

MATTHEW SHELDON AMES, PhD

Digital Health Education | Health Professions Learning Systems | East Africa & Global Contexts

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Senior digital health and medical education leader with 20+ years designing, implementing, and scaling technology-enabled learning systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. Specializes in health professions education, digital health training, and institutional capacity building in low-resource and rapidly evolving contexts. Former Head of e-Learning at the University of Global Health Equity in Rwanda, where I built the institution's digital learning infrastructure from the ground up and led a multi-year strategy aligned with national health workforce priorities. Grounded in implementation and strategy across medical education, AI-enabled training, and faculty development.

SELECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

- Built the digital health learning function at UGHE from inception — establishing governance, LMS architecture, faculty development systems, and a five-year strategy aligned with Rwanda's national Digital Health agenda.
- Designed and delivered blended Digital Health curricula for medical students and health professionals, integrating instructional design, health systems context, and technology-enhanced learning.
- Led AI-enabled capacity-building programs for health program managers across East Africa — an early applied use of AI in Sub-Saharan health workforce training.
- Supported grant-funded Communities of Practice for neglected tropical disease (NTD) workforce development across Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Contributed to Erasmus+-funded RADIC project spanning Finland, Rwanda, and Zanzibar — among few US-based educators with active grant experience across three continents simultaneously.
- Published in Scopus-indexed journals (TechTrends Q1; JMIR Human Factors Q2); presented at e-Learning Africa, TUFH Africa Regional Conference, and Advancing Medical Education Conference (Kigali).

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Independent Researcher & Digital Health Education Consultant

Project-Based | Tbilisi, Georgia | Jan 2026 – Present

- Developing the Meaning Machine — a place-based digital learning platform integrating geolocation, AI interpretation, and participatory narrative, with potential educational applications in community health and urban fieldwork contexts.

- Writing and refining research-driven work on AI integration in health professions education, digital learning systems, and the future of health workforce training.
- Available for consulting engagements with universities, NGOs, and health education organizations in East Africa and globally.

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

American University of Ras Al Khaimah | UAE | 2024–2026

- Led strategic integration of digital learning services for 800+ undergraduates, including health sciences and foundation programs, aligning LMS systems with accreditation and retention priorities.
- Built and developed a 30-member cross-disciplinary instructional team; implemented training frameworks, performance oversight, and service quality benchmarks.
- Led faculty development in technology-enhanced teaching, assessment, and blended/online learning design.
- Contributed to accreditation readiness and academic quality assurance processes across teaching and digital learning.

Head of e-Learning & Assistant Professor

University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) | Kigali & Butaro, Rwanda | 2019–2024

- Founded and institutionalized UGHE's e-learning function — establishing governance, LMS infrastructure, faculty development systems, and scalable digital learning infrastructure from scratch.
- Led 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 delivered blended Digital Health and medical education courses for first-year medical students, integrating health systems context and technology-enhanced learning.
- Led AI-enabled training programs for health program managers across East Africa, enhancing scalability, feedback, and instructional quality.
- Supported grant-funded Communities of Practice for NTD workforce development, strengthening regional knowledge exchange across Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Led LMS course architecture for the Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP), translating applied curriculum into scalable online delivery.
- Built faculty capacity in online pedagogy, assessment, and curriculum design during the rapid expansion of digital medical education post-COVID-19.
- Active contributor to Erasmus+-funded RADIC project with partners in Finland, Rwanda, and Zanzibar.

Assistant Professor, Department of Education (Remote)

New York Institute of Technology | USA | 2017–2019

- Designed and delivered graduate and undergraduate courses in instructional design and educational technology, with emphasis on online learning and assessment.
- Mentored students in research, academic writing, and professional development in virtual environments.

Instructional Designer & Educational Technology Advisor

Vinnell Arabia | Riyadh, Saudi Arabia | 2015–2018

- Advised senior leadership of a newly established graduate institution on digital learning strategy and educational technology infrastructure.

Instructor & Course Developer

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

- Designed and delivered fully online courses in digital media, instructional design, and educational evaluation.

Foundational Experience (2002–2013): Virginia Tech | Valencia College

Curriculum design and digital learning leadership across multi-campus institutions serving 40,000+ students; early large-scale e-learning adoption and simulation-based training development.

SELECTED DIGITAL HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION PROJECTS

- Digital Health Curriculum Development for medical students — UGHE, Rwanda
- AI-Supported Capacity Building for Health Program Managers — Sub-Saharan Africa
- Online Communities of Practice for Neglected Tropical Diseases — multi-country
- Faculty Development for Blended and Online Medical Education — UGHE
- Digital Health Applied Leadership Program (DHALP) — LMS architecture and online delivery
- Erasmus+ RADIC Consortium — digital rehabilitation education across Europe and East Africa

RESEARCH & SCHOLARSHIP

Journal Articles

- Cyuzuzo, C., Dukuzimana, M. J., Muhire, C., Ames, M. S., et al. (2025). Challenges to rehabilitation services in Sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review. *JMIR Human Factors*. (Scopus Q2)
- Clark-Stallkamp, R., & Ames, M. S. (2023). The AECT Archives: Elusive primary sources and where to find them. *TechTrends*. (Scopus Q1)

- Ames, M., Uwizeyimana, T., Clarke, O., & Gatete, C. (2023). Assessment of the implementation of the SAMR model in online courses at UGHE. *International Journal of Online and Distance Learning*.

Book Chapters

- Ames, M. S. (2023). Chapters in *AECT at 100: A Century of Innovation and Influence in Educational Technology*. Brill Academic Publishers.

Conference Presentations (Africa-Focused)

- Advancing Medical Education Conference, Kigali, Rwanda (2025)
- e-Learning Africa, Dakar, Senegal (2023)
- TUFH Africa Regional Conference (2023)
- AECT International Convention (multiple years)

EDUCATION

PhD, Instructional Design & Technology — Virginia Tech, USA, 2015

MA, Instructional Technology — Virginia Tech, USA, 1999

BA, Philosophy — Ferrum College, USA, 1993

REGIONAL EXPERIENCE

East Africa (Rwanda — 5 years, regional multi-country programs) · Middle East (UAE, Saudi Arabia) · United States · Sub-Saharan Africa (multi-country digital health initiatives) · Europe (Erasmus+ consortium)

CORE EXPERTISE

Digital Health Education & Training Systems · Health Professions & Medical Education · e-Learning Strategy in Low-Resource Contexts · Faculty Development & Instructional Capacity Building · Health Workforce Development · AI-Enabled & Mobile Learning for Global Health · Grant-Funded Program Design & Communities of Practice · Institutional Strengthening & Academic Leadership · Regional Partnerships (East Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa)