

Laura A. Sheets

# Instructional design

## Resources for online learning

Librarians, perhaps more than most professionals, understand the meaning of “other duties as assigned” in our job descriptions. Frequently, we are tasked with quickly learning a new technology, process, or even a new discipline with little support for training. As academia evolves and the priorities of administrations shift, so do our job duties. Although stressful, it has resulted in what I believe to be the strongest asset of librarianship and librarians: flexibility. We are quick learners, early adopters, and will (usually) roll with the punches.

As my job responsibilities as an instruction librarian were evolving and the frequency of instruction design librarian job postings increasing, I enrolled in an instructional design (ID) and technology graduate certificate program in 2017. It turned out to be a smart career move, but I also discovered that I enjoyed the ID process. It even benefited my classroom teaching. Since receiving this level of training or education is not feasible for all of us, I have collected ID resources to assist anyone thrown into this job responsibility or for those who are curious to learn more.

Instructional design consists of two subsections: the cognitive science of learning, specifically how people learn from visual or aural media (like videos, tutorials, or any object that you watch or listen to), and the design of online learning experiences for maximum retention and learning. Although ID is typically associated with online education, it applies to much more: web and graphic design, accessibility, the scholarship of teaching and learning, even LibGuides. If

designing online courses (or learning objects) from scratch is not part of your job duties, the principles of ID can help all librarians create and maintain high-quality instructional resources for our students and faculty.

If you are new to ID, review the learning theories before moving on to the processes and software of designing online learning experiences. Some of the resources are provided by for-profit ID companies, but still include helpful information and resources.

### Nonprofit resources

- **Instructional Design.org.** Created and managed by two ID professionals, [InstructionalDesign.org](http://InstructionalDesign.org) gives readers a foundational view of the theory of ID, focusing on learning concepts and theories, ID models, and learning domains (including both disciplines and learning skills, such as problem solving or reading). The only information missing, when comparing to other sites listed here, is the discussion of hardware and software applications used in the ID process. The weakness of [InstructionalDesign.org](http://InstructionalDesign.org) lies in its models: although the list appears to be comprehensive, only a few of those listed include a description of the model. Although the breadth of information listed is notable, the depth of the information is lacking. If you're looking for a site to quickly look up

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terms or concepts, [InstructionalDesign.org](http://www.instructionaldesign.org) is a good site to bookmark. *Access:* <https://www.instructionaldesign.org/>.

## InstructionalDesign.org

- **Instructional Design Central.** The strengths of Instructional Design Central include thorough explanations of various instructional design models and ID process templates, such as needs analysis, learning design planning, and storyboarding. Most of the templates are fee-based, although there are some available free of charge. Since Instructional Design Central is training-based (not education-based), the site focuses on adult learning theory (or andragogy), which can be helpful in a higher education setting. Their blog discusses trends and technologies in ID, as well as the job market. You can search the blog by topic or narrow down by a subject or tag. Since founder and owner Travis Jordan exclusively writes the blog, it is limited in its scope, but the search tools are helpful. *Access:* <https://www.instructionaldesigncentral.com/>.



- **The eLearning Coach.** The eLearning Coach, a site managed by ID consultant and author Connie Malamed, contains a massive amount of elearning resources for both new and seasoned instructional designers. I appreciate the wide range of resources, including both the cognitive science and its practical field applications. Malamed recommends helpful external resources, such as stock photo and graphic editing sites, and



reviews ID books, hardware, and software. Malamed's design of the site is exceptional (as we would expect), with intuitive use of categories and tabs to help you find what you need. *Access:* <http://thelearningcoach.com/>.

- **The eLearning Guild.** Driven by its members, the eLearning Guild claims to be the "oldest . . . source of information, networking, and community for eLearning professionals." The Guild creates and curates a wide variety of content, including blogs, recorded webinars, conference materials, and software reviews. The robust search options allow users to filter content by source type and topic. The eLearning Guild curates its own research library on ID, including case studies, presentations, research reports, white papers, and more. Also included is information on upcoming ID conferences and online trainings. Since the content here is advanced, the Guild may not be the best place for beginning instructional designers but is a treasure trove of information for those practicing ID or looking to become more involved in the profession. *Access:* <https://www.elearningguild.com/>.

### For-profit resources

- **Lynda.com/LinkedIn Learning.** Though not technically a free resource, many institutions (and public libraries) offer Lynda/LinkedIn Learning to their employees and communities. Lynda includes a robust offering of ID courses and videos ranging from basic to advanced. Since Lynda was incorporated into LinkedIn, users can also display completed course badges on their LinkedIn profile. The most useful videos teach ID software (i.e., Articulate) or other software used in multimedia projects (i.e., Camtasia). These courses can be a lifesaver when you need to learn a new technology quickly. Do not ignore the theory-based videos, though. They provide brief but thorough explanations of the theory and practice of ID, especially if you are new to the field. *Access:* <https://>

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“Academic Librarian Publishing Productivity: An Analysis of Skills and Behaviors Leading to Success” by Camielle Crampsie, Tina Neville, and Deborah Henry. Scholarly publishing continues to be a prominent expectation for many academic librarians. This survey explores characteristics, behaviors, motivations, institutional supports, and educational opportunities that help library practitioners become successful authors. It also looks at perceived confidence in research skills of both novice and experienced librarians. Many librarians show confidence in research activities related to their overall job assignments (literature searching, writing, etc.) but find more sophisticated research skills, such as statistical analysis more challenging. Findings indicate that having additional graduate research experience beyond the library degree, time-management skills, and collaboration with other researchers may provide useful benefits.

“Information Literacy’s Influence on Undergraduates’ Learning and Development: Results from a Large Multi-Institutional Study” by Kevin Fosnacht. This paper investigated the reliability and validity of the National Survey of Student Engagement’s Experiences with Information Literacy module, an assessment instrument

developed in collaboration with a group of instructional librarians. After identifying three information literacy-related factors in the module, it assessed the relationship between the factors and students’ engagement in Higher-Order Learning and Reflective and Integrative Learning activities and students perceived gains. The results from these analyses indicated that information literacy activities were positively and significantly correlated with student engagement and students’ perceived gains.

“Core Knowledge and Specialized Skills in Academic Libraries” by Laura Saunders. Academic libraries are challenged to keep pace with major changes and trends in the fields of library and information science and higher education generally. Through a nationwide survey of information professionals and LIS faculty, this study explores the knowledge, skills, and abilities currently in demand for academic librarians and compares them to that expected of information professionals in other areas of the field. The results show a strong emphasis on interpersonal and communication skills as well as certain domain knowledge. The results also suggest some significant differences between expectations for academic librarians compared to other information professionals. ❧

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[www.linkedin.com/learning](http://www.linkedin.com/learning) (or through your local library or academic institution).



- **The Rapid eLearning Blog.** Tom Kuhlman, an ID professional and the manager of Articulate Software’s user community, writes the Rapid eLearning Blog. Although housed by Articulate Software, you do not have to be a customer to read the blog. The posts are general and not exclusively focused on using the software, so it is helpful for anyone designing learning experiences. The focus lies on practical ID tips and techniques, such as using vid-

eos in learning management systems or adding captions to videos or live presentations. What I find most helpful are the course examples and scenarios. Browsing through existing learning objects and courses can spark inspiration for your  
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of the many Articulate-sponsored blogs. Check out all of them at <https://community.articulate.com/>. Access: <https://blogs.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/>. ❧

