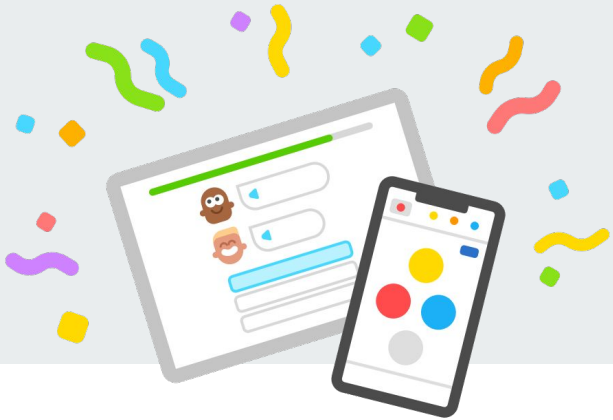
Strategies for Interviewing in Ed Tech



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March 18, 2021

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Background

- PhD Applied Linguistics
- MFA Creative Writing
- Prior experience
  - ESL teacher
  - L2 teacher training
  - StoryCorps facilitator
- Prior research
  - lexical development
  - applied NLP
  - corpus linguistics

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What I've Worked on at Duolingo

- English and Spanish courses
- Duolingo English Test
- Chatbots
- Tips and Smart Tips
- Spanish Podcast
- Audio Lessons
- Stories
- Managing others

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Tips for Interviewing Well

- Frame your expertise broadly for non-academics
  - focus on broad expertise vs. deep
- Show that you are a clear, accessible, and succinct communicator
- Demonstrate that you are easy to work with
  - you accept feedback gracefully
  - you're willing to compromise
  - you know how to collaborate

TIP:
Be prepared to complete tasks prior to or during the interview

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Frame the discussion around what you do—not what you study

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Skills to Highlight

- Research experience
- Problem-solving
- Project management
- Time management
- International experience
- People management
- Creativity
- Innovation
- Cross-functional collaboration
- Resilience to feedback

TIP:
Have one concrete example in mind for each so you can respond to questions like, “Tell us about a time when a project went wrong and you had to problem-solve…”

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Questions?

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CONTINGENCY SLIDES

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What's it like to work in tech?

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Working in Tech

Working in tech is...

- Fast-paced
- Metrics driven
- Cross-functional
- Collaborative
- Did I say “fast-paced”?
- Full of AB testing
- Lucrative
- Horizontal
- Product-centered
- Design-centered

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What skills do I need?

- Ability to communicate with non-experts
- Ability to communicate quickly and succinctly across modalities
- Product knowledge (can be developed)
- Well-roundedness
- Some coding would be nice
- Qualitative research can help as well!
- General awareness of tech communication (e.g., I live in Slack and Google Drive)
- Resilience

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Where to start?

- Get a LinkedIn page
- Start investigating User Experience Research (UXR)
- Take a coding / computer science intro course (if only for the vocab)
  - e.g, pull request, deploying to staging, porting to mobile
- Look for internships
- Try to get informational interviews with folks who are already working in tech (consider UXR as well)
- Learn about different roles (e.g., wtf is a product manager?)

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