

What is instructional design for each setting?

An instructional designer is an instructional designer is an instructional designer, right?

Not necessarily, young grasshopper.

Instructional designers regardless of the setting can wear many hats including (not limited to): tech support, LMS admin, consultant, babysitter, coach, etc. You get the point. Going back to being true to yourself and keeping yourself in the center of the job search process, how do you know what setting is going to work best for you?

Before going forward, identify three aspects you'd like in your instructional design role:

What are three aspects you want in your ID job?

Reflect here

It really can help sometimes to pause and reflect on what is important to you.

Take a moment to watch the following video (12:16) and think about if any of those aspects you identified above are present in the video. Warning the video is a little bit spicy but you know I have to keep it on brand (unfiltered ID).

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Differences between higher ed and corporate instructional designers



[Watch on YouTube](#)

🍵 Spilling the tea about faculty 🍵

I've been called out before for my unfiltered perspective of working with faculty as a higher education ID. Let me be clear, it's not all bad. There is nothing better than the magic of a partnership between an ID and faculty member when ultimately you know the students are benefiting. I just want to let folks know that depending on many factors, it can be a challenge.

I'm encouraged by the "time in the sun" of instructional design, especially by higher education institutions. What I saw as a higher education ID however when COVID-19 hit wasn't good design, it's what I call "panic-gogy". The emergency remote teaching often threw out accessibility initiatives, scaffolding, and basic user experience. I hope that now that more are using online learning, there is a call to improve and again make sure students are supported.

So what do higher education IDs do? Obviously, it may differ from institution to institution but you will likely find yourself:

- creating learning experiences that are either academic facing or professional development/training for faculty/staff.
- managing and troubleshooting the LMS as you often build directly into it at many higher education institutions.
- assist in institutional quality assurance (review courses via Quality Matters, institutional checklist, accessibility review).
- provide learning technology support to faculty for tools to aid in teaching (video conferencing, polling, even presentation software sometimes).
- all other duties as assigned

Higher education may be a good fit for you if...

- you enjoy providing assistance to a broad audience (faculty, staff, students).
- you thrive in an environment where you may need multiple approvals (faculty, college, etc).
- you enjoy working with learning management systems (LMS).
- you enjoy keeping up with technology and sharing ways to use technology in the classroom.

So what's the TL;DR for higher education? I think it's a great fit for people who are formally educated in ID or looking to get formally educated in ID. Many universities offer free or reduced tuition to employees. That is the primary reason I worked at the institution I did so I could get my education paid for. Also, higher education usually has a decent work-life balance and is pretty open if you consult on the side. I found as a higher education ID I had plenty of energy at the end of the day so I could go to school at night and also consult on the side. In my experience, the pace is decently slow with ebbs and flows in accordance with the academic semester. Even when the academic semester was kicking off, I found it easy to balance the demands. It's a great starter role and if you can move up in higher education, maybe you can change the world ;)

Corporate ID

So what do corporate IDs do? Obviously, it may differ from institution to institution but you will likely find yourself:

- creating learning experiences for internal employees or customer education for a product your organization created or manages
- managing and troubleshooting the LMS although you often build with learning technologies such as multimedia or eLearning authoring tools
- managing reports of completion of various learning experiences to report out to departments and leadership
- maintain old learning experiences and provide updates accordingly
- facilitate virtual instructor led training or classroom training
- determine root cause analysis of various problems brought to the instructional design department to see if training really is the answer
- all other duties as assigned

Corporate may be a good fit for you if...

- you like fast-paced environments. Usually, most stakeholders want training as soon as possible.
- you enjoy problem-solving. One of the most rewarding parts of being a corporate ID can be the problem-solving element.
- you enjoy a lot of autonomy with your work. You are seen as the product owner most of the time so you can choose what and how you will create the learning experience.

So what's the TL;DR for corporate? Corporate offers you a chance to often "own" the learning experience from start to finish which can be very rewarding. With that though comes the need to often manage your own projects (yes plural as you often are working on a couple of projects at the same time) which can be a challenge for new IDs. You will also need to keep your learning technology skills sharp as the variability of tools and ways ID is approached differs from organization to organization. The "good" standard will vary and while you may have tools and processes that works at one organization, another organization it may not work for. I do think after COVID-19, corporate has gotten better overall with work-life balance as many corporate IDs can work mostly remote or fully remote. Corporate roles often pay more than higher education roles too.



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