Introduction

Like most, I had a serendipitous beginning to my career in this field. I knew I loved to teach but did not know what subject. I loved to read and study theory as a literature major but did not want to spend my life writing another literary analysis of Chaucer. I loved to write as a former newspaper reporter and use visual design technologies to lay out newspapers but knew that was not quite right either. What was the answer? Luckily for me, a colleague mentioned instructional design, and I jumped feet first into a field that I knew very little about.

I've learned over the years that my experience is more common than not, as there is not "a proper way" (see Lloyd Rieber's Peter Dean lecture, republished in this book) to come into this field. People with a wide rainbow of academic and professional backgrounds come into this field and leave to occupy a similarly wide variety of employment options. For this reason, many have called our field a "meta" field that is integrated into many other disciplines. For what could be more ubiquitous than the need to educate? And where there is education, there must be designers to create it.

Because we work in a meta-discipline, editing a book on the "foundations" of the field is very difficult. No matter how many chapters are included, inevitably there will be important topics left out. For this reason, curious readers are recommended to seek out any of the other excellent foundation textbooks available, including the following:

- [Trends and Issues in Instructional Design and Technology [https://edtechbooks.org/-Rfx]](https://edtechbooks.org/-Rfx) (Reiser and Dempsey)
- [Foundations of Educational Technology [https://edtechbooks.org/-pX]](https://edtechbooks.org/-pX) (Spector)
- [The Instructional Design Knowledge Base [https://edtechbooks.org/-Eam]](https://edtechbooks.org/-Eam) (Richey, Klein, and Tracey)

I repeat, this book will not cover everything a student in the field should know. No book will. What I do hope, however, is that this book will provide enough of an overview of the key topics, discussions, authors, and vocabulary in the field that you will be able to start navigating and understanding other books, articles, and conference presentations as you continue your educational journey. I also hope to spark an interest in studying more on any one of these topics that may be interesting to you. There are rich bodies of literature underneath each of these topics, just waiting to be explored.

What's in a Name?

Scholars disagree on what we should even call our field. In the textbooks I mentioned above, our field is called educational technology, instructional design, and instructional design and technology. My academic department is called the Department of Instructional Psychology and Technology, although it used to go by the Department of Instructional Science. In this book I have sought for what I considered to be the most inclusive name: learning and instructional design technology (LIDT). I chose this also to emphasize that as designers and technologists, we not only affect instruction but also learners and learning environments. In fact, sometimes, that may be our greatest work.

Organization of This Book

This book reflects a suggested strategy for teaching new graduate students in the LIDT field. First, the book begins with definitions about what the LIDT field is. Second it surveys some key historical concepts that lay the foundation of the field, including an overview of learning theory and some brief history of the LIDT field and of the Association for Educational Communications Technology (AECT)—a main professional organization for the field. This section also provides some key concepts in design, programmed instruction, and instructional media.

The third section of the book focuses on current trends and issues, using the concept of "current" fairly liberally. Here we review topics such as the learning sciences, online learning, design-based research, K-12 technology integration, instructional gaming, and school reform. The fourth and fifth sections of the book I consider to represent the future of the field—or the future of you, the student just beginning your career! You are the future of the field, so this section of the book is dedicated to you. In it, you will find chapters related to successfully navigating graduate school, launching your career, and integrating yourself into the professional community.

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As an open book, my assumption was that other instructors might remix the content to fit their course. Readers may notice that there is a strong Brigham Young University influence in my version of the book, and other departments may want to emphasize their departments in versions of the book for their students. In fact, I believe it is good for students to become well acquainted with the foundations of their own department, and the current trending topics among their own faculty.

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Reflection

What do you hope to learn from this textbook? Write down any questions you have about the field and as you read through the chapters, note any answers you may have found or add any additional questions.

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Authors. 2018. Title of chapter. In R. West (Ed.), *Foundations of Learning and Instructional Design Technology* (1st ed.). Available at https://edtechbooks.org/lidtfoundations. [https://edtechbooks.org/-guw]

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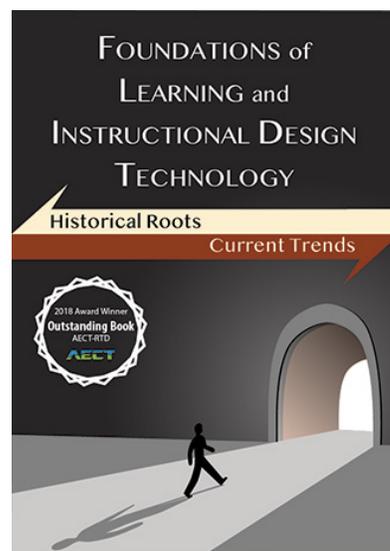
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