DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 008 95 CS 501 414

AUTHOR Stewart, Charles J.
TITLE Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, Ill.; Northern Illinois Univ., De Kalb. ERIC Clearinghouse in Career Education.; Speech Communication Association, Falls Church, Va.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 76
CONTRACT 400-75-0029
NOTE 40p.; Theory into Practice (TIP) Series
AVAILABLE FROM Speech Communication Association, 5205 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Va. 22041 ($1.40 members, $1.50 non-members)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Planning; *Employment Interviews; *Field Interviews; Higher Education; *Interviews; *Learning Activities; Question Answer Interviews; Secondary Education; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this booklet is to aid high school and college instructors in designing and teaching units or courses in the fundamentals of informational and employment interviewing. The theory section of this work provides a definition of related communications principles, and an analysis of the dynamics of informational and employment interviewing. Exercises are suggested to demonstrate to students their involvement in day-to-day interviewing situations and to increase student awareness of the total interview process, types and uses of interviewing in American society, and the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing as an information gathering technique. Other exercises are specifically related to preparation for career-hunting through practice in the employment interview situation and resume writing. (KS)

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 125 008 | 95 | CS 501 414

AUTHOR Stewart, Charles J.
TITLE Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, Urbana, Ill.; Northern Illinois Univ., De Kalb. ERIC Clearinghouse in Career Education.; Speech Communication Association, Falls Church, Va.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 76
CONTRACT 400-75-0029
NOTE 40p.; Theory into Practice (TIP) Series
AVAILABLE FROM Speech Communication Association, 5205 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Va. 22041 ($1.40 members, $1.50 non-members)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Career Planning; *Employment Interviews; *Field Interviews; Higher Education; *Interviews; *Learning Activities; Question Answer Interviews; Secondary Education; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this booklet is to aid high school and college instructors in designing and teaching units or courses in the fundamentals of informational and employment interviewing. The theory section of this work provides a definition of related communications principles, and an analysis of the dynamics of informational and employment interviewing. Exercises are suggested to demonstrate to students their involvement in day-to-day interviewing situations and to increase student awareness of the total interview process, types and uses of interviewing in American society, and the advantages and disadvantages of interviewing as an information gathering technique. Other exercises are specifically related to preparation for career-hunting through practice in the employment interview situation and resume writing. (KS)

Teaching Interviewing for Career Preparation

Charles J. Stewart

Purdue University

2

Speech Communication Association
5205 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia 22041

ERIC
Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

ERIC IC
Clearinghouse in Career Education
204 Gabel Hall, De Kalb, Illinois 60115

Published July 1976

Speech Communication Association
5205 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, Virginia 22041

ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills
1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801

ERIC Clearinghouse in Career Education
204 Gabel Hall, DeKalb, Illinois 60115

Printed in the United States of America

Staff Editor: Kathy Stevens

The material in this publication was prepared pursuant to a contract with the National Institute of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgment in professional and technical matters. Prior to publication, the manuscript was submitted to the Speech Communication Association for critical review and determination of professional competence. This publication has met such standards. Points of view or opinions, however, do not necessarily represent the official view or opinions of either the Speech Communication Association or the National Institute of Education.

Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). It provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development efforts, and related information useful in developing more effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current significant information and lists this information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—much informative data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of specific educational research are to be intelligible to teachers and applicable to teaching, considerable bodies of data must be reevaluated, focused, translated, and molded into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports readily accessible, NIE has directed the separate ERIC clearinghouses to commission from recognized authorities information analysis papers in specific areas.

In addition, as with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as one of its primary goals bridging the gap between educational theory and actual classroom practices. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of sharply focused booklets based on concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with the best educational theory and/or research on a limited topic. It also presents descriptions of classroom activities which are related to the described theory and assists the teacher in putting this theory into practice.

This idea is not unique. Nor is the series title: *Theory Into Practice* (TIP). Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks provide teachers with similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are unusual in their sharp focus on an educational need and their blend of sound academic theory with tested classroom practices. And they have been developed because of the increasing requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Committee. Suggestions for topics to be considered by the Committee should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Bernard O'Donnell
Director, ERIC/RCS

Theory

Introduction to Interviewing

Every year thousands of students complete their formal educations, search for jobs, and begin careers. Few, especially high school graduates, have ever taken part in job interviews or had any formal training in interviewing, for employment or for other reasons. The job search is often frightening, frustrating, and unsuccessful because applicants have vague or erroneous conceptions of the kinds of questions employers ask, the abilities and characteristics employers look for, the information employers provide, the information applicants should bring to interviews, the kinds of questions applicants should ask, and the information applicants should obtain from prospective employers. When ex-students obtain jobs and launch their careers, they discover that interviewing skills are required again—to get and to give information about tasks, responsibilities, procedures, problems, attitudes, beliefs, products, status reports, clients, customers, or patients. Graduates are thrust into complex interviewing processes for which they have had little training or experience.

This booklet is designed to aid high school and college instructors in designing and teaching units or courses in the fundamentals of informational and employment interviewing. The skills developed in these units and courses will be of immeasurable value to high school and college graduates and will aid them in understanding and handling the many types of interviewing situations they will encounter during their careers.

Interviewing defined. What is an interview? It is more than conversation because it has a predetermined and serious purpose. This suggests pre-interview planning and a purpose other than mere enjoyment or passing the time of day. An interview may involve more than two people (e.g., two members of a company interviewing an applicant) but never more nor less than two parties (e.g., an interviewer party and an applicant party). The interview is a complex process that is dynamic and ongoing and that involves the total makeup of both parties, contains some degree of order or system without being fixed, and includes numerous interacting variables. Behavior is interchanged—both parties speak and listen and exchange ideas, concepts, values, and expectations. Nearly all interviews involve asking and answering questions.

Types of interviewing. This definition encompasses a wide range of interviewing activities. Informational interviews include training and orientation sessions, surveys, journalistic and police investigations, and medical diagnoses. Employment interviews include screening, determinate, placement, appraisal, and reprimand situations. Counseling interviews pertain to an interviewee's behavior. Problem-solving interviews deal with mutually shared problems. Persuasive interviews involve "selling" ideas, products, or services.

Interviewing and other forms of communication. Interviews tend to be less formal and structured than speeches, lectures, and small group discussions and more formal and structured than conversations. Participation by both parties is more equal in interviews than in speeches, lectures, and small group discussions but less equal than in conversations. The interview is unique in its emphasis on questions, frequent switching of roles, need for constant adaptive behavior, intimate setting, and tolerated or planned digressions to relax one or both parties or to reduce tension between parties.

Fundamentals of Interviewing

Important communication principles. No communication principles are unique only to interviewing, but the intimate one-on-one situation tends to magnify important principles. For example, feedback is more immediate and direct, since the listener may interrupt at any time. Nonverbal communication is very important—every action by either party (raising an eyebrow, frowning, looking puzzled, shifting in a chair) may be noticed and interpreted in a meaningful way because there are few physical barriers, such as distance, furniture, or other listeners.

Writers have studied the impact on human communication of environmental factors (temperature, humidity, attractiveness and architecture of surroundings, and lighting), proximics or one's use and perception of social and personal space (seating arrangement and distance between parties), physical appearance and dress, gestures, posture and other body movements, and touch, eye, and vocal behaviors.

Language barriers may doom an interview, especially if one or both parties assumes that the intended communication took place. Words are merely learned symbols, and each party's total programming (environmental background, education, experiences, and perceptions of the situation, of self, and of the other party) may alter the meaning and understanding of words. Since the only message a person can act upon is the one he or she receives, the person may act or react in the opposite way intended by the sender.

