

Interview Skills

Unit: Employment and Professionalism

Problem Area: Communication Skills

Lesson: Interview Skills

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Describe interview skills.**
- 2 Practice interview skills.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

E-unit(s) corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc.
<http://www.mycart.com>.

Doyle, Alison. "Winning Interview Skills," *About.com: Job Searching*.
Accessed Sept. 8, 2012. <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewsnetworking/a/wininterview.htm>.

Heilke, Natalia. "Basic Interview Skills," *Career Advice @suite101.com*
Accessed Sept. 8, 2012. <http://natalia-heilke.suite101.com/basic-interview-skills-a68748>.

Newberger, Nathan. "Five Skills You Must Convey During the Interview,"
WorkTree.com. Accessed Sept. 8, 2012. <http://www.worktree.com/newsletter/skills-to-convey-interview.html>.

Steen, Margaret. "After the Interview: Answers to Five Common Questions,"
Monster.com. Accessed Sept. 8, 2012. <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/following-up/after-the-interview-answers-to-5-common-questions-hot-jobs/article.aspx>.



■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- critical thinking skills
- interpersonal skills
- interview
- interviewee
- interviewer
- nonverbal communication
- verbal communication

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

Demonstrate mistakes that job candidates might make during a job interview. Start class wearing a sloppy sweatshirt and chewing gum. Ask a student to read you the following questions. Use exaggerated body language and poor answers to demonstrate what students should not do in an interview. When you are finished, ask the students to critique your performance. Explain that by learning what behaviors and responses are not desired, they can focus on improving desirable interview skills.

- ◆ *Student: Hello. Welcome to Global, Inc. I'm Robert Smith.*
- ◆ *Teacher: What's up, Bob? (Offer a "fist bump," and then slump down into a chair)*
- ◆ *Student: Why do you want to work for Global, Inc.?*
- ◆ *Teacher: My boss was, like, a huge jerk, and I really want more money, so I, like, quit my last job, you know? How much do you pay? (Gesture with your hands while talking.)*
- ◆ *Student: We'll discuss salary at a later time. Tell me a little about yourself.*
- ◆ *Teacher: I like to play basketball and race cars. (Look around the room, avoiding eye contact, and fidget in the chair.)*
- ◆ *Student: What are your strengths?*
- ◆ *Teacher: I can bench press about 100 pounds. (Laugh loudly, slapping the table.)*
- ◆ *Student: I think I've learned everything I need. Thank you for coming.*
- ◆ *Teacher: So, did I get the job, or what?*

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Describe interview skills.

Anticipated Problem: What skills are necessary during an interview?

- I. An **interview** is the process in which an employer evaluates a candidate for a job. It involves an interviewer and an interviewee. An **interviewer** is a company representative in charge of hiring an individual. In contrast, an **interviewee** is a candidate applying for the job.
 - A. Communication skills
 1. **Verbal communication** is the exchange of information using words.
 - a. Interviewees should use proper grammar.
 - b. Interviewees should avoid slang.
 - c. Interviewees should avoid repeating words such as “um,” “like,” and “you know.”
 - d. Interviewees should answer questions thoroughly, but each response should be less than two minutes long.
 2. **Nonverbal communication** is the exchange of information without words. It includes body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and gestures. Nonverbal communication can convey confidence, even when the individual is feeling nervous.
 - a. Interviewees should have good posture when standing and sitting.
 - b. Interviewees should greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake.
 - c. Interviewees should avoid excessive gestures (e.g., waving hands around, pointing at the interviewer, and fidgeting in the seat).
 - d. Interviewees should make eye contact.
 - e. Interviewees should speak clearly, but not too loudly.
 - B. Professional appearance makes a good first impression.
 1. Interviewees should dress appropriately.
 - a. Business attire is appropriate, even if the actual job allows casual clothing.
 - b. When in doubt, interviewees should err on the side of formality.
 - c. Tips on interview attire are found at <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewdress.htm>. You may want to share these with your class.
 2. Interviewees should be properly groomed.
 - a. Neatly styled hair

