An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom

Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career

by

Amy Eno

A dissertation

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To the Graduate Faculty:

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Amy Eno find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

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RE: Study Number IRB-FY2023-83: An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career

Dear Ms. Eno:

Thank you for your responses to a previous review of the study listed above. I agree that this study qualifies as exempt from review under the following guideline: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording).

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
This letter is your approval, please, keep this document in a safe place.

Notify the HSC of any adverse events. Serious, unexpected adverse events must be reported in writing within 10 business days.

You are granted permission to conduct your study effective immediately. The study is not subject to renewal.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Tom Bailey (208-282-2179; fax 208-282-4723; email: humsubj@isu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Ralph Baergen, PhD, MPH, CIP
Human Subjects Chair

Dedication

To Boo, Moo, and You. Together, the world shines a little brighter every day.

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An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career

Dissertation Abstract – Idaho State University (2023)

The field of instructional design and technology (IDT) has become an alternative career path for many former K-12 classroom teachers who have left the teaching profession. The purpose of this study was to determine the transferable skills, skills gaps, and their impacts on former K-12 educators who have made this career transition. A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was used for this study. A quantitative survey was used to identify the top five skills used by IDT professionals and received 109 responses. Results of the survey indicated that the five skills used most were working with subject matter experts, developing learning assets, using e-learning software and tools, applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning, and designing storyboards.

The qualitative research followed a phenomenological design to collect the lived experiences of ten K-12 classroom teachers who have transitioned into the IDT career field and used the quantitative data to shape the focus of the research questions. Interviews were conducted via Zoom in a semi-structured interview format. After an inductive and deductive coding process, seven major themes along with subthemes were identified regarding the transferrable skills and skills gaps between K-12 teaching and IDT career fields. Identifying the transferrable skills illustrated how transitioning teachers can successfully adapt their current skillset to adult learning environments as well as appropriately target upskilling in weaker areas to meet the needs of the IDT field. Results also showed this career transition had a positive effect on participants overall job satisfaction and career outlook.

Chapter I: Introduction

In the 1920s and 1930s, researchers first noted that turnover in the teaching profession was a significant problem for American schools (Almack, 1970). Unfortunately, this seems to be a systemic issue that continues to increase, especially in recent years. The National Education Union (2018) conducted a nationwide survey of K-12 teachers in 2017 and the results were staggering as 81% of respondents conveyed that they have considered leaving teaching in the last year. According to Gardner-McTaggart (2021), "this figure is striking, and points to a career where the stifling of individual creativity and intuition has combined dangerously with rigid workloads, resulting in a dissatisfying work experience" (p. 16).

It is not surprising then, that the last decade of teacher attrition rates has continued to rise, albeit not to 81%. However, in 2021, jobs in the education sector had the highest rates of people quitting compared to any other industry (Dill, 2022), and "the percentage of teachers leaving the profession—known as 'leavers'—has increased substantially over the past two decades: 5.1% of public-school teachers left the workforce in 1992, while 8.4% left in 2005" (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 5). Of that, 8% leave teaching for other professions outside of the K-12 educational system (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Statement of the Problem

Although it is difficult to find research on where teachers go when they change careers, this topic has been gaining more traction since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. According to Anders (2022), a senior editor for LinkedIn, career data from their website in 2021 and 2022 shows thousands of teachers are walking away from education, a career many of them have loved for a long time, to pursue different careers in various sectors. K-12 educators are finding that their core skills, such as empathy, multitasking, stress management, quick absorption of new

tasks, and strong organizational skills, can easily transfer to roles outside of traditional elementary and secondary education (Anders, 2022; Dill, 2022).

LinkedIn data highlights that some of the most common career pivots for former K-12 educators include instructional coaches, software engineers, administrative assistants, or independent entrepreneurs (Anders, 2022). Instructional coaches are just one job title associated with the overall field of instructional design and technology (IDT), which is an essential and growing career field in both higher education and corporate settings (North et al., 2021). Besides instructional coaches, IDT roles and common job titles include e-learning developers, learning system designers, or most commonly, instructional designers. Instructional designers can work in a variety of industries and are tasked with creating effective learning programs for their chosen industry (Klein & Kelly, 2018; North et al., 2021).

Since classroom teachers are tasked with creating effective learning experiences for their students, and yet are often leaving the teaching profession, the field of IDT has become an alternative career path for many former classroom educators. Researching this information is difficult, however, since one would only know about this trend being actively involved in these career fields and seeing evidence of this movement online. There is currently no existing research on teachers transitioning specifically to IDT, which means that one cannot determine any commonalities among these individuals or how their skills have transferred or adapted when making this transition.

Purpose of the Study

The goal of this mixed methods explanatory sequential study was to analyze the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career. The study collected quantitative

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data to focus on the five most common skills used by current IDT professionals, and the qualitative research questions examined how, if at all, these skills transferred and adapted between the two careers, what skills gaps existed, and if using transferable skills led to the same personal fulfillment as their teaching career.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

(1) What are the five most common skills used by active instructional design and technology professionals?

(2) What instructional design and technology (IDT) skills did participants use while working as a K-12 classroom teacher?

(3) Were any of the five most common job skills used by active instructional design and technology professionals used while working as a K-12 classroom teacher?

(4) Did participant's past professional experiences as a K-12 classroom teacher develop any of these five identified instructional design and technology (IDT) skills?

(5) What skills gaps did participants have when transitioning to an IDT role?

(6) In what ways, if any, does the use of transferable skills in an IDT role allow for the same intrinsic and altruistic fulfillment that originally led them to K-12 teaching?

(7) How did extrinsic motivators, such as pay, environment, perceived respect, and job market influence choosing IDT as their new career?

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the instructional design and technology (IDT) career field is defined as the individuals that are responsible for the learning and development solutions

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within an organization. Specifically, these individuals use systematic design processes to present instruction and/or use technology to improve learning (Klein & Kelly, 2018).

Since there is no standard model or framework for assigning job titles to positions within the IDT career field, this study uses the term IDT to encompass a variety of job titles, such as instructional designer, instructional technologist, curriculum developer, or training specialist, among others (Klein & Kelly, 2018; North et al., 2021).

Instructional design and technology skills are defined as the skills IDT professionals should possess to be effective in creating the processes and frameworks that cultivate learning, maximizing individual performance, and developing the knowledge and potential of employees (Talent Development Capability Model, 2020).

K-12 educator or K-12 teacher are the terms used for a classroom teacher who has taught a subject or multiple subjects to students in any grade between kindergarten and twelfth.

Transitioning teacher refers to a K-12 educator who wants to leave the profession and pursue a new career outside of the K-12 education environment.

Research Design

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was used for this study. This research design involves a two-phase data collection process (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative data collection involved the creation and distribution of a survey using the Association for Talent Development Capability Model (ATD Model). The survey was posted for one week to the researcher's online social media platforms, which specifically targeted IDT professionals, to solicit volunteer sampling. Using descriptive statistics, which report on measures of central tendency such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations of the data

(Creswell & Creswell, 2018), the survey data was analyzed to identify the top five most frequently used job-specific skills by current IDT professionals in the field.

The qualitative research followed a phenomenological design to collect the lived experiences of K-12 classroom teachers who have transitioned into the IDT career field. In order to find eligible participants, information was posted to the same social media platforms as the quantitative survey to collect volunteer sampling for the qualitative interviews. This post listed the eligibility requirements, a brief overview of the study objectives, and a survey link. The survey link ensured participants met the eligibility requirements and collected data on their demographics and applicable background information. Once survey data was reviewed and ineligible candidates were removed, a sampling of 8-10 participants were chosen for semi-structured interviews using Zoom. The selected participants were systematically chosen to represent an appropriate cross-section of different demographics and background experiences, which would allow for a diverse population to be represented. After the interviews were conduced, the data was coded, analyzed, and themes and subthemes were identified. Connections between categories and themes were used to further understand how transferrable skills, skills gaps, and the connection between transferrable skills and personal fulfillment have impacted former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to IDT roles.

Limitations

Due to the mixed-methods nature of this study, potential limitations existed within both phases of this research. The participant collection methodology was similar for both phases and used social media as a means of selecting volunteer participants that met the research criteria, but using social media has its own limitations. First, it was possible that although participants must self-report on their backgrounds to ensure they met the established criteria, there was no means

of verifying their statements. For the qualitative research phase, it was possible during interviews to filter out or remove a response if the participant was not eligible for the study, but in the quantitative research phase there was no other means of verifying the participant's legitimacy besides self-reporting. Also due to the anonymity of the quantitative survey, there was no data collected to verify that the person had followed the instructions to complete the survey only once. Although there was clear instructions and the survey explicitly asked participants if they meet the criteria before they were able to move forward to the data collection, there was potential for misrepresentation.

An additional limitation to using social media was that it was only seen by those who are active both on the individual platform and also within the IDT target audience group or forum. Although it was posted to several forums, some of which have thousands of members, this may have limited certain age groups, demographics, or individuals in the IDT field who are not active on social media or actively participate in these online forums. These limitations led to the potential to have improper representation of the target population, which "might hinder the researcher for achieving its desired aims and objectives" (Chetty, 2016, para 2) and could only suggest that these skills are the top five for the general population of instructional designers.

There was also the issue of informed consent for online data collection. Due to the lack of physical interaction, the researcher was unable to answer any questions or clarify anything within the online informed consent statement. The researcher's contact information was listed for questions or concerns to help alleviate this issue, but it was still a limitation to the quantitative phase. For the qualitative phase, informed consent was addressed both online and in-person via the live Zoom interview.

In the quantitative phase, there was also a limitation in using the ATD Model and more specifically, its Professional Capacity Domain and the corresponding eight capabilities and 35 skills statements. At the time of this study, there was no established proficiency standard for instructional design and technology professionals. Therefore, although very similar in nature, there are a lot of independent professional learning and development organizations that have created their own capability model to fill this gap (North et al., 2021). The ATD Model is well-recognized (Bhatia et al., 2019) and includes foundational job-specific competencies that IDT professionals should have (Klein & Kelly, 2018), but it is not the only model that exists, and none have an established industry validation or accreditation. There are several, each with a varying scope based on the target audience or goals of the model, such as those meant for instructional design academics, exploring instructional design tools, or moving from novice to advanced (Guerra-Lopez & Joshi, 2021; Munzenmaier, 2014; Wang et al., 2021). The ATD Model and subsequent Professional Capability Domain were chosen because it mostly closely relates the job-specific skills in the IDT profession and best fit the context of this research. However, it is important to note that other models exist that may have different representations of IDT job-specific skills. Therefore, choosing the ATD Model allowed the researcher to narrow this study into a specific focus with as much validation as possible given the lack of a single competency standard or licensing body in the IDT field.

Using phenomenology for the qualitative phase, the researcher was aware of the limitations that exist with this research design. First, a sample size of 8-10 participants was anticipated for the data collection. However, in qualitative research, "the sample size is not generally predetermined. The number of participants depends upon the number required to inform fully all important elements of the phenomenon being studied" (Sargeant, 2012, p. 1).

Therefore, the researcher needed to review and adjust based on the findings as they were collected and analyzed to determine the adequate number of interviews to properly reach data saturation.

Additionally, with phenomenological research, it was important for the researcher to fully reflect on her own bias and influences, so they did not affect the outcomes of the study. It can be difficult to establish validity and reliability when using this research approach, so the researcher's positionality was important (Chetty, 2016). As well, it was anticipated that the interviews, which were semi-structured to allow for participants to share their personal, detailed experiences, accumulated large amounts of data for analysis. Therefore, the researcher was keenly aware to both refrain from influencing the participant as they shared their experiences, and also to objectively interpret the data without bias to the conclusions.

Significance of the Study

There is a growing trend of online resources and informal information to assist current or former teachers who are looking to change careers. Those that are currently looking to leave K-12 classroom teaching, but still have a passion for learning and development overall, often stumble upon instructional design and technology as a potential path because they see the parallels between creating adult learning experiences and teaching children. However, in contrast to teaching jobs which require a formal teaching license, IDT jobs do not have an industry license or standard besides general guidance from professional organizations such as ATD (North et al., 2021). Therefore, these transitioning teachers are often unaware of the skills necessary to be successful in an IDT role, what skills they have as a teacher that would help them succeed, and if instructional design and teaching have similar learning and development-oriented responsibilities.

At the time of this study, there was no research studying the transferrable skills and skills gaps between these two career fields, nor does any literature exist studying the overall transition from classroom teaching to the instructional design and technology field. Since IDT is still a relatively ambiguous career field which continues to grow, as well as a common career pivot for former K-12 teachers and other professionals (North et al., 2021), this research is beneficial to those looking to expand programs, training, and education for transitioning teachers. Furthermore, this study gave insight into the K-12 classroom skills that transfer to an IDT role, the ways in which teachers may need to upskill to be successful, and additionally answered if this new career fulfills teachers in the same way as K-12 education since they are able to utilize some skills and education gained and developed while in the classroom.

Theoretical Framework

Career Development Theory

The 'Great Resignation' was a term coined in 2021, in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which detailed the uprooting of the U.S. Labor Market and the largest resignation rate of workers in 20 years (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). The phenomenon of the 'Great Resignation' may have been exacerbated by the pandemic's social, cultural, and political impacts; however, the concept of career development is a continually evolving process that began well before this recent trend (Gothard, 2001). Called Career Development Theory by vocational experts, this theory was created over 100 years ago to show how career trajectory can shape a person's job satisfaction, behavior, success, and personal fulfillment (Jena & Nayak, 2020). In analyzing career paths, this theory "aims to explain why a person might be a good fit for a certain career" (Indeed Editorial Team, 2019, para. 2). It recognizes the importance of cultivating a positive relationship with work, your work environment, and achieving a

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meaningful professional outcome (Jena & Nayak, 2020). However, many of today's organizations have a volatile and unstable environment, which means it's much rarer for an individual to count on a lifetime of employment within a single organization (Eby et al., 2003). This demonstrates the continued importance and relevance of Career Development Theory, and its influences on this study.

Trait and Factor Theory

There are four categories of Career Development Theories that currently exist: personality-trait, psychological structured, decision-situational, and developmental self-concept (Gothard, 2001; Indeed Editorial Team, 2019; Jena & Nayak, 2020). Most relevant to this study is Parsons' (1909) Trait and Factor Theory, which falls into the personality-trait category and is the first reference to Career Development Theory overall, as he is said to be the founder of the vocational guidance movement (Bimrose, 2013; Gothard, 2001). Parsons' book, *Choosing a Vocation*, was published posthumously in 1909, and although many of his concepts still remain relevant to this day, it must be noted that there are outdated concepts within Parsons' work. For example, the book specifically uses "men", "boys" and "he" in reference to most vocations, and there is a chapter specifically devoted to "Occupations for Women" (Parsons, 1909). Additionally, the focus of his book was on vocational coaching for young people to choose a career path using a career counselor, instead of using these concepts for self-guidance which is more prevalent in modern times.

Although a few outdated concepts exist in his original work, the premise behind the Trait and Factor Theory is still the basis for many modern-day career decisions. The theory assumes that people may be matched to an occupation that is a good fit, on the basis that one can measure both a person's talents and the main aspects of a particular job (Bimrose, 2013). Parsons believed

that individuals perform best when in jobs best suited to their abilities, and therefore, their productivity is higher ("Parsons' Theory", 2019). He also believed that if an individual chooses their career so their best abilities and enthusiasms coincide with their daily work, they are laying a foundation for future success and happiness" (Parsons, 1909).

The Trait and Factor Theory theorizes that there is a three-fold approach to the ideal career. First, there must be a thorough understanding of the traits of the individual, such as skills, values, and personality. These would be the intrinsic and altruistic reasons a person may want to pursue a certain career. Second, there must be an understanding of the extrinsic factors of the employment, such as pay, work environment, and labor market. Thirdly, one must recognize the relationship between these two for an ideal match (Gothard, 2001; Jordan, 2019; Parsons, 1909).

The first aspect of this approach, which are the traits of the individual, uses a set of vocational and personal questions, such as what they liked and didn't like about previous jobs, what skills they enjoy using, and what is important to them as a person, to gain insight into the individual's personality and values (Jordan, 2019; Parsons, 1909). When considering a current or former K-12 teacher, many of these questions have probably been answered throughout that person's childhood, education, and career. The intrinsic motivators that led them to classroom teaching, such as their interest in education and learning, their desire to help others, and their patience and adaptability may still exist.

Other career theories, such as Super (1957) and Levinson (1978) that focus on life stages versus career stages, state that many people in their life go through a mid-life period of career transition or establishment. It is likely that they already have a direct understanding of their current skills, values, and personality at this mid-life stage in adulthood, and only self-reflection is needed to see if they are looking for advancement or adjustments (Ornstein et al., 1989).

Those that have analyzed the Trait and Factor Theory, such as Jordan (2019), note that "because of today's complex job market, it's important to help [people] understand and adapt to change. People's interests and circumstances may change throughout their career too, and you might help them look at alternative careers" (para. 8). That was one aim of this study, to explore how instructional design as an alternative career path may utilize similar skills and interests and offer this same intrinsic, personality-matched fulfilment as K-12 teaching.

Additionally, this ties into to the second aspect of Parson's (1909) theory, which is an understanding of the current job market, employment, and environment. In order for a successful match to be made, "data in regard to pay, conditions of labor, chances of advancement, etc. should also be collected and systematized" (Parsons, 1909, p. 9). In today's climate of "The Great Resignation", the current job market is putting jobseekers in the driver's seat. Workers who quit their jobs in 2021 are now employed elsewhere with higher job satisfaction, better pay, promotional opportunities, and a better work and family balance (Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022). However, teaching is a career field that may be on the negative side of that statistic, as a lot of research shows that the profession is greatly declining in both the number of active teachers and work environment satisfaction. Teachers are continually leaving due to both extrinsic and intrinsic aspects, such as lack of pay, advancement, satisfaction, and burnout (Borman & Maritza Dowling, 2008; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Dill, 2022; Gardner-McTaggart, 2021; Moss, 2020; Öztürk et al., 2021; Parker & Menasce Horowitz, 2022; Sainato, 2021; Toropova et al., 2021; Tūtlys et al., 2021).

In contrast, the career outlook of instructional design and technology shows higher average salaries, high levels job satisfaction, career growth, and adaptability (Braverman, 2015; Peck, 2021a, 2021b; Thakuria, 2021; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Furthermore,

according to a large survey of over 100 IDT hiring managers, very few IDT jobs require applicants to have any formal education beyond a bachelor's degree. Instead, many hiring managers prefer that a candidate comes into the role experienced, but they noted that if one doesn't have IDT-specific experience, the interdisciplinary nature of the field makes it very plausible to draw relevant skills from their previous positions (Peck, 2021a). This demonstrates a very open and malleable job market for IDT, as using transferable skills for success can often come from various modalities and a formal education and experience is not always needed to successfully transition to an IDT role.

This study aimed to reflect on the final aspect of Parson's (1909) three-fold Trait and Factor Theory, which is that in order to find a successful career, there must be a strong match between the person's personality and characters with the current job market and outlook of that career. Given the current state of teaching, coupled with a more positive outlook of instructional design and technology as a career field, this study explored if the use of transferrable skills gained from teaching, paired with the more positive environment of an IDT professional role, leads transitioning K-12 educators to a more ideal career match within instructional design and technology.

