

Chris Colatos

Learning Leadership / Creative Innovation

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San Francisco Bay Area

SUMMARY

Transformative learning & development leader known for driving sustainable growth and data-driven innovation. An entrepreneurial spirit and a proven record of designing world-class learning experiences, excelling in leading cross-functional projects from end to end, building scalable teams, and establishing growth strategies. Big-picture person with an eye for detail, a talent for tech, a knack for storytelling, and the vision to transform how organizations engage their audiences and each other. Expertise in delivering enterprise-level learner-centered solutions and cultivating high-performing, inclusive cultures that position learners and institutions for sustainable success.

EXPERIENCE

Vice President for Academic Affairs (2025 – Present)

San Francisco Film School

- Lead academic strategy and operations, driving initiatives that elevate excellence, improve outcomes, and advance institutional innovation.

AI Expert Contributor: Comp Sci Theory, LLM, Arts (2025 – Present)

Snorkel AI

- Enhance domain-specific AI datasets to strengthen machine learning reasoning.

Chief Learning Officer (2022 – 2025)

Fractional Chief Learning Officer (2018 – 2022)

Unforgettable Learning

- Led corporate teams at leading organizations, incl. global tech companies, & academic teams at universities, designing and delivering data-informed, active, learner-centered teaching and learning experiences, strategies, programs, curricula, assessments, analytics, accessibility conformance, and digital transformation to optimize efficacy & engagement.
- Owned the overall design, development, and execution of learning experience strategies, multimedia technologies, and systems for delivering synchronous and asynchronous programs to enhance learner engagement and knowledge acquisition.

Chief Learning and Development Officer (2023 – 2024)

ASI

- Designed and facilitated leadership programs, focusing on transformative principles, significantly enhancing management skills, team efficacy, and morale.
- Architected and executed organizational strategy and learning programs from onboarding to leadership, conducting 220+ performance evals and resulting coaching.
- Led onboarding and certification for 300+ new employees in the first year.
- Boosted certification and credential compliance by 180% in six months.
- Doubled employee retention in the first six months through targeted initiatives.

North America Director of Learning Design (2020 – 2022)

North America Chair of Curriculum Design (2015 – 2019)

SAE Institute

- Founded the Learning Design department for the North America system (7 colleges).
- Led learning designers, learning media developers, SMEs, curriculum committees, and campus leadership teams to design, develop, and implement experiential and active higher education teaching and learning tools and experiences.
- Served as the institutional specialist for online and hybrid learning innovation.

HIGHLIGHTS

Led institutions and programs for thousands, significantly improving engagement & impact as VPAA, Chief Learning Officer, Director of Education, and NA Director of Learning Design.

Owned the vision and development of a new Learning Design department serving 7 colleges; created 400+ media-rich, active learning experiences in 6 months while establishing the team and department from the ground up.

Volunteer Learning Designer at After-School All-Stars; developed arts programs in historically underserved communities.

SKILLS

Higher Education Leadership
Learning and Development Leadership
Growth and Operational Excellence
Executive Development and Corporate Training
Enterprise-Level Learning Experience Design
Career Empowerment
Program Design and Development
Competency-Based Education
Experiential Learning, eLearning, Hybrid Learning
Cross-Functional Project Management
Communication and Presenting
Data-Driven Decision-Making
Efficient and Effective Project Actualization
Fostering Collaboration and High Morale
Digital Transformation and Innovation
Digital Accessibility Conformance
Multimedia Production and Interaction Design
AI Agents for Research, Learning, and Creative

EDUCATION

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (in progress)
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

MASTER OF SCIENCE, DIGITAL EDUCATION
The University of Edinburgh

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE, SOUND ARTS
Ex'pression Center for New Media

LEADERSHIP COMMUNICATION
Northwestern University

TRUSTED TESTER TOOLS (Digital Accessibility)
U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security (9 Certs)

COMPUTATIONAL PROBLEM-SOLVING
University of Pennsylvania

LEARNING ANALYTICS/ED DATA MINING
Columbia University

INTELLIGENT AUDIO SYSTEMS (MIR)
Stanford University

CREATIVE CODING
Gray Area Foundation for the Arts

ALGORITHMIC COMPOSITION
University of California, Santa Cruz

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EXPERIENCE

Director of Education (CAO) (2018 – 2021)
Academic Programs Chair (2010 – 2018)
Executive Director, Professional Training (2008 – 2014)
Program Development Manager (2009 – 2012)
Professor / Academic Course Director (2002 – 2010)

