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### Careers in Corporate Learning & Development

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# **Careers in Corporate Learning & Development**

Seth-Aaron Martinez & Eunjae Kim

Instructional Design Careers Graduate Students

In this chapter we first define what a learning and development (L&D) role consists of. We then discuss the keys to secure a competitive L&D role in the corporate space. The second section is dedicated to several critical elements for achieving success once you have landed a corporate role. To illustrate each principle, throughout the chapter the authors incorporate examples from our professional experience.

### **Defining a Corporate L&D Role**

To be clear, the corporate environment is fast-paced and competitive. Therefore, the purpose of all corporate L&D roles is to improve performance. The rationale is that if the individuals and teams within a corporation perform at a top level, then the likelihood is higher that the corporation will perform at a top level as well. So—whether it is to onboard new employees, train the organization's leaders, upskill the software engineers, or anything else—the ultimate goal of the L&D role is the same: to improve the performance of the individuals and teams that constitute the organization.

Next, the job titles we have most frequently encountered in the corporate space include, but are not limited to, the following: instructional designer; learning experience designer; learning technologist; learning measurement and/or analytics; learning consultant; and learning strategist. While we discuss corporate L&D roles further in the sections that follow, the key here is that the L&D job titles and responsibilities of the corporate space are not much different than those of the nonprofit space. In our experience, what is different is the number of positions available and, typically, the depth of the expertise; that is, corporations can usually afford to hire for more roles and with greater experience/education/expertise for those roles.

### Securing a Corporate L&D Role

### Formal Education

In order to land a competitive L&D role, it is necessary to first acquire the relevant skills. In terms of formal training, is a graduate degree necessary if you want a high-caliber L&D role? Could a professional certificate suffice, or even necessary to begin with? Well, there are both advantages and disadvantages to each of the various altitudes of formal training and education one might pursue. Taking the position that you want to land a competitive (or highly competitive) L&D role, let us first consider formal education.

Yes, it is true that a person can secure an L&D role without formal education. However, if you want a competitive role with, say, a Fortune 300 company or better, we firmly maintain that a graduate degree in an L&D-related field is necessary. Potential fields might include, but are not limited to, programs such as: instructional design (ID), learning

experience design (LXD); learning science; educational technology; user experience (UX); and potentially even some of the visual design fields. While the specific degree is often less important, having a master's degree in any of these fields would greatly increase your chances at securing a competitive L&D role. As authors, in our time employed at Google, Adobe, Confluent, and Facebook (Meta), everyone on our teams and organizations possessed at least a master's degree in-hand. Because there are many resources at stake from the company's point of view, they will use every means necessary to separate top candidates from the rest—and formal education is often the first factor.

The immediate next question becomes, "If a graduate degree is so important, why is the discipline chosen less important?" It is vital to understand that many, if not most, L&D roles are interdisciplinary to begin with. For example, using Table 1 below, let us look at the roles of *instructional designer* (ID) or *learning experience designer* (LXD) as examples (in industry, the labels *ID* and *LXD* are often used interchangeably). The skills to be an ID/LXD require mastery of principles of learning and motivation, which stem from the fields of neuroscience and cognitive psychology. ID/LXD roles also require training in the theories of instruction and andragogy (for an adult audience) or pedagogy (for youth) to know which instructional techniques are best suited to the audience they are designing for, in which contexts, etc. A competent ID/LXD should also be adept at needs assessment and evaluation. Lastly, IDs/LXDs should be familiar with several technological tools and know when, where, and how to best apply them in order to succeed. Please note that these skills outlined above are simply *the basics* for an ID/LXD role. In this example, you can see that there are multiple disciplines at play. This is precisely why it is less important to have any one degree in particular—because it is possible to acquire the necessary skills for an L&D role from multiple academic backgrounds. From just our experience alone, we have been teammates with individuals with backgrounds ranging from ISD, educational technology, business (MBA), psychology, and graphic design (MFA, who later took courses in the learning sciences). And yes, at Meta (Facebook), numerous members of our L&D organization possessed a PhD.

