GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
Graduate Council New Certificate, Concentration, Tack or Degree Program
Coordination/Approval Form
College of Education and Human Development

(Please complete this form and attach any related materials. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. If no coordination with other units is requires, simply indicate “None” on the form.

Please Indicate: _____ Program _____ Certificate _____X_____ Concentration _____ Track

Description of certificate, concentration or degree program: IDD Immersion Concentration
Please attach a description of the new certificate or concentration. Attach Course Inventory Forms for each new or modified course included in the program. For new degree programs, please attach the SCHEV Program Proposal submission.

Please list the contact person for this new certificate, concentration, track or program for incoming students: gseadmit@gmu.edu or call (703) 993-2892

Approval from other units:
Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new program. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval:

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Graduate Council approval: ________________________________ Date: _____________

Graduate Council representative: ______________________________ Date: _____________

Provost Office representative: ______________________________ Date: _____________
Required Courses - 30 credits (electives are optional and additional)
EDIT 526 – Web Accessibility and Design (3)
EDIT 705 – Instructional Design (3)
EDIT 791 – Immersion Practicum (6)
EDIT 732 – Advanced Instructional Design (3)
EDIT 730 – Analysis and Design of Hypermedia/Multimedia Learning Environments (3)
EDIT 792 – Immersion Practicum (6)
EDIT 590 – Research Methods (3)
EDIT 752 - Design and Production of Hypermedia/Multimedia Learning Environments (3)

Timeline

Summer (6 credits)
EDIT 526 – Web Accessibility and Design (3)
EDIT 705 – Instructional Design (3)

Fall (12 credits)
EDIT 791 – Immersion Practicum (6)
EDIT 732 – Advanced Instructional Design (3)
EDIT 730 – Analysis and Design of Hypermedia/Multimedia Learning Environments (3)

Spring (12 credits)
EDIT 792 – Immersion Practicum (6)
EDIT 752 - Design and Production of Hypermedia/Multimedia Learning Environments (3)
EDIT 590 – Research Methods (3)

Description and Rationale:
The Immersion “program” is in its 6th year of implementation (it started in the Fall of 1999) however it has never been formalized as its own concentration in the Instructional Technology program. Therefore the purpose of this proposal is to formally establish the IDD Immersion Concentration, and to better align it with the IDD concentration. A description and rationale is provided however please visit http://immersion.gmu.edu/ for a complete description of this program, student portfolios, projects, and clients.

Rationale:
The study and practice of instructional design involves the creative application of principles of learning, skilled planning, decision-making and technological expertise. The field is a challenging discipline that attempts through a systematic process to provide effective and innovative solutions to instructional problems. This process is useful in various situations including educational, corporate, academic and military contexts. Instructional designers implement prescriptive and descriptive theoretical constructs to assist them in the analysis, design, production, implementation and evaluation of instructional materials. Therefore, it may be concluded that instructional design is a complex intellectual process requiring higher-level thinking skills and involving a myriad of professional skills to systematically problem solve instructional and training situations (Nelson, Macliaro & Sherman, 1988).

Addressing this complexity, theorists in the field have recently raised concerns over traditional methods of teaching the process of instructional design (Richey, 1997; Winn, 1997; Wager, 1995). There exists a noted incongruency in the content and methods involved in learning the discipline and what constitutes the actual practice. Rowland, Fixl & Yung (1992) state that many students who left their courses had difficulty with their
first real projects, noting that there existed a wide gap between the complexity of the instructional design case they encountered and the simple processes they had learned in their program of study. Also, focusing on shallow procedural processes rather than a thorough understanding of underlying theoretical constructs as vital to good design has been an apparent problem in many instructional design programs. Winn (1997) reports that in many programs, instructional design is being taught as a simple procedure often with the focus on media production as an end in and of itself. This approach ignores the complexity of this discipline and the necessary high-level communication, negotiation and other skills needed to successfully approach instructional problems.

It is apparent that new methods of teaching instructional design are warranted. Currency in state of the art instructional approaches take on great importance when guiding those who are the future of education and training. Due to the sophistication of students in the discipline of instructional design, there is a fundamental need to practice what it is we preach as a field. Competition from those who are designing instruction apart from the academic arena demands that Universities keep pace with current practices, theoretical perspectives and technology especially in regard to teaching the design of instruction using sophisticated tools.

Shifts in the philosophy and theory of learning are also impacting the field. There is an increased emphasis in the field on learner experience, learner control and learner interpretation as well as an emphasis on authentic environmental and contextual factors and their impact on teaching and learning (Richey, 1997). These theoretical constructs are moving the instructional design field from a traditional behaviorist orientation toward considering more constructivist approaches. It only makes sense to align the nature of teaching with the content, which is addressed.

The incorporation of constructivist approaches and importance of theory in the field of instructional design have promoted the use of authentic, situated learning environments as a method of teaching. The field lends itself toward these approaches in that much of the content and process is difficult to teach abstracted from actual practice. Theorists such as Rowland, et al. (1992) advocate “…the necessity of students immersing themselves in the role of the designer, participate in decision making and consider the consequence of decisions in the context of actual cases (p.37).” Providing students with opportunities to learn in context, experience modeling of expert thought processes and allow for reflection align these methods with constructivist theories such as cognitive apprenticeship (Brown, Collins & Dugid, 1989), situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and the reflective practitioner (Shon, 1987).

**Description:**
The full-time IDD Immersion concentration is designed to allow teams of 6-10 students to immerse themselves full time, for one year (summer, fall, and spring) in project-based experiences that require them to utilize their instructional design, development, and management skills through authentic practice. The Immersion concentration replaces 12 credits of the 30-credit IDD concentration coursework (EDIT704(3), EDIT601(1), EDIT701(1), and 7 credits of electives) with EDIT 791(6) and EDIT 792(6). Therefore we are requesting the modification of EDIT 791 and EDIT 792 from 9 to 6 credits to better align the requirements with the IDD concentration. EDIT 791 (a fall course) and EDIT 792 (a spring course) are two six-credit project development practicum experiences consisting of extended, situated involvement with several realistic projects selected from the corporate, academic or military arenas.

In these projects students learn to manage and problem solve complex instructional issues related to effective instructional design and development much as they would in the real world. Students are expected to take on a specific role in a design project team and successfully interact with a client to design and produce a prototype instructional project that addresses the needs of the client organization. The establishment of this new concentration is designed to reflect the authentic practice of an instructional designer under the guidance of an experienced faculty member. The outcome and purpose of this experience is to develop a prototype project that allows for experimentation in implementing instructional design constructs, rather than focusing on production of an accountable deliverable. For each of these project development practicum experiences, students will be required to present a portfolio of accomplishments similar to what students would do in EDIT 601 and EDIT
701 (the new courses for the IDD concentration). Reflection by the student as he or she progresses through the project development practicum will culminate as a portfolio-based assessment of their experience. This assessment tool (please visit the immersion website to see and other assessment and evaluation tools for the immersion program) is created and delivered electronically and consists of students’ reflection on the successes and failures in the overall instructional design process, integration and reliance on prescriptive and descriptive theory during the project, their role in the project as well as lessons learned and their suggestions for improved success in their next instructional design experience. These reflection points will be determined at the start of the project and will take place at several designated design and development milestones. Given the full time and one-year timeframe of this concentration, students are required to take 30 credits of required courses as listed above. Electives are optional and additional.

References


