How to Get Into Learning and Development: A Practical Workflow

- Teachers, trainers, HR staff, and career changers: L&D is a realistic destination
- Employers value transferable design, facilitation, and coordination skills over perfect title matches
- The workflow: assess fit, map skills, pick a role, learn tools, build proof, reposition, search, interview
- Success by the end: one target role, a prioritized gap plan, three portfolio artifacts
- 2026 hiring is selective and employer-led — demonstrable impact beats certificates alone



What L&D Work Actually Looks Like

Different roles. Diverse work. Real impact.



Role families

Role families: instructional designer, L&D specialist or coordinator, facilitator, e-learning developer, L&D manager

Typical deliverables

Typical deliverables: needs analyses, curricula, e-learning modules, facilitator guides, job aids, assessments, evaluation reports



Daily mix

Daily mix of design, delivery, administration, and stakeholder work across sectors

Entry points

Entry points: L&D assistant, learning coordinator, training coordinator, onboarding coordinator, instructional design assistant



Myth
L&D is just classroom teaching with a new title, or mainly course production

Reality
L&D starts with performance analysis and ends with measurable improvement

PEOPLE + LEARNING + BRIGHTER POSSIBILITIES

What 2026 Employers Actually Ask For

Employers describe a connected workflow: analyze, plan, enable practice, assess, evaluate, improve



Most-requested in postings: learning plans (94%), evaluation (85%), improvement (83%), analysis (81%)

Learner assessment appears in 43% — keep it separate from program evaluation

Stakeholder management (50%), data and analytics (48%), facilitation (39%)

Articulate in about 1 in 5 ads; AI demand rising — use it fluently, not build it



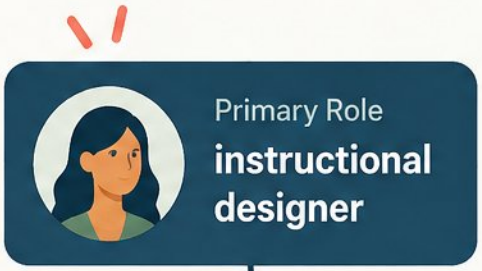
Assess Your Fit and Translate Your Strengths

- Audit strengths and thin areas against ATD's 23-capability model
- Self-assessment covers analysis, design, facilitation, assessment, evaluation, technology, stakeholder management
- Translate teaching into L&D language: lesson plans → training design plans
- Grading and feedback become evaluation loops; differentiation becomes learner-needs adaptation
- Decide now: is L&D right, which role family, what evidence is missing



Choose a Target Role and Build Your Gap Matrix

- Read job postings as requirement data: must-haves, nice-to-haves, tools
- Build a gap matrix against the target role, then sort: must-have, nice-to-have, defer
- Pick one primary role and one adjacent backup, e.g. instructional designer, then learning coordinator
- Match to your background: teachers lean design and facilitation; HR leans coordination and LMS
- Skillenai's 2026 index: 98.1% of instructional designer postings name instructional design



Primary Role
instructional designer



Adjacent Backup
learning coordinator

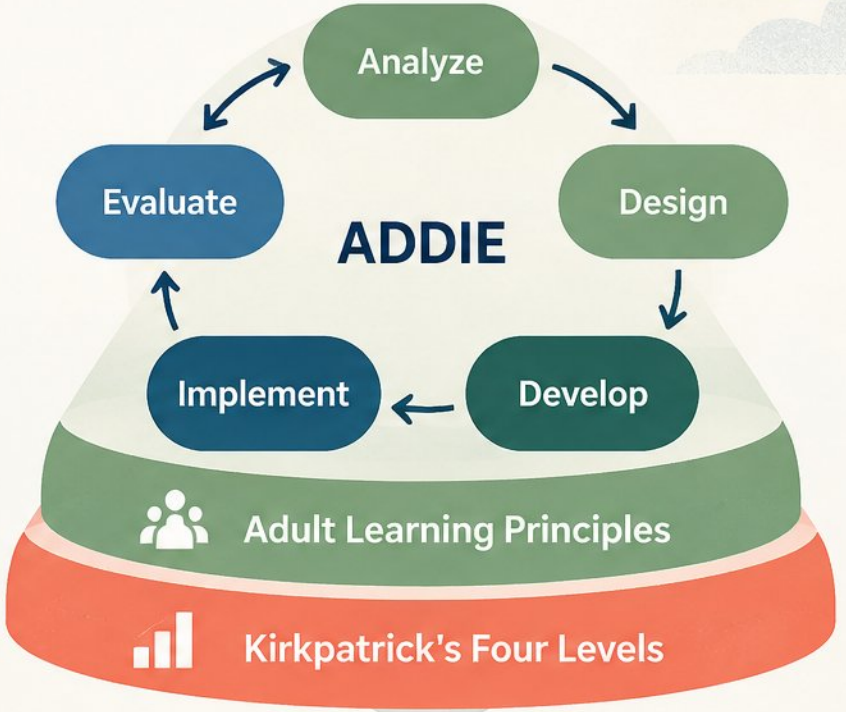
	Job Posting Requirements (from job postings)	**Your Current Skills** (from your background)
Must-have		
Nice-to-have		
Defer		

Translate
your experience
into opportunity

New skills.
Brighter possibilities.

