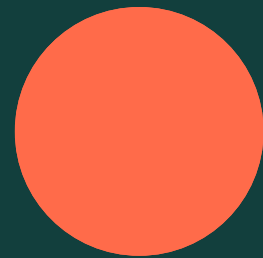


Making the Move into Learning & Development

How to turn the experience you already have into an actual L&D job, whether you're coming from teaching or another field entirely.

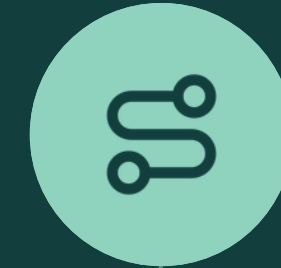


Holly Owens

L&D Career Strategist · Host of the EdUp L&D Podcast



Your experience



Position it



Prove it



Land the role

What we'll cover in the next 50ish minutes



01

Myth or Fact?

Clear out the beliefs that slow career changers down



02

The data

What the L&D job market actually looks like



03

Position your skills

Translate your experience into L&D language



04

Job-search playbook

Where to look, who to talk to, how to prove it



05

Take action

What I wish I'd known, plus your checklist

Where are you in your pivot?



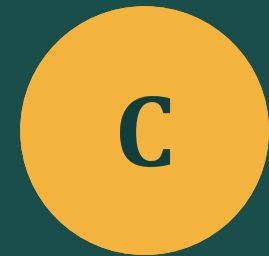
Just exploring

Curious about L&D, but no resume or portfolio updates yet.



Rewriting my resume

Trying to translate past experience into L&D language.



Applying, hearing nothing

Sending applications but getting ghosted or auto-rejected.



Interviewing

Landing screens and polishing samples and references.

Type A, B, C or D in the chat. Bonus: tell us where you're coming from: teaching, HR, healthcare, sales, retail, something else?

Myth or Fact?

Type the number plus M or F (e.g. "1M"). Answers on the next slide.

1

M or F?

“You need a master's in instructional design to get hired.”

2

M or F?

“You have to master Articulate Storyline before you apply.”

3

M or F?

“Teaching experience is L&D experience.”

4

M or F?

“L&D is still hiring.”

5

M or F?

“Applying to more jobs is the fastest way in.”

6

M or F?

“L&D just means instructional design.”

Four myths, two facts

MYTH

1

You need a master's in instructional design to get hired.

BLS lists a bachelor's as the typical entry point. Work samples do more persuading than another degree.

MYTH

2

You have to master Articulate Storyline before you apply.

Know what the tools do and show one solid sample. Tools are learnable; strategy gets you hired.

FACT

3

Teaching experience is L&D experience.

Designing, facilitating and assessing learning is the job. Your work is translating it.

FACT

4

L&D is still hiring.

About 46,000 openings a year are projected for training & development specialists through 2035.

MYTH

5

Applying to more jobs is the fastest way in.

Targeted applications and real conversations open doors that 'Easy Apply' doesn't.

MYTH

6

L&D just means instructional design.

Facilitation, enablement, onboarding, LMS admin, customer education: there are many doors in.

The field by the numbers

472,500

training & development
specialist jobs in the
U.S. (2025)

