

Program Title: Learning Experience Design Graduate Certificate

Institution: University of Michigan

Innovation Category: Non-Degree Credential

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Project Description:

Emerging media and technologies have created new possibilities for learning in the 21st century, such as through online and hybrid modes of instruction. To discover these new opportunities and prepare future leaders, the University of Michigan's Center for Academic Innovation (CAI) and the Marsal Family School of Education (SOE) have partnered to create the "Learning Experience Design (LXD) Graduate Certificate," offered through the Rackham Graduate School.

As part of the program, students take the "Learning Experience Design" seminar (EDUC 616), a required course for the graduate certificate co-taught by CAI staff and SOE faculty. Students in the course engage in thoughtful exploration of topics at the intersection of design, theories of learning, and educational technology. While exploring these scholarly topics, participants will serve as Students in Residence at the Center for Academic Innovation (CAI) where they will be immersed in an exciting design lab environment that is positioned at the cutting-edge of design and applied research. Students will complete a 150-hour residency, working collaboratively with Academic Innovation staff and U-M faculty to design, analyze, and implement innovative learning experiences and tools in online and residential environments.

In addition to EDUC 616, students will enroll in two other graduate courses focusing on topics such as learning theory, transformative learning, and the foundations of education.

Project Objectives:

The primary objectives for the graduate certificate in Learning Experience Design are to:

1. Prepare students for professional roles as Learning Experience Designers in a diverse range of professional settings,
2. Use research-informed practices to design and develop technology-enhanced learning environments, and
3. Use the principles of equitable and inclusive design to create transformative learning experiences for a diverse audience of learners.

Target Population:

Through seminar discussions and real-world design projects, the LXD certificate program seeks to positively impact graduate students who wish to better understand higher education, design theory, and learning experience design. Because of the unique

structure of this program, it is particularly well suited for students looking for an internship experience to complement traditional classwork.

Additionally, by training the next generation of LXD professionals, the LXD certificate program seeks to positively impact a diverse, global audience of learners who will benefit from innovative, scalable, open, and online courses.

Quantifiable/Qualifiable Outcomes:

With over 60 graduates of the program across a five year period, the certificate program has supported graduate students from different academic units and programs across the University of Michigan. The sustained student demand and diversity represents an important success for the program.

Besides student enrollment, the LXD certificate program also measures success through the quality of work being done, and its impact on real-world audiences. In the winter of 2024, students in the program designed and launched a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) specialization on An Introduction to Learning Experience Design. Within the first 9 months of its launch, this course has reached over 1500 learners worldwide. Other projects undertaken by students include: designing a MOOC on environmental sustainability, designing a MOOC on sports analytics, and designing a professional development simulation for campus leadership.

Challenges/Problems Encountered:

Planning for this new program required coordination between two departments on campus – SOE and CAI. When designing this certificate program, careful consideration was given to aligning the institutional missions of SOE, an academic unit, and CAI, a non-academic unit. Because both units shared a common vision of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and instituting innovative educational practices, this unifying theme helped determine the course curriculum. Now that the program is more established, attention continues to be paid to maintaining a coordinated approach to information sharing and recruitment, the application process, administrative and programmatic support for students, and career services.

Evaluation Approach:

Evaluation of the program occurs at multiple levels. Within the EDUC 616 seminar, evaluation occurs through formative and summative assessments, and a final student portfolio. Within the CAI residency program, evaluation occurs through individual progress check-ins, group meetings, and student surveys. Evaluation of the program as a whole occurs annually, when SOE/CAI faculty and staff meet to review student work, learner feedback, and instructor feedback.

Value Proposition, Financing Strategy and Return-On-Investment Indicators:

Costs associated with this certificate program have been minimal, as the program was designed to leverage current course offerings. Students in the program have access to CAI personnel and resources, such as learning professionals who serve as models and mentors, software tools and other informational aids needed to complete learning design projects. Additionally, the SOE provides Graduate Student Instructor support, which provides coordination and oversight for the residency portion of the program.

Potential for Replication:

When designing this program, special consideration was given to the human capital available at the University of Michigan. Essential human capital for this program includes, but is not limited to: the expertise of faculty and staff at SOE and CAI, the projects being undertaken at CAI, and the availability of faculty and staff. Other universities looking to replicate this program should consider the relative expertise of their faculty and staff and the nature of the projects being undertaken at their university. While the LXD certificate program at UM is being coordinated between a traditional academic unit and a center for innovation, other units doing comparable work may also be well positioned to replicate this program.

Vendor Involvement:

No outside vendors were involved in bringing this project to fruition.

Requisite Program Manager Competencies:

Effective communication and collaboration between multiple teams has been an essential manager competency for this program. In the early stages of development, stakeholders from SOE and CAI met to establish common goals for the program. Throughout the development of the program, managers had to maintain lines of communication with various project stakeholders to ensure the program was being developed in a timely and effective manner.

Additional Resources:

For more information on the LXD Certificate program, visit the [Center for Academic Innovation's website](#).

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