Learn the Core Frameworks: ADDIE, Adult Learning, and Evaluation

- ADDIE, SAM, backward design: apply them to design decisions, don't just recite them
- Adult learning principles shape how you plan practice, examples, and facilitation
- Kirkpatrick's four levels: use reaction and learning for quick course checks
- Use behavior and results evidence for program-level conversations
- Learner assessment asks "did they learn?" while program evaluation asks "did work improve?"
- Practice translating a workplace problem into a learning response — needs analysis beats model names



Learner Assessment
"did they learn?"

Program Evaluation
"did work improve?"

Real Work Brighter Futures

Choose and Learn the Right Tools First

Authoring — LMS admin — Surveys — Spreadsheets — Publish SCORM/xAPI — Upload to an LMS — Build a quiz

- Learn tools in order: authoring, LMS admin, surveys, spreadsheets
- Articulate 360 remains the industry default in 2026
- Rise 360 for fast builds; Storyline 360 for branching and interactions
- iSpring works inside PowerPoint; H5P is a capable free option
- Minimum literacy: publish SCORM/xAPI, upload to an LMS, build a quiz
- Use AI to draft and check output—and explain how you verified it



NEW SKILLS. A BRIGHTER NEXT CHAPTER.

Build Portfolio Evidence Without a Job

- Three artifacts show readiness: needs analysis brief, short e-learning module, facilitation plan
- Lead with one flagship project: situation, task, action, result—plus an openable artifact
- Write case studies on your decisions and constraints, not polished screens
- Name the SME review cycle, the pilot, and what changed from feedback
- Source scenarios ethically: volunteer work, nonprofit projects, SME interviews, open briefs
- Debrand paid work; one to three deep projects beat a shallow gallery



Reposition Your Resume and Profile

Show your value in a way that fits your next chapter.

- Combination format: summary that names the move, tailored skills, then work history
- Translate, don't inflate: what you designed, for whom, and the evidence it worked
- ATS basics: .docx or text PDF, single column, portfolio link in contact block
- Lead LinkedIn headline and About with the target role and problems you solve
- Place recent relevaant certificates above older degrees; list models and tools from ads



Run a Targeted Job Search

- Search multiple titles: learning coordinator, training coordinator, onboarding coordinator, L&D associate
- Look beyond job boards: internal moves, alumni networks, informational interviews, L&D communities
- Market is slower and selective in 2026 — build a weekly application cadence
- Research each employer's industry, workforce, training programs, and tech stack before applying
- Treat internships, apprenticeships, contract roles, and volunteer projects as valid entry routes



NEW SKILLS
BRIGHTER OPPORTUNITIES

Interview With Evidence and Handle the Career-Changer Question

Prepare. Show your thinking. Tell your story. Move forward with confidence.

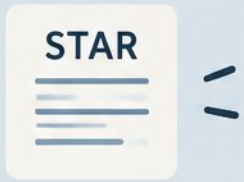




- Interview formats: phone screen, panel, portfolio walkthrough, case presentation



- "How would you design...?" — clarify the performance situation, propose a plan, name measures



- Prepare STAR stories with measurable outcomes, including one program that fell short



- Reframe your background as an advantage: facilitation, coordination, business alignment



- Practice judgment questions: tool choice, responsible AI use, success beyond completion rates

Your First 90 Days and Long-Term Growth



Days 1–30

understand the business, meet stakeholders and SMEs, inventory content and platforms

Days 31–60

analyze needs, prioritize gaps, agree on a limited roadmap

Days 61–90

launch one visible improvement and set up measurement

Review skills annually against the ATD Capability Model; choose a specialization path