Interviewers must know the principles of motivation—motives, goals, and perceptions—and, when structuring and developing an interview, must consider what motivates each party to respond and to act. The interviewer can enhance motivation by orienting the interviewee, making the interviewee aware of potential benefits, dealing with the interviewee as a person, being fair and just, and maintaining good communication.

Listening is vital to communication and motivation. If either party does not listen, important ideas and materials will be lost or confused. And if either party perceives that the other party is not listening, the result may be lessened motivation to listen and to contribute. There are many listening problems: viewing a topic as uninteresting, criticizing a speaker's delivery instead of his or her message, listening only for facts, preparing to answer questions before fully understanding them, allowing attention to be diverted, listening only to what is easy to understand, allowing emotion-laden words to interfere with listening, and permitting personal prejudices or deepseated convictions to impair comprehension.

Silence is closely related to listening. Many people avoid silence at any cost, but silence can serve several communicative functions, positive and negative. It can express agreement or disagreement, interest or disinterest, belief or disbelief, confidence or self-doubt. One interviewing party may interpret another party's silence as exhibiting a lack of sufficient information, no sense of urgency to respond, a careful pondering of exactly what to say, an avoidance of controversial or sensitive matters, or hesitation to respond to an unclear or complex question. Silence is not a void—communication is taking place.

Structuring interviews. We can divide interviews into three parts: opening, body, and closing. The opening often affects the willingness of both parties to communicate freely and to reveal feelings, attitudes, and information. It should establish rapport, develop a sense of trust between the parties, and orient the interviewee as to purpose and expectations. There are a number of "starters" for use, modification, or combination: summary of the problem, explanation of how the interviewer discovered the problem, mention of an incentive or reward, request for advice or assistance, reference to the known position of the interviewee, reference to the person who sent the interviewer, reference to the organization the interviewer represents, and request for a specified period of time. The interviewer selects one or more starters and adds appropriate verbal and nonverbal behavior.

The body of an interview may be divided according to subject areas (e.g., background and accomplishments, intellectual qualities, emotional maturity), functions or roles of the interviewer and interviewee (e.g., questions from employer, information on the position, and questions from the applicant), key questions (e.g., what, when, where, who, how, and why), or question sequences, including the funnel sequence and the inverted funnel sequence. The funnel sequence begins with a broad, open-ended question and proceeds to more closed questions. It is used when the interviewee knows the subject matter and wants to talk. The initial open question poses less of a threat than a closed question, is less prone to interviewer bias, and can relax the interviewee. The inverted funnel sequence begins with a highly closed question and proceeds to more open questions. It may motivate the interviewee to respond by "priming the pump."

The closing should maintain the rapport established during the interview, orient the interviewee as to what will happen next, make no promises the interviewer cannot keep, and prepare for further contacts. False finishes, where the interview seems to be coming to a close and then continues, should be avoided. There are many verbal actions (e.g., personal inquiry, internal legitimizing, appreciation) and nonverbal actions (e.g., hand leveraging, major leg movement, breaking eye-contact) that occur during "leave-taking" (Knapp, et al., 1973). The closing can reinforce or destroy what was accomplished during the interview.

Types and uses of questions. Interviewers have a limitless variety of questions at their disposal, but there are four basic types. The first type is the open question, which gives the respondent considerable latitude in determining the kind and amount of information to be given: "What happened at the meeting last night?" Answers to open questions reveal what the respondent thinks is important and may contain valuable information for which the interviewer might not think to ask. Open questions get the respondent talking and can relax the respondent.

The closed question, the second basic type of question, gives the respondent little or no latitude in determining the kind and amount of information to be given: "Do you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree with the president's economic policy?" The interviewer has considerable control over responses, can ask more questions in less time, and can get to the specific information desired. Answers to closed questions are easier to replicate, to code, and to tabulate. The bipolar closed question gives two choices, usually yes or no: "Did you like the concert last night?" It is useful when the interviewer wants a yes or no answer, but it does not reveal reasons for, degree of, or amount of.

Third is the probing or secondary question, which is asked when an answer to a primary question or another probing question seems suggestible, vague, superficial, incomplete, or in error. For example: (interviewer) If the election were held today, who would you vote for? (interviewee) Oh, I don't know. (interviewer) Well, if you had to choose between the candidates, who do you think you would vote for? A respondent may give an inadequate answer for any of several reasons; for example, the respondent might not understand the question, might think the question is irrelevant, or might be unsure about the amount of information desired. The reflective probing question reflects the previous answer to verify the interviewer's interpretation of the answer: "You mean the free sample actually caused you not to buy the product?" The mirror or summary question reflects all or part of an interview to verify agreements, findings, and interpretations: "So, we have agreed on the first three points and will meet next Tuesday afternoon at 4:00 after we have discussed the last two points with our committees?"

The directed or leading question, the final basic type of question used by interviewers, literally "leads" the respondent to give a particular answer. It may be mild with little pressure, "You can meet tomorrow, can't you?" or loaded, "Have you stopped cheating on your taxes?" Interviewers use directed questions to sway a person toward a specific action or decision, to observe the respondent under stress, to provoke an unguarded response, or to signal that any response is acceptable (e.g., When was the last time you got drunk?).

Informational Interviewing

Principles of transmitting information. Transmitting information is a complex process, especially when a message is transmitted through several persons. Each new transmission is certain to contain omissions, changes, distortions, or additions. These defects in transmission may result from individual physical restrictions (memory, ability to listen, ability to comprehend), role relationships between interviewer and interviewee, the physical setting, the amount and complexity of information being transmitted, and transmission techniques.

There are many ways to improve information transmission: select information that is relevant and meaningful to the receiver; give information in a systematic fashion; do not overload the receiver with information; begin with a summary of materials to be covered; use audio-visual aids; use verbal emphasis and pauses to call attention to important items; encourage the receiver to ask questions during the interview; be aware of verbal and nonverbal feedback; summarize frequently; repeat important concepts, details, and facts; define words and concepts that might be misunderstood; encourage note-taking; use a tape recorder; and reduce the number of persons through which the information is transmitted.

Principles of gathering information. The process of gathering information should progress through a number of stages:

1. General purpose. Involves two questions: What information is desired? How will it be tabulated and used?
2. Specific objectives. Includes determining short-range and long-range goals, conducting background research, and preparing an interview guide, which is an outline of topics and subtopics to be investigated.
3. Selection of respondents. Entails determining the number needed (and sampling techniques) and specific qualifications. Respondents must have the information needed, must be available, must be willing to give the information, and must be capable of giving accurate, complete information.
4. Structuring the interview. Includes constructing an opening and closing and selecting the most appropriate schedule. In a nonscheduled interview, the interviewer operates from an interview guide and prepares no questions beforehand. In a moderately scheduled interview, the interviewer prepares all major questions and some probing questions. In a highly scheduled interview, the interviewer prepares all questions and asks them in the same words and order during each

interview. In a highly scheduled, standardized interview, the interviewer prepares all questions and provides standardized answer options. The first two schedules allow maximum freedom to probe into answers, to adapt to different interviewees and situations, and to obtain lengthy answers to open questions. The last two schedules give the interviewer more control over questions and answers, are easier to replicate, have a higher degree of precision and reliability, and obtain answers that are easier to code and to tabulate. One or more question sequences may be selected.

