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Student Perspectives - Lisa Dise [1]

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As we seek to provide top-notch courses and programs in the online environment, we must remember that the experience of designing and implementing is only half of the equation. On the other side are the students – our partners in education. But we don't always know much about what online looks like from the student perspective.

So how do we learn more about what happens on the other side of the screen?

We ask!

In this Student Perspectives article, we feature Lisa Dise - a student in CU Denver's Information and Learning Technologies (ILT) Master's program.



Lisa Dise

I started in the ILT program as a requirement of hire for my current position. I was skeptical coming into the program about how much I would learn because I had been working in the Instructional Design and Technology field for ten years. I am glad that my skepticism was unfounded, as I have learned an immense amount from the courses, my instructors, and my fellow students in this program.

I really appreciate the flexibility that comes with an online program. I am a mother of two young children, work full time, and have a chronic and unpredictable medical condition. This program has allowed me to set my own weekly schedule to accommodate my busy life. Also, the learner-centered model that this program utilizes has allowed me to apply many of the course projects to my work environment, which has enabled me to directly utilize the skills I am learning in real life situations.

I live in the Eastern Time Zone and it’s been a challenge completing group assignments. It can also be challenging working with other professionals who also work full time, but have different schedules and life demands. I have found that group writing assignments are the toughest when working across time zones. They are doable, but probably my least favorite type of assignment.

One of the most memorable moments I have had was when we needed to play a board game in the Games and Learning class. My classmates decided on my suggested game, and since it was a game that only I had played before it was important that I be there to explain the rules and process. We successfully used Google Hangouts so that I could be present, and we played in pairs so that everyone could participate. I also got to “meet” some of my peers for the first time and establish a connection with them that helped me to develop a sense of community in the course.

The courses I have enjoyed the most are the ones that have challenged me to think differently and learn new skills and technologies. I also enjoy the approachability and genuineness of the instructors in the program. Although I live on the other side of the country, I’ve always felt that my mentors are close by and available for questions or concerns when needed. I appreciate the faculty that are willing to try new things, and sometimes fail. This sets a good example for students about innovation and instructional technology, that technology isn’t always the answer, and it doesn’t always work as expected.

Throughout my studies in the ILT program I’ve met some amazing people who have become my colleagues and friends. I have joined a peer learning group of fellow and former students, and others from around the world that work in instructional design, where we exchange ideas and chat about the ID industry. I consider these peers my friends even though I’ve never physically met them.

It will have taken me a total of four years to complete this program. Although I am excited to graduate next May, I am sad to leave the program where I’ve met so many amazing people. I hope to stay in touch through my peer learning group, Twitter, and other online means. Maybe I’ll even make the trip out to Denver for graduation!

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