Role	General Job Duties	KSAs Required
ID/LXD	<ul> <li>Assess learning needs</li> <li>Conduct end user research</li> <li>Partner with SMEs</li> <li>Design instructional material &amp; experiences</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Learning science, performance improvement, user research techniques</li> <li>ID, LXD, UX processes</li> <li>Visual design</li> </ul>
Learning Technologist	<ul> <li>Support delivery of learning solutions through technology (e.g., LMS)</li> <li>Assist in creation and maintenance of learning objects</li> <li>Troubleshoot technology issues</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Mastery of LMS</li> <li>Data-informed decision making</li> <li>Working knowledge of HTML (or another coding language common to LMS)</li> </ul>
Learning Analytics & Measurement	<ul> <li>Evaluate impact of learning interventions</li> <li>Measure performance outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul><li> Quantitative research techniques</li><li> Evaluation</li></ul>

Learning Consultant	<ul> <li>Provide consultation services within the business</li> <li>Offer recommendations for potential learning solutions, and how potential partnerships might best come to be</li> <li>Conduct needs analysis</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Strong familiarity with all other L&amp;D functions</li> <li>Partner with other parts of the business</li> <li>Evaluate vendors</li> <li>Typically more senior in experience level</li> </ul>
Learning Strategist	<ul> <li>Synthesize scholarly research and industry data into actionable best- practices for team/org</li> <li>Set forth the ideal state (i.e., the strategy) for the team/org</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ability to search, review, and synthesize relevant scholarly literature and industry data</li> <li>Ability to write well</li> <li>Typically more senior in experience level</li> </ul>
Operations	• Assist in the execution of plans	<ul> <li>Budgeting, project management, scheduling, communications</li> <li>(Note that the KSAs for Operations roles are not specific to L&amp;D)</li> </ul>

 Table 1. Description of Knowledge/Skill/Ability (KSAs) Required for Common Corporate L&D Roles

Note. These descriptions are both general and typical; actual skills required will vary from role to role and company to company.

### **Professional Certification**

Building off the notion that possessing a graduate degree puts you in the most competitive position but that the field itself is less essential, we must now discuss how a person with a background in graphic design or psychology or business might land an L&D role; this brings us to professional certification (see Table 2 below).

For individuals who have a background in a discipline that is not traditionally L&D, a professional certificate can make a transition to L&D more possible. This includes individuals looking to land a corporate role at a different company, or individuals looking to stay at their current employer but are presently in another (non-L&D) part of the business. Regardless, in the absence of a graduate degree altogether, a professional certificate is the next best thing. Certificates are not as robust as graduate degrees, but nor do they take as long to complete. Again, companies want the most expertise they can find, so while it may not rise to the level of a graduate degree, a professional certificate nonetheless reflects a certain altitude of technical training.

University Certificates	Non-University Certificates
Boise State University*	Digital Learning Institute*
Florida State University	Coursera* (University of Illinois)
Harvard University	LinkedIn Learning*

Indiana University*	NovoEd*
San Diego State University	<u>OpenLearning</u> *
University of Georgia	<u>Udemy1</u> *
University of Washington*	<u>Udemy2</u> *

\*Available online

Table 2. Potential professional certificates available.

#### Interpersonal Skills

Beyond the technical skills required for the duties of a given role, your interpersonal skills are just as important. An adage that has served us well is, "*The technical skills get you the first-round interview, but the people skills help get you the job.*" The reason for this is that so much of every L&D role demands the ability to work with members of other teams, often individuals for whom there is no obvious connection. For example, on any given project you may need to support the legal department, the finance team, or the software engineers. Because of this reality, it is vital that a person be able to communicate effectively to advance projects—to truly partner with others. Further, projects often require dealing with subject matter that is completely foreign to you. You may also need to report to individuals who are the VPs of their division. Ideally, these people and teams in different parts of the business with different altitudes in seniority will all want to work with you. Another inescapable fact is that corporate L&D roles often demand that the person do a small amount of evangelizing while working with different parts of the business in order to help them understand exactly how, when, and why L&D teams operate, and that too requires savvy interpersonal skills. In summary, success in a corporate L&D role can only be achieved through consistently clear communication and positive interpersonal interactions across the business. And recruiters absolutely know this and look for this when screening.

#### Experience

Assuming a person's educational background rises to the level of a competitive applicant, the next most significant attribute is that of one's professional experience. Corporate recruiters look at two aspects of potential candidates when trying to fill an open position: depth and breadth. Having a deep focus or concentration that you have mastered is a smart way to approach starting in a corporate role. That is, if you want to land a corporate role but are not coming from one currently, the next best thing you can offer is an L&D specialty. The recruiter can see your specialty or mastery and reasonably conclude that the leap to corporate would be less severe for you when trying to fill a role of a similar specialty.