5. Writing the questions. Involves the construction of questions for the schedule and sequence(s) selected in stage 4. Questions should contain language respondents will understand, should ask for information respondents have, should not be too complex or vague, and should be relevant to the stated purpose and topic.
6. Selecting interviewers. Involves several questions: How many interviewers are needed? What interviewing skills and knowledge must interviewers have? What personal characteristics are required: age, race, sex, ethnic background, personality? What role relationship between interviewers and respondents is most advantageous, that is, should the interviewers be superior to, equal to, or subordinate to the respondents?
7. Pretesting the interview. Should be a trial run with a small sample of respondents that evaluates opening and closing, all questions, recording of answers, and tabulating and analyzing of data.
8. Conducting the interviews. Should be the result of careful planning. Respondents expect interviewers to be well prepared, to be skilled communicators, to be interested in the topic, the interview, and the respondent, to orient respondents, to be skilled questioners, and to be considerate and polite.
9. Coding, tabulating, and analyzing data. The discovery of what was found during the interviews and what conclusions are warranted. If all has gone well, the process has come full circle, and the general purpose has been fulfilled.

Employment Interviewing

How the employer sizes up the applicant. This process typically progresses through several stages:

1. Preliminary steps. Involves determining the nature of the position to be filled, requirements applicants must meet

(experience, personal qualities, and formal qualifications), and how and where to advertise the position.

2. Gathering of information on applicants. These pre-interview data come from cover letters, resumes, application forms, letters of recommendation, and aptitude tests. Janes (1969) surveyed employers on the kinds of pre-interview information they desire and what they look for.
3. The interviewing process. Begins with screening interviews that obtain a general picture of each applicant and determine how he or she compares with other applicants. The interviewer probes into background and accomplishments, intellectual qualities, motivation, emotional maturity, and human relations skills; gives information on the position and the organization; and provides an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions. Immediately after the interview, the interviewer writes a detailed evaluation of the applicant. The question is, "Should we continue to consider this applicant?" If the answer is no, a letter of regret is sent. If the answer is yes, a determinate interview, the "plant trip," is arranged. Several members of the organization meet and question the applicant in depth. An evaluation following this interview determines whether the applicant receives an offer or a rejection notice. For unskilled positions, the screening interview serves as both a screening and a determinate interview.

Interviewers should follow several guidelines while conducting employment interviews. They should let the applicant do the talking. They should avoid questions that can be answered yes or no, that are answered on the application form or resume, that are leading, that contain evaluative responses, that trick the applicant, or that may violate local, state, or national fair employment practices laws. Interviewers act within most laws (1) if they ask no questions that may reveal age, race, religion, ethnic background, political affiliations, and arrest records, and (2) if they ask no questions of a woman they would not ask of a man. Interviewers should answer all questions honestly and thoroughly. They should provide accurate and pertinent information on the organization and position. Finally, they should try to eliminate the influence of personal biases and prejudices.

How the applicant sizes up the employer. The search for a suitable position usually progresses through four stages:

1. Self-analysis. What does the applicant want in a position? What does the applicant need to be happy on and off the job: money, possessions, advancement, feeling of accomplishment? What are the applicant's abilities and qualifications?

2. Preparation stage. The applicant should compose cover letters and resumes carefully; select references who know the applicant well and can write insightful letters of recommendation; search for openings through all available means—want ads in newspapers, placement centers at colleges and universities, employment agencies, and direct contacts; review lists of questions asked by employers and phrase ones of his or her own.
3. Selection of interviews. The applicant should interview only for positions with organizations in which the applicant has a sincere interest and for which he or she is qualified; make careful note of time, date, and place of interviews; review his or her background, materials, goals, and interests; learn everything possible about the organization—history, products, reputation, benefits, location(s); be aware of current events; prepare a schedule of questions to get complete information about the position and the organization.
4. Taking part in the interview. The importance of appearance varies from organization to organization and interviewer to interviewer. The more extreme the applicant's appearance, the greater the chance it will affect the interview and his or her candidacy for the position. The applicant should be polite and considerate; answer all questions thoroughly and to the point, without attempting to "snow" the interviewer; ask carefully worded, intelligent questions in important areas—type of work and supervision, working and living conditions, type of co-workers, advancement potential, salary, extra benefits; show a sincere interest in the interview, the position, and the organization; leave a favorable personal impression.

Practice

Introduction to Interviewing

Exercise 1: Sink or Swim Interviews

Objective: To provide students with an experience that will introduce them to the total interview: opening, closing, questions, answers, communication principles and problems, and the need for preparation.

Exercise: Divide the class into trios, designating one student in each trio as the interviewer, one student as the interviewee, and one student as the observer. The interviewers will have five minutes to discover everything they can about their interviewees: education, family, hobbies, interests, beliefs and attitudes, and so on. Interviewees will respond as they see fit, for example, if a question is deemed "none of your business" they should say so. Observers will note how interviews were started and ended, the questions asked, the answers given, evidence of motivation (or lack of it), listening problems of interviewer motivation (or lack of it), listening problems of interviewer and interviewee, nonverbal communication, communication breakdowns, and problems caused by lack of preparation and interviewing experience. At the end of four and a half minutes, tell interviewers they have 30 seconds to end their interviews. Begin round two immediately, having the students within each trio change roles. At the end of another five minutes, stop this round and begin round three, having the students change roles again. Each student should thus have an opportunity to be an interviewer, an interviewee, and an observer.

Discussion: How did interviewers begin and end interviews? If openings and closings differed from one round to another, what may account for these differences: different interviewer or interviewee, experience from earlier rounds, anxiety level or "stage fright" of the interviewer, previous relationships between interviewer and interviewee (close friends, total strangers, casual acquaintances, etc.)? How did lack of preparation and interviewing experience affect questions and answers? If this had been a planned interview, what might the interviewers have done during advance preparation to make the interviews more effective? Were there communication breakdowns? If so, what seemed to cause them: language barriers, listening problems, lack of motivation, the classroom setting with several interviews going on at once, failure to notice nonverbal communication? How were questions and answers communicated nonverbally? What major problems did interviewers feel they encountered? How would they propose to eliminate these problems in future interviews?

Exercise 2: I'm an Interviewer and Didn't Know It.

Objective: To demonstrate to students their day-to-day involvement in a variety of interviewing situations.

Exercise: Each student will keep a detailed log of his or her dyadic—one-to-one—communication experiences during a seven-day period. Have students distinguish between interviewing and noninterviewing dyadic experiences. The student's log should note the type of each interview, its purpose, its duration, whether he or she was interviewer or interviewee, techniques used by each party, problems encountered, and outcome.

Discussion. How were interviewing and noninterviewing dyadic experiences similar and different? Which was experienced most often? Was it difficult to distinguish between interviewing and noninterviewing situations? Which types of interviews did the student encounter? How were the purposes of various types of interviews similar and different? How long was the longest interview and how short was the shortest? In which situations was the student the interviewer? In which situations was the student the interviewee? Which role did the student enjoy the most? What techniques did each party use in various interviewing situations? How did the situation seem to affect the techniques employed? What problems did the student encounter, and how did he or she handle these problems? How successful were the student's interviews? How can the student account for the unsuccessful interviews?

Variations: Have each student keep a detailed log of all communication experiences encountered during a seven-day period: interviewing and noninterviewing dyads, small groups, public speaking, and written communications. Students should compare and contrast the types of communication experiences with respect to purpose, duration, roles of participants, techniques used, and problems encountered.

Exercise 3: Person-to-Person in the Mass Media

Objective: To make students aware of the types and uses of interviewing in American society.

Exercise: Each student will keep a log of televised interviewing situations observed during a seven-day period. Students should make at least one observation during each hour of the television day: 7:00 am to midnight. They should be careful to differentiate between interviewing and noninterviewing dyadic situations. The student's log should note time of day, type of program (news, talk show, commercial message, dramatic production, comedy, variety show, etc.), type of interview, its apparent purpose, and unique interviewing techniques.

