

John Tong Overview Statement

After a lot of reflection on my time and the work that I have done over the years in the program, and also the assignments professionally and personal projects in that time, I have decided that 'choosing' two programmatic themes out of the list would not reflect the journey I have experienced and the learning I have had. I wear many hats. As a manager, I mentor my team both technically and professionally, as a data analyst and data scientist I encourage data literacy as well as a wholistic understanding of the data, as an archery coach I teach abstract theories about form, physics and physiology as well as a kinesthetic skill. Following in the footsteps of being a non-traditional student, I would like to discuss the two primary themes of my study in the LDT program in a non-traditional manner and how they relate back to the core programmatic themes of the degree. In my personal statement I mentioned that there are two primary goals in my choice of program. The first was to have a more formal grounding and understanding of education and learning to make me a more effective teacher and mentor. The second was developing a more current skillset for creation of effective educational materials. I had these goals to allow me to be more effective in so many of my endeavors, which are, at their core, educational.

The first theme of my study was to build a solid academic foundation and understanding of education. I had 20 years as a technical expert, and most of that formally or informally as a trainer, both of internal and external students. I was effective, but I felt the lack of an academic grounding was a weakness. I had techniques that 'worked' but without an understanding of why. I wanted my decisions in design to be intentional. So thematically, this ties directly to the Handbook themes of *Foundations, Development and Implementation*. I have chosen some examples that I feel illustrate my current comfort and fluency with instructional design models, and actually realizing that research in producing deliverables.

- From an academic perspective, my research class allowed me to follow through a complete research project, beginning to end, including an informative meeting with the IRB. The result was a thoroughly researched paper called "The effect of draw distance on the accuracy for recurve archery" and results are practical and impactful. Further than that, an academic research paper only has so much reach. Knowledge needs to be accessible to the people who need it or that practice it, so I took this a step further and created a trade article for my students, and a 'pitch kit' for magazine publication titled "Luck of the Draw! Mastering Draw Distance".
- I have created some delightful video PSAs for my various archery communities demonstrating my ability to take established tasks and rules and designing and creating useful learning materials.
- In a larger project that had me research, create the curriculum, and create the material, I've also started a volunteer project with the SCA's Youth and Family Achievement program. In times of COVID, they needed volunteers to create remote learning material on various topics. As part of the Advanced Instructional Design class, I volunteered to create informal learning content on building wooden arrows.
- On the technical side, I have created and launched the DataNinja site as a learning opportunity to have a place to learn and create equivalent technical resources in the future. It involved

market analysis, new tool sets, research, design and a lot of experimentation. Though it is unpolished and a little barebones right now, the structure is there and what I've learned already about managing this resource as an informal learning hub has been very valuable, but obviously requiring more time to fully realize than a graduate student with a full time job offers. Perhaps, in a few decades of contributions, I can be the next Nowhere Rd of data analytics.

The second major theme of my study was to update my personal toolkit. I confess, I originally approached it from mostly a technical toolset perspective. The program certainly provided me with this early on, and you will see I took full advantage of all those skills in my example artifacts above. However, digging deeper, the tools I have extended beyond the creation of image, video, audio, or text assets. I found I was honing new skillsets in the programmatic themes of *analysis, evaluation and design* along the way. In approaching a client with a need, we have to approach a solution with more than just instructional interventions in our repertoire. As the saying goes, if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. This extends through as a thread from evaluation, analysis and design to address a need. I would like to highlight my HPT project final report as a highlight of this view, and also as an example of having ideals but also having to have the flexibility to meet client needs in a real-world situation.

In a brief summary of the project, the client approached UGA about creating a best practices and guidelines on how to best make use of data analytics in the Advising domain, I was given that opportunity to participate and I decided to approach it from an HPT perspective with Dr. Stefaniak. As it turns out, the analysis showed that the exemplar schools did not possess superior tools and analytics at the advisor level. The first major differences at the exemplar schools was the maturity in interdepartmental communication and interventions. Further exploration and interviews also showed a cultural difference that helped facilitate that cooperation and maturity. Despite my finding, the client still needs 'technical' best practice guidelines, which I drafted, but I am working with them on expanding the culture and governance sections of the guidebook to include my observations. As you can see, it was not an instructional, or even technical intervention that was at the core of that success, but rather a cultural difference. I created a culture change PechaKucha to discuss this finding which is listed in my artifacts. Had I gone in with a more limited 'tool kit' and not done a proper assessment or analysis, I could have easily just happily delivered what was asked for, but not truly provided the VALUE of the actual differentiating factors.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these artifacts. It is my hope that I have done my part as a student and properly represented your teaching in my work.