For breadth, we suggest pursuing a variety of professional experiences and project types. The fact is that the greater the variety of one's professional experiences, the greater the potential opportunities that he or she might realistically entertain. So, regardless of you being already in your first corporate role or hoping to land your first, it is important that you seek a variety of opportunities. For example, if you are hired for an onboarding role, you could still support a leadership program (like new manager training) in a secondary fashion. Or, if your current position is related to DEI, you could still assist with the individual contributor population. Over time, the greater breadth will allow you to be a more well-rounded employee in the present, as you will have more experiences to draw upon for your current work. Simultaneously, the variety will position you well for increased consideration of opportunities elsewhere. So, it becomes a win-win situation—the greater the depth and breadth, the more competitive you will be.

But if you are early in your career, how do you best decide between *specialization versus variety* of experiences? It is here that we should address the elephant in the room: the variable of the economy. The reality we must accept is that when the economy is not strong, L&D is often one of the first teams to go in corporate environments (Bennington & Laffoley, 2012; Reinheimer, 2010). A down economy favors those with a broad skill set (e.g., 'jack-of-all-trades'). This is because while companies tighten their budgets, they rely on individuals who possess a variety of skills—employees who

can wear multiple hats. We each saw this during the highly uncertain COVID pandemic. On the other hand, a strong economy benefits individuals with specialization because companies can afford to pay for the numerous narrow specialties. This is something that was quite evident to us prior to the pandemic.

Given the realities of how companies approach L&D teams during strong/weak economies, let us shift our focus to the trade-offs for specializing. To be clear, you will never go wrong pursuing specialization—the world rewards expertise. In fact, focused expertise is always the first thing sought after by companies. For example, if you are interested in an L&D role at an accounting firm, it would be extremely helpful to know how learning sticks best in accounting, financial, or highly computational situations. But then how and when should I approach variety in professional experiences? This becomes the key trade-off for specializing. If you want to devote significant time (e.g., years) to a specialized focus, it will likely come at the cost of adding variety, and that is your call to make. Conversely, if you opt to add a variety of experiences to your resume like we have discussed, there are certainly benefits to that—but it comes at the cost of deep specialization. In our experience, only you can make that call based on your professional priorities. The key is to know that these trade-offs are real.

### Your Digital Footprint

In 2023, we cannot overstate the importance of having a digital footprint as a professional. A digital footprint is essential and serves multiple purposes. First, we strongly recommend using a digital *portfolio* to showcase your expertise, skills, and accomplishments in a vivid and dynamic manner. For instance, take a look at the portfolios of <u>Shirleen Wong, AmandaLXD</u>, and <u>Cath Ellis</u>. Or, take a look at this <u>article</u> on portfolio creation by instructional designer Devlin Peck. Employers do not want to guess; they want to see what you are capable of. We suggest highlighting a variety of instructional products and projects, if possible: e-learning courses, instructor-led training, or even full learning experiences. If capturing a particular product or element of yours is difficult because of intellectual property issues, consider using screenshots and vignettes to illustrate your work. The more variety in your portfolio, the more illustrative, the better.

Second, consider sharing your key learnings and insights as a student or early career professional in written form, like a blog or longer-from article. Examples include blogs on your personal website (e.g. <u>Dr. Luke Hobson</u>) or on a content provider for long-form prose, like Medium.com (e.g. <u>Teacher to Instructional Designer</u>, <u>What Does AI Mean to Us As</u> <u>Instructional Designers</u>). In terms of longer-form writing, we should note here that for a corporate L&D role academic publication is not nearly as valued as good, illustrative, samples of work and/or a blog post that receives high traffic.

Next, leveraging social media serves to only increase your exposure and potential opportunities. LinkedIn is a must. Most companies employ full-time recruiters dedicated to filling open roles, and they use LinkedIn as their primary source of finding strong candidates. Ideally, you will link each of the elements described above to one another forming an interconnected web, thereby establishing a strong digital footprint for yourself.

### Interviewing

Your goals for L&D interviews are to articulate (a) your technical and social competence and (b) the impact you have had as a result of your technical and social competence in both your current and past roles. When it comes to the interviewing process, do your homework. Your ability to perform well on the "test" is made much easier when you have prepared and are familiar with what is coming on the test. Understand that the initial interview is typically to screen the candidates, often conducted by the recruiter themself. The screening interview is often general and basic in nature, typically asking questions from a script. The subsequent interviews, however, are usually conducted by the hiring manager and other members of the hiring team and will be more sophisticated and precise in each successive round.