Discussion: What problems were encountered in differentiating between interviewing and noninterviewing situations? What types of interviewing were observed? What were the apparent purposes of individual interviews and types of interviews? What unique interviewing techniques were observed? How were types of interviews, frequency of appearance of interviewing purposes, and interviewing techniques affected by time of day and type of program? How realistic were the interviews portrayed in dramas and comedy programs? From the student's observations, how would he or she react to this statement: "The electronic mass medium is little more than televised dyadic communication?"

Variations: Each student will keep a log of interviewing situations and uses observed in all mass media—radio, television, film, and print—during a seven-day period. Students should compare and contrast the types and uses of interviews by the various mass media with respect to purpose and techniques.

Exercise 4: To Interview or Not to Interview

Objective: To make students aware of the advantages and disadvantages of using interviews and questionnaires to gather information.

Exercise: Have the class pick two or three current issues. Each student will pick one of these issues and develop a series of questions designed to discover people's attitudes toward and knowledge about this issue. The series of questions should represent a variety of question types. Each student will give one copy of his or her questions to a friend, neighbor, or parent to answer in writing without the student being present. The student will then use a second copy of these questions in a face-to-face interview with a friend, neighbor, or parent.

Discussion: What kinds of instruction were necessary when explaining the questionnaire and the interview to respondents? How did they differ? What differences, if any, were there in answer length, detail, and revelation of the respondent's attitudes about the selected issue? Was it easier to motivate the questionnaire respondent or the interview respondent to help with this project? Was it necessary to phrase questions differently when using an interview instead of a questionnaire? How often did student interviewers find themselves rephrasing questions, probing into answers, and wandering from the issue? How did these behaviors help or hinder interviews? Which means of gathering information was most effective: the interview or the questionnaire? Which was most efficient?

Fundamentals of Interviewing

Exercise 1: What Did He Say without Saying It?

Objective: To provide students with an opportunity to observe all facets of nonverbal communication in an interview: eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, head movements, body movements, posture, and seating arrangement.

Exercise: Pick two students to demonstrate a five-minute information-giving interview. Student A will explain in detail his or her hobby or a favorite game to Student B. Send the two students out of the classroom for a few minutes of preparation. While they are gone, place two chairs several feet apart in the center of the room. Tell the remaining students they are to observe all nonverbal communication that takes place during the demonstration interview, beginning with the way the interview parties arrange their chairs and ending when they have returned to their regular seats at the end of the interview.

Discussion: How did the interview parties arrange their chairs? How did this arrangement affect the communication that took place? How did nonverbal communication aid in opening the interview? How did the interviewer use nonverbal communication to explain the hobby or game? Were some aspects of the hobby or game explained solely through nonverbal communication? How did the interviewee use nonverbal communication to show interest, to raise questions, to show understanding, to express puzzlement? How did both parties use nonverbal communication to close the interview? Did nonverbal cues precede verbal cues in signalling that the closing was beginning? Which means of nonverbal communication were observed most frequently: eye contact, gestures, facial expressions, head movements, body movements, posture, seating arrangement? How did nonverbal communication substitute for verbal communication, for example, a nod instead of a verbal "yes"?

Exercise 2: Great Language Barriers

Objective: To provide students with experiences in handling language barriers during information-giving and -getting interviews.

Exercise: This exercise involves in-class and out-of-class information-giving interviews and information-getting interviews. For the in-class interviews, divide the students into pairs according to their knowledge about technical or complicated hobbies, games, or occupations. The interviewer should be an "expert" on the subject, and the interviewee should know little or nothing about the subject. The interviewer will have five to seven minutes to explain the hobby, game, or occupation as clearly and completely as possible. At the end of each interview, the interviewee should reveal his or her understanding of the hobby, game, or occupation. For the out-of-class interviews, each student should contact a person with an occupation he or she would like to enter upon graduation or further training. The purpose of these interviews is to obtain a clear understanding of the occupation: necessary skills, training, duties, responsibilities, advancement potential, and so on. Important byproducts are experience in "real" interviews and knowledge of an intended occupation. At the end of each interview, the interviewer should write a brief report on the information obtained and have the interviewee review it for accuracy and thoroughness.

Discussion: How did interviewers and interviewees in both series of interviews try to handle potentially difficult language situations: technical jargon, seldom-used words, common words with unusual meanings or connotations? How successful were they? How can we account for the failures to eliminate language barriers? In their efforts to handle obvious language problems like technical jargon, did students fail to detect problems created by common words? How did language barriers affect the ability of interviewers and interviewees to report accurately and thoroughly the information received? How did students' pre-interview knowledge of their chosen occupations help or hinder eliminating language barriers?

Exercise 3: My View Is Not Your View.

Objective: To illustrate for students how each individual's physical make-up and programming affect frames of reference and stereotypes—ways of viewing people, places, things, and events.

Exercise: Ask students to take out paper and pencil and prepare to write down the first meaning or image that comes to mind upon hearing a series of words or phrases. First, give a series of single words, like game, city, sail, and bowl. Pause between words to give students time to write what first comes to their minds. Do not explain or repeat words. Second, give a series of descriptions, like British banker, female physical education major, medical doctor, elementary school teacher, and midwestern farmer. Pause long enough between descriptive phrases to give students time to describe in detail the images that come to mind. Third, taking one word or phrase at a time, have each student relate what came to mind upon hearing each of the single words and each of the descriptive phrases.

Discussion: How did meanings and images vary from student to student? Why did specific meanings and images come to mind? How were meanings and images apparently affected by the student's age, sex, race, ethnic group, religion, family background, education, geographical background, hobbies, beliefs, attitudes, and unique experiences? How did students interpret different words with the same sound, for example, sail and sale? How did students interpret words with the same spelling and sound, like "bowl" (soup bowl, bowling ball, and football bowl game)? How might these differing images and impressions affect interviews? How can interviewers and interviewees eliminate or minimize these communication problems?

Exercise 4: Did You Hear That?

Objective: To make students aware of listening problems and how they affect interviews.

Exercise: Select several controversial topics, one for each class period, and assign or have four or five students volunteer as interviewers for each period. Interviewers are to discover everything they can in seven minutes about the interviewee's attitudes and beliefs concerning the controversy. The interviewee (perhaps the instructor is best) should take a polar position on the controversy, insert an occasional invective or profanity, and maintain a serious attitude toward the topic and the interview. Interviewers should enter the room one at a time so their interviews will not be affected by earlier interactions. Tape record each interview. Following each interview, the interviewer is to write a report on what he or she heard during the interview. Then the student is to listen to the recording of the interview and see how well he or she listened to the interview.

Discussion: How can students account for apparent listening problems? Did they tend to get emotionally-involved, to want to debate the issue? How did their pre-interview positions on the controversies affect listening? Was a favorable attitude toward the interviewee's position more or less detrimental than an unfavorable attitude? How did the interviewee's use of invective and profanity affect listening? Was attention diverted by daydreaming, interviewee nonverbal behavior, or lack of interest in the topic? Were interviewers so interested in their next topics or questions or in challenging interviewee positions that they failed to hear what the interviewee was saying?

Exercise 5: How Do I Start This Thing?

Objective: To introduce students to the functions and types of openings in interviews.

Exercise: Review with students the functions of openings: to establish rapport, to orient the interviewee as to the purpose and emotional atmosphere of the interview, and to establish proper and effective role relationships. Review the types or techniques of openings: stress that two or more techniques may be combined in a single opening. Divide the class into groups of three or four and provide each group with a hypothetical interview setting like the following:

1. You are to take part in an in-class interview on October 12, but two highly important, time-consuming projects in other courses will make it very difficult to prepare for the interview. You are going to try to convince your interviewing course professor to postpone your in-class interview.
2. You need to have a course assignment clarified, but you have arrived at your professor's office just ten minutes before another class is scheduled.
3. You are conducting a door-to-door survey of student attitudes toward final examinations. You are interviewing in a dormitory.