SAE Expression College

- Owned the vision and performance for all academic and student affairs within the campus; chief academic officer.
- Hired and mentored 70+ Program Chairs, administrators, staff, and faculty, supporting thousands of students.
- Represented the college and built internal and external federal, state, and local regulatory, accreditation, and community partnerships.
- Developed, implemented, and maintained internal and external policies, including Standards of Accreditation (ADA, 504, 508, SEVIS, Title IV, Title IX, ACICS, ACCSC).
- Created a multi-year strategy to design and implement student-centered active education programs and increase student success from matriculation to graduation and into careers.
- Developed structures for regular data reflection on organizational and student progress and identifying opportunities for action.
- Collaborated cross-functionally to highlight innovation and drive change management across the organization.

Lecturer / Learning Designer (2012 – 2015)

San Francisco State University

- Faculty Lecturer and Learning Designer for Graduate and Undergraduate-level courses, incl. Intermedia Comp, Sound Design, Adv. Recording, and Game Audio.
- Applied digital learning strategies to the design and development of hybrid courses and courseware, learning activities, and assessments, and vetted and implemented appropriate technologies and tools to achieve learning goals.
- Established, designed, and administered the SFSU CEL certification programs.

Founder / Chief Creative (1993 – Present)

THE STUDI/O

- Lead the organizational vision, strategy, and creative direction.
- Serve as the principal producer and primary liaison to support the goals of hundreds of artists and organizations.
- Drive the planning, project management, and delivery of solutions spanning music and sound, games, interactive media, AR/VR, mixed media composition, design, performance, and installation.
- 200+ producing, recording, mixing, mastering, design, AR/VR, and game credits.
- Partner and produce for high-profile brands, including Apple, Google, LeapFrog, Honor Code, Legends The Game, Robot Invader, Eagre Games, OtoCast, Ableton, Universal Audio, Tarpan Studios, Twisted Tools, iZotope, PETA, Stardust Brands, Harbor Picture Company, GQ, Salvatore Ferragamo, and Vogue.
- Deliver top-quality music and audio production for globally recognized artists, including Greg Phillinganes, Siedah Garrett, Narada Michael Walden, James Taylor, Carole King, Smokey Robinson, Billy Joel, Sting, Katy Perry, and Elton John.

TECHNICAL

AI Tools, Google Workspace, Microsoft 365, Apple Suite, Jira, Monday, Asana, Trello, Slack, Vyond, Captivate, Articulate Storyline 360, Camtasia, Canvas, LTI, Learning Management Systems, Instructional Technology, SCORM, SAM, ADDIE, Action Mapping, Kirkpatrick, Power BI, Learning Analytics, Kanban, Agile, Scrum, Siteimprove, axe, WAVE, Accessibility Insights, Adobe Creative Cloud, Unreal Engine, Logic Pro, Interactive Music and Sound Design

ASSOCIATIONS

Intl Association of Accessibility Professionals
Acoustical Society of America
Advance HE (Fellow)
Association for Computing Machinery
Audio Engineering Society
Center for New Music
Fractured Atlas
Game Audio Network Guild
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
Interactive Audio Special Interest Group
Intl Society for Music Information Retrieval
Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the US
Society of Professional Audio Recording Services
Special Interest Group on Computer Graphics

LEADERSHIP

Advisory Board Member, Amotions AI (2024 –)
Liminal Human-AI Symbiosis in Learning (2025)

Augmenting the Reality of Accessible Learning Environments (2023)

Learning Efficacy of Multimedia in Interactive Augmented Reality Environments (2017)

Effects of Arts Education and Underserved Communities (2016)

Adaptive Learning Design Implications: Effects of Multimedia on Learning Efficacy & Cognitive Load (2016)

EARLY CAREER

Producer, Composer, Music Supervisor

(2011 – 2015) Country Road Films

Executive Director

Apple Training Hawaii

SEO, QR

(2008 – 2010) Google

Master Trainer

ACT T3 (28 Certifications)

(2006 –) Apple Inc.

Producer, Arranger, Engineer

(2001 – 2004)
Narada Michael Walden, Tarpan Studios