In preparation for an interview, we suggest speaking to any friend or ex-colleague that may currently work at the hiring company. Ask them what their hiring process was like, what they know about the L&D team that is hiring, the manager that is hiring, and the nature of the role from what they can see internally. We suggest combining that information with a review of the LinkedIn profile of the hiring manager and team. *Wait, we should LinkedIn stalk them*? Yes, 100%! There is no reason why you cannot be the most informed candidate they interview. If anything, that should be your goal.

As you investigate the role, be mindful of the question that always comes at the end of every corporate interview: "Do you have any questions for us?" Your ability to form a small number of thoughtful questions during the homework phase is another indication of your preparation and another chance to demonstrate how thorough you are. This type of recognizance is critical to succeeding in the interviews. In fact, we have been asked explicitly in our interviews, "How did you prepare for this interview?" Well, you absolutely want to be able to reply that you pursued knowledge of the role to the utmost degree. It is your chance to brag about your diligence leading up to the interview. Ultimately, they will be impressed by that.

### Negotiation

As you are advancing into the latter phase of the interview process, we do believe you should have a compensation target in mind. Then, when you are extended an offer for a corporate L&D role, you will be ready to negotiate. And for successful negotiation, again, do your homework.

Like our suggestions when interviewing, successful negotiation comes only as a result of strong recognizance work. Consider asking your contacts inside the company for any information they may be privy to, like, "How did you approach negotiation at that company?" "What insights might you have?" "What makes up that company's compensation package —is it just salary?" "Or perhaps does it also include stock options, a signing bonus, and work-from-home flexibility?" We also definitely recommend looking up the salary landscape on Glassdoor.com. The more information you can glean, the better.

At the most tactical level, with the offer now in-hand, we suggest that you always express gratitude and humility immediately in response, but that you also always counter their offer (just do not say that countering is what you are planning to do). It is very appropriate to ask for a day or two to mull it over. If the offer comes towards the end of the week, then consider asking to "take the weekend to digest it." At this stage, they have made you the offer because they like you the most. Therefore, the ball is completely in your court.

When considering the counter, we suggest you simply weigh the current offer against *what is most important to you*. Please note, however, that you typically should not ask for an increase in everything—we consider that a rookie move. Instead, decide what the one to two parts of the compensation package you care about the most are and go after those. For example, one of the authors had a salary target in mind when the offer came in for a role at Facebook (Meta). In the author's own words:

I had already earned a fair amount of stock over several years at my current employer and was more interested in liquid cash. Specifically, I wanted \$20k more per year than what Facebook was offering. So, I immediately told the recruiter who had shared the offer, "Wow, thank you, I am humbled by the offer. . . can I sleep on it and can we talk tomorrow morning?" The next morning, we had the pre-arranged follow-up call. I told her, "Again, thank you so much. The offer is very flattering, and I deeply want to join Facebook. But there is one thing that is eating at me and keeping me from diving in and accepting the offer fullsteam ahead, and I'd like to share my thinking," which she eagerly wanted to hear. "I told myself that I wouldn't leave (my current employer) unless I could make about \$30k more per year than I am currently making, and this falls short of that. Plus, in a couple months I have another annual batch of stock hitting at my current employer," which was completely true. "So, my thought is this: could you increase the base salary at least \$20k, or increase the stock shares to reach \$10–15k more per year? I am fine with either one. If one of those was reached, I would accept the offer immediately and submit my two-week notice today." After she discussed this with the finance department and traded phone calls with me for several hours, she finally called back and said, "Okay, here is what we can do: how about we give you a \$30k signing bonus to cover for the annual stock that you will miss from your current employer?" Which I gladly accepted.

# Succeeding in a Corporate Role

## Navigating the Corporate Space

Getting a new L&D job is exciting, but what now? What are the things that will make you successful in that job? While L&D is an essential part of any organization, it is important to consider how the role and team fit into the broader context of the company, especially when seeking critical buy-in from leaders. And, like all parts of an organization, L&D teams need to show these leaders the value it adds back to the business. So, how can you achieve this when you have just started in your role? In this next section, we break down the key considerations when starting in a corporate L&D role and discuss some practical steps that we have witnessed lead to success.