Chapter II: Literature Review

In the modern era, it is much more common for employees to change careers throughout their lifetime instead of staying at the same job until retirement. Details from a national Pew Research Study, outlined in Parker and Menasce Horowitz (2022), showed that low pay, a lack of advancement opportunities, and perceived disrespect were the top reasons why many quit their jobs last year. This mindset is also felt by teachers. Throughout the different stages of life, teachers have different goals, dilemmas, and desires as they grow and change (Zamir, 2018). The purpose of this literature review was to examine the potential impact of one's career and career change by exploring the K-12 classroom teaching profession and the field of instructional design and technology (IDT).

The literature will first explore the K-12 teaching profession, motivation, 'burnout' and attrition, showcasing how the teaching career and teacher satisfaction rates are leading classroom teachers away from the profession. This leads to exploration of the IDT field, as it is continually growing, yet is a "broad, non-uniform field" (Smith et al., 2006). This IDT exploration was investigated by reviewing literature surrounding the instructional design and technology profession, including the history, ambiguity, general preparation and skills, and career field. Finally, the connection between teaching and IDT is explored, leading to gaps in the literature and the need for research on the impacts of leaving K-12 teaching for a career in IDT.

K-12 Teaching Profession

When growing up, most children have very few role models or adult influences outside of their own family members. However, once they enter the school system, they have at least one consistent adult authority figure for at least eight months out of every year of their childhood. These are their teachers, and they are crucial to the success of a society's educational system and

future, as high-quality teachers correlate greatly to student success (Balyer & Ozcan, 2014).

Teaching is often seen as a noble but self-sacrificing profession, where one makes countless

sacrifices for what many consider an inadequate wage (Moss, 2020). Studies that have looked at

what motivates college students to choose teaching as a profession often look to identify the

specific extrinsic, intrinsic, and altruistic motives for choosing a teaching career (Balyer &

Ozcan, 2014; Bergmark et al., 2018; Thomson et al., 2012). According to Bergmark et al. (2018):

> *Extrinsic* motives involve aspects not inherent in the immediate work, such as salary,
>
> status, and working conditions. *Intrinsic* motives encompass inherent aspects, relating to
>
> the meaning of teaching and the passion for teaching, subject knowledge and expertise.
>
> *Altruistic* motives entail perceptions of teaching as a valuable and important profession
>
> and the desires to support children's development and to make a difference in society. (p.
>
> 265)

It was implied by these researchers that intrinsic motives are some of the main reasons for

choosing teaching, and "many newcomers to the field are still attracted by the dream of helping

children rather than for reasons of security or salary" (Help! Teacher Can't Teach!, 1980, p. 54).

These motivations can include interest an instruction, the desire to impact and benefit youth,

making a difference, helping others, career security, work schedule, and love of learning (Canlı

& Karadağ, 2021). However, the teaching career as a whole includes many factors not shown to

college students from the onset of their preparation program, such as "potentially stressful

interactions with parents, administrators, counselors, and other teachers, contend with relatively

low pay and shrinking school budgets, and ensure students meet increasingly strict standards of

accountability" (Wood & McCarthy, 2002, p. 6). Therefore, pre-service teachers focusing on

solely these intrinsic and altruistic motives may leave the occupation when reality does not match their expectations (Bergmark et al., 2018).

Current Climate and Job Satisfaction

When evaluating the current climate surrounding the teaching profession in the United States, the outlook could be described as poor (Moss, 2020), and the same diminishing prestige of the teaching profession and dissatisfying working environment is leading to the same outlook internationally (Toropova et al., 2021). Unfortunately, this outlook is not a new phenomenon and has grown in the last decade. The state-wide teacher strikes and walkouts in 2018, which included West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona, as well as large scale protests in Colorado, Kentucky and South Carolina demonstrated the collective struggles of America's teachers for better pay and working conditions. Although these strikes led to national attention and better contracts, the media attention was genuinely positive, but still mixed in how it was received by the public (Will, 2021).

Unfortunately, these issues are not just about salary and benefits, but the overall ability for teachers to do their jobs effectively. The rise in political controversies have steadily leaked into our public schools. In 2017, Americans saw one of the most contentious Cabinet nomination battles in memory when Betsy DeVos was appointed Secretary of Education by the Trump Administration (Kamenetz, 2017). For four years, the United States had an education secretary that believed in school choice, which essentially meant taking support away from traditional public schools and instead outwardly supported options and financial vouchers for charter schools, private schools, and home schooling (Kamenetz, 2017).

Additionally, aspects such as anti-LGBTQ accommodations in schools, white supremacy, and anti-Muslim and anti-Latino rhetoric all dramatically influence education, educational

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policies, and the overall culture in schools (Blumenreich et al., 2018). Blumenreich et al. (2018) also found that "teacher educators across the United States are adapting their practices to cope with how this [negative rhetoric] and these threats affect our lives and the lives of those in our communities and schools" (p. 1). This concept was even prevalent in the 2021 Virginia governor's race, when a huge media campaign centered on teaching ideologies such as Critical Race Theory (CRT) and parent involvement in schools (Hess, 2021). Voters claimed that frustrations with school closures, district bureaucracies, and extremist ideologies were large deciding factors in an incredibly tight election. This type of education policy and media attention hasn't been addressed as strongly in a state-wide election for the past two decades (Hess, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic also heightened issues with job satisfaction for teachers, since "many teachers' unions received some criticism for pushing to keep schools closed due to COVID-19 safety concerns, leading many teachers to say they felt as if the public had turned on them" (Will, 2021, p. 4). A study by Alves and Lopes (2021) found that during the pandemic, teachers' professional well-being decreased and they noted an unsatisfactory outlook regarding the future of the profession. They also found that teachers with more years of service felt the greatest negative perceptions of the profession. Moreover, when studying the changes in teacher stress during the pandemic, Oducado et al. (2020) found that those who perceived a greater risk of COVID-19 on their personal health or the health of their family had much higher stress levels. Teacher stress is important to consider, since both teacher stress and job satisfaction can have serious consequences for teacher well-being and educational quality (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Unfortunately, these issues with teacher job satisfaction and educational climate are not specific to the United States. The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), which

uses representation samples from 34 counties/regions and more than 104,330 teachers, examines a large number of issues related to the teaching profession, including teacher satisfaction (Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). Teachers in England find they have less autonomy over their work than employees in other professions, and seven out of 10 disagreed that they have the autonomy they need to do a good job (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). In Portugal, a majority of teachers would like to leave the profession, their motivation has decreased, and TALIS found over 95% noted that bureaucracy and external control over their work had increased (Lopes & Oliveira, 2020). Respondents also noted that they believe the media and political decisions have lowered appreciation of the teaching profession. In Sweden, Toropova et al. (2021) note that although it is difficult to globally compare teacher situations across national contexts, "it appears that the effects of the neo-liberal policies on the Swedish education system, and teacher situation in particular, have been akin to those in the United States and the UK" (p. 73). With this type of global educational climate, it is not surprising that many teachers are feeling the negative effects and rates in job satisfaction continue to decline.

Teacher Attrition Rates and 'Burnout'

The effects of the negative climate and overall dissatisfaction are often categorized as a feeling of 'burnout'. 'Burnout' is a term used when one feels emotionally exhausted and no longer has the energy to engage in their daily activities, often stemming from workload or workplace conflict (Öztürk et al., 2021). Teacher burnout can manifest itself in many ways, including lack of empathy and cynicism, decreased personal achievement and professional satisfaction that lead to feelings of meaninglessness and resignation (Tūtlys et al., 2021). According to Santoro (2019), if teachers are burning out, "it is because they are asked to do too much with insufficient support and low salaries" (p. 28). However, using the term 'burnout' for

teachers implies the teacher is the issue, not the system. This leads policy makers and others to create ineffectual remedies and not address the real problem (Santoro, 2019), ultimately leading teachers to find other ways to help address their problems.

It is not surprising then that many teachers, no longer feeling satisfied in their career, have chosen resignation as one way to increase their job satisfaction. According to two U.S. nationally representative surveys from 2012 and 2013 that identify trends in teacher attrition rates, the overall national teacher attrition rate hovers around 8%. This is an increase from 5.1% in 1995. Although that seems like a trivial increase, it amounts to about 90,000 more teachers leaving annually (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Additionally, what was already a major issue has been made even worse by the effects of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Online news articles with titles such as "How the pandemic has changed teachers' commitment to remaining in the classroom" (Zamarro et al., 2021), "'Exhausted and underpaid': teachers across the US are leaving their jobs in numbers" (Sainato, 2021), and "Florida teachers are quitting their jobs in droves — and who can blame them?" (Alvarez, 2021) had been commonplace for several years. Most highlighted the major issues in education that are continually addressed, but additionally draw attention to the exacerbated stress caused by COVID-related policies, such as anti-masking and anti-quarantine advocacy, making teachers feel more at risk than ever during an already turbulent time and forcing them to leave (Alvarez, 2021). According to a report by the U.S. Labor Department, 30,000 teachers resigned in September 2021 alone, citing reasons such as covering for others during severe staff storages and a lack of substitute teachers (Shamlian, 2021). Although Alvarez (2021) stated that new, young teachers are prone to leaving, evidence from Borman and Maritza Dowling (2008) suggested that "teachers with presumably better training, who have earned a graduate degree, are

somewhat more likely than those with lesser training to leave teaching" (p. 396), meaning these individuals, whether new or experienced educators, have enough education and skills to be marketable in other industries and perhaps find a more suitable profession that utilizes their skills.

Instructional Design and Technology (IDT) Career Field

Instructional design (ID) first surfaced during World War II, when several psychologists and educators were asked to conduct research on developing effective training methods for the military. After the war, many psychologists, such as Gagne and Briggs, continued this work on instructional methods to help people learn more effectively (Curry, Johnson, & Peacock, 2020). The 1940s and 1950s lead to the idea of looking at learning as a system, such as analysis, design and evaluation procedures, behavioral objectives, such as those written by Bloom and his colleagues, and in the 1960s, Mager popularized the idea of using objectives (Reiser, 2001). However, it was during the 1990s when several developments occurred to greatly impact instructional design principles and practices (Reiser, 2001), such as the technology boom, growing interest in different learning theories, and new interest in using the internet for distance learning.

Throughout this history, a number of definitions have been created by researchers to define the field of instructional design and technology (IDT). Earlier definitions, such as Silber's (1970), suggest within instructional design there are elements of research, design, production, evaluation, system management, materials, techniques, and settings. Reiser (2001) defines the field of IDT as the analysis of performance problems and instructional methods, and the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of these processes with the goal of improving learning and performance, often using instructional media to accomplish these goals. Klein and

Kelly (2018) state IDT has two main elements, "the application of systematic design processes" and "the use of technology to facilitate learning and improve outcomes" (p. 225). These and many other more recent definitions of IDT extend beyond designing and developing instructional solutions and further incorporate both technology and a variety of design processes to create measurable outcomes (Guerra-Lopez & Joshi, 2021). These are just a few of many definitions, but the same themes remain. The goal of the instructional design and technology field is to create better learning and performance outcomes. It does this by leveraging resources and analysis methods to design, develop, and evaluate the learning processes within an organization and make recommendations and training programs to better educate their intended audience.

Ambiguity in the Field

One would think that because there are similar definitions of IDT among the research, it would be easy to define a common job title, responsibilities, and job description for anyone pursuing the IDT field. Unfortunately, the relative newness of the instructional design field leaves many instructional designers shrouded in obscurity (Reiser, 2001). This obscurity has included many in the IDT field, in that their roles and responsibilities are always changing based on the current educational priorities within their organizations, or even within the nation or the world. Klein and Kelly (2018) noted this difficulty in their review of 393 job announcements for instructional design and technology jobs, which found 35 different job titles across 28 industries for similar roles. Some of these industries include non-profit organizations, higher education, business, government/military, K-12 education, and healthcare (Larson & Lockee, 2008; North et al., 2021). Even within the same institution, the profession itself may be described with different titles, roles and responsibilities (North et al., 2021; Sharif & Cho, 2015).

Sharif and Cho (2015) also state that "the different roles that instructional designers play under the name of the instructional design field depend on institutional, organizational strategic plans and instructional designers' personal levels of expertise" (p. 74), meaning even those IDT professionals working side by side in the same organization may have completely different job titles and responsibilities. Some of these include curriculum designer, instructional designer, instructional technologist, performance-improvement consultant and training manager (Klein & Kelly, 2018). Additionally, Richey et al. (2001) include analyst, evaluator, e-learning specialist, and project manager among common IDT roles and responsibilities. This leaves the door open for those outside of the IDT career field, such as K-12 teachers, to look at this vast array jobs, responsibilities, and educational requirements, and make connections to their own everyday work in education, curriculum development, and meeting learning objectives.

Skills and Competencies

With this career ambiguity, several researchers and professional organizations have sought to gain more insight into the day-to-day responsibilities of those serving within these IDT roles and the direct skills they may need to be successful. A study by Cox and Osguthorpe (2003) found that most instructional designers spend time in design work (23%), project management/administrative responsibilities (22%), meetings (14%) and research (12%). Additional time is spent in product reviews, development, teaching, and overhead functions and 2% was attributed to "other", such as analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

There are also professional organizations for instructional designers that have proposed competency models to use as a benchmark of the necessary skills needed for success. A competency model helps identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to design effective instruction (Munzenmaier, 2014). Those organizations include the Association for Educational

Communication & Technology (AECT), Association for Talent Development

(ATD), International Society for Performance Improvement (ISPI), and the International Board

of Standards for Training, Performance, and Instruction (ibstpi). Each of these models has a

varying scope, as articulated by Munzenmaier (2014):

> AECT's model could be used to assess knowledge of instructional technology and higher
>
> education. ISPI's standards identify tools that competent instructional designers should
>
> use to conduct front-end analysis, choose appropriate interventions, and evaluate
>
> effectiveness. ibstpi competencies are divided into categories appropriate to various
>
> stages of an instructional design career: novices should focus on mastering essential
>
> competencies, while experienced IDs might want to specialize in advanced or managerial
>
> competencies needed for the position they desire. ATD members can use the ATD Career
>
> Navigator to assess their current skills and to identify proficiencies they need to master in
>
> order to perform competently in their current or desired position. (p. 21)

Although competency models such as these can be helpful in identifying common skills needed

in IDT jobs, they are still relatively unused by employers, and it is difficult to identify all the

skills needed when transitioning into an IDT career.

North et al. (2021) used the ATD Model specifically to determine how instructional

design is operationalized in various industries, by reviewing 100 IDT online job postings to

compare how they matched to this model. In their analysis, they noted that the five capabilities

detected most were instructional design, training delivery and facilitation, technology

application, communication, and collaboration and leadership. These were mostly related to the

Professional Capacity domain of the ATD Model.

A similar study by Wang et al. (2021) analyzed 1,030 job announcements, but did not compare them to a specific competency model, and found knowledge of instructional design models and principles, e-learning development, online teaching, developing course materials, and creating effective instructional products were the top technical competencies found. For general skills, soft skills, such as collaboration, content development, working with subject matter experts, and oral and written communication skills were the most frequently noted.

Among these identified technical skills, the use of the ADDIE model, which stands for analysis, design, develop, implementation and evaluation, e-learning–authoring software experience, and knowledge of learning theories are often the most frequent (Klein & Kelly, 2018). The ADDIE model seems to be the most recognized model for instructional development among IDT professionals (Bichelmeyer, 2005). Many professional instructional designers use some aspect of ADDIE, or the same general skills associated with ADDIE, in about half of the principles guiding their work (York & Ertmer, 2016). That leaves the other half, which appears to weigh heavily on the soft skills, identified in many of these studies.

In order to effectively analyze the needs of the target learners, coordinate with subject matter experts, and work with organizational stakeholders, those in the IDT field are not able to work in isolation to identify the proper training to impact learning and performance. Howard & Benedicks (2020) found that qualities of good instructional designers include transparency, technical ability, critical self-reflection, and the ability to learn and develop within a team. Additionally, Williams van Rooij (2013) found that when instructional designers are looking for a promotion into instructional design project management, the emphasis on people skills suggests that although technical instructional design skills provide entry into the field, these skills must be accompanied with strong interpersonal skills to successfully advance one's

career. This blurring of the boundaries between technical skills and people skills creates new career pathways for instructional designers but also means that they must be prepared to show how they can contribute to all aspects the field currently demands (Munzenmaier, 2014).

Training and Education

Since IDT jobs in differing industries often vary, there is still some obscurity surrounding the best education, training, and development for those pursuing the instructional design field. There are many higher education programs in the field of IDT, which can come in many forms, such as educational technology, distance education, instructional systems, media, and human performance technology (Arrington & Darabi, 2018). West et al. (2017) explored the academic productivity of IDT university programs and found that program courses fit mostly into the design and development aspects of ADDIE, but for those outside of the ADDIE framework, common course topics included readings related to the IDT field, psychology, human development, writing skills, basic research, and educational technologies.

However, Cox and Osguthrope (2003) found that many of those currently in the field of IDT have not completed any formal coursework in instructional design. This is consistent with what many in the IDT field have witnessed amongst colleagues, professional organizations, and online networks. Many current instructional designers, or those looking to get into the field, sometimes turn to certificate programs, informal online resources, or just leverage their current skillsets to move into an IDT role. In fact, there is even a book called "The Accidental Instructional Designer: Learning Design for the Digital Age" by Bean (2014), who coined the phrase "accidental instructional designer" as those individuals who become instructional designers without any formal education in IDT, and instead are promoted or moved into a training role and likely a subject-matter expert in the field.

In addition, professional organizations such as ATD and ISPI are now offering cross-disciplinary certifications, along with traditional IDT certificate programs, to address both the common technical competencies, learning theories, and instructional design models needed for instructional design, but also the aforementioned soft skills that have shown to be as equally important in the IDT field (Munzenmaier, 2014). This opens the door for others to enter the IDT field, since these employees can work in different settings, have different roles and responsibilities, and have varying levels of formal education. Sharif & Cho (2015) noted that especially in today's climate, due to the global paradigm shift in the technological, social, economic, and cultural context, there is a larger emphasis on diverse and holistic learning skills than ever before. This means that instructional designers, and the educational programs that prepare instructional designers, need to be flexible to respond to the demands of this continually changing professional context.

K-12 Teachers and Instructional Designers

There was a significant gap in the literature connecting K-12 classroom teaching to the IDT field. However, a quick internet search will yield over a dozen results for blogs, informal certificate programs, personal coaching, video walk-throughs and articles that specifically target K-12 classroom teachers who want to transition into instructional design. There is even a non-profit group, "Teaching: A Path to L&D" (https://www.teachlearndev.org), which gives free resume and portfolio coaching to K-12 educators as they navigate into the IDT field. This is not surprising, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic and the growth in online learning. With both schools and corporations expanding their ability to teach online, teachers now have more exposure to both in-person and online educational modalities and instructional design has become even more of a necessity. It is likely the IDT profession will continue to see this same

growth in the next 3 to 5 years, as more K–12 educators and other professionals look to transition into instructional design (North et. al., 2021, p. 723).

