

Professional Statement  
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According to Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt in their book *Building Online Learning: Effective Strategies for the Virtual Classroom*:

Outcomes of this process, then, should not be measured by the number of facts memorized and the amount of the subject matter regurgitated but by the depth of knowledge and the number of skills gained. Evidence of critical thinking and of knowledge acquired are the desired learning outcomes. (2007, p. 5)

While I'm interested in many aspects of instructional design, a passion project of mine is designing and facilitating online courses in music production and engineering. I think an online, discussion based course would be particularly well suited for those subjects, and a good format for the learners. Because a myriad selection of recording tools is so readily available, and because the price range and feature set of these tools is so broad, students will likely want to learn about recording on a setup they have at home. If they don't already have a home setup, they could easily create one with a set of headphones and a cheap or free recording program (commonly called a Digital Audio Workstation, abbreviated "DAW"). Contrast this home setup where a learner can work and create on their own schedule on their DAW of choice with a more traditional face to face course in a computer lab, where the hours are limited and there are only one or two DAW brands available, and the online course format has clear advantages. Additionally, by creating a situation where the learner has large amounts of control over what format they're using for their learning, and making the instruction itself work in a variety of formats, there is a better chance of creating deep learning, rather than shallow, "push this button, then that button" learning. While this is a very specific example of a design approach, it should give an idea of my attitudes towards instructional design as a whole.

In the field of instructional technology, I see myself mainly as a designer, collaborator, and content developer. In the future, while I'm interested in working as in instructional designer at the university level, which would involve a good deal of collaboration, I would also like to become an online course designer and facilitator. I am particularly interested in discussion-based courses, and one of the reasons is that, in my previous example of music production, there are very few simple answers, and even fewer absolutes. If people enjoy listening to it, then the path taken to creating the music cannot be wrong. The modern usage of common music tools such as compressors and EQs can be traced back to engineers and producers utilizing them for something other than the purpose for which they were designed. Learning production and engineering is not about memorizing steps, or even defining a set approach or process. It is more about creating frameworks for creativity and a way to problem solve.

A fair question, then, if the rules are so loose, and the standards are undefined, then what is the purpose of having a course for this subject? Learners may find their learning stunted if they don't explore outside their own experiences. If a musician only uses pre-selected settings (also known as a "presets") in their DAW, and they don't understand what the settings are doing,

they may find themselves lost when the presets don't work well for the material they're working on. There is not set road map, it is helpful to know that there is a larger world out there. The idea of a diversity of methods doesn't just apply to music engineering. The collaborative approach to this subject matter would work with a variety of subjects.

One way to create and facilitate this course (or courses) would be to partner with a university or community college. It would be possible to develop, advertise and administer courses independently as a fee for service, but by working through a university or community college has its own benefits. I would have access to certain tools and resources that I would otherwise have to purchase, and working through a university would add legitimacy to the course. It would be a beneficial arrangement for my partner because the subject matter is very broad and constantly in flux. Having a course facilitated by someone currently immersed in the current technology of recording and producing would also be a benefit for a university.

Currently I work as an administrator at the University of Tennessee (UT) in the Psychology Department. I've worked at UT in some capacity for the last fifteen years, and in that time I've witnessed a transformation in the way that universities approach technology, online technology in particular. The experience of being an undergraduate student when there were no online components, and then a master's student taking only online courses ten years later has given me a front row seat to this technology transformation for students. My creative background is in music performance, with later expertise in recording, both my own music and the music of others. I currently co-own a recording studio, and my partner and I have witnessed first-hand the immense changes that have taken place in the music business and the recording business in the last twenty years.

I believe in an ethical approach to design, which, to me, means looking at instruction through the lens of universal design. Striving to make instruction easily accessible to the largest possible audience, whether it's by checking websites to see what they look like to people who are color blind, or adding picture text for people using e-readers, is a very worthwhile pursuit. I also believe that developing a process for independent learning is an extremely important thing for a person to do, as it is how I've approached my own learning after I got my degree. While most people will end their formal educations at some point, the opportunity to learn lasts a lifetime. These are some of my core values. The role of facilitator would fit well with these values, as facilitating in the constructivist sense is not so much about telling someone what is right or wrong, but about letting a person's personal understandings and beliefs guide them through the process of finding answers (Reiser, p. 40). With this in mind, my role as facilitator is to encourage people to take the time and make the effort to apply their personal understandings and understandings to answer questions they might not have asked themselves.

Instructional design has multiple pathways that point towards different goals. It is not enough to facilitate learning, you also have to constantly improve performance, both of yourself and of the learner. The tools available for online teaching and learning are always changing, and they should be explored to examine their effectiveness and efficacy. You cannot just create content, you also have to use it and manage it effectively. This spider web of ideas and requirements aligns well with my own values and beliefs about learning and teaching. I am a

firm believer in synthesis of ideas, and I believe that learning in one area should be can be applicable in other areas in unexpected ways. It should not be enough that students feel like they have learned something, they should be able to demonstrate that learning, and that demonstration should apply to real world settings.

There are a variety of places you can find competencies for instructional design and instructional technology. The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) lists indicators of competence in the following areas for instructional designers:

1. Content Knowledge
2. Content Pedagogy
3. Learning Environments
4. Professional Knowledge and Skills
5. Research

There are also a variety of indicators that the AECT uses for these standards, many of which apply to more than one standard (AECT Standards, 2012).

When I judge myself by these standards, I have strengths and weaknesses. I feel I have a strong sense of the ethics, which is an indicator that cuts across all five of the competencies. Managing is another area where I believe I am strong, and it is an indicator that covers all of the competencies except research. It can refer to managing technology, and also managing people. I have had experience with this in the recording studio as well as in my life as a UT, both as a student, and an administrator.

As for areas for improvement, I would like to get more experience using online teaching tools and multimedia instruction. One way to get experience might be to start with short demonstration videos that could be posted online. The process of writing and producing those videos would help me develop content as well as get comfortable with the tools. I could pilot pieces of a course with musician friends who are interested in the subject, and use their feedback to evaluate the course's effectiveness.

I plan to continue my professional development post-master's degree through courses at the university, as well as through independent learning. The internet has been extremely helpful for this learning, as there is a wide array of discussion boards, articles, and videos largely available online covering a broad range of subjects. I am already a faithful reader of TapeOp, which is a magazine for studio owners and engineers; it has articles and interviews with other people in the field, and an occasional reader of Sound on Sound, which is a similar publication. It might also be helpful to join a professional teaching association like AECT. Ultimately, I'm looking to develop the depth of my knowledge, both in music and in instructional design, and use my skills to help others achieve their learning objectives.

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