+11%

projected growth,
2025–2035: much faster
than average

~46,000

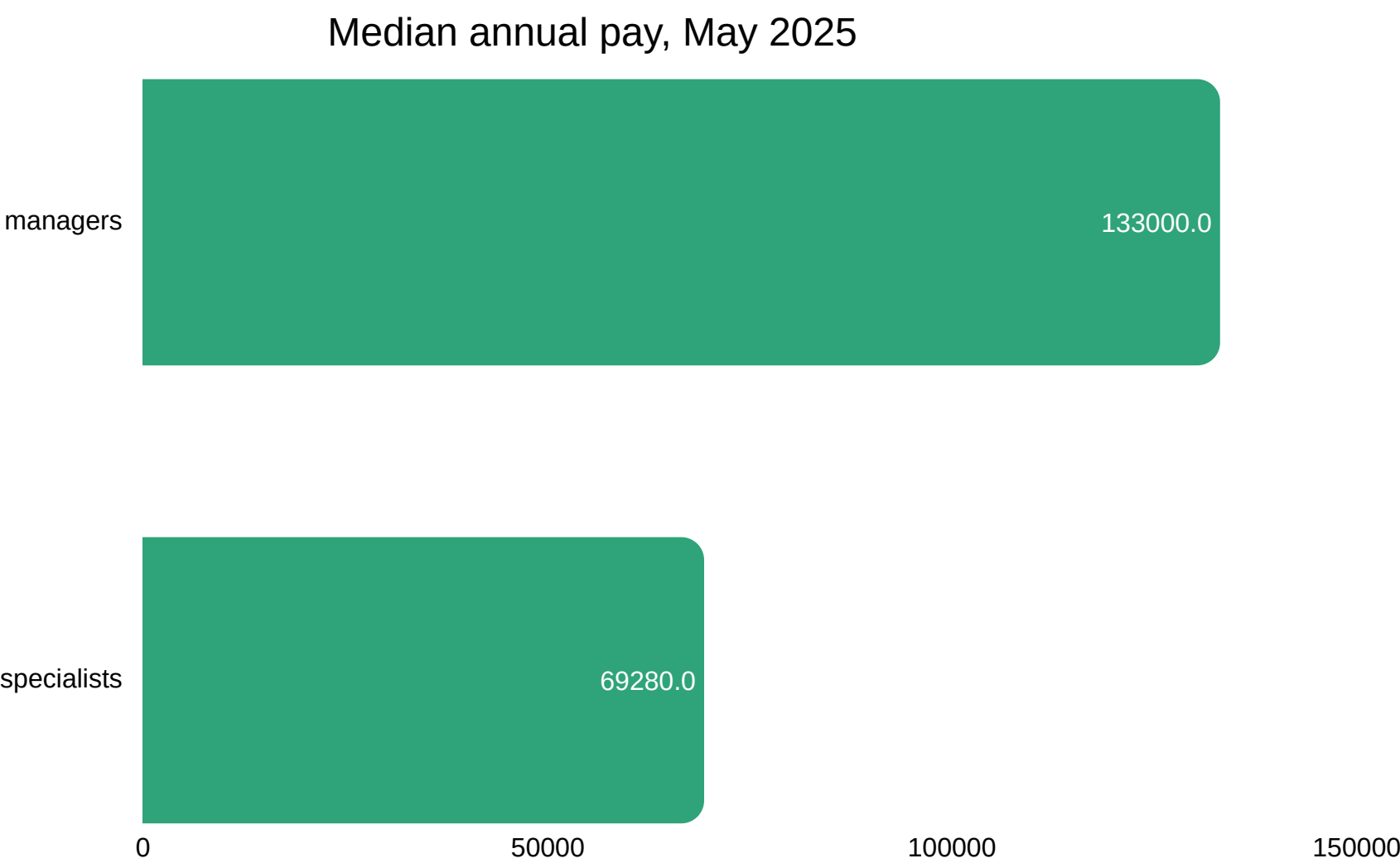
projected openings
every year, on average

\$69,280

median annual pay
(May 2025)

What it means for you: there's steady demand, but you're competing with other career changers. Positioning and proof are how you stand out.

Where L&D is headed, and where it can take you



Managers typically need 5+ years of related experience. Source: BLS OOH.



Teams are growing

More than a third of organizations added talent development headcount in 2024. Trainers, facilitators and instructional designers were among the most common new roles.

ATD State of the Industry 2025



AI is now part of the job

71% of L&D pros are experimenting with or integrating AI. Fluency is a differentiator, not a prerequisite.

LinkedIn Workplace Learning Report 2025



Learning is moving into the flow of work

Formal learning hours per employee fell from 17.4 to 13.7 as coaching and mentoring grow: skills many career changers already use.

ATD State of the Industry 2025

PART 2

Position what you already have

You're not starting over. You're re-labeling.



Your background points to specific L&D roles



IF YOU'RE FROM

Teaching

Look at: Instructional designer, facilitator, learning experience designer



IF YOU'RE FROM

HR & recruiting

Look at: L&D coordinator, onboarding specialist, talent development



IF YOU'RE FROM

Sales & customer success

Look at: Sales enablement, customer education, product trainer



IF YOU'RE FROM

Healthcare

Look at: Clinical educator, compliance & patient-education training



IF YOU'RE FROM

Retail, hospitality & ops

Look at: Field trainer, training manager, frontline onboarding



IF YOU'RE FROM

Tech & admin

Look at: LMS administrator, learning technologist, learning ops

Translate, don't just transfer

What you say now	What L&D hiring managers hear	Common in
Lesson plans	Learning design, storyboards	Teaching
Students	Learners, target audience	Teaching
Differentiated instruction	Personalized learning paths	Teaching
Grading and quizzes	Assessment and evaluation	Teaching
Parent and admin meetings	Stakeholder management	Teaching
Trained new hires on the floor	Onboarding program delivery	Retail / ops
Wrote SOPs and how-to guides	Job aids, performance support	Any field
Ran team huddles and meetings	Facilitation	Any field



Try this tonight

Copy three job posts you'd love. Highlight the repeated phrases. Those words go in your headline and the top third of your resume.

Resume bullets: before and after

FROM TEACHING

BEFORE

Planned daily 5th-grade math lessons, managed classroom behavior for 30 students, and graded weekly quizzes.



AFTER

Designed and delivered performance-based instruction for 30 learners, using formative assessment data to adjust content and raise mastery by [X]%.