Potential Overlapping Skills

"Teachers are not instructional designers" (p.364) is the first line in Kerr's (1981) research article about teacher thinking in instructional design, which immediately catches one's attention. However, he goes on to state that "most teachers have not had formal training in the procedures commonly used by instructional designers; many find it difficult to shift their thinking into instructional design (ID) patterns… but teachers do design instructional materials, just as they design plans for lessons and units they will teach" (p. 364). He then goes on to address that although teachers often do not follow the same natural patterns as laid out in the instructional design world, IDT literature is still "maddeningly vague" (p.376) when describing the mediums, strategy and materials for teaching content, so both instructional designers who use established models and educators who design instruction through naturalistic approaches may just have different paths to the same successes (Kerr, 1981).

Although the overall scope of these careers is different, many of the skills both teachers and instructional designers are equipped with can overlap or be similar in nature. Teachers need not only the subject matter expertise in their given subject or subjects, but are also tasked with creating a conducive learning environment, redesigning and reshaping knowledge, motivation, and knowing appropriate assessment techniques (Seema, 2021). Teachers need to use lectures, media, and visual aids for students with different learning preferences and must hold discussions, experiments, demonstrations, and practices to keep learner's attention (Gultom et al., 2020). Part of teacher preparation programs highlight the need for teachers to effectively articulate measurable learning objectives and design quality assessments to determine if students have

appropriately learned the material (Peters-Burton, 2012). Just like an instructional designer, they need to be able to create appropriate learning experiences that lead to behavioral change. A blog by Skjoldager (2021) lists 15 K-12 teacher skills that would translate well to instructional design, which includes skills such as curriculum planning, understanding an audience, mapping lessons, choosing resources, evaluating learner progress, creating assessments and communicating with others. Like Kerr (1981), Skjoldager (2021) also noted that although teachers may not recognize the instructional design language such as ADDIE, these skills generally align with the steps of this ID model. Concepts such as a needs analysis are performed on a regular basis when new students enter the classroom and previous assessment data is reviewed or pre-tests are given to assess that student's current development level. Teachers are "insightful in analyzing their professional practice and can demonstrate evidence-based decision-making. Teachers draw upon their professional knowledge to plan a course of action and determine goals that improve their practice and student learning" (Kulshrestha & Kshama, 2013, p.31). Other similar skills include time management, flexibility, and love of learning (Skjoldager, 2020).

When it comes to learning technology, research such as Kraglund-Gauthier et al. (2010) and Rozitis (2017) highlighted the lack of preparation that preservice teachers receive in respect to online learning. Rozitis (2017) specifically highlighted that online schoolteachers request instructional design-specific professional development and that teacher training programs should emphasize instructional design competencies. These are pivotal skills, as both asynchronous and synchronous online learning for K-12 students has expanded as more schools have hybrid or online learning options, one-on-one device policies, and integrations with learning management systems (LMSs). Furthermore, there are even completely virtual K-12 schools, which replace a traditional classroom with a fully remote option. These technological changes have impacted the

nature of teacher design work and, according to Kali et al. (2015), "teachers design, re-design, and customize not only analogue, but also technology enhanced learning materials and activities. Here, the term, 'design' is used broadly, to include the process of mapping and/or actually developing specific resources for teaching or learning" (p.173). Studies such as these were before the COVID-19 pandemic, which further forced both experienced and inexperienced teachers to have to use LMSs and online delivery formats to create instruction for at least a year, if not more, while schools were forced to close or adapt to pandemic restrictions. Additionally, many teacher preparation programs themselves have adapted to both synchronous and asynchronous formats, giving more teachers and preservice teachers exposure to online learning platforms and methodologies (Hager, 2020).

This potential for overlapping skills is important to consider for the instructional design transition, since according to a recent survey by Peck (2021a) of over 100 instructional design and technology hiring managers, the top three skills the respondents looked for when hiring instructional designers included eLearning development (74.3%), communication skills (65.3%) and the ability to apply ID theory and science (61.4%). This same survey found that 21.8% of hiring managers considered formal experience in instructional design as important, but it does not play a significant role in their hiring decisions. Additionally, 5% of hiring managers stated that formal experience plays no role in the hiring decision. If this is an accurate generalization, then it is understandable why many former and current teachers find this transition manageable.

Career Comparisons

The question then becomes if a career in the IDT field would have higher job satisfaction than a K-12 teaching career. Although research on instructional design and technology job satisfaction in scarce, the research that does exist shows promise. According to the U.S. Bureau

of Labor Statistics, the median pay for high school teachers is $62,870 per year, and for K-6 educators it is $60,660 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). Unfortunately, the report does not have a specific category for instructional designers. However, Thakuria (2021) looked at various 2021 online job databases and found that:

> According to Glassdoor, the annual average base pays of an instruction designer and manager is $71k and $80k, respectively. According to PayScale, an instruction designer and manager's average yearly base pay is $64k and $78k respectively. According to Indeed, the annual average base pay of an instruction designer is $63k, and that of a manager is $69k. According to ZipRecruiter, an instruction designer's average yearly base pay is $80k, and that of a manager is $86k. According to Salary, the annual average base pay of an instruction designer is $60k, and that of a manager is $120k. Finally, based on 3k surveys from 30 countries, the E-Learning Guild estimated the annual average salary of the US e-learning professionals to be $84k. (para. 6)

Although these numbers were averages and did not account for years of experience, individual industries, and levels of education, there is still a high potential for significant salary gains between teaching and IDT.

There are also additional benefits outside of financial gain. In 2012, CNN Money ranked instructional designer as the 38th best job in America, and in 2015, e-learning developer was ranked 29th. For the quality-of-life ratings, CNN Money gave the career top marks in every category: personal satisfaction, benefit to society, telecommuting, and low stress (Braverman, 2015). A survey by (Peck, 2021b) found similar results, since out of 614 IDT professionals surveyed, 94% were either satisfied or very satisfied with their work-life balance and 91% were

either satisfied or very satisfied with their current role. Although limited, these types of statistics showed promise in the benefits of the IDT profession and its future.

Conclusion

If K-12 classroom teachers transition to the IDT field, they may be able to fulfil the same intrinsic and altruistic motivations that drove them to teaching in the first place. Although many teachers enter the profession to help children, they also enter for satisfaction in their personal life, love of learning, and wanting to make a difference (Balyer & Ozcan, 2014). These are all motivations that could be fulfilled in the IDT field. Changing careers could better fulfill some of the important extrinsic factors that are also needed for job satisfaction, such as a sufficient salary, lower stress, and work/life balance.

Many teachers are currently leaving the profession, citing the need for better working conditions and to escape from the feelings of 'burnout' and 'demoralization'. Since teachers are leaving due to the current political climate, lack of support, low salaries, dissatisfaction (Santoro, 2015), and the issues caused by the COVID pandemic (Alvarez, 2021; Dill, 2022), this leads many look for an alternative career path that may alleviate some of these concerns. Since IDT is still a rather new and ambiguous field (Reiser, 2001), it opens the door for those interested in education and outside of the field to research how to best transition into an IDT role. If teachers look objectively at the skills they have gained in the classroom and research some of the necessary competencies that might be needed, it is likely that more and more K-12 educators may find their way into the IDT field.

Chapter III: Methods

The goal of this mixed methods explanatory sequential study was to analyze the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career. Using this design, quantitative data was collected and analyzed, and then the results were used to shape the research questions within the second, qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

(1) What are the five most common skills used by active instructional design and technology professionals?

(2) What instructional design and technology (IDT) skills did participants use while working as a K-12 classroom teacher?

(3) Were any of the five most common job skills used by active instructional design and technology professionals used while working as a K-12 classroom teacher?

(4) Did participant's past professional experiences as a K-12 classroom teacher develop any of these five identified instructional design and technology (IDT) skills?

(5) What skills gaps did participants have when transitioning to an IDT role?

(6) In what ways, if any, does the use of transferable skills in an IDT role allow for the same intrinsic and altruistic fulfillment that originally led them to K-12 teaching?

(7) How did extrinsic motivators, such as pay, environment, perceived respect, and job market influence choosing IDT as their new career?

Quantitative Phase

Participants

With approval from the Institutional Review Board, eligible participants for this phase were found by posting information from the researcher's personal and professional online social media accounts for volunteer sampling. The posts were only visible on specific groups or forums with IDT professionals as the target audience. The participant inclusion criteria included that they must: (a) be actively employed in an IDT-specific role and (b) have been in the IDT career field for a minimum of one year. Exclusion criteria include those who are not employed in an IDT-specific role and who have been in the IDT career field for less than one year.

The goal of this phase was to study an assortment of IDT roles and collect a broad range of viewpoints and experiences from different IDT professionals. The data collected was not dependent on the participants' background or education, but rather was targeted at all IDT professionals to appropriately study these roles throughout the entire career field. Therefore, it was not necessary for participants in this phase to be former K-12 teachers.

Data Collection

The quantitative phase was a single-stage sampling using a Google Forms survey (see Appendix A). A survey design was chosen because surveys allow the researcher to study a sample of the population while looking for associations within that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The survey included statements from the Association for Talent Development's Talent Development Capability Model (ATD Model) to determine the top five job-specific skills used most by current instructional design professionals. The Association for Talent Development gave permission to use the ATD Model in this research (see Appendix B).

In choosing the ATD Model for this research, North et. al. (2021) explained it well, stating that "while teaching jobs require formal teaching licenses, instructional design jobs do not. Because of the lack of a formal license program, many instructional designers look to professional development organizations like the Association for Talent and Development (ATD) for guidance" (p. 716). The ATD Model is "the best known example" (Bhatia et al., 2019, p. 56) of a competency model in the learning and development field, and depicts the information, aptitudes, and mental capacity necessary to successfully carry out one's professional responsibilities (Bhatia et al., 2019). Released in 2014 and recently revised in January 2020, the ATD Model has three separate domains meant to set an industry standard for the personal, organizational, and professional capabilities needed to be successful in the Learning and Development career field ("ATD Professional Capacity Domain", 2020).

This research used the Developing Professional Capability (DP) domain of the ATD Model, which centers on the job-specific skills needed in IDT roles. Recently, in North et al. (2021), the ATD Model was compared to over IDT 100 job postings, and their findings "suggest that that employers and those who create job postings are first and foremost searching for applicants with skills and experience in the DP domain. The capabilities within the DP domain are most specific to the requirements of the job, describing the functional skills necessary to perform" (p.718), which is further justification for why narrowing the ATD model down to the DP domain was most efficacious for this study.

There are eight capabilities in this domain: (1) learning sciences, (2) instructional design, (3) training delivery and facilitation, (4) technology application, (5) knowledge management, (6) career and leadership development, (7) coaching, and (8) evaluating impact. Each of these capabilities have corresponding job-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) statements

which "embodies the knowledge and skills talent development professionals should possess to be effective in their roles of creating the processes, systems, and frameworks that foster learning, maximize individual performance, and develop the capacity and potential of employees" ("ATD Professional Capacity Domain", 2020, para. 1). These KSA statements begin with either the word "knowledge" or "skill", which organizes them into what an individual must know or do to be successful. There are 71 total KSA statements in this domain.

For the needs of this study, the knowledge statements were eliminated, focusing only on the 35 skills-specific statements. The survey stated the instructions then had the list of skills in a multi-select menu. To complete the survey, participants were asked to read through the entire list of skills statements and then identify the top five skills they use most within their IDT role by clicking the corresponding box. The survey functionality will require them to choose exactly five skills.

Although the ATD model categorizes the DP domain skills statements into eight capabilities, the researcher chose to list the skills statements together and did not categorize them in this same manner. The reasoning was to eliminate any unintended bias among the participants when reading the skills statements. For example, someone who's job title is "instructional designer" may have only looked at the skills statements listed under "instructional design" instead of reading all statements objectively. They could have incorrectly assumed the other capabilities don't apply to their role, which is likely inaccurate given the diversity of IDT roles and the reasoning behind using this model and domain, so listing all statements together gave everyone taking the survey the opportunity to consider all statements in the same manner.

The survey was posted on the researcher's personal and professional online social media accounts to the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, and Reddit (see Appendix C). The

posts were only visible on specific groups and forums with IDT professionals as the target audience. These postings listed the eligibility requirements, a brief overview of the study, the study's objectives, and the survey link. Responses were collected anonymously; however, the participants were specifically directed to complete the survey only one time. The survey was open for one week until closed. There was no limit to the number of respondents who could complete the survey. The goal was to collect at least 30 responses and that goal was met with a final total of 109 responses.

Reliability and Validity

Before beginning the quantitative phase of this study, the researcher conducted a content validity index (CVI) to assess the validity of the survey instrument. A CVI is the most widely used index in quantitative evaluation and verifies that an instrument has an appropriate representation of the content being measured (Shi et al., 2012). The goal of the CVI process ensured that the survey properly assessed the top five skills used by active instructional design and technology professionals. Six instructional design and technology content experts were identified by the researcher to act as judges and complete this task. They received an emailed set of instructions (see Appendix D) and a link to the survey, which was modified so that each of the 35 survey items contained the 1-4 relevancy rating scale as outlined in the CVI instructions. During the beginning of this process, it was noted by the content experts that there were two duplicate survey items, and those were eliminated without being rated and the survey was reissued with 33 items.

Once the six content experts completed the survey and rated each item in the CVI, the content validity relevance ratio was computed according to the method outlined in Zamanzadeh et al. (2015). To calculate the CVI, each rating was translated into a score of 1 (3 or 4 rating),

36

meaning "relevant", or 0 (1 to 2 rating), meaning "not relevant", for each item. Then values of 1 for each item were totaled to give a calculation of the number of judges who scored the item as "relevant". Lastly, that total was divided by 6, which was the number of judges, to give a final CVI score for each survey item (see Appendix E).

An 80 percent agreement or higher for new instruments as appropriate. Items with an CVI score between 70 and 79 percent indicated that those items need revision and if an item had a score of less than 70 percent, it was eliminated. The final results of the CVI indicated that 18 items met the required score for relevancy and zero needed revision. These edits were made to the quantitative survey before moving forward with the reliability testing.

To ensure reliability of the survey design, a test-retest method was used to verify that instrument yielded consistent results. Five active instructional design and technology professionals from the researcher's professional network, different than those chosen for the CVI, were selected to complete the test-retest. After completing the survey and data was collected, they were instructed to retake the survey again 10-12 days later.

To calculate the consistency score, the test and retest results were paired with their respective content expert and evaluated. Each of the five survey items selected by the content expert were compared between tests, receiving either a score of 100 for a match or a score of 0 for a non-match. Then the five scores were averaged to calculate a consistency percentage. The results of the test-retest (see Appendix F) indicated that no changes were necessary, as each survey item scored an 80 percent or higher consistency score. Therefore, the final instrument with 18 options was the quantitative survey sent to participants for data collection.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Once the survey was closed, responses were moved into an Excel spreadsheet for review and manipulation. An initial review was performed to eliminate any responses that did not meet the criteria or had missing information, but no eliminations were necessary and a total of 109 responses were collected and analyzed. The data was downloaded and compiled into a single table and highest values were calculated. They were then converted into a bar graph to be analyzed in order to determine the five skills statements that were identified by the largest number of respondents.

The purpose of this data was to identify the top five day-to-day skills used by current, active instructional design and technology professionals in the field. This data set was used to direct the focus of the qualitative research questions. The goal is of this phase was to validate the qualitative research questions and ensured that the data collected in phase two adequately reflected the most used IDT job responsibilities necessary for success in an IDT role.

<div align="center">

Qualitative Phase

</div>

Participants

A similar model was used to collect volunteer sampling for the qualitative second phase of this research. The participants for this phase needed to meet the following inclusion criteria: (a) employed in the IDT field for a minimum of six months, (b) currently working in a full-time or part-time IDT role, and (c) formerly employed as K-12 classroom teacher for at least three years. Exclusion criteria for this phase of research include IDT professionals that work only in a freelance or contractor capacity, have worked in the IDT field for less than six months, or were formerly employed as a K-12 classroom teacher for less than three years.

Data Collection

The qualitative research followed a phenomenological design to collect the lived experiences of K-12 classroom teachers who transitioned into the IDT career field. Given (2008) defines phenomenological research as a "study of lived or experiential meaning and attempts to describe and interpret these meanings in the ways that they emerge and are shaped by consciousness, language, our cognitive and noncognitive sensibilities, and by our preunderstandings and presuppositions" (p. 614). It is meant to deeply explore a phenomenon, in this case K-12 teachers transitioning into instructional design careers, directly from those who have experienced it, and its value comes from prioritizing and investigating how human beings experiences the world (Given, 2008).

Eligible participants were found by posting information from the researcher's personal and professional online social media accounts to the following platforms: LinkedIn, Facebook, and Reddit (see Appendix G). The posts were only visible on specific groups and forums with IDT professionals as the target audience. These postings listed the eligibility requirements, a brief overview of the study, the study's objectives, and a survey link. If a participant from the quantitative phase also met the requirements for the qualitative phase, they were eligible to participate in both phases but were required to complete both surveys to be added to the qualitative selection process.

The qualitative survey (see Appendix H) ensured participants met the eligibility requirements and collected their contact information, demographic information, as well as relevant information regarding their background and experience in both teaching and the IDT field. Once survey data was reviewed and ineligible candidates were removed, a sampling of 8-10 participants were selected using the demographic and background information. Subject

selection was done purposefully; participants will be selected "who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study" (Sargeant, 2012, p. 1). This means the researcher reviewed the collected information and selected participants intentionally to ensure a proper and diverse cross-section of participants, such as different gender identities, K-12 teaching backgrounds, years of experience, IDT job titles, geographical locations, and IDT-specific education. After being selected, these candidates were emailed the study information sheet (see Appendix I) which detailed the study's purpose, risks and benefits, confidentiality and consent, and a link to book a 1-hour interview session using the Calendly scheduling software. Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher reflected on her own positionality and potential biases.

Phenomenological design often uses interview questions that are formulated to allow interviewees to express their own views on the phenomenon under study (Given, 2008). Therefore, the researcher created a list of questions (see Appendix J) for a semi-structured interview format, conducted in a conversational style. The questions followed the basic structure recommended by Krueger and Casey (2015) for semi-structured interviews, starting with opening, introductory and transitional questions, followed by the key research questions, and then closing with ending questions for the participants to share final any final thoughts to the researcher. The open-ended nature of the question defined the research topic but provided opportunities for both the interviewer and interviewee to discuss topics in more detail. Additionally, if the interviewee provided only a brief response, the interviewer encouraged the interviewee to consider the question further (Mathers et al., 1998).

The interviews were conducted via Zoom at a time that was convenient for the subjects. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and the Zoom Live Transcript

feature provided an auto-created transcript. After the interview, the researcher downloaded the transcript, as well as the video recording. While playing the recording, the transcript was reviewed and important gestures and pauses were added to help with context, as well as notations added to capture who was talking. If the transcript was missing any dialogue or the transcript varies from the video recording, edits were made to the transcript for accuracy. Only minor edits, such as a few "ums" and "ers" were removed if they distracted from understanding the text.

Protocols

The researcher explained the instructions for the interview and received the participants' oral consent to participate and be recorded (see Appendix J). The intent of the study and a copy of the interview questions was distributed to the participant prior to the interview. Participants were assured that their confidentiality would be maintained, only their chosen pseudonym would be used in all documents and the final product, and all recordings would be destroyed after completion of the study.