Each student will prepare an opening for the hypothetical setting he or she has been assigned. At the beginning of the class period, the interviewers for a particular setting will leave the room. One interviewer at a time will enter and proceed with an interview until the opening is completed. The student will then take his or her regular seat in the room, and the next interviewer will enter and proceed with his or her opening. When all openings are completed for a particular setting, discuss the various opening techniques and combinations employed. Proceed to the next hypothetical setting and repeat this process.

Discussion: What opening techniques and combinations did interviewers use? Which techniques were dictated by each situation? Which techniques and combinations appeared to be most effective? Which techniques were not employed? How can we account for this? What role did nonverbal communication play in the openings? How did interviewers involve interviewees in their openings?

Exercise 6: What Comes in Between?

Objective: To make students aware of question patterns and structural patterns employed in interviews.

Exercise: Select several sample interviews representing a variety of situations: a survey interview, an employment interview, a counseling interview, a sales interview, an appraisal interview, and so on. First, have students determine the role(s) questions played in the interviews. If the role(s) was major, see if students can identify one or more question patterns, such as funnel sequence and inverted funnel sequence. Second, divide each interview into major divisions, for example, opening, body, and closing. Have students determine the approximate time and proportion of the interview devoted to each division. Third, where possible, divide the body of each interview into meaningful parts. Have students suggest alternative sequences, divisions, and parts for each interview.

Discussion: What kinds of question sequences were used? What difficulties were encountered in identifying sequences? How did the interview situation (counseling, employment, appraisal, survey, etc.) influence the selection and nature of the sequences? What difficulties were encountered in dividing interviews into opening, body, and closing? How did the interview situation affect the amount and proportion of time devoted to each major division? What parts were discovered in the body of each interview? How much did interviewer preference and interviewing situation seem to determine the structural parts of the body of each interview? How might interviewers have structured their interviews differently? More effectively?

Exercise 7: How Do I Shut This Thing Off?

Objective: To introduce students to the functions and techniques of closings in interviews.

Exercise: Review with students the functions closings serve in interviews: to summarize findings, agreements, and solutions; to maintain rapport established during the interview; to make a final appeal; to reveal what happens next. Review the techniques of closing interviews and how these may be combined. Divide the class into groups of three or four students and provide each group with a hypothetical interviewing situation. The following are examples:

1. You have been trying to convince your interviewing instructor to postpone your in-class interview because of two highly important and time consuming projects in other courses that will make it very difficult to get ready for the interview. The decision is to try to swap interview dates with someone else in the class.
2. You wanted a course assignment clarified, but you arrived at your professor's office just ten minutes before another class is scheduled. You are told that the assignment cannot be discussed at this time.
3. You are conducting a door-to-door survey of student attitudes toward final examinations. You now have the information you want from a particular student.

Each student will prepare a closing for the hypothetical situation he or she has been assigned. At the beginning of the class period, the interviewers for a particular situation will leave the room. One interviewer will enter at a time, take a seat across from the interviewee, and proceed with a closing. The student will then return to his or her regular seat, and the next interviewer will enter and proceed with his or her closing. When all closings are completed for a particular situation, discuss the various closing techniques and combinations employed. Proceed to the next hypothetical situation and repeat this process.

Discussion: What closing techniques and combinations did interviewers use? Which techniques were dictated by the situation? Which techniques and combinations appeared to be most effective? Which techniques were not employed? How can we account for this? What role did nonverbal communication play in the closings? How did interviewers involve interviewees in their closings?

Exercise 8: What Kind of Question Was That?

Objective: To aid students in learning the types and uses of questions.

Exercise: Prepare a list of twenty nonrelated questions like the following:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. You like close detail work, don't you?
3. Why do you think that happened?
4. Go on.
5. How old are you?
6. Did you vote in the last presidential election?

Have students identify each question in four ways: open or closed, primary or secondary (probing), neutral or directed (leading or loaded), and possibly a special type like bipolar, reflective probe, or mirror. Discuss how differing contexts and interviewing situations might change the ways in which each question is identified. Have students alter questions verbally and nonverbally to change them from open to closed, primary to secondary, neutral to directed, and so on. For instance, question two above can be changed from directed to neutral by altering the language: "Do you like close detail work?" Question three can be changed from a neutral probing question to a directed question by altering vocal delivery: "Go on!" A neutral question now becomes a challenge to the respondent's honesty. Finally, have students offer reasons why an interviewer might use each question on the list.

Discussion: Which questions were most difficult to identify? How can we account for these: question taken out of context, subtle use of language, no indication of nonverbal communication, respondents may answer in a variety of ways? What were the easiest means of altering questions? How can we determine whether a question is directed or merely a reflective probe or mirror question? What has this exercise revealed about the use of bipolar questions, leading or loaded questions, and highly closed questions with standardized answers? Why might an interviewer use each question as phrased in this exercise? For instance, why ask question number two as a directed question instead of a neutral question?

Exercise 9: What's Wrong with That Question?

Objective: To aid students in understanding and applying the criteria for question selection and usage.

Exercise: Prepare a list of unrelated questions, and provide information concerning interview situation and location during the interview. For example:

1. Are you familiar with the proposals of ERA? (the first question in an attitude survey on the proposed Equal Rights Amendment)
2. That wasn't a good reason to quit a job, was it? (a probing question in an employment interview)
3. What is your definition of euthanasia? What comes to mind when you hear euthanasia mentioned? (first two questions in an attitude survey on euthanasia)
4. What are your reactions to the abortion case now going on in Boston? (question during an attitude survey on legalized abortion)
5. Do you obey the speed limit (a) most of the time, (b) when convenient, (c) seldom? (question during a survey on driving habits)

Have students identify what is wrong with each question and recommend how the question can be altered to meet criteria for question selection and usage. For instance, the first question above assumes the respondent knows what ERA stands for. It also asks for a simple yes or no answer, which would reveal nothing about the extent of the respondent's familiarity with ERA. A better approach would be to explain what ERA means and then ask about attitude along an attitude scale. Or, the interviewer could ask, "What do you know about the ERA?"

Discussion: Which criteria does each question fail to satisfy? What problems might occur because of these violations, for example, inaccurate data, false assumptions, biased answers, meaningless generalizations, loss of respondent motivation? How can these violations be corrected? How do interviewing situation and location of the question in the interview affect the selection and usage of questions?

Exercise 10: What Kind of Answer Was That?

Objective: To see if students can identify what is wrong with interviewee responses and provide appropriate secondary questions.

Exercise: Prepare a series of questions and answers that require followup or secondary questions. For example, an answer may be incomplete, too general, vague, inaccurate, or suggestible. The question may elicit no response. The series of questions might look like the following:

1. Interviewer: "If the election were being held today, who would you vote for?"
   Interviewee: "Oh, I don't know."
   Interviewer:
2. Interviewer: "How did you like the football game?"
   Interviewee: "At first it was quite interesting."
   Interviewer:
3. Interviewer: "How do you feel about the ERA?"
   Interviewee: (no response)
   Interviewer:
4. Interviewer: "What were your favorite subjects in high school?"
   Interviewee: "Algebra."
   Interviewer:

Have students identify the problem(s) with each answer. Then have students suggest appropriate secondary or probing questions that might alleviate the problem(s). Do not allow a student to ask another primary question, even if it is related to the initial question.

Discussion: What is wrong with each answer? Is the problem the fault of the interviewee or the interviewer? In what ways can this problem be attacked? How might an interviewee respond to each proposed secondary question? Which responses to secondary questions would gain the information originally desired? Which would gain information not originally desired? What new problems might the secondary questions create?

Exercise 11: To Lead or Not to Lead.

