing them with appropriate support. I am also working on building programming around a digital book I wrote with two other collaborators on my campus. This book aligns social justice with teaching and course design. Our plan is to develop workshops and other programming around the resource and equity pedagogy. Finally, I want to continue to build my own knowledge as an educational developer by attending conferences, reading, and working with other educational developers on my campus. I hope to gain more knowledge in diversity, equity, and inclusion practices in educational developer work, including conducting a DEI audit among educational developers on our campus.

Current Work

In my role as an educational developer (instructional specialist), I work within five main areas: course design and pedagogy, instructional technology, project management, programing and resources, collaboration and committee work.

Course Design and Pedagogy

- Partner with Arts & Sciences faculty and staff in the design, development, and assessment of courses for remote, hybrid, and on-ground courses in a manner consistent with instructional design and pedagogical best practices.
- Through individual consultations and group workshop settings, I assist and support innovative teaching and learning strategy development in all modalities.
- Use backwards design, the ADDIE model, and Universal Design for Learning to build innovative, inclusive, and equitable courses in all teaching and learning modalities.

Instructional Technology

- Collaborate with SME's and information technology staff to implement and resolve issues related to educational technology, including assessment, pedagogy.
- Ensure course design and course materials meet accessibility standards; provide accessibility training and assistance for instructors.
- Research and recommend new and emerging technologies, instructional design theories and models and their potential application to instructional opportunities.

Project Management

- Manage multiple design projects concurrently including:
 - Creating project plans, managing timelines, and coordinating with team members and partners in the Center for Teaching and Learning, the College Office and A&S Computing and Technology to meet project deliverables.
- Lead projects to develop innovative uses of educational technology for pedagogy, research, student learning and community building.

Programming and Resource Development

- Design, develop, and deliver training/workshops to inform faculty and staff about pedagogical innovations and effective use and integration of technology tools for a variety of learning modalities.
- Design and produce learning materials to support teaching and learning. Serve as the primary point of contact in Arts & Sciences for learning resources.
- Assist in development of additional curricular resources for faculty and students.

Collaboration and Committee Work

- Collaborate across campus units and organizations to create learning resources and training related to effective teaching and learning best practices.
- Participate in accreditation activities related to remote and hybrid programs
- Represent Arts & Sciences in campus wide and state and national discussions and initiatives focused on online learning.