The Role of the Researcher

This topic was important to the researcher because this was the same career transition the researcher made over eight years ago, after teaching K-12 students for five years before leaving to become an instructional designer in 2015. The researcher had also informally mentored many other K-12 educators of various backgrounds to successfully do the same. Therefore, the ability to recognize and understand her positionality was an important aspect in addressing any potential biases that may have discredited or disrupted the results of this study. It was important that she worked to recognize that each K-12 teacher who has become an IDT professional has molded their own unique path. They may not have held the same professional or personal thoughts, skills, education, or experiences that she, or others that she had mentored, had undergone.

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The first step in ensuring that the researcher's personal biases were addressed was that at no point in the research process did she share her own background with the study participants. If they knew that she, too, had been in their position and mentored others, it could have led to a form of participant bias, such as acquiescence or friendliness bias. This information could have hindered the participants' openness and honesty about their own experiences. Study participants may have felt that the researcher was searching for a specific response and told her what they thought she wanted to hear, or they may have been too intimated to speak freely if they assumed their experiences were different than the researcher's.

Along with refraining from sharing the researcher's personal background, she was also conscious of her disposition, expression, tone, and appearance when conducting the interviews and interacting with the participants, so she did not portray any emotion about their experiences and responses. Instead, the researcher worked to practice active listening, which meant minor gestures, verbal cues, small smiles, or utterances that encouraged participants to continue further elaboration (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

In order to properly recognize and execute the aforementioned interview procedures, the researcher conducted a pilot interview with a member of the dissertation committee before the rest of the interviews were scheduled to ensure that the researcher would be able to self-assess these practices. During this pilot interview, the feedback received was that the interviewer did make positive gestures towards responses, indicating that they agreed with statements or felt answers were "correct", instead of maintaining a neutral expression or reaction. It was also indicated that the researcher read too quickly through the interview instructions and needed to slow down while properly explaining all interview procedures. This feedback was really important for the researcher to receive prior to beginning the quantitative research phase, because

it allowed for the data collection process to be conducted with more self-awareness to proper interview protocols and best practices.

Additionally, using a semi-structured interview format had its challenges with unintentional bias. The researcher had carefully worded the key questions to maintain as much neutrality as possible, such as including "if any" to questions that could lean toward a positive or negative response, so it allowed for a more neutral interpretation. However, the open-ended nature of semi-structured interviews could have led to an unintentional impulse to ask a leading question, which would have biased the response (George, 2022). When the researcher conducted qualitative interviews in the past, she noticed her propensity to get excited about a response and ask leading follow-up questions quickly to elicit more details, so it was pivotal for the researcher to curb her emotions and immediate impulses to speak, so that follow-up questions were thoroughly thought-out before they were asked. Adams (2015) recommended that semi-structured interviewers use a neutral, conversational tone when speaking that does not show shock or coldness, but rather is relaxed and professional. Also, although the goal was to be semi-structured, the researcher had written neutral follow-up questions, including reminders to ask for an example, to obtain clarification or additional details without leading the response. Also, if the conversation flowed off topic, it was best to let the person finish their thought before asking probing questions to softly steer the conversation back to the priority (Adams, 2015).

It was also important throughout the process to avoid confirmation bias. The researcher needed to listen and interpret each individual experience based on the data analysis and not conform any of the responses to her own previous experiences. Having the participants review the transcript immediately after the interview for accuracy, the internal validity processes, as

well as having the participants review the interpretations after coding the data all helped ensure the accuracy of their responses and neutrality of the data interpretation.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Ongoing data analysis took place throughout this study. After preparing the transcripts, the researcher wrote a pre-coding memo to reflect on the interviews and prepared to code as well as added additional notes on any non-verbal aspects of the interview, such as tone of voice and body language. The researcher uploaded each transcript file to Dedoose, a qualitative analysis software program, to assist in the organization and coding process.

Inductive coding was used to code the data. Inductive coding allowed the researcher to code paragraphs, sentences and individual words without tying those to a certain theme or concept (Chandra & Shang, 2019), which allowed the researcher to unbiasedly examine the data without making any preconceived notions about the findings. To complete the inductive coding, the researcher read through a small section of the data to carefully analyze it and pick out key words that were relevant to the research questions and analyzed any patterns that emerged. Codes were created to cover that data sample, then new samples of data were read to apply those initial codes, while noting where codes don't match or additional codes were needed (Medelyan, n.d.). This helped identify themes and subthemes within the data set to draw conclusions and make connections to the theoretical framework. These connections were used to further the researcher's understanding of the transferrable skills, skills gaps, and their impact on former K-12 classroom teachers who transitioned into an IDT career and shaped the organization of the data for interpretation in chapters four and five.

Validity and Trustworthiness

Participant validation was used throughout the study to help ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the data, in addition to the pilot interview that was conducted with a member of the research team prior to the data collection process. Ravitch and Carl (2021) define participant validation as a process by which the researcher checks in with the participants directly to elicit feedback on the data set that pertains to them. This allowed the researcher to ascertain whether or not they understood participants correctly, deciphered their thoughts and ideas as intended, and was an opportunity to challenge the researcher's interpretation of the data.

The first participant validation occurred shortly after each interview was completed. After formatting the transcript, but before uploading to Dedoose for analysis, the researcher emailed the participants a copy of the transcript to elicit feedback. To ensure trustworthiness, there were no edits to the transcript besides any formatting necessary for readability, but the content was not removed, changed, or edited. This served as an opportunity for participants to ensure that they answered the questions as intended and were able to change or edit any response they felt did not properly articulate their original thoughts.

The second round of validation occurred after the data had been coded. Triangulation was used throughout the deductive coding process so that more than one member of the research team reviewed the codes and data analysis. This aided in the validity of the code building process and the corresponding interpretations within each code. This ensured the trustworthiness and credibility of all data collected, ensuring it's not dismissed or ignored in the final chapters, even if it led the researcher to have to reevaluate aspects of their original codes and interpretations.

Additionally, the qualitative phase of this study involved interviewing 10 participants, including the pilot interview. It was estimated that 8-10 interviews would be needed to collect

the amount of data needed to adequately answer the research questions. However, it was important to the validity of the research that data saturation be reached before ending the interview process. Data saturation occurs when no new or relevant information emerges regarding the newly constructed theory being studied (Given, 2008). The researcher first conducted eight interviews and read the data, determining that it was difficult to determine saturation and conducted two subsequent interviews. Therefore, after conducting a total 10 interviews, a member of the doctoral committee was consulted, read the full transcripts, and determined that saturation has been reached.

Summary

For the researcher, it became clear through professional networks, online presence, and being involved in this same transition eight years ago that this was a growing and popular occurrence, but further research was needed to explore this trend. This chapter described the methods and procedures that were used to provide insight into the transferrable skills, skills gaps, and their impacts on K-12 educators that have made this transition. The research design, research questions, and populations and procedures for both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this research were outlined, and in Chapter 4, the findings from the data collection will be presented to address the seven research questions discussed.

Chapter IV: Analysis and Presentation of the Data

Many teachers have become burned-out and disengaged from the current teaching climate and may benefit from a career alternative that has potential to build on their current skillset and positively impact their intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic motivators. However, no research existed on what might correlate to a K-12 teacher successfully transiting to an instructional design and technology role by understanding the existence of transferrable skill and skills gaps between the career fields. This research explored this career transition and correlated the impacts to Parson's (1909) Career Development Theory, understanding how a person's personality, the job market, and career outlook can shape a person's overall career satisfaction.

This study used a mixed methods explanatory sequential design to answer the seven proposed research questions. The quantitative phase of this research served to narrow down the ambiguous and complex field of instructional design and technology by surveying instructional design and technology professionals on the skills they use most in their current professional role. This data was used to focus the qualitative research questions so that the skills discussed were relevant to the main skills needed in the instructional design and technology field. The quantitative phase then used a phenomenological design to interview former K-12 educators who have transitioned into IDT roles and identify the skills gaps, transferable skills, and their impacts between these roles. These findings, and the impacts of the transferrable skills, were then tied into Parson's Trait and Factor Theory, the discussions and implications of which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Quantitative Findings

The quantitative survey received 109 individual responses and each respondent was asked to choose five skills statements. All participants were current full time, part time, contract,

or freelance instructional design and technology professionals who had been in the career field for at least one year. The survey, given in a single stage, was open for one week on three social media forums that specifically targeted instructional design and technology professionals. No responses received were incomplete or ineligible, so all responses were included in the final total.

The survey instructed participants to choose exactly five of the 18 skills statements listed in a multi-select menu. The 18 skills statements were taken directly from the Association for Talent Development's Talent Capability Model, specifically the skills from the Professional Capacity Domain, and narrowed down by the researcher, content validity index, and reliability processes as outlined in Chapter 3 (see Appendix E).

The data was downloaded and compiled into a single table and highest values were calculated to determine the five skills statements that were identified by the largest number of respondents (Table 1).

Table 1

Quantitative Findings

Skill	Responses
Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning	73
Designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome.	59
Using e-learning software and tools.	56
Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention	52
Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups.	51

Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements.	36
Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	34
Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.	29
Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware.	25
Delivering training using multiple delivery options and media, for example mobile/multi-device, online, classroom, and/or multimedia.	21
Identifying, selecting, and/or implementing learning technologies, for example using evaluative criteria and identifying appropriate applications in an instructional environment.	20
Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.	20
Identifying the type and amount of information needed to support talent development activities.	14
Creating positive learning climates/environments.	13
Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	11
Designing and implementing knowledge management strategy.	11
Developing, managing, facilitating, and/or supporting knowledge networks and communities of practice.	11
Developing, administering, and debriefing results of assessments of intelligence, aptitude, potential, skill, ability, and/or interests.	9

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked to identify the five most common skills used by active

instructional design and technology professionals. Results of the survey indicated that the five

skills used most by IDT professionals were: (1) eliciting and using knowledge and information

from subject matter experts (SMEs) to support and/or enhance learning, (2) designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome, (3) using e-learning software and tools, (4) applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention, and (5) designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups.

Data shows that these five skills had a much higher response rate that the other skills statements. The average number of responses for the top five skills was 58.2, with the lowest response being 51 and the highest being 73. This indicated that over 66% of respondents commonly elicit knowledge from SMEs and close to 50% or more commonly use the additional four skills. All other skills statements received 36 responses or less, which is less than 34% of respondents. Therefore, these results positively indicated the five skills discussed in the qualitative phase of research appropriately represented the most relevant skills within the instructional design and technology career field.

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Qualitative Findings

</div>

Participants

Ten participants were interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study. Three were male and seven were female. The majority taught in the K-12 classroom for over six years and every grade level was represented. There was equal representation between former K-12 teachers who taught at the elementary level (K-5) and high school level (9-12), as well as two that also taught at the middle school level (6-8). There was also a diverse representation of years in the

instructional design and technology career field. Four participants were new to the field with six months to one year of experience, four were between one and three years, and two had over six years as an IDT professional (Table 2).

Table 2

Qualitative Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Years in K-12	Grade Level(s)	Current Job Title	Years in IDT	Gender	State
Aubrey	6-10	K-5	Instructional Designer	6 mo.-1	Female	FL
KR	10+	9-12	Instructional Design Specialist	6 mo.-1	Female	WI
Jeff	10+	K-5	Online Course Design and Delivery Specialist	1-3	Male	IN
Hannah	10+	K-5; 6-8; 9-12	Learning and Development Specialist	1-3	Female	MN
Willow	6-10	K-5	Manager of Learning Design	1-3	Female	WA
EngProftoISD	6-10	9-12	Senior Instructional Design Consultant	4-7	Male	MD
Michael	10+	9-12	Training Specialist	6 mo.-1	Male	TN
Yi	3-5	9-12	Learning Strategist	10+	Female	IL
Amy	6-10	K-5	Instructional Designer	1-3	Female	TX
Brandy	6-10	K-5; 6-8	Instructional Designer	6 mo.-1	Female	KS

A cross-section of the country was also represented as none of the participants came from the same state. Half were from the Midwest region and the other half were scattered across varies other regions of the United States. The state listed in Table 2 is their current location, however, this location may not be representative of where their teaching or instructional design experience occurred, since many participants noted they have relocated after teaching or currently hold a remote instructional design and technology role based in a different location.

There was also diversity in the participants' former K-12 subject matter, environment, and educational experiences. Previous teaching roles included each elementary grade level,

elementary music, K-12 special education, middle school math, and high school English, science, foreign languages, and social studies. K-12 environments included public, charter, and private schools in varying socioeconomic and community settings, which participants described using words such as affluent, suburban, Title I, high poverty, or remote. Before entering the instructional design and technology field, participants also had varying levels of formal or informal education in instructional design. Four obtained a master's degree with an instructional design focus, four used only open-source learning platforms to obtain informal education in instructional design, and two did not obtain any formal or informal education prior to transitioning.

Seven major themes along with subthemes were identified regarding the transferrable skills and skills gaps between K-12 teaching and the instructional design and technology career fields (Figure 1). Participant quotes supporting the themes are shown in Table 3.

Figure 1:

Themes and Subthemes

Personal Impact	Making a Difference, Working with Children, Family Influence
Forces of Change	Personal Growth, Burnout, Autonomy/Respect, Teaching Workload
Transferrable Skills	
Comparable Skills	Learning Objectives, Lesson Plans, Project Management
Instructional Design Implementation	
Juxtaposition	Work/Life Balance, Workload, Environment, Pay, Autonomy/Respect
Guidance	Preparation, Upskilling, Technology

Theme 1: Personal Impact

      Participants were asked what motivated them to become a K-12 educator when they first began their careers. Many respondents expressed the subtheme of wanting to make a difference in the lives of others and were driven by intrinsic and altruistic motivations. One participant stated, "I did like the continuous learning aspect of being a teacher. I feel like every day was kind of different, and I got to witness 'ah ha' moments from students, and I think I just wanted to help people and have an impact" (Hannah). Another educator who worked with indigenous children expressed "I think that I saw that my mission at the time was very unique, because there weren't as many opportunities for them. I felt proud of bringing my expertise to a pretty remote area, and to making an impact" (Yi).

      Other participants identified working with children as another motivation for why they chose to become an educator. Willow described the influence of her childhood experience "I had done a lot of babysitting. We grew up with foster kids in our house, so I had little people around me all the time. So, it just felt really natural" (Willow). On the other hand, many participants simply expressed how much they liked working with children. Jeff noted, "I enjoyed, working with the kids and being a music teacher is just a lot of fun."

      When deciding to become an educator, participants often noted that their family influenced their decision. There were two perspectives represented in this subtheme. Some individuals recognized the convenience of having the same schedule as their children. Amy explained that it "worked well with my family life, too, because I had off the same time as the kids, and I could be with them after school and before school." Other participants recognized that their parents or a family member had been an educator as well and inspired them to become one

as well. As Willow described, "And so my mom had been a teacher. One of the job opportunities that was fed to me as a little girl in the Midwest was being a teacher."

Table 3

Supporting Quotes

Theme	Supporting Quotes
Personal Impact	"I wanted to make sure that my kids had good experiences. I understood the education system and I just wanted to give kids a better understanding of learning and what the purpose of it was. Mostly because I didn't have good experiences going through school, and I felt like it didn't have to be that way. There's nothing like the 'ah ha' moments for students and making relevant." (Brandy)
	"With the kinder and preschool kids, it's just seeing so much growth and seeing the light bulbs, and they still have that love of learning. They're just so full of life and innocence, and it's neat to work with all of that. Every day is different when you're working with that age group and getting to have those experiences with them." (Amy)
	"My mom. She was an educator. She taught business ed classes in the seventies, then at a high school, and then taught at a technical college. My sister also kind of dabbled in education for a little bit. I went to college to be a music teacher, but I also was taking Spanish classes because I wanted to study abroad because my mom and my sister had too. So, I was interested in that and then I said, well, maybe I'll become a Spanish teacher." (KR)
Forces of Change	"I had overall very good experiences up until the last few years with COVID, and that made things a little a little different. But even leading up to that, I knew that it was not something that I wanted to do until I was 67 or 70 years old, which is why I decided to pursue a second master's degree in instructional design." (Jeff)
	"I didn't know if there was any clear ladder in the school district at the time. I didn't see any sort of a career trajectory." (Yi)
	"The burnout had built itself up over the 10 years teaching, starting from year 1. By year 5, I had realized it wasn't going to be a forever career, but I didn't know what to do at that point. I didn't know what came next. I didn't even know what I could do. I thought, I'm a kindergarten teacher, that that's all I know how to do." (Aubrey)

Theme	Supporting Quotes
	"Behaviors in general with the kids. They were getting more and more extreme, and the job was getting very stressful. I would come home exhausted every day; mentally, physically, just exhausted, and it just wasn't good for me for my family." (Amy)
	"People asked me initially 'what's the biggest difference?'. I was like, 'I sleep at night'. I'm not stressed out like I was as a teacher, and I don't feel like I'm always having to improve myself. I feel like in my current role that I'm trusted as a professional and treated as a professional and a valued part of the department and supported." (Jeff)
	"The ridiculousness of some of the requirements. It adds nothing but they light a fire and say this has to be done, or your kids can't do this. It takes time, then nobody enforces it. They ask you to do all these things. They don't tell you a purpose." (Brandy)
	"A lot of things in the education system were unnecessarily asked and didn't directly tie to curriculum or student learning. They didn't help students grow and learn, it actually helped deteriorate them." (Michael)
Transferable skills	"Your days are hectic and you focus on students and their individualized needs. Your day is very much limited and it got really repetitive." (Yi)
	"I wanted something that I felt somewhat comfortable with right away, where I had some transferable skills." (KR)
	"My first bachelors is in business administration, with a concentration in marketing and management. So, when I started looking, I thought, what I can do that would be a good blend of business skills and of educational skills?" (Amy)
	"I was trying to explore what are my options in the world with a teaching degree? My partner was in grad school. We didn't want to pay for 2 degrees, and so how can I leverage what I have to get something else?" (Willow)
Comparable Skills	"I would say, unconsciously backwards design is something that I used all the time. As a music teacher, I was always thinking about 'This is what I want to happen at the end', 'There's a performance that I have to give', or 'I want this song to sound this way'. I always knew what my goal was. I was working through my lessons with an idea of what it's going to look like when I'm done. So that definitely was something that I was aware of, and a way that I approached learning before I even started thinking about instructional design." (Jeff)