FROM CUSTOMER SUPPORT

BEFORE

Answered customer tickets and helped train new team members.



AFTER

Built and facilitated onboarding for 12 new support hires, reducing time-to-proficiency from 6 weeks to 4.

The formula: action verb + learning work + audience + measurable result

PART 3

Run a smarter job search

Fewer, better applications, backed by proof and people.



Five moves that beat sending 100 applications

1

Search by every title, not just one

The same work hides under many names. Save searches for all of them (see right).

2

Mirror the job post's language

Tailor your headline, summary and top bullets to each role so the ATS and the recruiter both see a match.

3

Talk to people before you need them

Ask L&D practitioners for 15-minute chats. Ask what their team needs, not for a job.

4

Look inside your current organization first

Offer to help with onboarding or training. Internal moves are a real first L&D role.

5

Track it like a project

Log applications, contacts and follow-up dates. Follow up after a week of silence.

Search terms to save

Instructional designer

Learning experience designer

Training specialist

Corporate trainer

Facilitator

L&D coordinator

Enablement specialist

Customer education

Onboarding specialist

eLearning developer

Show the work, then let others vouch for you



1–2 case studies > 10 badges

Pick past projects (classroom, team or volunteer) and tell the story in four beats:

Problem

Approach

Solution

Result

A simple Canva or Google Slides case study works. Clear learning goals and a business result matter more than flashy software.



Secret weapon: video references

A 30–45 second clip from a colleague or leader shows your communication and facilitation in a way paper can't.

SCRIPT TO SEND TODAY

"Hi [Name]! Would you record a 30-second Loom about what it was like working with me on [project], especially my facilitation or problem-solving? It would really help my L&D job search."

Hire or pass?

CANDIDATE A

The Tool Collector

5 certification badges and \$2,000 in software courses, but portfolio samples have no clear learning objectives or business results.

Recruiter take: tech-savvy, but no evidence of design thinking.

CANDIDATE B

The Problem Solver

One simple 3-slide Canva case study showing how they fixed a communication gap, plus a 40-second video reference.

Recruiter take: instant confidence they can do the job.

Type A or B: who gets the interview?

Six things career changers often miss



Your first title may not say "designer."

Coordinator, trainer and enablement roles are real L&D experience.



You don't need every certificate.

Pick one skill gap and close it by building a project.



Silence isn't a verdict.

Applications get lost. Follow up, adjust, keep going.



Conversations beat cold applications.

Start networking before you feel ready.



Training is the means, not the goal.

In interviews, talk about the business problem you'd solve.



Your past career is an asset.

Lead with it. Don't apologize for it.

Your 30-day L&D action plan

WEEK 1

Audit & translate

- ☐ Pick your target L&D roles
- ☐ Rewrite resume using L&D vocabulary
- ☐ Update LinkedIn headline & About

WEEK 2

Build proof

- ☐ Choose 1–2 past projects
- ☐ Draft a simple case study
- ☐ Request 2 video references

WEEK 3

Connect

- ☐ Join 1–2 L&D communities
- ☐ Reach out to 5 practitioners
- ☐ Book 2 informational chats

WEEK 4

Apply with intent

- ☐ Apply to 5 well-matched roles
- ☐ Tailor each application
- ☐ Log and follow up after 1 week

Grab the full template/checklist: [link in the chat](#)

What I wish you knew about this process

- 1** You are interviewing the company just as much as they're interviewing you.
- 2** *Read number 1 again.*
- 3** You're worth it.
- 4** *Read #1 and #3 again.*
- 5** **You got this.**

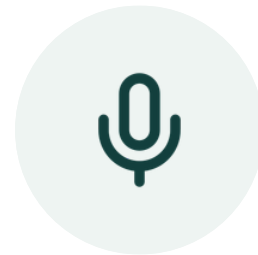
Ways to work with me



FREE

A "Hire This Person" post

Have you seen them out on LinkedIn? A post that puts you, your skills and the role you want in front of my network.



FREE

A "Hire This Person" podcast episode

Get the word out about you to a network of over 1 million downloads.



\$

1:1 conversations

- Mock interviews
- Deep conversations about your career goals
- Your professional resources

Interested? Message me on LinkedIn and tell me which one you'd like.

OPEN Q&A

Let's talk about your pivot

Drop your biggest resume, job-search or portfolio question in the chat.



Keep learning with Holly: EdUp L&D Podcast · connect on LinkedIn

Sources

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook: Training and Development Specialists (employment 2025, median pay May 2025, 2025–35 projections).
- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook: Training and Development Managers (median pay May 2025; 5+ years typical experience).
- Association for Talent Development (ATD), 2025 State of the Industry report (2024 data from 539 organizations): headcount growth, new roles, formal learning hours.
- LinkedIn Learning, 2025 Workplace Learning Report: 71% of L&D professionals experimenting with or integrating AI.