- b. A clean body and clean clothing
 - c. Trimmed or manicured fingernails
 - d. No body odor and no excessive perfume/cologne
- 3. Interviewees should be on time.
 - a. Interviewee should get directions ahead of time and should know where to go.
 - b. Interviewee should allow plenty of time for transportation issues (e.g., late bus or no cabs available).
- C. Preparedness is another key interview skill.
 - 1. Interviewees should be organized.
 - a. Interviewees should be able to find documents quickly without having to rummage through a messy purse or briefcase.
 - b. Interviewees should be able to provide a résumé (even if one was previously provided), as well as a list of references and work samples.
 - 2. Interviewees should be ready to answer common questions. They should research common interview questions and practice answering them.
 - a. They should know about the company. Interviewers often ask if the interviewee has any questions. It is wise to have a question in mind, although questions about salary and benefits are not appropriate during the first interview.
 - b. **Critical thinking skills** are the abilities needed to solve problems by making assumptions based on known facts. (Example question: “How many helium-filled balloons would it take to lift my desk off the ground?” It may be impossible to come up with the correct answer, but the interviewer is probably more interested in the interviewee’s thought process.)
 - c. **Interpersonal skills** are the abilities needed to interact with others. (Example question: “Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a co-worker. How did you resolve it?” The interviewer is probably trying to gauge how the interviewee gets along with others.)
- D. Good follow-up makes a lasting impression on a potential employer.
 - 1. Interviewees should send a thank-you letter soon after the interview, thanking the interviewer for his or her time.
 - 2. Interviewees should call to follow up once to ask if the job has been filled.
 - a. It is appropriate for the interviewee to ask for feedback to help with future interviews.
 - b. It may be considered “badgering” to call more than once. Interviewees should keep in mind that some job searches take weeks or months.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–A and VM–B. You may want to have the students work in pairs to practice interviewing one another. If time permits, watch some interviews online (e.g., YouTube clips). Have the students critique them.

Objective 2: Practice interview skills.

Anticipated Problem: How can people practice interview skills?

- II. It is important for job candidates to practice interview skills.
 - A. Candidates should list their skills on paper and give examples.
 - 1. Interpersonal skills (e.g., get along well with others and enjoy being part of a team)
 - 2. Personality traits (e.g., creative and outgoing)
 - 3. Skills and qualifications specific to the job (e.g., will graduate in June and took a textile class at the community college)
 - B. Candidates should practice out loud.
 - 1. It is best for people to role play with friends or family members.
 - a. Tell students to choose outfits that would be appropriate for interviews. Have them bring in photos, have them wear the outfits one day.
 - b. Have students practice greetings and shaking hands.
 - c. In class, have your students practice answering common questions. Many examples are found at <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-questions/100-potential-interview-questions/article.aspx>.
 - d. Tell them to make a list of questions about a specific company based on research about company.
 - e. After having students do mock interviews, tell them to ask for feedback (on paper) from their classmates. Then have them conduct second mock interviews to try to improve.
 - C. Candidates should watch, instead of just listening.
 - 1. They should practice in front of a mirror.
 - 2. Videotape mock interviews, and have them watch with the sound turned off to study:
 - a. Body language
 - b. Gestures
 - c. Facial expressions
 - D. Candidates should prepare a sample follow-up letter that can be customized for each interview.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–C to aid in a discussion. Assign LS–A.

Review/Summary. Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. Questions at the ends of chapters in the textbook may be used in the Review/Summary.

- **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.
- **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Matching

1. f
2. c
3. d
4. a
5. g
6. b
7. e

Part Two: True/False

1. F
2. T
3. F
4. T
5. T
6. F
7. T
8. T

Part Three: Short Answer

1. Watching your mock interview on videotape allows you to study your body language, gestures, and facial expressions.
2. Critical thinking questions allow the interviewer to hear your thought process, even if it is impossible to come up with the correct answer.
3. Answers will vary but should include three of the following: body language, posture, eye contact, tone of voice, gestures, and facial expressions.