Theme	Supporting Quotes
	"With an IEP, that's individual education plan for special education, we had to write a lot of goals and objectives, so the structure of writing objectives was very familiar to me." (Hannah)
	One of the things that we always do in education is talk about our objectives. What are we going to assess on? Those are also really big in instructional design. So that helps focus the content questions and gives you more information. [SMEs] might give you a 100-slide deck and you have to figure out the important part." (Brandy)
	"When I had to create a course from scratch, it's the structure of the class and the flow. You have to start with activating prior knowledge. Then the flow of it; the scaffolding, giving lots of examples, the guided practice, and then the independent practice. Just knowing that, and also bringing over my knowledge of Blooms Taxonomy, writing objectives, scaffolding for the full the flow of a class, that kind of thing was similar." (Amy)
	"I don't think teachers are aware of their project management skills, but I think project management is a big scale that carries over from teaching to instructional design. Also, communication, just the ability. I sent out weekly Newsletters as a kindergarten teacher and had regular meetings with parents. That ability to have a client relationship and the ability to send professional communications, I think, is also transferable." (Willow)
Instructional Design Implementation	"It lends itself more to the modality of learning. For the e-learning concept, you have to storyboard and mockup, and then put it all together to see where you're going. Parallel to that, our canvas system and K-12 education, you could design it two ways. You could do modules or you could do a giant website. I could never do modules, because as you built the modules, you had to know where you were going. You had to storyboard it before, and that's just not the way I work. I could never. I was always an in the moment teacher." (Michael).
	"If I was going to call someone subject matter experts on my team, it would be like speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, parents. I did have annual meetings, if not more than annual, with them, trying to develop plans for learners. So I'd say it was probably more direct in terms of me hearing it, or being in direct contact with them." (Hannah)
	"I knew that my audience was a very tough crowd because they are high schoolers. It was tough to win them over. I really appreciated working with such a tough group because they act like they don't care and they don't want to listen to you. They have zero interest. So I wanted to really hone my skill

Theme	Supporting Quotes
	to work with a tough audience, and think about how I engage them or how to make the content interesting." (Yi)

"It's like some of those uneasy feelings you had as a first year teacher or your first year in a district, not knowing all the nuances in corporate America. They don't want you to be the expert on it, but they want you to know how to lay things out and how to do it. So that was a big one, project management, and then engagement. Your pedagogy goes into it, understanding the learning process, and what it takes to really facilitate and ingrain that information into somebody's brain." (Brandy)

"I don't really feel like there's a huge difference [between teaching adults and children]. You're always trying to motivate your learners, no matter who you're working with. I had students constantly asking me, 'Why do we have to do this?'. I was trying to find lessons or create lessons that would apply to their real lives, especially when they were young adult learners in their transition age. So, a lot of the lessons I put together were hands-on. How do you teach someone to actually do this? So yeah, I would say there's a comparison there." (Hannah)

"I know people say to different [learning] styles, that 'No, that's a myth', but I still feel like people need to be able to physically do it. How do you practice the skill? Whether it be adults, practicing a soft skill or a hard skill, just like kids need to practice skills in the classroom. And with motivation, I know with the kids we would try physical things because they don't have that necessarily intrinsic motivation like adults do." (Amy)

"Through Covid, we used canvas as our e-learning, and then when COVID stopped, we went one-to-one. So, I've always used it, and even before that we had School Fusion. There's always been a management system and tools for e-learning per se, but most of it was used, because a majority of school is in-person, more as homework, taking tests, benchmark assessments, smaller things like that." (Michael)

Juxtaposition   "I have way more work/life balance. My stress and anxiety have gone way down. I feel like I'm able to take care of things at home. I'm able to take care of myself and my family. One of my cats got real sick for a while and I was able to take them to the vet whenever they needed it. Having the flexibility with my schedule, being fully remote, and setting some of my own hours has been really great for balancing my personal life." (Aubrey)

"I find it one thousand times more enjoyable. I don't miss giving up my summers or those extra breaks, because I'm not nearly as stressed out. I have a lot more flexible time." (Brandy)

Theme	Supporting Quotes
	"I would say it's been positive, but I feel like I don't experience the other end, either, when you have that high of a student really excited or achieved something. There's just not really that experience in my job now. I really like the ways I get to be creative, but it's not like as the emotionally draining or emotionally high." (Hannah)
	"I really enjoy just about every aspect of instructional design, whereas teaching I did have this or this I didn't like, or I could say I really hate this. There are a couple little annoying things that we're kind of working out as we're getting our processes in place, but I really can't see a negative of becoming an instructional designer." (Aubrey)
	"I think for me it's being able to work with different groups. It's interesting, because personally, I just don't enjoy something that's repetitive. Growth was hard as a teacher and only working with one group at the time, for 3 years, was a lot on me." (Yi)
	"As educator we are supposed to help kids grow and it seemed like at times we were doing more harm than good. If kids didn't like testing or didn't feel successful, they were getting a bad impression of school at such a young age and that is heartbreaking to see. So, I am much less stressed than I was in the classroom. I feel like it's a much better work/life balance working in instructional design." (Amy)
	"It wasn't the pay because I was already pretty far on in my teacher contract, but I wanted to make this decision now. Because I felt like I would just keep getting stuck or not make a move if I wasn't going to do it at this point in my career." (Hannah)
	"If I have questions, I have people to go to who answer my questions and give me the support I need, whereas I don't feel like you get that in education all the time. So, it's a much happier place to be." (Jeff)
Guidance	"To become an ID, really focus on that knowledge transfer skillset that you have. That's probably number one. You have years of experience taking knowledge from point A and getting it to point B. The modality of that is trivial. Also, as an educator, we're always seeing objectives. We're objective-driven and I find that's so important for learning." (Michael)
	"I would say, if you're serious about it, meet with a career coach or resume writer, and talk to other people in who are doing [instructional design]." (KR)

Theme	Supporting Quotes
	"One of the best ways for instructional designers to learn is to find a page and copy it. See if you can recreate what someone else did and that was great advice. I did that early on in my career change, and it was a really great way to think about it." (Jeff)
	"I did a lot of YouTube videos, webinars, and some LinkedIn Learning. I did the Articulate 30-day trial to play with it, but before that I did a lot of research on it. I went to webinars with people in the industry that use it. I was building random things to learn how different things interacted." (Brandy)
	"I use Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. That's it. And my LMS from day to day. Now with the video projects I've had to do, I've used Camtasia and Adobe Premier Pro. Some of the software that I mentioned earlier I didn't know how to use, and even PowerPoint, as a teacher I used it in a very simplistic way." (Jeff)

Theme 2: Forces of Change

After discussing their teaching experience, participants were then asked why they chose to leave K-12 education and pursue a different career. During this discussion, five subthemes became prevalent that spoke to the theme of forces of change, or the motivating factors driving them away from the classroom. One of those was personal growth, as many felt teaching had limited potential, such as one participant who articulated that:

There's a ceiling that you get to when you're a teacher. I wasn't interested in becoming an administrator or going that route, so I was in education for 15 years, and I was reaching a ceiling with my salary, reaching a ceiling with what I could do. (Hannah)

With administration being one of the only leadership growth options in the K-12 environment, similar feelings were noted by several, like KR, who explained, "I always dreamt bigger. Maybe I won't be in the classroom forever. I didn't really want to do administration."

Besides personal growth, burnout was frequently mentioned as another force driving their need to leave teaching. Some participants, who transitioned after 2020, reported their symptoms

of burnout were magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them chose to leave their career in education as a result of their teaching experience during this timeframe. One participant reflected on her feelings at this time by describing:

A severe burnout; My mental and physical health were affected. I didn't enjoy the job at all. I dreaded going in each day. The thought of Monday coming up. I'd always have the Sunday night 'scaries', and breaks coming to an end. You shouldn't feel nauseous or a pit in your stomach thinking about going to work the next day. I finally had an epiphany. I need to try something different. I don't want to feel like this for the rest of my life.

(Aubrey)

Others had similar sentiments, like Michael, who detailed not just the mental or physical toll, but also the toll it took on his workload and family:

In order to keep the rigor that I need, I needed to put more time into my grading, and not necessarily my planning. I'm a huge component of assessments and feedback and that means that I have to give up more time with my family, and having a youngster, I just couldn't do that anymore. I was like I can't. My other option was to lower my expectations, and internally I just could not do that. So, I said that I need to find a [new] job.

Many of the responses about burnout also correlated with the subtheme of autonomy/respect, as these feelings were often coupled with additional factors of how they were treated as professionals. A statement by one participant explained these frustrations:

It just became a lot of data collection over teaching and being able to prove why you did what you did rather than just trusting that someone in my position, with over 20 years of experience, that I actually know what I'm doing. Just having to prove yourself all the

60

time and feeling that way. Also, with my last administrator, I began to see some inequity

in how she treated her staff. (Jeff)

Aubrey also had similar experiences, stating that she dealt with "Constant pressure to increase

test scores and get kids to perform at higher levels, despite low resources and external factors

like poverty, turbulent home lives, and then the pandemic."

Additionally, their teaching workload was cited as another force of change for leaving K-

12 education. Not only did many feel burnout or dealt with a lack of autonomy/respect, but the

reason for those feelings often stemmed from the everyday job responsibilities and environment.

One participant explained:

There are a lot of things in the education system that were unnecessarily asked and didn't

directly tie to curriculum or student learning. It didn't help students grow and learn. It

actually helped deteriorate education. So, I was putting in thousands of hours outside of

my contract time over the summers, vacations, etc. (Brandy)

This was similar to several other statements, such as Amy, who spoke about: "The behaviors in

general with the kids. They were getting more and more extreme, and the job was getting very

stressful. I would come home exhausted every day; mentally, physically, just exhausted, and it

just wasn't good for me and my family."

These five subthemes, often overlapping and compounding, demonstrated that there were

many forces of change driving these former educators away from education, thus leading them to

a different career path that may alleviate these concerns.

Theme 3: Transferable Skills

When participants were asked why instructional design and technology was chosen over any other career field when transitioning, the theme of transferable skills became prevalent among many of the participants. Hannah stated:

I think there's a lot of transferable skills. It wasn't unfamiliar, a lot of the things that I was learning, I felt like I could come in and draw from previous experience or draw from some of the things that I had already done in my career as an educator.

Similarly, Jeff conveyed that he could work in instructional design within higher education, "I didn't want to leave education completely, because that's always been my career. It's something I'm passionate about, and I'm knowledgeable in that field. And so, it seemed like a natural fit in many ways."

Another participant chose an instructional design role that focused on design and development, and explained:

I just kind of knew it was something else I wanted to do in learning and development that didn't require me to be the facilitator from the room. So, what else can I do? Where I can take the same skill set, which is, why you're doing this and transfer [knowledge] in a seamless way, because it's already doing what I already do, but behind the scenes.

(EngProftoISD)

All of the participants recognized that their experience as a K-12 educator was adaptable to other roles and responsibilities, making instructional design a conceivable career option.

Theme 4: Comparable Skills

The next group of interview questions focused on instructional design skills. First, participants were asked to think back about their years as a K-12 educator, and reflect on what, if

any, instructional design skills they used in that environment. Then, the questions specifically

focused on the five skills identified in the quantitative research phase of the study. The five skills

included working with subject matter experts, creating learning assets, developing e-learning,

using cognitive science and learning theories, and creating storyboards or visual representations

of learning content.

During this discussion, many respondents indicated that there were several comparable

skills between their classroom experiences and those in instructional design and technology.

Many of those were related to the subtheme of lesson planning, and how that planning process

helped them become better at visualizing a more effective learning process as an instructional

designer. As Jeff explained:

> We were really required to walk through that ADDIE model, but it was never defined that
>
> way. We were required to walk through that and be able to do the front-end analysis,
>
> designing our curriculum, implementing it, then evaluating it, and be able to prove the
>
> outcomes at the end. So, as an educator, I used that model regularly.

Interviewees also discussed how the lesson planning process in K-12 shaped how they look at

content and evaluate how to be more effective. One participant described:

> I think that lesson planning was very helpful. I really enjoyed it because my focus was on
>
> how to introduce this new idea or help them, and reinforce certain content based on the
>
> objective I have for my lesson plan. I tend to break down every single key learning point
>
> very carefully, and I align it with a creative activity, ideas, or handouts, or materials. (Yi)

This perspective also tied into the other subtheme of learning objectives. Effectively identifying

and meeting learning objectives was described as a common aspect of both environments and

gave them a foundation for how they look at the learning process, as KR described:

Anything from the big picture planning, like instruction, learning design, writing

objectives. What are our learning objectives? What are our goals? What do we want at

the end of this process? I still employ a backwards design-type model. Okay, what do we

want people to learn?

Another participant discussed how they have found meeting learning objectives is easier now

that they've been exposed to the K-12 environment by describing, "My experience being a K-2

teacher; if I can teach a 5-year-old to read, I can break down content. So, I've been using that

ability to fine tune and focus in on the meat of the lesson" (Aubrey).

The final subtheme identified when looking at comparable skills was project

management. It was often expressed that the K-12 environment and instructional design both

required the ability to juggle multiple projects. For example, Brandy described:

I use a lot of project management. When you're laying out your daily units and lesson

plans, but also in creating a game plan, whether it's for one day or a whole unit, whether

I'm teaching math in a middle school or reading in the first-grade classroom, it doesn't

matter. Being able to use those project management skills, looking at the data, knowing

what my students need, making a plan, and adapting some of that learning, is important

when you're an instructional designer.

Another participant described a similar experience:

As a high school teacher, multitasking, not in the sense of doing two things at once but

having multiple projects. I taught three classes, so three different curriculums at the same

time. Being able to compartmentalize and work on each one a little bit, that's something

that definitely has a parallel. (KR)

These sentiments about project management, coupled with the parallels to lesson planning and using learning objectives to shape their course design process, demonstrates that there were comparable skills recognized between these career experiences.

Theme 5: Instructional Design Implementation

Another theme that arose during this phase of the interview was that of instructional design implementation. As participants reflected on their past and present experiences, they described how their skills have adapted or expanded between environments and have been implemented in their new role. When discussing working with subject matter experts (SMEs), many noted that this skill was uncommon in K-12, explaining, "I think that for teachers, you're considered the SME. They know a lot about their subject matter field." (Yi) and "Comparing it with the classroom, I felt like I was that subject matter expert" (KR). Another participant also described how the SME relationship was a fairly new concept, recounting:

> In the K-12 world, I did not have to listen to knowledge from subject matter experts, because you're given your curriculum. Now, I currently do have to work with subject matter experts. I get with them, I have questions I have to ask, and I have to go back and get clarification on stuff. So, I do a lot more work with subject matter experts where I didn't have to before. (Amy)

Additionally, Michael noted, "It was probably one of the hardest shifts when I made the transition, because in the classroom, I was the expert."

However, it seemed that although new, participants did not feel like working with SMEs was a skill they couldn't hone from their past, as Michael noted later,

We spend a good chunk of time talking about objectives. It's so interesting, because until

I showed up, they never really thought of it that way, and that's made it a lot better of a

transition. It helped them kind of meet me, but also checking myself so I can meet them.

Others had similar ways they felt comfortable adapting to this skill, like Jeff who stated, "I think

part of it is just my personality. When you're working with students, you're working with so

many students that you get used to interacting with people and trying to get the best out of

them".

Having to adapt to an unfamiliar skill was also noted when discussing storyboarding. One

example of this was given by Brandy when she stated that, "It's very similar to coming up with a

lesson plan. But the storyboarding, blueprints, and schematics of adult education, or what they

want, is a lot more detailed." Similarly, another participant reflected:

In K-12, I was the sole creator of my content. I ran my own show. Did I create drafts of

things? Yes. So, in a sense, back then I didn't know I was creating storyboards, but I was.

But I wasn't giving them to someone to approve. So that's the difference, that I created

this storyboard to give to others to approve. That was hard for me at first, because of

being my own boss. (EngProftoISD)

These sentiments regarding an unfamiliar but adaptable skill were also similar when discussing

the development of e-learning content, as Aubrey described:

I had made some PowerPoints and Google slides, but I hadn't done any e-learning

development. I guess you could count Nearpod, it's a little bit like e-learning. I built

some things in Nearpod for my students, but as far as Articulate or something, I'd never

heard of that until I went to make my transition.

Other participants described how COVID had been a factor in their exposure to e-learning, like Amy who noted:

> We started using e-learning because I was there during COVID, so we had to use some of the ones that are more geared towards schools. I also started using Doodly to develop math curriculum for the district. I was creating animated math videos that the kids could watch at home and learn math skills since we transitioned to online learning.

However, not all found e-learning familiar, as one participant described, "E-learning software and tools was really new to me when I got into instructional design. I hadn't ever used this exact software. So that's been probably the major learning curve" (Brandy).

Although these examples were described as less familiar or comparable by participants when entering instructional design, others like developing learning assets and applying learning science were spoken about as more relatable. For example, one participant described how they have implemented these skills to their new role:

> I think one of the things that I brought to the organization, that for people to learn something and retain it, they need opportunities to practice. They need multiple entry points, or multiple experiences with that content. Because if you just tell them something, that's not training. They're not going to learn it. They're not going to remember it. They need an immediate way to apply it, and that's especially true for adult learners. (KR)

Another participant spoke similarly about how applying learning science was also easy to implement because of their previous experiences:

> Thinking about who your learners are, where you want to get them by the end of the learning, and channel it all the way through. It's different teaching an adult learner from pedagogy, but you go through that the same idea of walking learners through a learning

event. All those steps that you must take. How do you engage? How did you present the

objectives? How do you tie it to prior learning? So those are the skill sets for me that I

took from that and made it seamless. (EngProftoISD)

The acknowledgement between teaching adults versus teaching children became a point of

conversation in each interview. Several spoke of noticeable similarities but admitted there are

differences, and along with this, most agreed their teaching experience was helpful in their new

role. Aubrey stated:

There's some overlap and there are some differences. But it made understanding it a lot

easier, as well as the ability to pull out objectives, write objectives, write test questions,

quiz questions, and really get the content out in a way that is engaging, yet effective.

Others reflected similar sentiments, like Willow who stated:

I think there's engagement. Getting people to participate in content is part of learning,

whether they are adults or children. But being aware of what feels petty to adults, and

what feels too mature for children, just that personal awareness is what's going to help

you excel in both of those worlds. And in the instructional design world there's always

this big conversation with andragogy and pedagogy, how they're so different. At the heart

of it all, it's just getting down to knowing your learners and engaging your learners and

how you do that looks different for each age group.

Although some examples of instructional design skills had more comparisons to the K-12

environment than others, all participants were able to reflect on their past experiences and

discuss how they have effectively implemented these skills in their current instructional design

roles.

Theme 6: Juxtaposition

The penultimate interview question asked participants to describe any differences, both positive and negative, that they had noticed between the two career fields. Their responses indicated a strong theme of juxtaposition between participants' experiences in the K-12 environment versus their current experiences as an IDT professional. Many of these responses were focused on the subtheme of work/life balance. Compared to their time in K-12 education, respondents strongly indicated that teaching was much more detrimental to this balance than the IDT field. For example, KR explained:

> It was my personal life. I have two young children in elementary school, so I'd come home tired and want to spend time with them. And I just couldn't do all the things I wanted to as a teacher with the limited time I had in my contract time. When I was younger, before kids, I would work on the weekends, lesson plans and things like that, and I enjoyed that. But something had to give. Just to be at the level of dedication that I wanted and was used to, I just couldn't anymore. So that took some of the joy out of it because I just couldn't do all the things I wanted to do.

Other participants described these same types of experiences, mentioning anything from more time with family, more flexible schedules, and even small but important improvements to their daily lives. Willow explained some of these smaller improvements by describing:

> Corporate has way more flexibility than teaching. Teaching was very rigid in terms of time, constraints, and even the ability to go to the bathroom. I don't have that in corporate. Now I work from home and I can cook and make really nutritious things, so even my diet has really improved since going into instructional design.

Brandy also had very similar sentiments on the improvements of small but meaningful things, and described, "The restroom usage, getting water whenever I want, or being able to sit and eat my lunch. Now I don't mind eating lunch at my desk, because it's no longer about how fast I can wolf it down."