## Balancing Learning vs Performance

The first question to answer is, *"What does your business and/or leader care about and why?"* In other words, you need to quickly build a strong understanding of the key priorities of the business and its leaders, especially your leaders. The corporate environment is typically fast-paced, demanding, and results-driven with a high focus on meeting deadlines and achieving business goals. Therefore, in this context it is less important to drive learning objectives and learning goals, per se (yes, we realize how that sounds). But trust us, your aim instead is to continuously improve the performance and productivity of the business, which will get the attention of leaders. We recommend drafting and aligning your L&D initiatives such that your L&D efforts will accomplish just that. In short, business goals drive everything. Figure 1 below helps illustrate the hierarchy of your corporate L&D priority:



#### Figure 1. Priority of the Corporate L&D Role

To achieve this, it is necessary to practice two very important skills in the corporate space: (a) develop a deep understanding of both business and learner needs, and (b) balance these needs to achieve the best possible outcome for the business. You will find that success means ultimately becoming a "translator" between the business and learners, and that you will draw from your expertise in both. You will often switch back and forth, looking for business solutions while also supporting the growth and development of learners.

### Understanding Key Drivers of the Corporate Space

Next, we suggest developing a deep understanding of the top three factors that drive the corporate space: time, cost, and quality. There is often a trade-off between time, cost, and quality due to the fast-paced nature of the corporate environment. The L&D professional must be able to quickly assess the trade-offs between these factors and make decisions on optimal approaches to design learning solutions. That is, the simple fact exists that we cannot have all three simultaneously–a high-quality solution that is produced very fast and at very little cost. So as the professional, you must decide (or help decision-makers decide) which of the three you are most willing to stomach not having. In our experience, we have found that usually speed is the most important factor for the business, thus making it a decision between reducing either the quality or the cost of delivery. And that decision is one only you can make given all the factors at play. In our experience, sometimes it is the quality that must be cut short, which might be painful if you are a perfectionist. At other times, you are able to afford for the business to pay more money to get higher quality. In the end, it really comes down to your priorities as they marry with the business priorities and constraints.

#### Individualized vs. Scaled

With that in mind, often over the course of a corporate role your team must decide between an individualized versus scaled learning solution. When designing a learning solution, you may have to choose between a highly customized solution that is more costly and takes longer to develop versus a more scalable solution that can be developed quickly and at a lower cost. While an individualized solution can be more effective, it is often necessary to scale solutions to reach a larger audience. When deciding, you must weigh the benefits and drawbacks of each approach, then select the solution that will make the most impact across the needs of both the business and the learners.

#### Buy vs. Build

The same is also true when deciding between buying a solution or building it internally—a dilemma that arises frequently in corporate roles. In this situation, again you must consider the trade-off between the cost, time, *and* quality required to buy a solution externally or build one internally. For instance, if a solution requires a specific type of medium (i.e., eLearning with iPads) and you do not have the capabilities in-house to develop this in an efficient amount of time, can you afford to bring in a contractor or vendor to help get the job done? While quality would be high, cost vs. time is definitely a trade-off that will need to be considered.

#### Can vs. Should

Taking the previous section further, another decision that we believe is not addressed enough in corporate L&D roles is that of *can vs. should*. That is, just because your team can buy or build something does not mean you necessarily *should*. For example, in a corporate setting, there are often more resources available than in other contexts, so throwing money at problems can be the default mentality. Or, when trying to innovate, adding a feature to a learning experience for the sake of novelty (without any thought of the learning science principles at play) is not a smart approach to take: "Hey, what if we added a VR component to this and bought a few headsets for participants? We have several hundreds of dollars in the budget, let's try it. It will be cool." We have seen this type of logic repeatedly. Sadly, our experience teaches us that throwing more money at a problem is not necessarily the best solution. In fact, it seldom is. Rigor, thoughtfulness, and intentionality still reign supreme, especially so when the temptation is to spend more or add more simply because you can. Please remember, more is not always better.

### Build Trust, Gain Influence

A simple fact exists within the corporate environment: building trust with whom those you work helps you gain influence. Especially in a corporate environment, influence is crucial for success for an L&D role as it allows you to more easily get the job done and achieve results. You can build influence specifically in two ways: (a) horizontally with other teams and peers, as well as (b) vertically with your leaders.

