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Preparing future instructional design leaders through an applied doctoral program: the DPS in Instructional Design Leadership

August 29, 2016 | By Yi Yang
Instructional Design
Teaching Effectiveness

A Brief History of Instructional Design Doctoral Programs

Over the past decade, the demand for professional practitioner-oriented doctoral education has grown rapidly. Groups ranging from the Carnegie Foundation to the Higher Learning Commission say that universities should offer professional practice doctorates to better serve the needs of educators seeking career growth. As a result, the number of these programs has skyrocketed to nearly 500 around the world.



Organizations invest considerable time and money in staff learning and development. According to the American Society of Training and Development, U.S. organizations spent approximately \$164.2 billion on employee learning in 2012. \$18 billion went to tuition reimbursement for employees' college degrees and credentials.

Within higher education organizations, instructional design leaders are valued because they are uniquely qualified to envision the future of education and give critical and strategic direction to others. They ultimately provide an organization with the leadership necessary to move institutions deeper into the 21st century and beyond.

In the instructional design field, historically there have been two types of doctoral degrees offered: the Ph.D. and the Ed.D. The Ph.D. degree is a research-oriented, traditional academic degree that prepares researchers and scholars in education. The Ed.D. prepares students for administrative leadership in education.

However, neither degree is optimally designed to prepare graduates for success in the business world. Instructional designers need professionally oriented degrees that help them apply high-level thinking to complex problems in the real world.

An Innovative New Program

In response to this need, Franklin University is now offering the [Doctor of Professional Studies \(DPS\) degree in Instructional Design Leadership](#).

This three-year, professional practice doctorate is designed to attract professionals in curriculum design, training, instructional design, and related fields. It will prepare graduates to be exemplary domestic and international leaders through a demanding curriculum that is student-centered, professionally focused, inquiry driven, theory-to-practice, and globally significant. Our graduate learning environment places high value on diverse cultures, experiences, and perspectives.

The goals of the DPS in Instructional Design Leadership program include:

- Teaching students instructional design leadership within domestic and global organizations
- Advancing the scholarship of practice
- Providing a quality, professionally tailored, comprehensive, and practice-oriented curriculum
- Developing strategic alliances with professional, corporate, government, and educational organizations
- Building a community among students, faculty, alumni and professionals
- Creating a transformational environment for students to achieve their personal and professional goals

This is the first doctoral program that combines professional practice in both leadership and instructional design at the doctoral level. It is cross-disciplinary and shares curriculum with the Doctor of Business Administration in Management and Leadership program. Further, it is transfer friendly, and allows prospective students to transfer in up to 24 credit hours for the 58-hour program.

Dissertation completion is often a major obstacle to students' progress. To help remedy this problem, we are creating a

unique dissertation guidance structure to help students navigate the dissertation process. This will minimize stress and uncertainty and help students achieve their academic and professional goals.

What's a DPS degree, exactly?

The DPS degree a research doctorate equivalent to the Ph.D. degree. While Ph.D.s usually involve in-depth study in a single discipline, the DPS is by its very nature interdisciplinary, and focuses on research into dynamic, multi-faceted and complex real-world problems. DPS degrees are intended for those with substantive experience in their respective professional fields. Therefore, DPS students can leverage their rich professional experiences into applied research opportunities.

The DPS is a popular degree in Europe and Australia (it's often referred to as a DProf in Europe). In the United States, several institutions offer DPS degrees in computing, information management, occupational studies, bioethics, and organizational leadership.



Who will enroll in this program?

Because the DPS is intended to prepare future instructional design leaders, typical students will be:

- Domestic and international
- Working professionals
- Post-secondary instructors
- Students with prior doctoral credit or advanced professional credentialing
- Regionally accredited master's graduates in instructional design (ID), adult education, or related areas
- Practitioners and leaders in training, instructional design, curriculum design, or related field

What can graduates do with a DPS degree?

Career opportunities for graduates from this program include but are not limited to:

- Professor
- Lecturer or Instructor
- Adjunct Faculty
- Chief Learning Officer
- Chief Academic Officer
- Director of Training and Development
- Training Manager
- Training Director
- Consultant
- Lead/Senior Instructional Designer

This sounds great! Where can I learn more?

Please visit our [DPS in Instructional Design Leadership](#) website for more information about the program.

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