Along with work/life balance, participants also described the subtheme of workload. When comparing the two, participants noted that the overall workload in IDT seems to be less demanding on their time than teaching. This has decreased their stress level, even though there are aspects of teaching that are missed. Amy noted:

> Do I miss having all the holiday breaks and time off in the summer? Yes, but it hasn't been that big of a deal, because in the evenings I'm not bringing homework. I may occasionally have to work late, but it's not the constant working till 5 or 6 o'clock, coming home completely exhausted, barely being able to cook dinner, and then having to go to bed.

One participant also detailed similar thoughts about the overall change in stress level, expressing, "I would say there's less stress. Sometimes I still feel stressed, like I've got to get this done, but it's not as emotionally draining. There's a lot of responsibility when teaching in terms of helping students or knowing when they're upset" (Hannah).

A change in their work environment was also a subtheme that was identified when comparing careers. Eight out of ten specifically noted that they work fully remote, and the other two stated that their role was hybrid or flexible when in-office. This was often noted as a positive change and allowed for more personal flexibility, since all participants previously came from an in-person classroom environment, apart from virtual teaching noted during COVID.

Along with the physical environment, many participants also noted that they felt more nourished professionally in the IDT environment. For example, Willow described:

I felt really limited as a teacher but there was a creative side of me. I always liked thinking about how to teach things in a new and exciting way or leveraging the latest trends or games to engage learning. I felt really limited in that because of the standards and expectations being put on me. But if that is a skillset you have as a teacher, there's a lot more margin for it in the corporate world.

Similarly, another participant described the IDT environment as being more understanding in their demands than that of K-12:

It's a lot more relaxed and understanding of work/life balance and a lot more understanding in their demands. The demands are there, and they are very high, and sometimes they can be intense. But at the same time, you don't feel like an utter failure if you don't do it right, and that's what I felt like in education. Your evaluations could be so detrimental to who you were and how you felt, how your next year looked, and all those things, whereas in in in the corporate world their goal is to make you good. It is not to find fault. (Brandy)

It was additionally noted that this environment not only led to more professional nourishment but could also help teachers feel as if their previous altruistic and intrinsic motivations could still be met. For example, EngProftoISD explained:

I encourage all teachers that it's a good field to get into. It allows you to continue being a learning professional and create learning behind the scenes. You get a lot of satisfaction from being that person, because once you get a sense of who you're creating this for, and why, you're still connected to it in the same way you would in a classroom.

Therefore, overall, respondents indicated that the instructional design field has allowed for mostly positive changes in the work/life balance, workload, and environment of participants.

Additionally, when discussing the above items, another subtheme of pay emerged within the discussion. Almost all participants mentioned an increase in pay, and for some it was part of the driving force for leaving, as KR expressed, "One of the many reasons was I was unsatisfied with my salary and our pay." For some it was a significant increase, like those who noted, "I make five times what I made as a teacher in corporate instructional design" (Willow) and "I increased my salary significantly from teaching." (Brandy)

However, although an increase in pay was more common, it was not noted among all participants. In fact, the positive change in the other aforementioned subthemes was more important to some than salary. An example of this was Jeff, who explained:

> You're not necessarily going to leave education and make a lot more money. In my position, I'm making less initially and but at the same time the tradeoff is, I get to work from home, which I really enjoy. I have a much more flexible schedule and the work environment is a lot less stressful. As much as I love education, it's become really difficult for teachers, because you have very little control over anything anymore, especially student behavior.

Along with Jeff, others explained that taking a pay cut would have been accepted because they wanted to be in this field and pay was not a driving force to leave, like Amy who revealed, "When looking at starting pay for instructional designers, I thought I would take a pay cut, because our district was one of the highest paid in the area. But I actually got a pay raise, which was surprising."

The final subtheme identified was that of autonomy/respect. Since many participants had described teaching as a career that sometimes lacked in this area, as described in theme two, it is important to note that when discussing instructional design, many found the change noticeable. As Michael explained:

> I've been in this job a year and I notice appreciation and things like that. The value that I'm shown for what I can do is gravely different. The bonuses, the yearly raise, or whatever it may be, they show appreciation that my talent is valued.

Other participants had similar feelings about the change in appreciation and respect, noting "I find corporate world a lot more forgiving" (Brandy) and "I'm trusted to get the work done. I think I found a position that is also very nurturing." (Aubrey)

Within this theme of juxtaposition, all participants detailed several positive changes when comparing careers, and were able to better fulfill several intrinsic and extrinsic factors that were important when choosing a new career after leaving K-12 education.

Theme 7: Guidance

The final interview question asked participants to give advice to any teacher looking to make this same career transition. Within their guidance to others, the subthemes of preparation, upskilling, and technology emerged. Many encouraged others to prepare thoroughly to enter the career, emphasizing that it was important to understand what instructional design is and what skills one needs to be successful. As a participant described:

> I did a lot of connecting, networking, asking questions, and getting into round tables. I did a lot of round tables to be able to listen and go, 'what does this mean?' and 'what is this?' Ask those questions. That would be my advice for people that are transitioning. Ask questions, know the vocabulary, and know the software. (Brandy)

Another participant similarly suggested using the knowledge of others to prepare, and stated, "Having a community or having people to bounce things off of is really helpful. That can be like e-learning heroes in the comments section, or for me, joining an academy was helpful." (Hannah).

Many also noted that one should not only have knowledge of the IDT field, but also that it is important to put in the effort and ensure that their resume and interviews reflect the skills to be successful in an IDT role, as Aubrey explained:

Really get your resume in order. You don't have to pay somebody to do it, but there's a lot of offers to help. There's a whole LinkedIn group about teachers transitioning into learning and development. They offer free advice. You have to prep for the interview too. You can't go and blind and hope that you can answer the questions. You have to do your homework. It's not a seamless transition. It takes work and dedication, and it can absolutely be done. (Aubrey)

Like these examples, most participants noted that they prepared thoroughly for the transition and believed this preparation helped them successfully land their new positions.

Additionally, many participants shared that they attribute their successful transition to upskilling in areas that are not as common for teachers to experience. Many chose different avenues to upskill and figured out their own skills gaps, as Aubrey stated:

I did not have any experience with adult learning theories prior to becoming instructional designer. So, I learned about them and filled in gaps through LinkedIn Learning and online research. Also, I think Storyline is just PowerPoint on steroids, so that helped with that transition. A lot of it was self-taught, like trial and error. Watch some videos. Try a few things. Ask, 'why isn't it working?', then google it and figure out why.

Along with self-taught upskilling, others utilized established programs or degrees. Four

participants obtained a master's degree in an IDT-specific field, which they found helpful, and

others chose informal online education. Some who chose this method, such as Willow, found

that, "You don't have to get a degree. I spent $3,000 between career coaching, ID certifications,

and an academy and was able to make 5-fold my income" and then further described her

upskilling experience:

> The big thing I did was join an academy. An instructional designer who sells their own
>
> courses in a cohort model. The first course I took was a Camtasia video editing class. I
>
> had no experience in video editing. And I took a podcasting class and an augmented
>
> reality class with them. Then through LinkedIn Learning, I took Adobe InDesign and
>
> Premiere Pro courses.

Continued upskilling was also encouraged, even with a degree, as Jeff noted:

> I'm continuing to learn as I'm working. I'm reading through *Design for How People*
>
> *Learn* right now, to keep myself moving forward. I got a couple of other books on the list
>
> too, to make sure that I'm on top of what's current and that the things I'm designing are
>
> meeting those basic requirements for good design and quality.

From these responses, one can see that the upskilling mentioned focused on both the theoretical

aspects of instructional design, such as adult learning theory and instructional design principles,

as well as the technology aspects like authoring tools and video editing software.

These technology and software skills were prevalent in most of the guidance given by

participants and therefore designated as the final subtheme. Along with the advice to learn

certain software, as noted in several examples above, many participants were also able to

compare their K-12 classroom technology experience to the technology skills needed in IDT,

finding these skills important and recognizable in both environments. For example, Hannah described:

> I like using technology creatively and I did that a lot in the classroom. I did our school
>
> news, helped a student make a podcast, and used the smart board and smartboard games.
>
> So, I like to incorporate a lot of technology and a lot of that transferred over.

Others, like Michael, also noted how leveraging technology can be an important skillset, expressing, "I'm very passionate about making technology work for the greater good. If I have a piece of technology, I wanted to utilize that and leverage it to make [learning] successful and transferable."

The guidance to others given by participants showcased that they found the transition manageable through proper preparation and understanding of the instructional design career field, upskilling to fill knowledge gaps between their teaching experience and common IDT responsibilities, and understanding how their previous technology skills can be leveraged to be successful in an IDT role.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings from the quantitative survey as well as the semi-structured interviews with 10 former K-12 educators who have successfully transitioned to instructional design and technology field. The goal of these findings was to identify the top five skills used by instructional design and technology professionals and to gather the live experiences of former educators to recognize how they have used their former skills and new experiences to successfully transition careers.

Results of the quantitative survey indicated that the top five skills used by instructional design and technology involved working with subject matter experts, creating learning assets,

developing e-learning, using cognitive science and learning theories, and creating storyboards or visual representations of learning content.

In the qualitative phase of the study, after analysis and coding of the interview data, seven major themes along with subthemes were identified regarding the transferrable skills and skills gaps between K-12 teaching and the instructional design and technology career fields. These themes indicated that K-12 teaching had led participants to burnout from high workloads, a lack of autonomy/respect, and an overall dissatisfaction with their career outlook, leading them to find a new career that used transferrable skills and still fulfilled many of their personal and professional needs. In the instructional design field, participants noted a more positive viewpoint on work/life balance, environment, autonomy/respect and workload. Chapter five contains a summary of the study's findings and recommendations for future research.

Chapter V: Discussion

This study demonstrated how educators can successfully leave the K-12 environment and transition to an instructional design and technology role by identifying the transferrable skills and skills gaps that exist between these career fields. However, no peer-reviewed research exists linking these two careers and helping to guide those looking to make this same transition. Even more difficult is that fact that many IDT researchers still find that defining instructional design job titles and responsibilities can be ambiguous, vague, and vary greatly between organizations and settings (Kerr, 1981; Klein and Kelly, 2018; North et al., 2021; Reiser, 2001; Sharif & Cho, 2015).

However, there are no lack of online programs, blogs, websites, bootcamps, and social media groups that exist to promote instructional design careers to aspiring former teachers. Those like Skjoldager (2020; 2021), who run one of these programs, explains that a teacher's skills, such as curriculum building, assessments, time management, flexibility, and love of learning, are all highly transferable to IDT. While statements like these may have merit, this study provides validation to the transferrable skills and skills gaps that exist when guiding aspiring former educators into the instructional design and technology career field, while also highlighting the additional intrinsic and extrinsic fulfillment an IDT career may bring to their lives.

Discussion of Findings: Quantitative Phase

The goal of this phase of the study was to survey current instructional design and technology professionals and determine the top five job-specific skills they used most in their IDT role.

Top Five Instructional Design and Technology Skills

Results of the survey indicated that the five skills used most by IDT professionals centered around the instructional development process. Eliciting information from SMEs received the highest number of responses (73) and was followed by designing learning assets (59), using e-learning software and tools (56), applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to maximize outcomes (52), and designing storyboards or mock-ups as a visual representation of learning and development solutions (51), all of which were well above the other thirteen options (<36).

This finding is consistent with the literature reviewed for this study. Previous studies found that professional instructional designers use the general skills associated with ADDIE, a recognized model for instructional development, in a large percentage of their work (Bichelmeyer, 2005). The top five skills identified in this study are often associated with the A-D-D stages of ADDIE, or analysis, design, and development. This further supports previous studies that revealed that IDT professionals spend a lot of time doing design work and employers are looking for instructional designers with knowledge in e-learning development, instructional design principles like cognitive science and adult learning theory, technology application, communication, and developing course materials (Cox & Osguthorpe, 2003; Munzenmaier, 2014; North et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2021). Since the purpose of this phase of the study was to shape the focus of the qualitative interview questions to relevant skills used by IDT professionals, these findings validate that the skills discussed in the qualitative phase of the research were highly applicable to IDT professionals.

Discussion of Findings: Qualitative Phase

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to capture the lived experiences of

former K-12 educators who have successfully transitioned to IDT careers and discover any

transferrable skills, skills gaps, and their impacts. The results suggest that many former teachers

found that the skills they acquired in the K-12 classroom better equipped them to meet their job

responsibilities as an IDT and only certain skills needed to be acquired or adapted for a

successful transition. Additionally, many have found instructional design and technology to be a

better career fit for both their personal and professional lives, as the career change helped

improve many other aspects of their career outlook.

Instructional Design and Technology Skills in the K-12 Classroom

During the course of the interview, participants noted several similarities between their

skills in the classroom and that in IDT. Most noticeably was the lesson planning process and the

use of learning objectives to shape instruction. It was highlighted by most participants that in the

classroom, one of the skills they needed for successful teaching was to both understand their

goals first, or the intended outcomes of the lesson, and the needs of their students, in order to

successfully build meaningful instruction that would meet those outcomes.

A number of participants even directly referenced that they unknowingly used parts of

ADDIE in their lesson planning process, but it was not taught to them in that way. This is

consistent with Kerr (1981), Kulshrestha & Kshama (2013) and Skjoldager (2021), who noted

that although teachers often do not follow the same natural patterns as laid out in the

instructional design world, or recognize a model such as ADDIE, these are just different paths to

the same successes within both fields. Peters-Burton (2012) also specifically pointed to the need

for teacher preparation programs to teach K-12 educators how to effectively articulate

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measurable learning objectives and align assessments to determine if students have learned the material.

Other highly transferable skills participants noted were project mamangement and communication. The ability to manage multiple projects, or in the K-12 environment the different responsbilities that accompany the everyday classroom facilitiation, helped participants better adapt to the IDT environment. Many found that their ability to prioritize needs, constantly communicate with others like parents or school support staff, and juggle the workload responsibilities of teaching, gave them a strong background that is useful within their IDT projects and responsonsibilites.

Connections Between the Top Five IDT Skills and the K-12 Classroom

Of the top five skills identified in the quantitative phase, results indicated that participants found two out of the five skills especially transferrable from the K-12 setting and used them regularly within their former work. Participants expressed that they often applied principles of cognitive science and learning theory to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes and developed learning assets in their time as a K-12 educator. Although the practices of learning theory varied between pedagogy and andragogy, they found the same concepts in their thinking patterns have made the transition relatable to their acquired skillset.

However, in contrast, results indicate that the other three of the five skills were not used in the K-12 setting, at least in the same relatable context as the other two. These include eliciting and using knowledge from subject matter experts, using e-learning software and tools, and designing storyboards and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions. Although not deemed entirely transferable, many participants still found common connections to aspects of their K-12 teaching experiences within these skills. This adds to the limited body of

research connecting K-12 educators with instructional design skills, but is in line with Kerr (1981), who noted that although teachers are not instructional designers, and may not be able to translate their skills into instructional design thinking, they do have responsibilities in lesson planning and designing instructional materials that parallel IDT skills but with less formal definitions behind their instructional models or strategies.

Developing the Top Five IDT Skills as a K-12 Educator

Although not all five skills were used in the K-12 environment, even the three that were less transferrable still had some parallels and recognition to the IDT field. Results indicate that in some way, all five skills were developed from their K-12 experience, although it was also indicated that they needed additional upskilling or education to truly be successful in their IDT role.

Learning Assets, Cognitive Science, and Learning Theory

Designing learning assets and using cognitive science and learning theory to shape instruction were the two skills determined to be highly developed from their K-12 teaching experience. Observations and thoughts of study participants are consistent with the K-12 teaching responsibilities outlined in several reviewed studies, which note that teachers need to use a variety of learning tools to increase motiviation, effectively articulate measurable learning objectives, design quality assessments, and demonstrate evidence-based decision-making to be effective, among other responsibilites (Gultom et al.,2020; Kulshrestha & Kshama, 2013; Peters-Burton, 2012; Seema, 2021). Comparing that to studies regarding the IDT career field, the same type of language is used to discuss IDT responsibilies, such as using instructional media to improve learning performace, using technology to faciliate learning, and creating measurable learning outcomes using a varity of resources and design processes (Guerra-Lopez & Joshi,

2021; Klein & Kelly, 2018; Reiser, 2001). This parallel is confirmed by the study findings, that skills such as these, surrounding the creation of learning content and using principles of cognitive science and learning theory to shape instruction, are abundantly used, recognized, and transferrable between career fields. Former K-12 educators who transition to IDT are highly developed in these skills and found they were able to use this knowledge base to be successful in their IDT role.

However, it is important to note that responses were varied among particiapnts who felt noticable differences between andragogy and pedagogy. Although all participants were familiar with the overal concepts of learning theory, some noted no noticable difference between adult and adolescent learning theory after transitioning careers, whereas others deemed it necessary to differenciate the two to be successful.

Subject Matter Experts

When discussing working with SMEs, all participants noted that this was a consistent job responsibility in their current role, but very few had experience with this skill in the K-12 environment. Several described that as the teacher, they themselves were often the SME, so working with one was a very different experience. However, many could find connections to other aspects of teaching that helped them develop this skill. Many noted that they were good communicators and that being able to articulate what makes a good lesson, such as identifying objectives, helped them learn how to speak with SMEs effectively to shape learning outcomes. Many also referenced that although not directly the same experience, they had to work with other members of the school community, such as an instructional coach or special education staff, and make curriculum adjustments based on their feedback. Therefore, although very different

experiences, this similar knowledge base made learning how to work with SMEs more manageable.

E-Learning and Storyboards

The skills of creating e-learning content and designing storyboards or visual representations of learning solutions were very similar to particiants as working with SMEs. Many stated these were unfamiliar skills when entering IDT, but they often recognized ways to draw from their previous K-12 experiences when learning how to navigate these unfamilar responsiblities.

When discussing e-learning, thoughts from participants varied based on their timeframe in the classroom. Those that transitioned before COVID noted that e-learning was a very new concept and was not recognizable. In the literature, Kraglund-Gauthier et al. (2010) and Rozitis (2017) highlighted the lack of preparation that preservice teachers receive in respect to online learning, which seems to be consistent with the findings of this study. None of the participants indicated an adequate knowledge of e-learning concepts, unless forced by COVID, and even that was fairly limited. Even some who transitioned during or shortly after the COVID lockdown period still noted e-learning was not a skill they possessed in the K-12 environment. Therefore, only a select few noted that because of COVID, they were able to better understand and recognize good elements of e-learning because they had created some during this timeframe. However, when discussing particular software, none of the participants used e-learning authoring tools such as Articulate 360 or Adobe Captivate in the classroom. Their experiences were limited to small LMS interactions, K-12 specific online tools, or creating videos or online content for asyncronous viewing.

Although storyboarding was also described as a new concept when entering IDT, it was highlighted as a much more recognizable skill to most participants. Many noted that although they had not done any storyboarding in K-12, and it was a noticeably different context, there was a strong connection to lesson planning. Particpants recognized their previous abilities to plan out what they wanted students to achieve, therefore having to be diligent about the steps it took to get there and the process of creating properly scaffolded and organized instructional content. So although different, particpants found this skill to be more easily adapted when they moved to the IDT environment.