Objective: To make students aware of the influence of directed questions on interviewee responses.

Exercise: Have each student prepare a schedule of questions for a five-minute attitude survey on a current issue, such as the energy crisis, inflation, or abortion. Each question must be neutral with no explicit direction by the interviewer. Then have students prepare a second schedule by turning several questions from the original schedule into directed questions, leading or loaded. For example, questions might look like the following:

Schedule A	*Schedule B*
1. Do you favor or oppose legalized abortion?	1. Do you favor legalized abortion like most people I talk to?

2. If your unmarried sister or close friend became pregnant, would you suggest that she consider an abortion?
3. What are your feelings about further legalization of abortion?

2. If your unmarried sister or close friend became pregnant, wouldn't you suggest that she consider an abortion?
3. Would you support further legalization of abortion, or would you support current laws that force women to have abortions from quack doctors?

Students should conduct five interviews with each schedule, noting both verbal and nonverbal responses to each question. After all interviews are completed, students should write a comparison of responses and data attained by the neutral and directed versions of each question.

Discussion: How did differing versions of questions seem to influence the amount of data received? How did differing versions seem to affect the attitudes expressed? Did responses to directed questions clearly lean in the direction provided by the interviewer? How did differing versions of questions affect willingness to answer questions, the communication climate of the interviews, and motivation of respondents?

Informational Interviewing

Exercise 1: I Hope You Can Remember All of This.

Objective: To make students aware of the difficulties encountered when transmitting messages.

Exercise: Create three paragraphs that deal with an event, place, or person; or have students create them. Include names, dates, statistics, and facts in each paragraph. At the beginning of this exercise, ask for volunteers or select four or five students and send them out of the room. Give copies of one of the paragraphs to each of the remaining students. Tell them to record what happens to the information in the paragraph as it is passed orally, and from memory to succeeding students. Bring in the first student and tell him or her that you are going to read aloud a short paragraph. No questions or repetitions will be allowed. When you have read the paragraph, bring in a second student and explain that he or she will receive a brief message from the first student and will then pass this information on to the next student. This exercise continues until the last student transmits the message to the whole class. Discuss what happened to the message. Take a second paragraph, select another four or five students, and give copies of this message to the class. Your instructions remain the same except that each student may ask three simple questions about the message *after* hearing all of it. Discuss what happened to this message. Take the third paragraph and proceed as before except that each information transmitter will give the information twice (one repetition) to the receiver. Discuss what happened to this message.

Discussion: What kinds of materials were deleted from messages when they were transmitted from person to person? How were materials altered? What information was added to messages? How can students account for these deletions, alterations, and additions? How did asking questions help or hinder the accurate and complete transmission of message number two? How could the receivers have made wiser use of questions (e.g., during the message instead of after the message was completed)? How did the repetitions of the third message help or hinder its transmission from person to person? How could these repetitions have been made more effective? If students were doing this exercise over, what would they do to insure more effective information transmission?

Exercise 2: You Will Remember This!

Objective: To give students an opportunity to experiment with a variety of methods of transmitting information through interviews.

Exercise: Prepare several 600-word messages containing names, dates, statistics, descriptions, definitions, qualifying words like *probably* and *maybe*, and technical or professional jargon. Give a copy of each message to three or four students. Each is to prepare a five- to six-minute interview designed to transmit this message accurately and completely to a second party consisting of two other students. Interviewers should use all available means to transmit information: questions, feedback, outlines, pictures, charts, repetition, verbal emphasis, and so on. At the beginning of a class period, interviewers and receivers for a particular message leave the room. One interviewer and a party of two students enter the room for an interview. Upon completion of the interview, the receiving party leaves the room to write down the message it received. The second interview then begins and the process is repeated until all interviewers have transmitted their assigned messages. Each receiving party returns to the classroom and relates the message it received. The transmitted messages are compared with the original for additions, deletions, and alterations.

Discussion: Which interviewer was most successful in transmitting the message? How can we account for this? Which techniques were apparently most successful? Which seemed least successful? Which aspects of the message—statistics, names, dates, technical jargon, qualifying words—were most difficult to transmit accurately and completely? How can we explain this phenomenon? Which unused techniques could have aided in transmitting these materials?

Exercise 3: The Case of the Reluctant Respondent

Objective: To provide students with a challenging experience in gathering information through extensive use of secondary or probing questions.

Exercise: Divide the class into groups of five or six and prepare for each group a different "case" consisting of facts and testimony about an incident: disaster, murder, lawsuit, accident, happening at school, and so on. The cases should be approximately two or three single-spaced, typed pages and include a variety of facts and testimony, some of which are contradictory. Provide students in each group with a brief descriptive setting for their case. For example, the setting for a case dealing with a scoutmaster's actions during a disaster that struck a scout campout might look like this:

> Several years ago a natural disaster struck a Boy Scout camp near Elizabeth, Tennessee. Local residents have now written to the Baker Hero Fund Commission urging that Rex Ingram be awarded its silver medal for his actions during the disaster. The Commission has sent you to Tennessee to interview a person who has collected facts and statements from several residents. (Kerr, 1962)

Descriptive settings should not include any important or revealing information about the case. Only the instructor should know the details. Each student should first prepare an interview guide containing areas and subareas of information he or she thinks ought to be probed. After a guide is roughed out, the student should prepare a moderately scheduled interview. One case will be used each day. At the beginning of class, the interviewers for that day should leave the classroom. One interviewer will enter at a time, conduct a seven-minute interview, and then go to a room where he or she will write a brief report based on the information received. The interviewee should be absolutely honest but should give only the information asked for in each question. Broad, open-ended questions, like "Tell me all about it," should be answered in a simple, general sentence. The class will have the opportunity to observe several different approaches to getting the same information, from the same interviewee, about the same case. When all interviews for the day are completed, the interviewers will return to the classroom and read their brief reports on the case to show the information they received. The instructor will then reveal any information not brought out during the interviews.

Discussion: How can we explain the remarkable success of some interviewers and the relative failure of others: the interview guide, schedule of questions, probing into answers, phrasing of questions, patience to stick with an area until all information was obtained, organization, ability to identify important areas of information, communication skills, ability to adapt and to alter the original guide and schedule? What was the major problem that confronted interviewers: the reluctant interviewee, the time limit, pre-interview assumptions, the difficulty of the case? Why was some information rarely or never obtained? Did the interviewee unintentionally mislead the interviewers?

Exercise 4: What's Your Opinion?

Objective: To provide students with an experience in preparing and conducting a highly scheduled interview.

Exercise: Have each student select a current local, national, or international issue and research it. Each student should then prepare a highly scheduled interviewing instrument for a ten-minute interview. The instrument should include an opening, all questions to be asked, answer spaces or options, and a closing. Require a variety of questions, like the following: two open questions, one directed question, three closed questions with standardized answers, one bipolar question, and two moderately closed questions. Divide the class into three groups. Triads will be formed for each of the three rounds of interviews.

During Round 1, Group A will be interviewers, Group B respondents, and Group C critics. Stop the interviews at the end of ten minutes and have each member of a triad evaluate the interviewer with a standardized critique form. Round 2 will begin as soon as all evaluations are completed. Group B will provide the interviewers, Group C the respondents, and Group A the critics. Repeat the above process, and then conduct a third round so all students have been interviewers, respondents, and critics. After all interviews are completed, students should hand in the interviewing instruments containing the information received during their interviews. Interviewers receive two evaluations and grades, one for the oral interviews determined by averaging student critiques and one for the interviewing instrument.

