

Instructional Designer Interview Questions

Interview By: Megan Mallon

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Name:

Dr. Kirsten Butcher



Years in the field:

10 years in the area of Educational Technology

Position Title & Institution:

Assistant Professor in Instructional Design & Educational Technology at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Background, Training, & Education:

B.A., Whitman College, 1997

M.A., University of Colorado at Boulder, 1999

Ph.D., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2003

Dual major in Cognitive Science & Cognitive Psychology, which gives Dr. Butcher a unique view into the hows and whys of the learning processes of students.

Your Clientele:

Dr. Butcher works with Master's students, most of whom are practicing teachers. These Master's teachers teach everything from kindergarten to the collegiate level. She also receives a lot of funding from the Utah National Science Foundation, which wants to see how Dr. Butcher's research and design processes impact student achievement.

Process used in designing instruction:

Dr. Butcher believes in first looking at the cognitive processes that students use in learning. From her perspective, this is where deeper learning occurs, and this is the natural progression from designing instruction to implementing it. She is also a very strong believer in using educational technology and multimedia to teach students.

Instructional Design Theories/Models Used:

Dr. Butcher is a fan of the Backwards Design. She likes encouraging her Master's students to use it. Looking at the desired end result meshes well with designing meaningful learning for students based on their cognitive processes.

Projects/Examples of Instructional Design Uses:

Dr. Butcher is working on a wide variety of projects currently. With younger students (4th grade), she and her Master's students are working on using multimedia and visual interactions to help build skills. They provide visual information for students to think more deeply, and look at different ways that students may reflect, interact, or explain their understanding of the concept. With high school students, Dr. Butcher and her team are working on an Intelligent Tutoring Program for geometry, which will allow students a multimedia opportunity to connect visual and conceptual representations of geometric concepts.

My Reflections:

I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with Dr. Kirsten Butcher. I will readily admit that this assignment was outside of my comfort zone, but I did get a lot out of it. If I ever move to Salt Lake City, I would love to get a second Master's degree in her program! ☺ When she talked about looking at how and why students learn first, and then using that information to design learning opportunities....this is the same philosophy I believe in. I liked how Dr. Butcher wants to reach actual students, and I think she has some extremely innovative projects going that do a wonderful job of incorporating technology.

