Senior Instructional Designer

Part time or Full time | Location: Greater Boston strongly preferred; other locations considered

WPS seeks multiple Senior Instructional Designers to join its small and growing team to build out robust, intellectually engaging professional learning experiences for K-12 educators. The Senior Instructional Designers will work with the WPS program team to design immersive and transformative learning experiences for educators grounded in a distinct set of learning principles. This role is ideal for intellectually curious Humanities and STEM subject-matter experts who are excited by the opportunity to research, design, and execute deeply meaningful learning experiences. Candidates should have a creative approach to creating professional learning offerings that allow educators to engage as learners as well as be metacognitive about the implications for their work.

ABOUT WPS AND ITS PROGRAMS

WPS is a non-profit education start-up grounded in the belief that teaching and learning are the most transformative of human endeavors. The organization was founded on a humanistic view of what it means to be educated - one that extends beyond traditional markers of achievement. Our programs center around two complementary endeavors that we will continuously develop and refine: the learning and development of educators and the students they serve. Throughout everything we do, we maintain a strong focus on recognizing and investing in educators that serve our country's highest need communities. WPS is in the process of developing a campus in the Boston area to support its programming and mission.

At the core of WPS sits the Adult Learning Institute (ALI), a center of professional learning that deploys a range of adult learning pedagogies to meaningfully deepen educator practice. Teachers and school leaders ("educators") from across the country participate in rigorous, research-based inductive learning experiences. The WPS Foundational Teacher Fellowship grounds educators in a cohort-based examination of central questions related to content, pedagogy, and leadership while exposing participants to a range of approaches that collectively seek to model transformational learning. More specialized programs allow educators to engage in a deeper exploration of specific disciplines, content areas, or pedagogies.

WPS is also piloting innovative programs for students from high need communities. Beginning with the College Transition Program, WPS seeks to deepen students' competencies to become deliberate and collaborative thinkers, while also helping them develop a constellation of integrated non-cognitive skills. The newly hired Senior Instructional Designers' responsibilities will primarily center on the ALI but their work may be leveraged to inform future student programming.

A set of learning principles guides the design and execution of all programs. WPS believes that learning is most powerful when it is:

- **Participant-Centered**: Learning experiences are based on theory that places learners at the center, playing an active role rather than being presented to and requires participants to share their perspectives, engage in activities, and be accountable to their peers by fully engaging.
- **Inductive**: Learners draw inferences and make meaning for themselves based on analysis of problems, moving from the specific to the generalized principles "organically," which strengthens the connection between lived experience and theory.
- **Intensive in Peer-to-Peer-Exchange**: Learners clarify their thinking by interrogating their perspectives, beliefs, and assumptions through deliberate debate and exchange of ideas across lines of difference.
- **Metacognitive & Mindset Shifting:** Intentionally creates space and process for self-reflection and analysis of one's thinking and learning, rather than just 'doing;' allows for participants to make meaning of a given learning experience.
- **At the Nexus of Theory and Practice:** Program design and pedagogical approaches should be grounded in academic research across a range of disciplines and sectors; learning experiences should be designed in ways that allow learners to better understand the principles/theory/research that undergird the content or skills they are exploring.
- **Able to move the *"Heart and Mind"*:** Attends to social, emotional and cognitive development, such that participants are transformed in how they view themselves, their practice, and the world around them.

WPS employs a set of highly engaging, participant-driven pedagogies with both teachers and students that reflect the above learning principles, including: the case study method, experiential-based learning, design-thinking, discourse-based approaches, and field-based research projects. These approaches share in common the belief that learners must make their own meaning through civil debate, questioning and exploration.

ABOUT THE ROLE

WPS seeks to bring together an entrepreneurial, interdisciplinary, and diverse team of mission-aligned individuals, of which the Senior Instructional Designers will play a critical role. The ideal candidate will have deep subject matter expertise in one or more areas and experience in instruction and instructional design for educators and/or other professionals. All candidates should be excited by the prospect of working closely as part of a team to create programs for educators that are innovative and build on time-tested approaches to learning.

Responsibilities

- Conduct research and literature reviews to identify and curate resources developed by best-in-class researchers, practitioners, and other subject-matter experts in a range of disciplines related to teaching and learning and teacher leadership and influence
- Collaborate with educational experts and conduct field work to identify areas for professional learning and develop engaging learning experiences

- Design and shape an inductive-based set of professional learning experiences that allow educators to deepen their practice through reflection and analysis grounded in theoretical frameworks and research
- Facilitate in-person and online educator learning sessions using a range of inductive, discourse-based, experiential and peer-to-peer methods
- Manage a variety of design-focused initiatives and projects, including multi-year initiatives developed with internal and external stakeholders
- Support the organization's partnership development work by assessing potential content and design partners' specialized knowledge and offerings (e.g. researchers, academics, and experts)
- Take on additional responsibilities based on interest and need, as the organization grows and evolves its programmatic focus over time

Desired Mindsets

- Hold a strong belief in the power of educators to create transformative learning experiences for students in greatest need of support
- Demonstrate passion for learning that is learner-driven and centered, inquiry-based, cross-disciplinary, experiential, project-based, and interdisciplinary
- Enjoy and embrace collaboration, thought-partnership, and working with highly committed colleagues in a professional learning community
- Value feedback, differing perspectives and learning from others; accept and provide feedback with grace, demonstrating openness, humility, and lack of defensiveness
- Embrace a highly iterative approach to design steeped in feedback and revision
- Exercise comfort, flexibility, and adaptivity in a highly fluid start-up environment that requires team members to take on a range of responsibilities and contribute on multiple fronts
- Embrace the use of research and technology to strengthen teaching and learning endeavors
- Display an open-minded, creative, and intellectually curious approach to work
- Demonstrate adaptability and a high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity

Desired Experience and Qualifications

- Have 10+ years of experience, including:
    - Experience identifying and applying high-quality research to the development and execution of learning activities
    - Experience in and command of high quality, meaningful curriculum, program, and content design for teachers and students
- Hold a Bachelor's degree or advanced degree in related field (preferred)
- Possess deep content and pedagogical expertise
- Evidence strong written and verbal communication skills
- Exhibit self-initiative and an ability to work independently to progress against work plans; thoughtfully produce work product in a short time-frame, to high standards

WPS is an equal-opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status.

APPLY

Pay is competitive. Candidates are invited to submit a cover letter and resume here. To learn more about WPS, please visit our website at wpsinstitute.org.