

About Me

Hello and welcome to my portfolio! I hope that it provides you with insight into my professional and academic work. This portfolio culminates my experience with the Master's of Instructional Technology program at UNC-Wilmington.

I spent my childhood in the New Jersey suburbs of Philadelphia and moved with my family to North Carolina just before high school. The transition from New Jersey to North Carolina was definitely a learning experience for me, as I was able to reinvent myself very early in life. Throughout high school, I focused my time and attention on the theatre arts – as an actor and student director. In these roles, I discovered my self-confidence and ability to lead others.

In 1995, I was a recipient of the North Carolina Teaching Fellows Scholarship and attended the University of North Carolina at Asheville where I studied Education, Drama and Social Studies. During my time at UNC-Asheville, I focused on my leadership skills, understanding of the educational process and critical eye for the theatrical presentation as a student director, scene shop supervisor, intern at a rural cultural arts center and aspiring teacher. Looking back on my undergraduate life, I realize that, not only was I learning my craft, but I was also gaining an understanding of diversity, organizational structure and the need for interpersonal skills. I graduated in 2000, moved to Wilmington, NC and began my teaching career as a middle school Social Studies teacher in Hampstead, NC.

As a young teacher, I was eager to learn as much as I could about the process of teaching and the school environment in order to advance my knowledge of the field. In my quest for continuous improvement, I participated in hundreds of hours of professional development, served on school-based and district leadership teams, supervised a student teacher and began to deliver training to my colleagues and other community members. After three years in a traditional school, I began to search for opportunities to improve myself further and requested a transfer to an alternative school for outcast students. Unfortunately, this experience confirmed that my search within the school building was nearing an end and I began to search for opportunity elsewhere.

In 2005, I accepted a position at the district office as the Instructional Technology Coordinator and began my journey through the Instructional Technology (MIT) program at UNCW. My job as Instructional Technology Coordinator allowed me to examine first-hand the inner-workings of a school system. From strategic planning to grant evaluation and needs assessment to budgeting and politico, I was truly challenged by my career and course of study. Coupled with the hands-on experience through my job, the past two-and-a-half years of my experiences were a period of intense educational productivity, inspiring professional development and eye-opening personal opportunity.

A quote from the 1980's classic "*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*" states, "Life goes by pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." My career progressed last year as I added the district Media program to my responsibilities and my personal life saw drastic changes. Last October, my wife and I had our first son and we began to rethink what is truly important. As a result, a few months short of my son's first birthday, I chose to take a leave of

absence from my career to focus my attention on the raising of our son and completing my MIT degree. I believe this was a good decision, because not only I have been able to complete my degree, but also I have had time to look deeper at my personal life and career opportunities.

For me, the term Instructional Technology has come to mean the blending of instructional design, human performance improvement, materials development, project management and evaluation into a systematic process of taking a step back to look around so that we miss nothing when designing interventions to problems or implementing new systems. Since beginning the MIT program, the systematic process of analysis, design, development, implementation and evaluation has become such a natural way of thinking for me. I now see myself as a resource to those with whom I work – conducting careful analysis before designing training, utilizing sound techniques when designing training and developing materials, implementing solutions based on the readiness of those who are affected and finally evaluating my work before, during and after implementation to ensure quality. I believe in the process of performance improvement as a cornerstone to instructional design – fully analyzing a system's needs before designing and developing an instructional solution. I believe in providing technological solutions only to those who are ready, using only the most appropriate learning environment for the identified objectives. I strive to stay abreast of emerging technology, although I do not believe in using new tools simply because they exist – there must be a process and rationale for implementation. This is perhaps the biggest lesson I have learned – push change, embrace it, but only adopt when the situation warrants it.

In finishing my formal education, I do not plan to stop learning. For me, new knowledge and skills are critical, especially in this field. I hope to continue learning new strategies for materials development, using a variety of technologies. I plan to incorporate the processes, knowledge and skills that I have gained from this program into my future career. My goal is to utilize my past and newly developed skills to become an essential component of a design team whose mission is to produce effective instructional designs, develop flawless materials and deliver solid instructional products that will help drive performance improvement, informed leadership and systemic change in any industry I enter.