

In my professional circle, I'm a problem solver. I like to work with and lead teams. In my early career, I was the director of operations for a video production company. My duties included recruiting, training, and workflow for all stages of the production process. Part of that job was to lead a team of 10-15 highly skilled video editors and post-production professionals. I am not the best video editor, but I can communicate goals, understand problems, and relate through the common language of the profession. That career is far behind me, but it is the type of IDT professional I want to become. In Reiser & Dempsey, they mention that the ability to build quality relationships is paramount to be an effective manager and "Leaders function more as innovators, visionaries, trust builders, and influencers of people." (2018, p.113)

I am a teacher and will always be a teacher at heart. Whether that is teaching a student the best way to learn a concept, teaching a colleague a more efficient way to achieve a goal, or teaching an employee the skills to develop as a professional and move on to bigger and better things. I'm a teacher at heart but I am focusing my IDT career on leading, researching, or managing. *Educational Technology: A Definition With Commentary* has the first definition I've seen of what management can be in the field of IDT (Januszewski & Molenda, 2008, p. 9). I try to be a changemaker wherever I go. I build new models and improve processes. As an advisor for the office of Student Media I was tasked with training students to create more digital content. Within a few years I was able to work with dozens of students to help them create over 500 videos reaching thousands of people. Student are now more confident, and this is leading them to engaging careers. My long-term goal is to be a leader and a manager while understanding multiple aspects of the field. I enjoy doing a little bit of everything and also want to be involved with research related to IDT. This will continue to round out my experience and ability to communicate effectively with multiple audiences and customers.

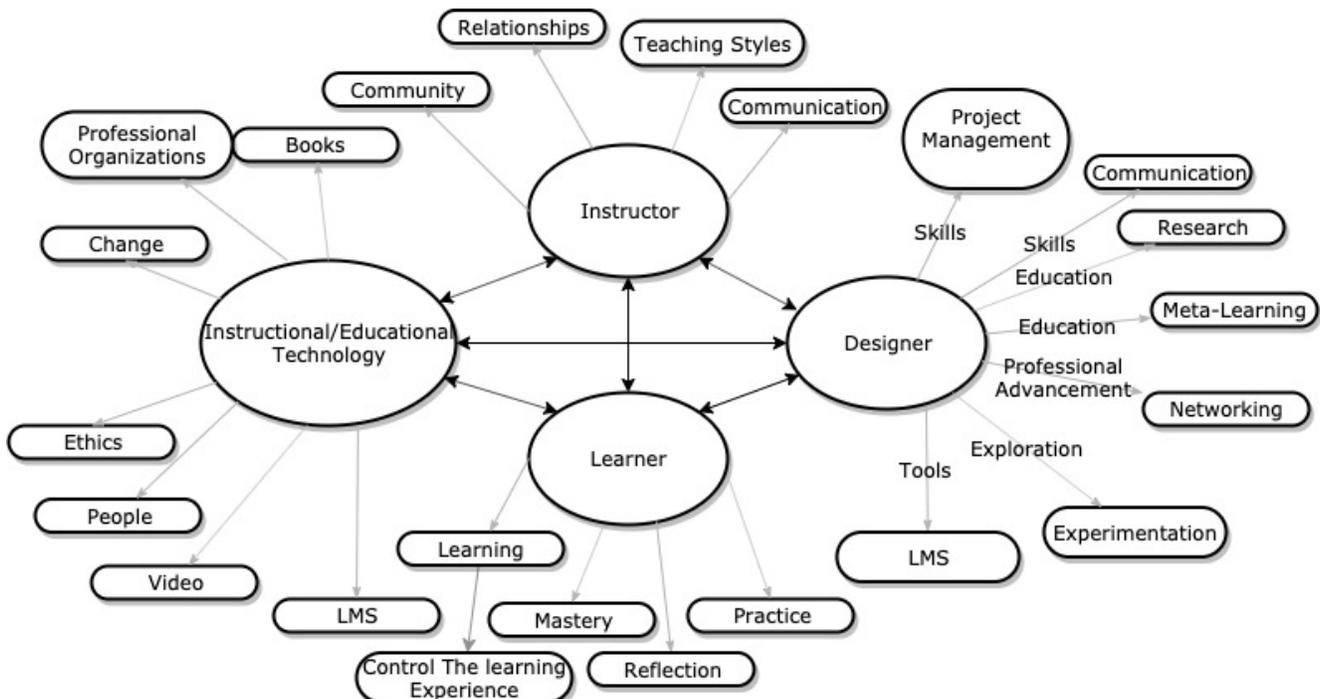


Figure 1 - A concept map defining the field of instructional design and technology as a relationship of all four with key concepts and overlapping components.

Being a manager requires one to be a good communicator, have an innate understanding of the field, and a degree of empathy to be able to build meaningful relationships. This is how I was able to be an effective manager in the past and these skills are transferrable across professional sectors. A good manager should be able to connect and put themselves in multiple positions to be able to objectively reflect on the current situation. I know I can't just jump into a management role in IDT. I will need to be a designer ready to put in the work first. If I never experience the problems a design has, how will I develop the skills to solve those problems and improve processes. Building relationships has been a critical part of my personal and professional growth. I understand the value of it now and understand how important it is in the IT-online program for both educational relationships and future professional ones.

I am a good manager. I can communicate with people effectively and coordinate a team. I don't shy away from a challenge because that's what drives me. What I do need to improve on is my lack of knowledge in this field. Like I said earlier, a broad, but detailed, knowledge of instructional design and technology is critical to be an effective and successful manager. Through the process of building this knowledge, I will also build the relationships needed to grow and develop in the field.

My next step to develop as a professional in IDT is to attend conventions, join professional organizations, and continue to learn from peers, instructors or professional colleagues. Conventions are an excellent opportunity to get valuable facetime with other professionals in the field. There are also opportunities to network with vendors and employers. Not to mention specific professional development classes and workshops that are usually scheduled during these conventions. Without even attending the convention, AECT has a number of resources directly on their website. Specifically, there are two divisions (emerging learning technologies, Graduate student assembly) that will get me involved quickly and start putting my name out there. It's an easy way to start communicating and sharing knowledge. These relationships are invaluable when researching, discussing current problems and looking for new work-related opportunities. As I continue the 4-year IT-online program I'll have an opportunity to meet a wider variety of students as it seems a number of them are in the 2-year program. This will help me reflect on what I've learned through class and share it with others. I've already seen value in taking IT525 as my first class and reflecting with students that are taking IT521 as their first class. This helps me process and get closer to an "active use level" (Januszewski & Molenda, 2008, p. 5) of understanding topics.

REFERENCES

Januszewski, A., Molenda, M., & Association for Educational Communications and Technology (Eds.). (2008). Educational technology: A definition with commentary. New York, NY: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Reiser, R. A., & Dempsey, J. V. (Eds.). (2017). Trends and issues in instructional design and technology (Fourth edition). Boston: Pearson.