

Derek Thurber

PROFILE

Educational developer and higher education scholar specializing in curriculum coherence, faculty agency, and systems-level improvement in higher education. Research and professional practice focus on how curriculum, assessment, instructional design, and organizational structures shape teaching and learning interactions across programs and courses. Leads institution-level initiatives related to curriculum redesign, assessment systems, curriculum mapping, and faculty development.

Research Interests: Curriculum coherence; faculty agency; program assessment; curriculum implementation; organizational learning; higher education change; educational development

EDUCATION

EdD | Educational Leadership & Innovation May 2023
Arizona State University • Phoenix, AZ
Dissertation: "Balancing fidelity and agency in higher education curriculum"

MS | Higher Education Administration & Policy Dec. 2015
Northwestern University • Evanston, IL

BA | History May 2011
Whitman College • Walla Walla, WA

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University, Mary Lou Fulton College for Teaching & Learning Innovation

Principal Teaching + Learning Specialist June 2023 – Current

- Supervised and mentored two full-time professional staff members.
- Provided strategic leadership for college-wide faculty development, curriculum coherence, and continuous improvement initiatives.
- Directed implementation of shared Airtable-based infrastructure supporting curriculum management, assessment reporting, and institutional collaboration.

Senior Learning Designer April 2019 - June 2023

- Led curriculum mapping initiatives to improve alignment among program outcomes, coursework, assessment practices, and accreditation requirements.

Instructional Designer July 2018 - April 2019

Northwestern University, School of Education and Social Policy

Instructional Design & Technology Consultant Dec. 2015 - July 2018

Instructional Technology Specialist Sept. 2014 - Dec. 2015

Riverland Community College

Tutoring Center Coordinator (AmeriCorps VISTA) Aug. 2013 - Aug. 2014

PUBLICATIONS

Refereed Journal Articles

- Thurber, D.**, Markos, A., Ross, L., Conley, Q., & Wendt, J. (2025). Examining the use and usability of course “fact sheets” as an approach to faculty development. *Journal of Faculty Development*, 39(2), 41-48.
- Thurber, D.**, & Bossen, K. (2025). Curriculum review in higher education: The educational developer’s role in facilitating faculty communities of practice to improve coherence. *To Improve the Academy: A Journal of Educational Development*, 44(1). <https://doi.org/10.3998/tia.4500>
- Lujano Vilchis, I., **Thurber, D.**, & Romkey, M. (2024). Exploring the role of student-run journals in shaping academic identity. *Studies in Graduate and Postdoctoral Education*, 17(2), 129-143. <https://doi.org/10.1108/SGPE-04-2024-0036>
- Thurber, D.**, Markos, A., Ross, L., Conley, Q., & Wendt, J. (2024). Improving implementation of a large-scale curriculum redesign: An innovative approach to balancing fidelity and agency. *Innovative Higher Education*, 50(2), 389-410. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-024-09736-2>
- Speer, J., Conley, Q., **Thurber, D.**, Williams, B., Wasden, M., & Jackson, B. (2022). A mixed-methods study of the effectiveness and perceptions of a course design institute for health science educators. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03910-w>
- Thurber, D.** (2021). Designing learning experiences for the future of learning in the digital age: A proposed framework. *Current Issues in Education*, 22(1).
- Thurber, D.**, & Trautvetter, L. (2020). Examining student reported interaction and satisfaction in higher education administration graduate seminar-style blended courses. *Online Learning*, 24(3), 184-202. <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i3.2102>

Book Reviews

- Thurber, D.** (2022). Rachel Gabel, *The hidden curriculum: First generation students at legacy universities*. *Higher Education*, 85, 241-243. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00845-5>

Manuscripts under Review in Refereed Journals

- Thurber, D.**, Markos, A., & Ross, L. (In Review). Standardization vs. autonomy: Exploring tensions in faculty perceptions of agency in a redesigned curriculum. *Further and Higher Education*.
- Thurber, D.** & Conley, Q. (In Review). Identifying factors influencing the Sense of Teaching Agency (SoTA) among higher education faculty in the United States: A Delphi study. *Innovative Higher Education*.
- Thurber, D.** (In Review). Assessing student learning progression at scale: A validation study of embedded rubric-based indicators. *Research & Practice in Assessment*.
- Thevaraja, A., Postlewaite E., Xiaofang Zue, L., Kim, S., **Thurber, D.**, & Villarruel, H. (In Review). Changes in faculty and staff interest, awareness, and knowledge of a character framework over time. *New Directions for Higher Education*.