#### Horizontal Influence

Finding success while building horizontal influence heavily weighs on your ability to collaborate effectively with other teams, your peers, and other parts of the business. This is especially true if you are placed in new environments and/or industries. One of the unique aspects of being a L&D professional is the ability to be topic- and industry-fluid, working with different teams and in different areas of expertise. However, to thrive in areas where you may have limited knowledge or prior experience, it is essential to cultivate strong relationships with others who can provide support and guidance.

While building and maintaining strong relationships in the corporate space is a well-known factor for success, the importance of strong interpersonal skills and strategic relationships are underestimated. Interpersonal skills include communication skills, emotional intelligence, active listening, and empathy, all linked to building genuine trust and rapport with others. Use this to focus your attention on understanding motivations and perspectives of key people and teams, especially if you both can have direct impact on both side's initiatives and efforts.

#### Vertical Influence

It is also critical to ensure you are strategically building and gaining the trust of your senior leaders to <u>drive executive</u> <u>engagement</u> for your work. When it comes to building trust with executive leaders and senior stakeholders in the corporate environment, it is important to be well-prepared and methodical in your approach. This involves three key principles: (a) know all aspects of your project(s); (b) conduct the proper research to gather the necessary feedback and data; and (c) craft a strong plan or recommendation that is entirely based on that feedback and data (Martinez, 2020). Simply put, make sure you are seen as the trusted expert who has comprehensive knowledge and awareness of all aspects of a learning program (i.e., learning experience, feedback, etc.). Any questions leaders pose to you, you want to have an answer ready based on your research work. Then, we suggest basing your conclusions or plans on data, information, feedback, and experience to build a solid story. By following these steps consistently, you can increase trust and, ultimately, your influence with the senior leaders you work with.

### Continue to Invest in Yourself

Lastly, success is never final in the corporate environment. That is, for top L&D performers there is no real point of "arrival." A mindset of continual improvement is a healthy one that has served both of us extremely well. One invaluable way to put such a mindset to practice is by investing in yourself for personal, professional growth. We strongly suggest taking advantage of the increasingly standard practice of companies offering a *Professional Development Fund* for their employees (see D'Angelo, 2023; Comparably, 2022; Apple Newsroom, 2022). *Wait, once we are employed, we should look to study more?* After your initial period of acclimating to the role, team, and company, yes. That is exactly what we are suggesting.

The domains and topics that are particularly relevant to work on for corporate roles may vary by role, by company. But the skills that we have seen to be particularly useful, though not always taught in graduate school or in an L&D certificate program, include the following list depicted in Table 3 below.

Skill	Description
Interpersonal Communication	As stated above, effective communication is highly important. An individual can always improve in this area. Even CEOs receive coaching in this area.
Stakeholder Management	Closely connected to interpersonal communication above is stakeholder management. The ability to work with cross-functional partners (XFNs) and peers is where the rubber meets the road for a corporate L&D role. Top performers are always very strong at working

	with and managing XFNs and peers while collaborating on projects.
Project Management	Every L&D project requires the ability to carefully and tactfully manage its progress. The skill is one every L&D role must possess to succeed.
Data-Driven Storytelling	Data (i.e., accurate information) is the universal language that allows L&D professionals to communicate clearly with the non-L&D parts of the business.
Design Thinking	Innovation and thinking outside the box are a premium for many companies. In our experience, too few people have experience with the benefits of design thinking at companies.
Pilot Testing	The ability to prototype and to produce MVPs (minimum viable products) is also a skill itself. We recommend always testing a preliminary version of your work before a more fully-developed launch. Many sins can be prevented by simply deploying an early MVP.

Table 3. List of Relevant L&D Skills Often Not Taught in School

Additionally, we are firm believers of proactively seeking help from internal sources. This can include reaching out to someone you respect to be a mentor; a source of guidance at strategic times or situations in your time at the company. This may also include volunteering for additional work projects that serve as secondary tasks (often referred to as "stretch" projects). Similarly, we also believe in seeking help from external sources. These can be working with a professional coach, attending professional development classes or workshops (mentioned previously), or even doing pro-bono work outside of the job. Really, the opportunities are endless for seeking additional help and support, but the key is to be proactive. In the end, you are the one that controls your career.

## Conclusion

The corporate environment is a unique context that brings with it unique requirements. It is only by understanding the uniqueness of the context and its requirements can a person navigate the L&D space that they seek. To that end, it is our belief and hope that by adhering to the principles shared in this chapter, you too will be able to land a corporate L&D role and ultimately find genuine success in that role.

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