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# **Teaching tradition:**

## **Investigating potential teaching tools for the preservation of Kyrgyz textiles traditions**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Design in Textiles at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

*Jennifer Rosenthal 2010*



## NOTE TO READERS:

When contemplating this Masters research project, I was unsure whether it fit best within the field of international development or design. It is a research project about design set in the context of international development.

Sir Christopher John Frayling identified three types of design research one of which I think best describes this research. "Research for design" according to Frayling, is "research where the end product is an artifact - where the thinking, is so to speak embodied in the artifact"<sup>1</sup>. In this case, the artifact/s I have designed reflect the thinking I have arrived at while seeking a way to preserve and revive Central Asian wool felt textile traditions in order to support the development of crafts-based economic development initiatives in Kyrgyzstan.

As an instructional designer, my goal was not to create an aesthetically pleasing or cleverly designed artifact but the design of an effective and appropriate instructional resource that could help preserve traditional designs while inspiring and informing new designs among a particular group of people - in this case, a women's handicraft cooperative in Kyrgyzstan.

The traditional textile designs that I aim to help preserve through this project are those that the Kyrgyz have developed or adapted from other cultures over time which have come to reflect the Kyrgyz cultural traditions and identity. According to Gale and Kaur, "Textiles ( ... ) mirror periods of national history, reflecting the way in which people see themselves, their culture and their lifestyles at a particular time."<sup>2</sup> Many of these traditional designs originate from a time when the Kyrgyz were free to express their cultural identity through their arts. Years of Soviet oppression and forced assimilation made it difficult - even illegal - to practice these arts. Today, as the Kyrgyz struggle to adapt to independence they are looking to the past to help restore their national and cultural identity.

Because instructional design is an emerging discipline that many people are unfamiliar with, I thought it would be helpful to provide the reader with a definition: Instructional design is the practice of maximizing the effectiveness, efficiency and appeal of instruction and other learning experiences.<sup>3</sup> A great deal of instructional design involves understanding what the learning need is, and designing the most appropriate resource or "intervention" to meet that need.

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Christopher Frayling, *Research in art and design, Research Papers Vol.1, No1*, Royal College of Art, London, 1993, pp. 1 -5.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Gale and Jasbir Kaur, *The Textiles Book*, Berg Publishers, Oxford, 2002, p.91.

<sup>3</sup> *Instructional Design*, Wikipedia, retrieved 23 February 2010, < [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructional\\_design](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructional_design)>

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