SELECTED GRANTS & INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

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|---|----------------|
| Project Lead, Academic Program Lifecycle Framework, MLFC | 2026 – Current |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointed by the college’s Staff Executive Team to lead development of a unified framework for the launch, revision, and sunseting of academic programs. | |
| Steering Committee Lead, CORE Affinity Groups Initiative, MLFC | 2025 – Current |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led implementation planning and collaborative infrastructure development for a college-wide faculty inquiry initiative engaging more than 100 faculty and professional staff. | |
| Project Lead, Program Assessment Systems Initiative, MLFC | 2023 - Current |

- Designed and implemented an assessment system using embedded progression indicators across 26 programs and more than 4,000 students annually.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Arizona State University

HED 572: Program Assessment & Evaluation for Higher Ed Professionals [Online]	2026
TEL 701: Quantitative Methods in Action Research [Online]	2024, 2026
HED 598: Using Technology for Student Success [Online]	2025
TEL 708: Collaborative Approaches to Data-Informed Decision Making [Online]	2024
TEL 711: Strategies for Inquiry [Hybrid; Online]	2023, 2024
EDU 301: Why Education? [Online]	2021, 2022, 2023
LSE 305: Conceptualizing Learning [Online]	2021, 2022, 2023

Northwestern University

MS_HE 406: Research and Development I [In Person]	2016, 2017
MS_HE 407: Research and Development II [In Person]	2017, 2018
MS_HE 408: Research and Development III [In Person]	2017, 2018

EDITORIAL & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Editorial

Guest Editor, Special Issue on Student-Led Journals, <i>Current Issues in Education</i> (CIE)	2023
Managing Editor, <i>Current Issues in Education</i> (CIE; ISSN 1099-839X)	2022 - 2023
Reviewer, <i>Discover Education</i>	2026 - Current
Reviewer, <i>Education Sciences</i>	2024 - Current
Reviewer, <i>Trends in Higher Education</i>	2023 - Current
Reviewer, <i>To Improve the Academy</i>	2022 - Current
Reviewer, <i>Current Issues in Education</i>	2020 - Current

Curriculum

Co-designer, TEL 701: Quantitative Methods in Action Research	2026
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Institutional Service

Ex-Officio Member, Continuous Improvement Topical Action Group (TAG), MLFC	2023 – Current
Application Reviewer, Leadership & Innovation EdD Admissions Committee, MLFC	2024 - 2026
Committee Member, Leadership & Innovation EdD Dissertation, MLFC	2026
Member, Faculty Development Systems Ad Hoc Committee, MLFC	2023 – 2024
Faculty Facilitator, Doctoral Research Conversations, MLFC	2023, 2024
Mentor, Doctoral Student Self-Directed Learning Internship, MLFC	2023

Professional Service

Session Moderator, POD Network Annual Conference	2023
Reviewer, POD Network Annual Conference	2021, 2023
Reviewer, EDUCAUSE Education Learning Initiative (ELI) Annual Conference	2021
Reviewer, Online Learning Consortium (OLC) Innovate Conference	2020, 2021

RECENT CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Thurber, D.** Markos, A., Wendt, J., Ross, L., & Conley, Q. (2024). "Improving Implementation of a Constructively-Aligned Program: Balancing Fidelity and Agency." American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Conference, Philadelphia, PA.
- Thurber, D.** (2023). "Course 'Fact Sheets' as a Novel Tool for Professional Development." Professional & Organizational Development (POD) Network Annual Conference, Virtual.
- Thurber, D.** (2023). "Exploring Tensions in Faculty Perceptions of Agency in a Teacher Preparation Program." Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Annual Conference, Virtual.
- Thurber, D.** & Bossen, K. (2021). "The learning college: Continuous improvement through a curriculum review process." Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network Annual Conference, Virtual.
- Thurber, D.** & Trautvetter, L. (2018). "Interaction and satisfaction in graduate, seminar-style blended format courses." Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) Annual Conference, Tampa Bay, FL.

AWARDS & HONORS

ASU MLFC Annual Staff Excellence (Risk Taker) Award	2024
ASU Professor of Impact Award	2023
ASU SUNAward (Multiple)	2018 - 2026
Corporation for National and Community Service Exemplary AmeriCorps VISTA Project	2014

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Emerging Supervisors Pathway [Equivalent to 1-year of Supervisory Experience], ASU	2023
Associate Certification, Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL)	2023
Blended Learning Design within a Community of Inquiry Framework, EDUCAUSE	2016

SKILLS

Research & Assessment

Mixed methods research; Delphi methodology; design-based research; action research; program assessment & evaluation; curriculum mapping; quantitative and qualitative analysis; SPSS; R; Atlas.ti; NVivo; Qualtrics

Academic Systems & Data

Airtable; Tableau; Assessment reporting workflows

Learning Technologies

Canvas LMS; Articulate Rise; Adobe Creative Cloud; Perusall; Harmonize

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

- American Educational Research Association (AERA)
- Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)
- International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (iSSoTL)
- Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network