Discussion: If some questions and options required explanations by interviewers, how could this have been avoided? How did respondents react to directed questions? Did bipolar questions elicit bipolar answers? How did respondents answer open questions? What problems did interviewers encounter with note-taking? How did the highly scheduled instrument affect verbal and nonverbal communication? How was the atmosphere of this interview situation similar to and different from that of moderately scheduled interview situations? How did lack of opportunity for probing into answers affect the outcome of these interviews?

Exercise 5: Do You Have a Pencil?

Objective: To make students aware of the problems and techniques of note-taking during interviews.

Exercise: Arrange to have two or three 10-minute informational interviews conducted in front of the class. The class and the participants should focus attention on note-taking techniques and the apparent effects of note-taking on communication between the interviewing parties. Interviewers should take adequate notes for accurate and thorough reports on the information obtained during the interviews. The interviews should contain a variety of questions, including very open questions. At the end of each interview, have the interviewer give an oral report on the information received (from notes and memory) to see if he or she was successful in gaining and recalling information.

Discussion: What note-taking techniques did interviewers employ? Which of these interfered most (and which least) with communication between interviewer and respondent? How did note-taking affect the smooth flow of the interview? How much time was consumed by note-taking because the interviewee hesitated to go on when the interviewer was writing, because one or both parties talked slower to aid note-taking, or because the interviewer did not ask another question until the notes were completed? Was there evidence of interviewee curiosity about what the interviewer was writing? How was nonverbal communication affected by note-taking? What techniques can aid in maintaining good communication while taking notes?

Exercise 6: May I Record This?

Objective: To provide students with an opportunity to use a tape recorder during gathering and analyzing data from informational interviews.

Exercise: Have each student prepare a highly scheduled interviewing instrument for a fifteen-minute interview with a stranger or slight acquaintance. Require a variety of questions: open-ended, directed, closed, closed with standardized answers, bipolar, and so on. The student must record the interview and assure that the quality of the recording would be adequate for playing excerpts to a class or radio audience. When the interview is completed, the student must transcribe the tape, analyze the data from the tape and transcription, and write a report on experiences during the interview, transcription, and analysis stages of the assignment.

Discussion: How did interviewees react to student requests for recorded interviews? How did the tape recorder affect verbal and nonverbal communication during the interview? What problems did students encounter when trying to maintain a good quality recording, a smooth flow of questions and answers, and good verbal and nonverbal communication? What problems did students have with their tape recorders? How did students prepare before their interviews to lessen or to eliminate recorder problems? How did students try to assure a good quality recording? Did they succeed? What problems were encountered in transcribing information from tapes? How can these be eliminated? How did the recordings and transcriptions aid in data analysis?

Employment Interviewing

Exercise 1: Here's My Resume.

Objective: To provide students with an opportunity to prepare a personal resume and to have it evaluated by an employer.

Exercise: Have students read the Harold D. Janes article, "The Cover Letter and Resume" in *Personnel Journal*, which relates employer preferences for length and content of resumes and cover letters. Discuss and criticize sample resumes from textbooks, pamphlets, and students. This reading and study should prepare students to develop their own resumes suitable for positions they wish to attain now or in the future. Each student should present a typed copy of his or her resume to a prospective employer and meet with this person to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the resume. Encourage students to revise their resumes to remove the weaknesses noted by employers.

Discussion: What major problems did students encounter during preparation of resumes? What strengths and weaknesses did prospective employers point out? How were employer views similar to and different from those found in the Janes study? How did employer desires differ from institution to institution: retail stores, schools, industry, government agencies, law offices, hospitals?

Exercise 2: So You're Interested in a Position with Us?

Objective: To provide students with realistic experiences as employment interviewers and applicants.

Exercise: Each student should prepare two copies of a job description, including name of organization, its location, the position or positions to be filled, requirements such as age, education, and experience, and perhaps some information about the organization and its benefits. Each student should also prepare two copies of a resume and two job application forms. The instructor should prepare interview sign-up sheets that list all student employers and two interview periods for each. On a given day, students will shop among the job descriptions and pick out two for which they would like to apply. They sign up for interview times with student employers and give each employer a resume and a completed application form. A student critic will be assigned to each interview. The interviews should be ten to thirteen minutes long. Several interviews may take place at the same time. Grades will be determined by averaging critiques of applicants and employers prepared by the applicant, the employer, and the critic at the end of each interview.

Discussion: How were interviews structured, and which structures seemed most successful? What were the strengths and weaknesses of employer questions? Were interviews proportioned adequately, that is, was there enough time for employer's questions, information about the job and organization, and applicant's questions? What were the strengths and weaknesses of applicant questions? What major problems did employers and applicants encounter?

Exercise 3: You Can't Ask That!

Objective: To aid students in understanding what kinds of employment questions are violations of fair employment practices legislation and why.

Exercise: Prepare a series of questions employers might ask during interviews. Include legal and illegal questions in random order. Be sure illegal questions pertain to age, sex, religion, political affiliations, race, ethnic background; relatives, and arrest record. Ask one student to serve as an applicant; the remaining students will act as judges; and you, the instructor, will be a prospective employer. If a student judge thinks a question is illegal, he or she can stop the interview and challenge the employer. The student must explain why the question is illegal and offer a rephrasing of the question to make it legal. Repeat this exercise two or more times with different series of questions and applicants of different sex, race, ethnic background, and so on.

Discussion: Which areas of potential discrimination appeared most often: age, sex, religion, political affiliations, race, ethnic background, relatives, arrest record? Which appeared least often? How can students explain these observations? Which violations of fair employment practices legislation are most likely to be accidental—not intended by the interviewer? Which violations are most easily detected? Which illegal questions were most easily rephrased into legal questions? Which apparent violations are or should be allowed under special circumstances? Were violations more noticeable if the applicant was female, black, or an obvious member of an ethnic group? If a person interviewing a student for a job asks questions not allowed by fair employment practices legislation, how should the student deal with this situation?

Exercise 4: Welcome to Our Home Office.

Objective: To introduce students to the entire selection process with emphasis on determinate interviews.

Exercise: Select three or four students to serve as applicants. Divide the remainder of the class into groups of four or five. Each group will then become employees of a specific organization: Ford Motor Company, Sears, Continental Grain, General Hospital, Montgomery County Schools, and so on. Each student should take on a specific role for his or her organization, such as screening interviewer, personnel director, sales manager, school superintendant, director of research, plant manager. A student applicant is assigned to each organization and provides the screening interviewer with a resume and a completed application form. The organization provides its applicant with a detailed job description containing the organization's name, its location, the position or positions open, requirements, and some information about the organization and its benefits. During the first day or two of the assignment, screening interviewers conduct ten- to thirteen-minute interviews with their assigned applicants. The remaining employees (to serve as determinate interviewers) should not be in the room to hear their applicant being screened. Between the initial interviews and the determinate interviews, screening interviewers should transmit evaluations of their applicants to their "home offices." One 35-40 minute determinate interview will be conducted during each of the next three or four class periods. Vary the formats. For instance, on one day have all the employees of an organization (minus the screening interviewer) interview the applicant as a committee. On another day have the applicant remain in the room while various interviewers come and go, each spending about ten minutes with the applicant. On a third day have the applicant taken out of the room after each interview and then brought back in for the next interview—a simulation of being taken from office to office.

Discussion: What were the major differences between screening and determinate interviews? What problems were encountered in coordinating screening and determinate interviews? What problems seem to be unique to determinate interviews? How can these be lessened or eliminated? What were the strengths and weaknesses of determinate interviews and interviewers? Which determinate format seemed most effective? Which seemed least effective? What are other possible formats for determinate interviews?

Exercise 5: A Visit with a Personnel Director

Objective: To get students involved in real-life interviews and to introduce them to personnel directors' views on employee selection.

