

Maria Al Tayar

Learning & Development Manager

Strategic L&D Leader | Instructional Design & Change Management

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Portfolio: <https://creativelearningspot.com/>

Professional Summary

Strategic L&D Leader and Instructional Design Manager with 15+ years partnering with organizations to close performance gaps, navigate change, and build learning ecosystems that drive measurable business impact. Brings 5+ years of team leadership managing cross-functional academic and operations teams, plus hands-on mentorship of instructional designers in current role. Applies ADDIE-based methodology and LMS platforms to turn ambiguous needs into scalable learning solutions. Track record of leading enterprise-wide programs, managing budgets and vendor relationships, and influencing senior stakeholders across global, regulated environments.

Core Skills

- Learning Strategy & Program Design
 - Instructional Design & Content Development
 - Performance Consulting & Needs Analysis
 - Change Management
 - Team Leadership
 - Learning Management Systems Administration and Reporting
 - Budget/ Vendor Management
 - Training Effectiveness and Analytics
 - Stakeholder Engagement & Influence
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Key achievements

- Led end-to-end global overhaul of the Global Screening Operations onboarding program, conducting gap assessments, designing standardized solutions and supporting the roll-out across three global regions (CitiBank)
 - Developed change communication about a new platform rollout across multiple banking functions, driving stakeholder awareness and adoption. (CitiBank)
 - Developed training and trained the facilitators to support organizational restructuring at a major non-profit (Knight Foundation)
 - Increased school profitability by 15% (Kaplan Miami)
 - Improved student satisfaction by 40% (Kaplan Miami)
 - Elevated school ranking from 20th to consistently 1st–2nd nationally (Kaplan Chicago)
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Work Experience

Global Training Instructional Designer – CitiBank

Oct 2021 – Present

- Designed, developed and delivered 50+ high-impact learning solutions, including regulatory training and facilitator enablement programs to ensure consistent delivery at scale across global audiences ranging 30-500,000 learners.
- Managed project delivery using agile workflows (Jira), while overseeing scope, dependencies and risk across concurrent projects to ensure on-time, compliant delivery.
- Diagnosed and addressed a critical performance gap among global screening operations analysts by designing a comprehensive, multi-component onboarding program aligned to management-identified needs.
- Served as a strategic L&D partner to global business stakeholders, aligning learning to business priorities and performance goals.
- Measured program effectiveness through learner analytics data and on-the-job performance driving continuous training improvement and increased adoption.
- Mentored junior designers to ensure consistency of the team's output.
- Applied AI-driven workflows and prompt engineering techniques to accelerate content development and demonstrate practical AI use cases for the business units.
- Served on cross-functional governance forums to drive enterprise-wide adoption of new tools and technology.

Independent Learning and Development Consultant – The Knight Foundation

April 2026 – July 2026

- Conducted thorough needs analysis through structured stakeholder and employee interviews, surfacing a critical gap between HR's career framework intent and employee understanding that redefined the project scope.
- Designed and developed a facilitated training experience for an audience of 70+ participants incorporating gamification, psychological distancing and change management principles to drive active engagement with a high-stakes organizational restructuring.
- Developed a targeted leadership module building managers' change-leadership capability, including framing the "why," handling pushback, and reinforcing key messages, to position them as active change champions rather than passive recipients.
- Built facilitator guides and delivered a train-the-trainer session to ensure consistent, confident delivery across the foundation.

Co-Founder & Learning Experience Designer – Training Lounge

Apr 2020 – Oct 2021

- Co-founded an independent online learning venture delivering live virtual programs to international students world-wide, designing full curriculum, developing multimedia learning experiences and managing digital content and brand presence.

Instructional Designer – Independent Consultant - Highway to English

Apr – Aug 2020

- Designed and developed online learning programs across multiple cohorts, ensuring consistent learner experience, instructional quality and on-time delivery.
- Managed dependencies between curriculum design, facilitator enablement and content rollout.

School Operations Director – Kaplan International, Miami

Dec 2018 – Oct 2020

- Increased profitability by 15% by using CRM data to optimize admissions process, aligning offerings to meet market demand and designing and delivering sales enablement training for admissions staff.
- Improved student satisfaction by 40% through data-driven program improvement and training.
- Led academics, sales and residential operations in a high-volume, service-driven environment, overseeing cross-functional teams to ensure seamless delivery and customer satisfaction.
- Assessed employee performance to make compensation adjustments, promotions and terminations decisions.
- Managed relationships with external vendors and service providers, overseeing contract performance, quality standards and delivery timelines to support academic and operational programs.
- Held full P&L responsibility for up to 1\$M budget, tracking, allocating and reporting on all revenue and expense lines.
- Served as LMS administrator, managing platform configuration, user access, content maintenance, while supporting faculty and learner adoption.
- Led a full-scale digital transformation during COVID, managing stakeholder resistance, building faculty capability and sustaining operational continuity through a high-pressure, unplanned transition.

Academic Manager – Kaplan International, Chicago

2015 – 2018

- Elevated school ranking from 20th to consistently 1st–2nd nationally, driving measurable improvements in faculty performance and student satisfaction while navigating a complex unionization process and competing organizational pressures.
- Managed a multi-program academic portfolio serving 300+ learners.
- Administered the student management system, utilizing reporting and analytics to monitor learner progression, support capacity planning and inform operational decision-making.
- Mentored and managed performance for a team of 30+ instructors, ensuring delivery quality and alignment with program standards.
- Established instructional KPIs, delivery metrics, and quality standards to improve program outcomes.
- Supported accreditation and compliance initiatives by standardizing curriculum delivery and maintaining audit-ready documentation.

Team Leader, Instructional Design & Curriculum Development – The Cambridge Institute of International Education

2014 – 2015

- Led curriculum projects across a nationally distributed network of 100+ schools.
- Developed content for international juniors and seniors academic support programs, including blended alternatives.
- Planned curriculum roadmaps, sequencing development milestones and managing dependencies.
- Implemented content governance, quality controls and LMS standards to support scalable delivery across the network.
- Coordinated training and enablement for instructors and partner schools to ensure rollout readiness.

Academic Director – Target International Student Center

2013 – 2014

- Managed academic programs, overseeing instructional delivery, faculty performance, and learner outcomes.
- Planned and implemented curriculum initiatives aligned to organizational and accreditation standards.
- Led onboarding and development programs for instructors to ensure consistent delivery quality.

TESOL Coordinator & ESL Instructor – Target International Student Center

2011 – 2013

- Designed learner-centered curricula grounded in adult learning principles and facilitated immersive programs for diverse international audiences.

Education

- M.S. Instructional Design and Technology – Purdue University, 2020
- M.A. in Communication – Suffolk University, 2011
- B.A. Linguistics and Foreign Languages – Moscow State Linguistic University, 2007

Certifications

- Becoming a Strategic Advisor –Owen Fitzpatrick for Citibank - May 2026
- Google AI Essentials Certificate – May 2024
- Certificate in AR/VR Instructional Design – University of Maryland, 2023
- Graduate Certificate in Leadership – University of Michigan, 2016

Pro Bono Work

Instructional Designer - Heart-to-Heart International
Sep – Dec 2020

- Designed e-learning content for a public health program serving underserved youth in low-income communities.