

MATTHEW SHELDON AMES, PhD

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategic Higher Education Executive with over 20 years of experience directing digital learning transformation and academic support operations across the US, East Africa, and the Gulf.

Ph.D. in Instructional Design & Technology with a proven track record of standing up centralized institutional departments from scratch, managing multi-disciplinary teams of 30+ staff, and driving academic success operations for 800+ students. Authorized cross-continental expert in AI-enabled framework implementation, curriculum re-engineering, and global grant development (Erasmus+).

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Built a full institutional e-learning ecosystem from the ground up** at a medical university in Kigali—establishing governance, LMS architecture, faculty development systems, and a five-year digital strategy aligned with the University's long-term priorities.
 - **Led and scaled academic support and digital learning services for 800+ students**, managing a 30-member instructional team and aligning tutoring, LMS, and retention-focused interventions within an integrated support model.
 - **Secured and contributed to a multi-country Erasmus+ initiative (RADIC)** spanning Finland, Rwanda, and Zanzibar—bringing rare cross-continental grant experience across Africa and Europe.
 - **Published in leading Scopus-indexed journals (Q1/Q2)** and contributed to *AECT at 100* (Brill), establishing an international research and thought leadership profile in educational technology.
 - **Designed early AI-enabled training systems for global health workforce development**, applying AI in real-world educational contexts before widespread institutional adoption.
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WORK EXPERIENCE

Educational Researcher & Writer (AI & Digital Learning)

Strategic Consultant | Tbilisi, Georgia | Feb 2026 – Present

- Lecturing at universities in the Caucasus on AI in higher education.
- Developing AI-supported digital learning and place-based educational technology systems.
- Designing a new AI-era educational framework that rethinks assessment, pedagogy, and the role of the instructor in technology-rich environments.
- Writing and refining research-driven essays work on AI in education, digital learning systems, and the future of higher education.

Director, Center for Learning Support Services & e-Learning Programs & Assistant Professor

American University of Ras Al Khaimah | Ras Al Khaimah, UAE | Jul 2024 – Feb 2026

- Led a 30-member instructional team (tutors, TAs, and support staff), establishing standardized training frameworks, performance expectations, and operational workflows to improve service quality and consistency.
- Directed centralized academic support and digital learning operations serving 800+ undergraduate students, integrating tutoring services, learning centers, and LMS support into a coordinated institutional system.
- Redesigned academic support delivery using data-informed approaches, increasing student engagement and utilization of tutoring and learning services.
- Managed operational budgeting, staffing, and resource allocation, aligning service delivery with institutional priorities for retention, student success, and academic performance.
- Contributed to accreditation readiness and academic program review processes, ensuring alignment between learning support services, digital learning infrastructure, and quality assurance standards.

Head of e-Learning & Assistant Professor

University of Global Health Equity | Kigali, Rwanda | Nov 2019 – Jul 2024

- Founded and institutionalized the university's e-Learning Department — establishing governance, faculty development systems, LMS integration, and scalable digital infrastructure.
- Directed development and execution of the institution's five-year e-learning strategy, aligned with medical education priorities and Rwanda's national Digital Health agenda.
- Designed and facilitated faculty development initiatives supporting teaching innovation, digital pedagogy adoption, and capacity-building across interdisciplinary teams.
- Led LMS course architecture for the Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP), translating applied curriculum into scalable online delivery.
- Contributed to grant development and AI-supported training architecture for NTD workforce initiatives.
- Active contributor to Erasmus+-funded RADIC project with partners in Finland, Rwanda, and Zanzibar.

Assistant Professor, Department of Education

New York Institute of Technology (Remote) | USA | Aug 2017 – Oct 2019

- Designed and delivered undergraduate instructional technology coursework in a fully online program.

Instructional Designer

Vinnell Arabia | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | Nov 2015 – Jan 2018

- Developed educational technology strategy for a new graduate college; advised executive leadership on infrastructure and systems alignment.

Instructor & Course Developer

CITSIE, Virginia Tech | Blacksburg, VA | Jun 2013 – Oct 2015

- Designed and delivered remote teacher education courses including Message Design and Product Evaluation.

Early Career (2002–2013): Virginia Tech | Valencia Community College

Digital learning leadership across multi-campus institutions serving 40,000+ students; large-scale LMS integration and digital media transformation.

SELECTED RESEARCH & PRESENTATIONS

- Ames, M. S. (2023). Chapters in AECT at 100. Brill.
- Clark-Stallkamp, R., & Ames, M. (2023). TechTrends (Q1 Scopus).
- Cyuzuzo et al. (2025). JMIR Human Factors (Q2 Scopus).

International Presentations:

- e-Learning Africa (Dakar)
- Advancing Medical Education Conference (Kigali)
- TUFH Regional Conference (Africa)

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Instructional Design & Technology — Virginia Tech

M.A., Instructional Technology — Virginia Tech

B.A., Philosophy — Ferrum College

CORE COMPETENCIES

Digital Learning Strategy · e-Learning Systems Design & Implementation · Faculty Development & Capacity Building · Academic Quality Assurance & Accreditation · AI Integration in Higher Education · Curriculum Design & Assessment · Institutional Change Management · Cross-Cultural Leadership (U.S., East Africa, GCC) · Budget Oversight & Resource Allocation · Grant Development