Addressing Skills Gaps Between Careers

As the discussion from above indicates, participants found the transition attainable using many aspects of their previous skills and experiences, however there was often the need to adapt or upskill to successfully adjust to the specific needs of an IDT role. Even the most transferrable skills, like using learning theories or creating learning assets, needed some adjustments before participants felt they were truly able to use them adequately as an instructional designer. Many indicated that although familiar with pedagogy, they felt acquiring an IDT job required a stronger knowledge base of andragogy, instructional design models, and best practices in creating materials catered to adult learners.

The use of e-learning authoring tools was also identified as a skills gap for participants. Although some had limited experience in creating online instruction or posting to an LMS, mostly surrounding COVID, all noted that they had never used the most common tools in IDT e-learning development, such as Articulate Rise, Storyline, or Adobe Captivate. They also did not have experience storyboarding specifically for using an asynchronous authoring tool or strong knowledge of video editing tools, like Camtasia, that often accompany these e-learning projects

in an IDT role. Unfortunately, most existing literature has studied K-12 educators and their connections to online learning before COVID, so little exists that may indicate a growth in these concepts as online learning in K-12 environments continues to expand. However, research like that of Hager (2020), which found teacher preparation programs themselves allow for more exposure to online learning platforms and methodologies because of their own adaptions to both synchronous and asynchronous formats, are unable to be verified by participants of this study based on the timing of their original teaching degree but could be verified for later teaching graduates.

The most notable skill gap determined by this study was in eliciting knowledge and information from SMEs. Results indicated that participants used this skill on a regular basis in their IDT role, but it was a very unfamiliar skill since as a K-12 educator, they were considered the SME in their own classroom and did not need to use knowledge from another person to build curriculum in an unfamiliar subject area.

This skill has often been described as multifaceted, as it requires technical knowledge of instructional strategies as well as the soft skills of strong communication and collaboration, which has become a more common focus within IDT education (Munzenmaier, 2014; Sharif & Cho, 2015). Many participants cited that this skill was not necessarily difficult to obtain, as they felt their K-12 soft skills and background in identifying objectives helped them better excel in learning about this topic, but continued to be a necessary area of self-improvement, upskilling, and learning as they adapted to IDT.

Although these skills gaps were consistent among participants, their method to upskill in these areas varied. Consistent with the evidence from Cox and Osguthrope (2003) and Bean (2014), who found that many professionals currently in the field of IDT have not completed any

formal coursework in instructional design, study participants were equally split between those with formal IDT education (4 participants) and those without (6 participants). However, four of the six without a formal education in IDT did use informal online education to upskill in areas of IDT in which they did not feel fully prepared. These methods included reading IDT-specific books, watching tutorial videos, taking IDT courses on platforms such as LinkedIn Learning, EduFlow, or E-learning Heroes, or participating in a bootcamp or certificate program. However, none of the participants indicated that their upskilling method, whether formal or informal, hindered their ability to successfully learning new IDT skills and/or adapt their skills from K-12. This mindset mimics a survey by Peck (2021a), that illustrated that about a third of IDT hiring managers either do not consider formal instructional design experience in their hiring decisions or consider formal experience as important, but it does not play a significant role.

Intrinsic and Altruistic Fulfillment

Participants' thoughts and reflections regarding their initial motivations to become a K-12 educator, and subsequently their decision to the leave the profession, were vastly in line with the reviewed literature for this study. Similar to studies such as Bergmark et al. (2018) Canlı and Karadağ (2021), and Thomson et al. (2012), participants' motivations to become a K-12 educator included aspects such as an interest in instruction, the desire to impact and benefit youth, making a difference, helping others, the work schedule, and a love of learning. However, also consistent with the research, as they moved forward in their teaching careers, they found the career as a whole included many factors not shown to them in their college preparation programs (Wood & McCarthy, 2002). Many participants, especially those that taught during the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasized that these factors were what ultimately drove them away, as they left education because of the negative interactions with parents and administrators, frustration over

excessive assessment-driven practices, and their overall emotional exhaustion of the day-to-day responsibilities.

Additionally, several participants found that after numerous years in the classroom, they no longer gained the same fulfillment as they did before due to the lack of growth within K-12 education. This was especially prevalent for participants that left teaching before COVID-19, since severe burnout and high demands were less dominant during their time in K-12 than those that taught during the pandemic. Since these participants did not want to be an administrator and just stayed in the same classroom with new students each year, they found teaching to be very repetitive with no upward mobility or professional growth. This lack of advancement led these participants to leave education and pursue a new career because it better fit that intrinsic need for self-improvement and ultimately provided more of a personal and professional challenge where new roles, promotions, or varied responsibilities would exist.

Participants were also asked specifically why instructional design was chosen instead of any other career field they could have pursued when leaving education. Results supported and gave evidence to the theoretical framework guiding this study. The first factor within the Trait and Factor Theory theorizes that there must be a thorough understanding of the traits of the individual, such as skills, values, and personality to find an ideal career. Parsons (1909) believed that if an individual chooses their career so their best abilities and enthusiasms coincide with their daily work, they are laying a foundation for future success and happiness. Participants emphasized that they chose IDT because their love of education and instruction were able to carry over into their new role, as well as the ability to use other skills they had developed. They believed that their communication skills, knowledge of best practices in learning, and the ability to engage and understand their intended audience were all important in choosing IDT.

Only a few participants noted that they missed the interactions with children and making an impact on today's youth, but most participants instead emphasized that although no longer working with children, they still felt their role in educating adults allowed them to feel satisfied and impactful to others. Additionally, they felt more satisfied in their overall career outlook as they were able to not only fulfill these same intrinsic and altruistic motivations but were able to do so in a way that was no-longer self-sacrificing to their own families, mental health, and work/life balance.

Influence of Extrinsic Motivators

The second aspect of Parson's (1909) Trait and Factor Theory is an understanding of the current job market, employment, and environment. In order for a successful career match to be made, aspects such as pay, working conditions, and chances for advancement should also be taken into account. Study results also supported this aspect of the framework, as respondents stated that the instructional design career gave them better work/life balance, pay, flexibility, professional growth, and overall job satisfaction than that of K-12 teaching. This is consistent with the findings from Parker & Menasce Horowitz (2022), who found that workers who recently quit their jobs now have higher levels of job satisfaction because of these same factors relating to pay, work/life balance, and promotional opportunities.

Of the ten study participants, all but one raised their pay from K-12 education, with the majority stated that the increase was significant. This finding is consistent with the current rates of pay between these career fields, as IDT often has higher average salaries than K-12 teachers (Peck, 2021a, 2021b; Thakuria, 2021; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021). However, even the participant that took a pay cut justified its necessity by stating that the other benefits, such as remote work, flexibility, respect and support, and less burnout were all determining factors

outside of the pay itself. This was a consistent finding among all participants, even if they had raised their salary. Most respondents emphasized work/life balance and burnout as the main reasons for leaving K-12 to pursue IDT, citing pay as an additional factor but it was not as predominant until asked within the interview. This study adds further credibility to the literature that emphasizes policy makers are not addressing the real problems or proposing ineffectual remedies in K-12 education, leading teachers to find ways to remedy the problems themselves, including resignation (Öztürk et al., 2021; Santoro, 2019; Tūtlys et al., 2021). Ultimately, it was revealed within this study that the need to change their overall work environment, which strongly included these extrinsic factors, is what lead participants away from teaching and into an IDT career.

Implications and Recommendations

Results of this study indicated that K-12 teachers hold many transferrable skills when transitioning to the instructional design and technology field. Their background in designing effective instruction, creating learning assets, and understanding the use of learning objectives are all highly transferrable to an IDT role. They can effectively evaluate an audience and differentiate instruction to achieve targeted training outcomes. Many also reflected on their skills in communication, lesson planning, and managing multiple projects as highly relevant in IDT.

However, there are skills gaps that exist when making this transition. The most prevalent gap found in this study was working with subject matter experts, as this was noted by all participants as a regular IDT practice but was almost completely unknown from K-12, albeit mildly adaptable. Other skills gaps included using e-learning authoring software and tools and formal storyboarding practices. There were also mixed reactions on the need to understand the differences between pedagogy and andragogy, although most participants found them similar

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enough to be transferrable. Additionally, although many participants found they recognized the general structure of instructional design models such as ADDIE, it was never formally taught to them as educators, and therefore they never used these processes prior to pursing instructional design.

Implications for Transitioning Teachers and Instructional Design Programs

Although many formal degrees and informal certificate programs exist to teach instructional design to those outside the field, there is a lack of consistency among these programs, and on the lens on which employers view them. Also, the ambiguity of the IDT field further leaves focusing certain skills to be difficult, as relevancy between roles can vary greatly. K-12 educators wanting to pursue instructional design and technology need to self-assess their own skills in these areas before deciding on the program or upskilling method that would be most beneficial. Reading job descriptions of IDT roles, looking at the courses or objectives within a degree or certificate program, and finding a mentor to guide them through this transition would all be helpful to identify their personal skills gaps for this transition. They should also review resources by ATD, ISPI, or other IDT associations that have tried to unify the field through the creation of competency models and compare their current skills to those identified as relevant in the field.

Once transitioning teachers chose a degree, certificate program, or online resource, it should allow them to build on instructional design theory as it relates to andragogy, teach about e-learning authoring tools, and most importantly, give practice and recognition to working with SMEs. Additionally, it should allow for direct feedback that makes sure they are targeting adults appropriately and adapting their skills from K-12 to a new audience and context. It may even help to have them explain or lay out their former lesson planning process and then compare it to

common instructional design models to they can identify what strengths and gaps exist in their current instructional practices.

Recommendations for Future Research

One limitation of this study was that it only included five instructional design skills as a means of appropriately narrowing down the study focus. Although the quantitative research process gave validity to those skills as the top five most commonly used skills in the IDT field, recommendations for further research would include examining additional skills to expand on the skills gaps and transferrable skills that exist between careers. The ATD Talent Capability Model, which was the competency model referenced in this study, has over 100 skills and knowledge statements in three different domains: professional capability, personal capability, and impacting organizational capability. This study narrowed down the skills listed under the professional capacity domain, but evaluating K-12 educators on their transferrable skills and skills gaps within the other two domains would allow for even more insight into the necessary areas for transitioning teachers to upskill and adapt when pursuing IDT. It may also give additional data on the non-technical skills, such as communication and project management, that were identified in this study but not compared and contrasted like the others.

<div align="center">

Conclusion

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Given the current climate in K-12 education, which has been marred by increasing feelings of burnout and rates of attrition (Alvarez, 2021; Alves & Lopes, 2021; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Lopes & Oliveira, 2020; Moss, 2020; Öztürk et al., 2021; Toropova et al., 2021; Tūtlys et al., 2021), many educators have left K-12 to pursue a new career in instructional design and technology. However, guiding them in this transition is difficult because of the lack of research comparing the transferrable skills and skills gaps within these fields. This

study provided insight into the top five skills used most by IDT professionals and examined how one might successfully transition from teaching using several skills developed in the K-12 environment. Identifying these transferrable skills helped illustrate how one can adapt their current skillset to adult learning environments as well as appropriately target upskilling in weaker areas to meet the needs of the IDT field. Additionally, this research supported the positive impact of the IDT career field on transitioning teachers and demonstrated how it improved the overall job satisfaction for those who successfully changed careers.

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Quantitative Survey

Phase 1: Identifying the Top 5 Skills Used by Instructional Design and Technology Professionals

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled **An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career**. You were selected as a potential participant because you are currently an instructional design and technology professional and have been in an instructional design and technology role for a minimum of one year. For this portion of the study, you do not need to be a former K-12 educator. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by **Amy Eno**, a doctoral candidate at Idaho State University (ISU), and has been approved by the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Background Information:

The purpose of this data is to identify the top five day-to-day skills used by current, active instructional design and technology professionals in the field. The overall purpose of this study is to better understand the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career.

Inclusion Criteria:

You can participate in this study if you are:
- Actively employed in a professional instructional design and technology role, such as but not limited to an instructional designer, learning experience designer, and/or e-learning developer, either full-time, part-time, or as a contractor.
- Have been employed in the instructional design and technology career field for a minimum of one year.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to identify 5 skills statements out of 35 options in a Google Forms survey over the course of about 5-10 minutes.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Idaho State University. If you initially decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There is *no more than minimal risk* associated with participating in this study and there is no individual benefit to participation in the study. However, study findings may provide the overall benefit of helping former K-12 educators understand the necessary skills needed to successfully transition into professional instructional design and technology roles.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study, you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

Recording:

I understand my participation involves no audio or visual recording requirements.

Confidentiality:

Any data or records gathered from your participation will be kept private. Your data will be gathered anonymously to protect your information. Additionally, the Google Forms account holder has multi-factor authentication enabled to minimize the risk of data exposure. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will make every effort not to include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be securely stored and only accessible to the researcher. The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes and will be shared with the Idaho State University representatives.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is **Amy Eno**. The researcher's faculty advisor is John Curry, Ph.D., (currjohn@isu.edu). You may ask any questions you have related to the consent to participation. If you have questions later, you may contact them via Amy Eno (enoamy@isu.edu) or the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at humsubj@isu.edu.

* Required
Electronic Consent

I have read the above information, been given adequate time to consider the information, and understand my participation is voluntary so I may stop participation at any point. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to take part in this study.
*
IMPORTANT: If you do NOT consent to participate, please select "No" to exit the survey.
Yes
No

The following statements are taken from the Association for Talent Development (ATD) Talent Development Capability Model, specifically the Developing Professional Capability section. The Developing Professional Capability section is separated into eight capabilities: learning sciences, instructional design, training delivery and facilitation, technology application, knowledge management, career and leadership development, coaching, and evaluating impact.

Each of these eight capabilities have corresponding knowledge and skills statements. You can view the entire ATD Model here: https://capability.td.org/#/.

For the purpose of this research, only the 35 skills statements in the Developing Professional Capability Model have been included.

Please indicate the **top five skills you use most** in your role as an instructional design and technology professional. **Read through the entire list before making your selection.** Although it is likely you use many of these, you will only be allowed to choose five skills.

- Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention.
- Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements.
- Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups.
- Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning.
- Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.
- Designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome.
- Coordinating the logistical tasks associated with planning meetings or learning events.
- Facilitating meetings and/or learning events in face-to-face and/or virtual environments.
- Creating positive learning climates/environments.
- Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.
- Delivering training using multiple delivery options and media, for example mobile/multi-device, online, classroom, and/or multimedia.
- Designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome.
- Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.
- Identifying, defining, and articulating technology system requirements to support learning and talent development solutions.

- Identifying, selecting, and/or implementing learning technologies, for example using evaluative criteria and identifying appropriate applications in an instructional environment.
- Developing artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, augmented reality, and mixed reality that are ethical and free of bias.
- Using e-learning software and tools.
- Using human resource technology systems to store, retrieve, and process talent and talent development-related information.
- Designing and implementing knowledge management strategy.
- Identifying the quality, authenticity, accuracy, impartiality, and/or relevance of information from various sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.
- Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.
- Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware.
- Identifying the type and amount of information needed to support talent development activities.
- Developing, managing, facilitating, and/or supporting knowledge networks and communities of practice.
- Developing, administering, and debriefing results of assessments of intelligence, aptitude, potential, skill, ability, and/or interests.
- Facilitating the career development planning process, for example helping employees identify needs and career goals, and preparing development plans.
- Conducting individual and group career planning sessions to provide guidance across career phases, for example onboarding and job changes.
- Sourcing, designing, building, and evaluating leadership development experiences.
- Helping individuals or teams identify goals, develop realistic action plans, seek development opportunities, and monitor progress and accountability.
- Coaching supervisors and managers on methods and approaches for supporting employee development.
- Creating effective coaching agreements.
- Establishing an environment that fosters mutual respect and trust with coaching clients.
- Recruiting, training, and pairing coaches and/or mentors with employees.
- Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.
- Selecting and/or designing organizational research, for example defining research questions, creating hypotheses, and selecting methodologies.

Appendix B

Permission from ATD Email Documentation

Amy Eno   July 18, 2022 at 5:14 PM
Using ATD Model domain in Dissertation
To: customercare@td.org

Hello!

I am hoping to get more information regarding the ability to use part of your ATD Capability Model (specifically the Developing Professional Capacity domain) in my dissertation research. I am currently working on my proposal and would like to do a mixed-methods study on the transferrable skills and skills gaps for K-12 teachers who have transitioned to instructional design and technology (IDT) careers.

I need to do a quantitative survey to narrow down the skills to discuss in my qualitative research, and I'd really like to use the ATD Model to do that. My thought process was to build a survey simply asking volunteer participants (posted on several ID-focused social media forums) to pick from the list of the ATD Professional Capacity domain knowledge and skills statements and identify the most commonly used in their professional IDT role. That way, I have several skills I can justify with data in my qualitative research that are necessary for success in an IDT role. My qualitative research will not involve using the model itself.

No other part of the research would involve the ATD Model, the full model would not be used, and credit to the ATD Model would be identified within the survey as the source of the knowledge and skills statements and in the dissertation.

Please let me know the next steps I would need to take to get permission to do this, if I need it. I know your model is copyrighted, but I did not know if it would fall under fair use for research in this limited capacity. I appreciate any information you can provide.

Thank you so much!
Amy Eno
Ed.D Student
Idaho State University

On Thu, Jul 21, 2022 at 11:40 AM Morgean Hirt <mhirt@td.org> wrote:

Amy,

Very interesting! Yes, we can go ahead and give you permission to use the statements with appropriate attribution.

I will be fascinated to hear your results, as we have a sizeable audience of members who are looking to transition from K-12 roles to corporate L&D roles. And using the Capability Model to map their skills is one of the things we do suggest, to give them a sense of where they stand versus what might help to develop further.

Thanks for reach out.

Morgean Hirt, ICE-CCP

Director of Credentialing

atd CERTIFICATION INSTITUTE
Association for
Talent Development

Appendix C

Quantitative Social Media Post for Participant Sampling

Hello! I am looking for 30 participants for my dissertation study to complete a short 5-10 minute survey, details are below and within the survey link. Please only complete this survey one time. Your help is greatly appreciated!
Survey Link: https://forms.gle/6TXn9LGgYLZHhhpw9

DISSERTATION STUDY PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

The purpose of this phase of a larger research study is to identify the **top five day-to-day skills** used by **instructional design and technology professionals**.

To participate in this research, you must:

1. Be actively employed in an instructional design and technology-specific role full time, part-time or as a contractor.

2. Have been in the instructional design and technology career field for a minimum of 1 year.

Thank you for your help!

Completion Time: 5-10 minutes

Questions? Please email Amy Eno, a doctoral candidate at Idaho State University (ISU) at amyeno@isu.edu. This study has been approved by the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB) who can be contacted at humsubj@isu.edu.

Appendix D

Content Validity Index: Content Expert Instructions

Hello [Name]!

Thank you so much for agreeing to serve as an instructional design and technology content expert to help evaluate the survey instrument in my dissertation study. You will be completing a content validity index (CVI).

The goal of the survey is to **identify the top five day-to-day skills used by current, active instructional design and technology professionals in the field.** The survey uses statements from the Association for Talent Development (ATD) Talent Development Capability Model, specifically the Developing Professional Capability section, which has corresponding knowledge and skills statements. You can view the entire ATD Model here: https://capability.td.org/#/. For the purpose of my research, only the 35 skills statements in the Developing Professional Capability Model have been included.