Interview Skills

► Part One: Matching

Instructions: Match the term with the correct definition.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a. critical thinking skills | e. interviewer |
| b. interpersonal skills | f. nonverbal communication |
| c. interview | g. verbal communication |
| d. interviewee | |

- _____ 1. The exchange of information without words
- _____ 2. The process in which an employer evaluates a candidate for a job
- _____ 3. A candidate applying for a job
- _____ 4. The abilities needed to solve problems by making assumptions based on known facts
- _____ 5. The exchange of information using words
- _____ 6. The abilities needed to interact with others
- _____ 7. The company representative in charge of hiring an individual

► Part Two: True/False

Instructions: Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- _____ 1. It is acceptable to call the interviewer once a week until you hear whether you have been hired.
- _____ 2. Nonverbal communication can convey confidence, even if you feel nervous.
- _____ 3. You should never ask questions during an interview.
- _____ 4. During an interview, you should keep each response less than two minutes long.



- _____ 5. Part of a professional appearance includes being on time.
- _____ 6. If you previously sent a résumé, you do not need to take one to the interview.
- _____ 7. Some job searches take weeks or even months to complete.
- _____ 8. It is important to practice interview skills.

► Part Three: Short Answer

Instructions: Answer the following.

1. Explain why it is helpful to videotape a mock interview and watch it without sound.
2. What is the purpose of critical thinking questions during a job interview?
3. List three examples of nonverbal communication.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

◆ **Verbal communication** is the exchange of information using words.

- Use proper grammar.
- Avoid slang.
- Avoid repeating words (e.g., “um ...,” “like,” and “you know”).
- Answer questions thoroughly, but each response should be less than two minutes long.

◆ **Nonverbal communication** is the exchange of information without words. It includes body language, eye contact, tone of voice, and gestures.

- Have good posture when standing and sitting.
- Greet the interviewer with a smile and a firm handshake.
- Avoid excessive gestures (e.g., waving hands around, pointing at the interviewer, and fidgeting in your seat).
- Make eye contact.
- Speak clearly, but not too loudly.



PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

◆ Dress appropriately.

- Business attire is appropriate, even if the actual job allows casual clothing.
- When in doubt, an interviewee should err on the side of formality.
- *More tips on interview attire can be found at <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewattire/a/interviewdress.htm>.*

◆ Be properly groomed, which includes:

- Neatly styled hair
- A clean body and clean clothing
- Trimmed or manicured fingernails
- No body odor or excessive perfume/cologne

◆ Be on time, so you do not appear frazzled.



PUTTING SKILLS INTO PRACTICE

It is important to practice your interview skills, so you will be ready when you have a real job interview.

- ◆ List your skills on paper, and give examples of how you use those skills.
- ◆ Practice out loud.
- ◆ Ask a friend or family member to role play in a mock interview.
- ◆ Practice answering questions in front of the mirror.
- ◆ Videotape your mock interview. Then watch it without sound to study your body language, gestures, and facial expressions.
- ◆ Prepare a sample follow-up letter that can be customized for each interview.



Practice Interview Skills

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to practice interview skills.

Objectives

1. Identify common interview questions.
2. Practice interview skills.

Materials

- ◆ writing utensil
- ◆ computer with Internet access
- ◆ video camera (optional)

Procedure

1. Make a list of 20 questions you are likely to encounter during a job interview. You can find examples at <http://career-advice.monster.com/job-interview/interview-questions/100-potential-interview-questions/article.aspx>.
2. Work with a partner to create a brief description of a fictional company. Give your company a name, as well as a few other facts. You may include information such as how many offices there are in the United States, what type of product or service the company offers, and how employees perform their work (on teams or mainly independently). Use that information to ask questions as an interviewee and to answer questions as an interviewer.
3. Conduct mock interviews with your partner, using the list of questions you created earlier. Take turns being the interviewer and interviewee. If a video camera is available, record the sessions.
4. Evaluate your partner on his or her answers, as well as his or her body language, expressions, and enthusiasm. If the session was recorded, review the video without sound to evaluate body language more closely.
5. After your partner evaluates your performance, choose at least three answers or behaviors that you would like to improve before a real interview. Describe how you would practice to improve in those areas.