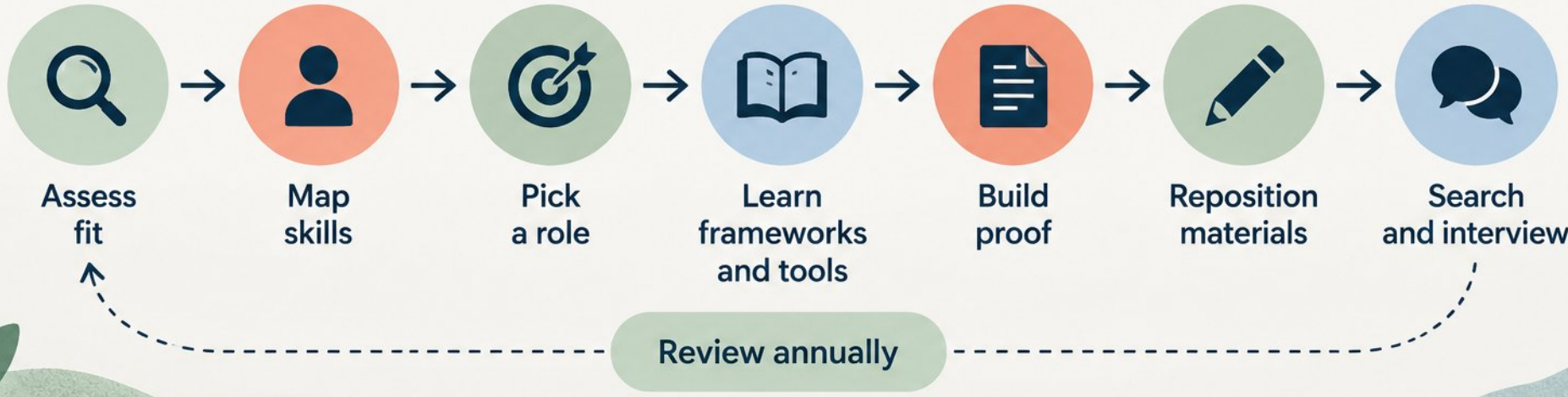
Build credibility with quick wins tied to business outcomes—don't rebuild everything

Your Action Plan: What to Do in the Next 30 Days

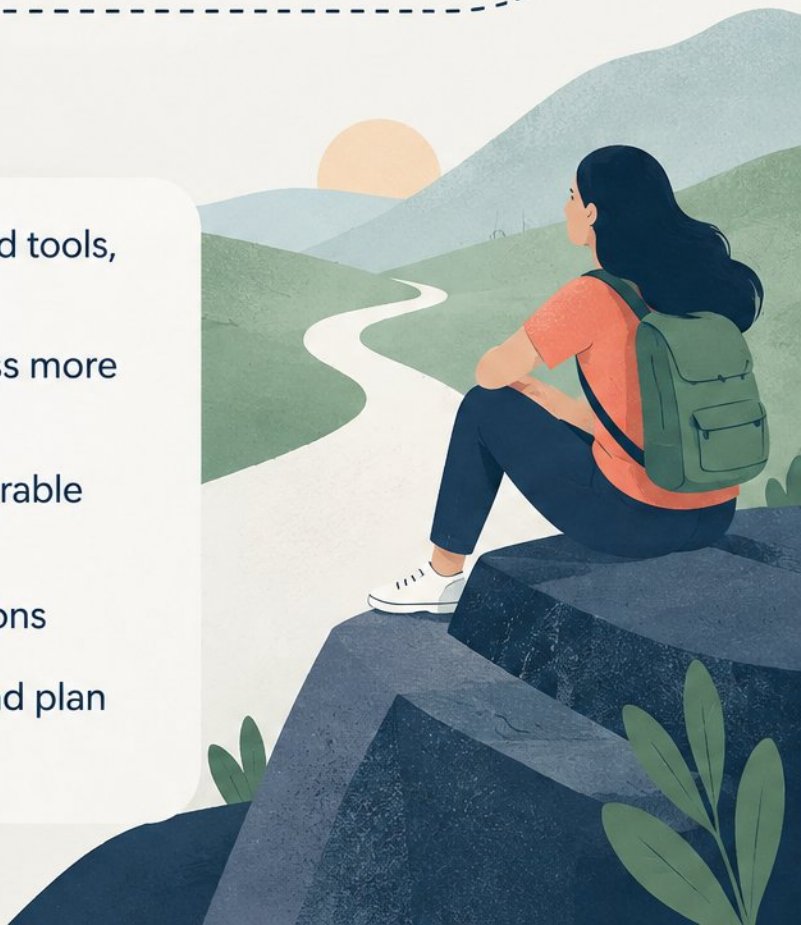
- Complete the fit self-assessment; pick one primary role and one backup.
- Pull ten real job postings; build a gap matrix and shortlist two to three must-have gaps.
- Start one portfolio project now, ideally for a real client or volunteer audience.
- Rewrite one resume bullet and your LinkedIn headline in translated L&D language.
- Set a weekly application cadence and schedule your first informational interview this week.



Recap: The Seven-Step Workflow and Key Takeaways



- Seven steps: assess fit, map skills, pick a role, learn frameworks and tools, build proof, reposition materials, search and interview
- Demonstrated work and translated evidence predict entry success more than a perfect degree match
- Hiring in 2026 is selective: tailor applications and lead with measurable outcomes
- Learner assessment and program evaluation stay separate decisions
- Reuse this workflow annually to review skills, update evidence, and plan your next move



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