Your task will be to rate each survey item (the 35 skills statements) on the following scale:
1 - not relevant
2 - item need some revision
3 - relevant but need minor revision
4 - very relevant

Please follow the link to complete the CVI: https://forms.gle/jXKNDhGQNRx6uZgE8

Please complete no later than [Date].

Let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thank you!
Amy Eno

GOOGLE FORMS SURVEY

Content Validity Index

Phase 1: Identifying the Top 5 Skills Used by Instructional Design and Technology Professionals

🚫 **enoamy@isu.edu** (not shared) Switch account ☁

* Required

Please rate each survey item on the 1-4 relevancy scale, with 4 being very relevant. You are rating it as an instructional design content expert to judge if each item helps answer the overall research question: To identify the top five day-to-day skills used by current, active instructional design and technology professionals in the field. *

	1 - not relevant	2 - item needs some revision	3 - relevant but needs minor revisions	4 - very relevant
Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention.	○	○	○	○
Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements.	○	○	○	○
Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups.	○	○	○	○

Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning.	○	○	○	○
Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	○	○	○	○
Designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome.	○	○	○	○
Coordinating the logistical tasks associated with planning meetings or learning events.	○	○	○	○
Facilitating meetings and/or learning events in face-to-face and/or virtual environments.	○	○	○	○
Creating positive learning climates/environments.	○	○	○	○
Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	○	○	○	○

Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.	O	O	O	O
Identifying, defining, and articulating technology system requirements to support learning and talent development solutions.	O	O	O	O
Identifying, selecting, and/or implementing learning technologies, for example using evaluative criteria and identifying appropriate applications in an instructional environment.	O	O	O	O
Developing artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, augmented reality, and mixed reality that are ethical and free of bias.	O	O	O	O
Using e-learning software and tools.	O	O	O	O
Using human resource technology systems to store, retrieve, and process talent and talent development-related information.	O	O	O	O

Designing and implementing knowledge management strategy.	○	○	○	○
Identifying the quality, authenticity, accuracy, impartiality, and/or relevance of information from various sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.	○	○	○	○
Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.	○	○	○	○
Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware.	○	○	○	○
Identifying the type and amount of information needed to support talent development activities.	○	○	○	○
Developing, managing, facilitating, and/or supporting knowledge networks and communities of practice.	○	○	○	○

Developing, administering, and debriefing results of assessments of intelligence, aptitude, potential, skill, ability, and/or interests.	○	○	○	○
Facilitating the career development planning process, for example helping employees identify needs and career goals, and preparing development plans.	○	○	○	○
Conducting individual and group career planning sessions to provide guidance across career phases, for example onboarding and job changes.	○	○	○	○
Sourcing, designing, building, and evaluating leadership development experiences.	○	○	○	○
Helping individuals or teams identify goals, develop realistic action plans, seek development opportunities, and monitor progress and accountability.	○	○	○	○
Coaching supervisors and managers on methods and approaches for supporting employee development.	○	○	○	○

Creating effective coaching agreements.	○	○	○	○
Establishing an environment that fosters mutual respect and trust with coaching clients.	○	○	○	○
Recruiting, training, and pairing coaches and/or mentors with employees.	○	○	○	○
Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	○	○	○	○
Selecting and/or designing organizational research, for example defining research questions, creating hypotheses, and selecting methodologies.	○	○	○	○

Submit   Page 1 of 1   Clear form

Appendix E

CVI Results

1	Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention	1.00
2	Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements.	0.83
3	Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups.	1.00
4	Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning	1.00
5	Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	1.00
6	Designing and/or developing learning assets, for example role plays, self-assessments, training manuals, job aids, and visual aids that align to a desired learning or behavioral outcome.	1.00
7	Coordinating the logistical tasks associated with planning meetings or learning events.	0.33
8	Facilitating meetings and/or learning events in face-to-face and/or virtual environments.	0.33
9	Creating positive learning climates/environments.	0.83
10	*Duplicate of #5, deleted*	N/A
11	Delivering training using multiple delivery options and media, for example mobile/multi-device, online, classroom, and/or multimedia.	0.83
12	*Duplicate of #6, deleted*	N/A
13	Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.	0.83
14	Identifying, defining, and articulating technology system requirements to support learning and talent development solutions.	0.67
15	Identifying, selecting, and/or implementing learning technologies, for example using evaluative criteria and identifying appropriate applications in an instructional environment.	0.83
16	Developing artificial intelligence, machine learning algorithms, augmented reality, and mixed reality that are ethical and free of bias.	0.50
17	Using e-learning software and tools.	1.00
18	Using human resource technology systems to store, retrieve, and process talent and talent development-related information.	0.67
19	Designing and implementing knowledge management strategy.	1.00

20	Identifying the quality, authenticity, accuracy, impartiality, and/or relevance of information from various sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.	0.67
21	Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media, speeches and presentations, and observations.	1.00
22	Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware.	1.00
23	Identifying the type and amount of information needed to support talent development activities.	1.00
24	Developing, managing, facilitating, and/or supporting knowledge networks and communities of practice.	0.83
25	Developing, administering, and debriefing results of assessments of intelligence, aptitude, potential, skill, ability, and/or interests.	0.83
26	Facilitating the career development planning process, for example helping employees identify needs and career goals, and preparing development plans.	0.33
27	Conducting individual and group career planning sessions to provide guidance across career phases, for example onboarding and job changes.	0.33
28	Sourcing, designing, building, and evaluating leadership development experiences.	0.67
29	Helping individuals or teams identify goals, develop realistic action plans, seek development opportunities, and monitor progress and accountability.	0.50
30	Coaching supervisors and managers on methods and approaches for supporting employee development.	0.33
31	Creating effective coaching agreements.	0.17
32	Establishing an environment that fosters mutual respect and trust with coaching clients.	0.50
33	Recruiting, training, and pairing coaches and/or mentors with employees.	0.00
34	Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	0.83
35	Selecting and/or designing organizational research, for example defining research questions, creating hypotheses, and selecting methodologies.	0.33

Appendix F

Test-Retest Results

	Test	Retest	Score
Content Expert 1	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 3. Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups 4. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 5. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 3. Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups. 4. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 5. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes.	100
Content Expert 2	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 3. Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media,	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 3. Organizing and synthesizing information from multiple sources, for example databases, print and online media,	100

	speeches and presentations, and observations. 4. Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware. 5. Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	speeches and presentations, and observations. 4. Curating instructional content, tools, and resources, for example researching, evaluating, selecting, and/or assembling publicly available online courseware. 5. Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	
Content Expert 3	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 3. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes. 4. Creating positive learning climates/environments. 5. Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 3. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes. 4. Creating positive learning climates/environments. 5. Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems.	100

Content Expert 4	1. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 2. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 3. Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems. 4. Using e-learning software and tools. 5. Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	1. Developing learning and behavioral outcome statements. 2. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 3. Selecting, integrating, managing, and/or maintaining learning platforms, for example learning management systems, knowledge management systems, and performance management systems. 4. Using e-learning software and tools. 5. Creating data collection tools, for example questionnaires, surveys, and structured interviews.	100
Content Expert 5	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Designing blueprints, schematics, and/or other visual representations of learning and development solutions, for example wireframes, storyboards, and mock-ups. 3. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 4. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes. 5. Using e-learning software and tools.	1. Applying principles of cognitive science and adult learning to design solutions that maximize learning and/or behavioral outcomes, for example enhancing motivation and increasing knowledge retention. 2. Creating positive learning climates/environments. 3. Eliciting and using knowledge and information from subject matter experts to support and/or enhance learning. 4. Selecting and aligning delivery options and media for training and/or learning events to the desired learning or behavioral outcomes. 5. Using e-learning software and tools.	80

Qualitative Social Media Post for Volunteer Sampling

Hello! I am looking for 8-10 participants for my dissertation study. If you are a former K-12 educator who has transitioned into instructional design and technology, I'd love to invite you to be voluntarily interviewed, details are below. The survey link will collect your contact information and eligibility, and I'll be in touch with additional details to coordinate a convenient time. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Participant data collection survey link (5 minutes): https://forms.gle/sypGcPvBzBoFpXhj7

STUDY PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

The purpose of this study is to identify the transferable skills and skills gaps for **K-12 teachers who have transitioned** into the **instructional design and technology career field**.

To participate in this research, you must:

1 Been formerly employed as K-12 classroom teacher for at least 3 years.

2 Currently working part-time or full-time in an instructional design and technology (IDT) role.

3 Been employed in the IDT career field for a minimum of 6 months.

Calling all former K-12 teachers!

Will consist of a 1-hour Zoom Interview

Thank you for your help!

Questions? Please email Amy Eno, a doctoral candidate at Idaho State University (ISU) at amyeno@isu.edu. This study has been approved by the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB) who can be contacted at humsubj@isu.edu.

Appendix H

Qualitative Survey Language

Phase 2: Interviews with former K-12 Educators

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled **An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career**. You were selected as a potential participant because you are currently an instructional design and technology professional for a minimum of six months and were formerly a K-12 educator for at least three years. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before acting on this invitation to participate in the study.

This study is being conducted by **Amy Eno**, a doctoral candidate at Idaho State University (ISU), and has been approved by the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to better understand the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career.

Inclusion Criteria:

You can participate in this study if you: (1) Were formerly employed as a K-12 educator for at least 3 years, (2) are currently employed full-time or part-time in an instructional design and technology-specific role and (3) have been employed in the instructional design and technology career field for at least 6 months.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to confirm your eligibility and answer basic demographic and contact information questions in a Google Forms survey over the course of about 5-10 minutes. Upon completion, if you are chosen for the study, I will reach out via email to establish a convenient time for a Zoom interview using Calendly. This interview will take approximately one hour. Additional procedural information will be provided via email and verbally before the interview.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Idaho State University. If you initially decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time later without affecting those relationships.

Risks and Benefits of Participation:

There is *no more than minimal risk* associated with participating in this study and there is no individual benefit to participation in the study. However, study findings may provide the overall benefit of helping former K-12 educators understand the necessary skills needed to successfully transition into professional instructional design and technology roles.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study, you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

Recording:

I understand my participation in the Zoom interview involves audio and visual recording requirements.

Confidentiality:

Any data, recordings or records gathered from your participation will be kept private. Your data will be gathered anonymously to protect your information. Additionally, the Google Forms account holder has multi-factor authentication enabled to minimize the risk of data exposure. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will make every effort not to include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be securely stored and only accessible to the researcher. The results of the study will be used for scholarly purposes and will be shared with the Idaho State University representatives.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is **Amy Eno**. The researcher's faculty advisor is John Curry, Ph.D., (currjohn@isu.edu). You may ask any questions you have related to the consent to participation. If you have questions later, you may contact them via Amy Eno (enoamy@isu.edu) or the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB) office at humsubj@isu.edu.

* Required

Electronic Consent

I have read the above information, been given adequate time to consider the information, and understand my participation is voluntary so I may stop participation at any point. I have asked questions and received answers. I consent to take part in this study.
*
IMPORTANT: If you do NOT consent to participate, please select "No" to exit the survey.
Yes
No

Confirm eligibility for study participation:

Please confirm you were formerly employed as a K-12 educator for at least 3 years:
Yes
No

How many years were you a K-12 educator?
3-5 years
6-10 years
More than 10 years

What grade level(s) did you teach?
Pre-K or Young 5s
Elementary (K-5 grade)
Middle School (6-8 grade)
High School (9-12 grade)

Please confirm you are currently employed full-time or part-time in an instructional design and technology-specific role:
Yes
No

What is your current job title?
Open-ended response field

Please confirm you have been employed in the instructional design and technology career field for at least 6 months:
Yes
No

How long have you been in the instructional design and technology career field? (including other IDT-specific roles besides your current role)
6 months – 1 year
1 - 3 years
4 -7 years
8 - 10 years
More than 10 years

What instructional design and technology-specific education did you complete PRIOR to making the transition? (Select all that apply)
None
Open-source online learning (i.e. LinkedIn Learning, YouTube videos, free software trials)
Online Certificate Program (i.e. IDOL, ATD)
College/University Certificate Program

Additional Bachelor's degree
Master's Degree
Doctorate Degree
Other *(open-ended response field)*

PAGE 3

Demographic and Contact Information

Preferred Pseudonym
(open-ended response field)

What is your gender or gender identity?
Female
Male
Non-binary
Prefer not to say
Other *(open-ended response field)*

In what city and state do you currently reside?
(open-ended response field)

What is your email address?
(open-ended response field)

Do you consent to being contacted via email to participate in a Zoom interview?
Yes
No

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Appendix I

Dissertation Study Information Sheet

</div>

STUDY TITLE: An Analysis of Transferrable Skills, Skills Gaps, and their Impact on Former K-12 Classroom Teachers who Transition into an Instructional Design and Technology Career

RESEARCHER: Amy Eno

FACULTY ADVISOR: Dr. John Curry

You are invited to participate in a research study. Your participation is voluntary. This document explains information about this study. You should ask questions about anything that is unclear to you.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to better understand the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

Participants are asked to complete a 13-question questionnaire using Google Forms which should take no longer than 5-10 minutes to determine their eligibility for this study.

Upon notification of selection, participants will electronically sign an interview consent form and will also be asked to register for an interview date and time via the Calendly online scheduling tool link provided.

The interview contains several open-ended questions and is estimated to take one hour. The interview will be conducted over Zoom and both audio and video recording will be utilized. You may decline to be recorded, in part or in totality, and continue with your participation.

If you have any accessibility requirements, please respond to the selection notification email, and the researcher will strive to meet your needs.

A follow-up interview may be required.

PAYMENT/COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no compensation provided for your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The members of the research team (researcher, faculty advisor, and dissertation committee members) and the Idaho State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) may access the data.

The IRB reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

Any data gathered from your participation will be kept private. Additionally, the Google Forms and Zoom account holder has multi-factor authentication enabled to minimize the risk of data exposure. In any report of this study that might be published, the researcher will make every effort not to include any information that will make it possible to identify you.

To maintain the strictest confidentiality, please only provide a pseudonym, city and state in which you are currently located, and preferred gender identify when requested.

The researcher will delete all non-selectee screening questionnaires once ineligibility is rendered. For selected participants, the researcher will maintain your survey data on their ISU-provided Google account and will maintain all interview transcript(s), interview video(s), and notes related to the interview(s) on a local computer that is both biodata and password protected. Your files will be maintained until the study is submitted and approved by the dissertation committee.

Interview/audio recordings will be permanently deleted from the computer after transcription is complete.

During the interview, you may elect to turn your video off, permitting audio-only. You may also request to not be recorded, in part or totality.

You may request a copy of your files at any time. If you permit the use of recording, you will receive a transcript of the recording to review after the interview is complete to verify your thoughts have been communicated accurately. If you are not recorded, you will receive a written summary of the notes taken manually by the researcher for an accuracy review.

At the completion of the study, all files and their contents will be deleted.

RISKS AND BENEFITS
There is no more than minimal risk associated with participating in this study and there is no individual benefit to participation in the study. However, study findings may provide the overall benefit of helping former K-12 educators understand the necessary skills needed to successfully transition into professional instructional design and technology roles.

In the event you experience stress or anxiety during your participation in the study, you may terminate your participation at any time. You may refuse to answer any questions you consider invasive or stressful. If you decide not to participate, we will not include your data for research and analysis.

RESEARCHER CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Amy Eno.

IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Idaho State University Institutional Review Board at humsubj@isu.edu.

ORAL CONSENT

Please review the above information carefully. Before the interview begins, you will be read the following statement and asked specifically to give oral consent, which will be captured as part of the interview recording:

You have read the study information sheet, been given adequate time to consider the information, and understand this form, the research study, its risks and benefits, and that your participation is voluntary so you may stop participation at any point. If needed, you have asked questions and received answers. Do you consent to participate in this study?

Appendix J

Interview Questions and Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to better understand the transferrable skills, skills gaps, their impacts on former K-12 teachers who have successfully transitioned to an instructional design and technology career.

This meeting will last about 60 minutes. Your participation in this meeting is completely voluntary and you can stop the meeting at any time. You can also let me know if there are any questions you would rather not answer. I will only use your chosen pseudonym in this study and will not disclose any identifiable information to anyone as part of the project.

Will it be okay if I record this interview?
        Start recording

You have received an electronic version of the study information sheet. Before we begin, do you have any questions regarding this information?

I'm now going to read you a statement to confirm oral consent for this study.

You have read the study information sheet, been given adequate time to consider the information, and understand this form, the research study, its risks and benefits, and that your participation is voluntary so you may stop participation at any point. If needed, you have asked questions and received answers. Do you consent to participate in this study?

        Receive a verbal "yes" before continuing or end the interview

Thank you. The Zoom recording will be saved locally on a password-protected computer and not uploaded to any cloud-based storage programs. I will permanently erase the file after the study is completed. Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

You also received a copy of the interview questions in advance so you have an idea of what will be asked. The instructional design and technology skills were identified in the first phase of this study as the top five day-to-day skills used by IDT professionals, which is why we are specifically focusing on those skills. These questions are meant to semi-structured, so I will be listening to your responses and will only be asking follow-up questions as needed.

	Questions	Probing Questions
	1. Tell me about your years and experience as a K-12 teacher.	• Grade level(s), subject • Public, private or charter • Pre, during or post-COVID?

	2. What first influenced you to become a K-12 teacher?	• What did you like about your job responsibilities? • What did you dislike about your job responsibilities?
	3. What influenced you to pursue a new career and leave K-12 education?	
	4. What influenced your decision to pursue an IDT role as your next career?	• Was it the job position itself or IDT as a general career field that influenced your decision to leave teaching?
	5. Tell me about your years and experience as an IDT professional.	• What is your current job title? • How many IDT roles have you had?
	6. Think back about your years as a teacher, what, if any, instructional design skills did you use?	• Changes due to COVID? • Can you share some examples of what this looked like with your students?
IDT Skills *(Identified in Phase 1)* **Skill A** **Skill B** **Skill C** **Skill D** **Skill E** *Skip Q8 if they are unfamiliar with skill from Q7*	7. So now thinking specifically about your current IDT role, How, if at all, do you use *skill* in your current role? *(REPEAT WITH EACH SKILL)*	• Can you share a specific example?
	8. For *skill*, describe, if at all, how you adapted this skill between what it looked like as an educator and what it looked like in your IDT role. OR For *skill*, describe how you acquired this skill to be successful in your IDT role. *(REPEAT WITH EACH SKILL)*	• Was this upskilling done before you were hired or on-the-job? • Was this part of any formal IDT education program or self-taught?
	9. What differences, if any, both positive and/or negative, have you found between K-12 teaching and working in IDT?	• Environment? • Pay? • Job Market? • Workload/Responsibilities?
	10. If you could give advice to anyone making the same transition, what advice would you give?	

	11. Is there anything else that we didn't cover that you'd like me to note for this research?	

Stop recording

Thank you so much for sharing with me about your experiences!

I will be contacting you shortly via email to review the interview transcript and make sure your meaning was recorded accurately. There you will have an opportunity to give feedback and correct any wording or messaging that doesn't adequately reflect your thoughts.

Thank you so much!