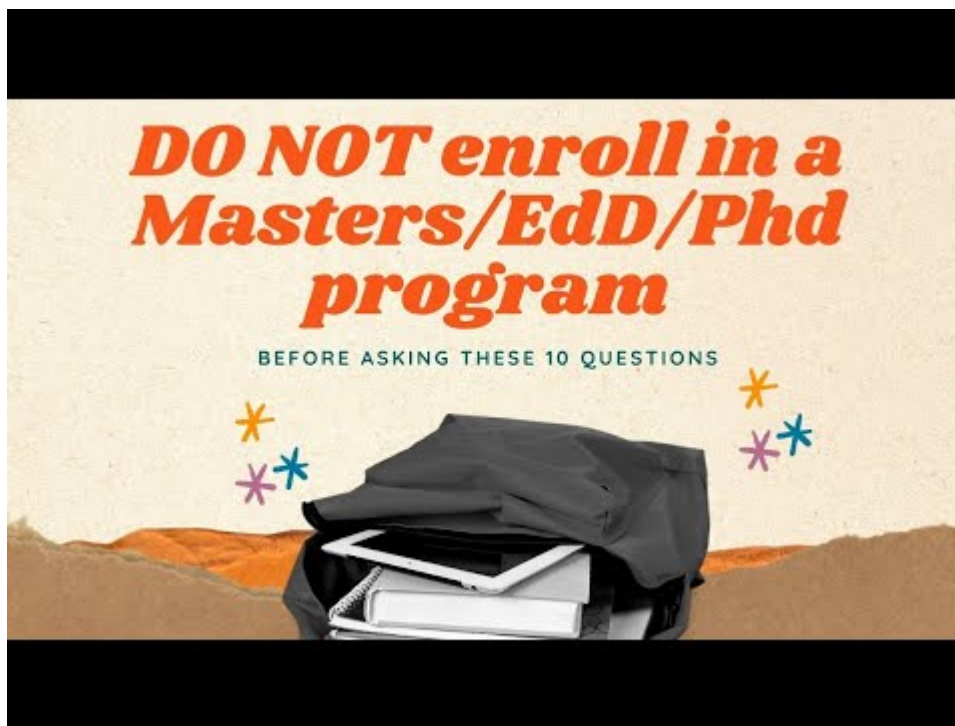


Do you need a degree to be an ID?

This is probably one of the most frequent questions I get, especially from IDs on the job market. Do you need a degree to be an ID? Before you even consider it, I believe in due diligence and you have the right to be an informed consumer. Do your homework on the programs you are enrolling in. I made this video (15:30) to go over 10 questions you should ask when making this decision.



[Watch on YouTube](#)

I did some [research](#) with some of my fellow [labmates](#) to see if we could determine in a sample of job descriptions if the setting and degree matter.

North, C., Shortt, M., Bowman, M.A. *et al.* How Instructional Design Is Operationalized in Various Industries for job-Seeking Learning Designers: Engaging the Talent Development Capability Model. *TechTrends* (2021).

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11528-021-00636-2>

From North, Shortt, Bowman & Akinkuolie, 2021

"Fisher's exact test was employed to test the association between two categorical variables: educational requirements and job setting (Agresti, 2013). Specifically, educational requirements were coded as high school, bachelors, bachelors but masters preferred masters, or Ph.D. The settings were coded as corporate, education, non-profit, or government. The information for this came directly from each job description with some information on companies sought by visiting their company website to learn more about them. Using Fisher's exact test, the results show that there is a significant association ($p < .001$) between the job setting and the educational requirements stated in the job descriptions. For corporate settings, more jobs than expected require bachelor's degrees and fewer jobs than expected require a master's degree or higher. On the contrary for higher education settings, more jobs than expected required master's degrees or higher and fewer jobs than expected required bachelor's degree. While this may not be surprising to some job seekers, it does open up the possibility for many job applicants, especially those with bachelor's degrees, to have the educational requirements to apply for a corporate role."

Agresti, A. (2013). Categorical data analysis (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

So TL;DR if you want to work in a corporate setting, you don't necessarily need a masters degree to get a job although it may be a preferred qualification. If you are wanting to work in a higher education setting however, you will need a masters or doctorate.

I've found many formal education programs do a great job at providing instructional design students with a foundation in learning theory but often fail at the application piece. This can be for a variety of reasons but let me be clear, walking into a job interview in a corporate role with a literature review on your favorite learning theory won't impress many (any corporate) hiring managers. We want to see evidence of how you work with subject matter experts, how you manage projects and how you can transform a firehose of content into a learning experience that is mapped to business metrics and focuses on what someone should be able to do with the information.

Now if you are wanting to do higher ed ID, by all means talk about your research interests, what learning theories you like, etc. It's all about knowing your audience. In higher ed that's important, corporate not so much.

Spilling the tea on Instructional Design Academies and Bootcamps

I've been outspoken about the instructional design academies that keep popping up everywhere however I don't think all of them are bad. Several of them are predatory and the only value is that you are padding someone's bank account (that isn't yours). If you are considering an ID academy, I recommend taking your time and asking the following questions:

- 1) Who is leading the program? Google them, see what they've done in instructional design. Many of the academy leaders have came out of the woodwork to make a quick buck on you. They should also have a their own personal website with scholarship, portfolio artifacts, and ways they have contributed to the field. Just having a Facebook page doesn't cut the mustard here.
- 2) What do you need to do to be successful in the program? Are they promising that you will be an overnight instructional designer? Look beyond the false marketing hype claims.
- 3) What is being promised? Are you being promised a six figure income? How about a guarantee of a job? Red flag a poolza!
- 4) What can I do if it isn't for me? Many of the academies WILL NOT give you a refund if life happens. Again, another red flag.
- 5) How are members supported? Do you actually get face time with the ID academy leader or are you supported only by other newbies? Do you get feedback?
- 6) What is being taught? Is the content created by the academy or is it curated from other leaders in the industry? If you are PAYING someone for an academy, it's my belief that you should paying for THEIR expertise, not the resources and work of others.

So if you are thinking of enrolling in an ID Academy or Bootcamp, stop and do your due dilligence.



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