Exercise: Have each student make an appointment with the personnel director or hiring officer of an organization for which he or she would like to work in the future. Students should obtain and complete an application form and prepare a cover letter and resume. They should submit all of these materials to their interviewees prior to the interviews. During their interviews, students should probe into the interviewees' training, experiences, interviewing methods, and the hiring process of the interviewees' organizations. Students should ask for comments about the application forms, cover letters, and resumes submitted prior to the interviews.

Discussion: What kinds of training and experience do personnel officers tend to have? What methods do they use? How are these affected by training and experience, organizational policies, and the types of jobs offered: teaching, supervision, sales, assembly line, and so on? What materials are used in the selection process: resumes, application forms, letters of recommendation, aptitude tests, screening interviews, determinate interviews? What role does each play in the evaluation and selection of applicants? What were the strengths and weaknesses of the materials submitted prior to each interview?

Bibliography

Banaka, William H. *Training in Depth Interviewing.* New York: Harper and Row, 1971.

Barbara, Dominick A. "Don't Be Afraid of Silence." *Today's Speech* 6 (January 1958): 13–15.

Barker, Larry L. *Listening Behavior.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

Berelson, Bernard, and Gary Steiner. *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1964.

Broadbent, Donald E. *Perceptions and Communication.* New York: Pergamon Press, 1958.

Brooks, William D. *Speech Communication.* Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1974.

Brown, Patricia. "How to Snow a Job Interviewer." *Business Today* 9 (December 1972): 19–22.

Converse, Jean M. *Conversations at Random: Survey Research as Interviewers See It.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974.

Gorden, Raymond L. *Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics.* Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1969.

Gough, John S. "Interviewing in Twenty-Six Steps." London: British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education, 1971. (ED 057 328)

Goyer, Robert S. "Giving and Getting Information." Form R.S.G. 1065. Communication Research Center, Department of Communication, Purdue University.

Goyer, Robert S., W. Charles Redding, and John T. Rickey. *Interviewing Principles and Techniques: A Project Text.* Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1968.

Gritzmacher, Karen J. "Understanding Certain Interview Variables Affecting Trust in an Interview." *Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association* 4 (Spring 1974): 78–83. (ED 099 903)

Hirsekorn, Arnold A. "Job Finding Kit." Olympia, Wash.: Washington State Coordinating Council for Occupational Education, 1972. (ED 090 377)

Hutchinson, Marilyn A., and Sue E. Spooner. "Job Search Preparedness Barometer." Bethlehem, Pa.: College Placement Council, 1975.

"Information and Referral Services: Interviewing and Information Giving." Working Draft. Minneapolis, Minn.: American Rehabilitation Foundation, Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies, 1971. (ED 055 635)

Jackson, Matthew. *Recruiting, Interviewing, and Selecting: A Manual for Line Managers.* London: McGraw-Hill, 1972.

Janes, Harold D. "The Cover Letter and Resume." *Personnel Journal* 48 (September 1969): 732–733.

Jermy, Charles W., Jr., and Patricia Barbaresi. "Research Interview Module." Instructor's Procedural Guide. Ithaca, N.Y.: State University of New York and Cornell University College of Agriculture, 1972. (ED 098 105)

Johannesen, Richard L. "The Functions of Silence: A Plea for Communication Research." *Western Speech* 38 (Winter 1974): 25–35.

Johnston, Marcia S. "Get a Job." *Chicago Guide* 23 (August 1974): 62–67.

Kahn, Robert L., and Charles F. Cannell. *The Dynamics of Interviewing.* New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964.

Kerr, Harry P. *Opinion and Evidence: Cases for Argumentation and Discussion.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962.

Knapp, Mark L. "The Field of Nonverbal Communication: An Overview." In *On Speech Communication*, edited by C.J. Stewart. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Knapp, Mark L. *Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Knapp, Mark L., Roderick P. Hart, Gustav W. Friedrich, and Gary M. Shulman. "The Rhetoric of Goodbye: Verbal and Nonverbal Correlates of Human Leave-Taking." *Speech Monographs* 40 (August 1973): 182-198.

Krivonos, Paul D., and Mark L. Knapp. "Initiating Communication: What Do You Say when You Say Hello?" *Central States Speech Journal* 26 (Summer 1975): 115-125.

Lee, Irving J. *How to Talk with People.* New York: Harper and Row, 1952.

Lipset, Laurence, Frank P. Rodgers, and Harold M. Kentner. *Personnel Selection and Recruitment.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1964.

Magee, Richard H. *The Employment Interview—Techniques for Questioning.* Swarthmore, Pa.: Personnel Journal, 1965.

Making the Most of Your Job Interview. New York Life Insurance Company, n.d.

Management's Role in College Recruiting. Chicago: Enterprise Publications, n.d.

Mehrabian, A. *Nonverbal Communication.* Chicago: Aldine–Atherton, 1972.

Minter, Robert L. "Human Rights Laws and Pre-Employment Inquiries." *Personnel Journal* 52 (June 1972): 431–433.

Moss, William M. *Oral History Program Manual.* New York: Praeger, 1974.

Nichols, Ralph, and L.A. Stevens. *Are You Listening.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957.

Parks, Malcolm R. "Dyadic Communication from the Perspective of Small Group Research." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Central States Speech Association, April 4–6, 1974, at Milwaukee, Wisc. (ED 091 780)

Payne, Stanley L. *The Art of Asking Questions.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1951.

Richardson, Stephen A., Barbara S. Dohrenwend, and David Klein. *Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions*. New York: Basic Books, 1965.

Rivers, William L. *Finding Facts*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975.

Rogers, Don. "The Interview: Special Form of the Dyad." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Central States Speech Association, April 4-6, 1974, at Milwaukee, Wisc. (ED 089 388)

Steinmetz, Lawrence L. *Interviewing for Supervisory Personnel*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1971.

Stevens, Nancy D. "Job-Seeking Behavior and Vocational Development." Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American Personnel and Guidance Association, April 4-8, 1971, in Atlantic City, N.J. (ED 051 519)

Stewart, Charles J. "Interviewing: A Better Means of Teaching Speech Communication." *Indiana Speech Notes* 5 (April 1972): 7-12.

Stewart, Charles J. "Types and Uses of Questions in Interviews." In *On Speech Communication*, edited by C.J. Stewart. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Stewart, Charles J., and William B. Cash. *Interviewing: Principles and Practices*. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co., 1974.

Walker, Jerry P. "Decision-Making Under Conditions of Information Overload: Alternative Response Modes and Their Consequences." Paper presented at the Fifty-fifth Annual Conference of the American Educational Research Association, February 4-7, 1971, in New York, N.Y. (ED 049 518)

Webster, Edward C. *Decision-Making in the Employment Interview*. Montreal: McGill University, Industrial Relations Center, 1964.

Weitzel, Al R. "The Dyadic Exchange: A Useful Exercise in Teaching Interpersonal Communication." 1975. (ED 103 924)

Wheatly, Bruce C., and William B. Cash. "The Employee Survey: Correcting Its Basic Weaknesses." *Personnel Journal* 52 (June 1973): 456-459.

Wiemann, Mary O., and John M. Wiemann. *Nonverbal Communication in the Elementary Classroom*. Urbana, Ill.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills and Speech Communication Association, 1975.

Other Titles in the Theory Into Practice Series

Group-Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing by Thom Hawkins. 1976. (ERIC/RCS and NCTE) NCTE Stock No. 18976, members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.*

Individualizing Writing in the Elementary Classroom by Iris M. Tiedt. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and NCTE) NCTE Stock No. 23058, members $1.25, nonmembers $1.50.*

Instruction in and about Small Group Discussion by Kathleen Galvin and Cassandra Book. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Instruction in Conflict Resolution by Fred Jandt and Mark Hare. 1976. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Intercultural Communication by Eileen Newmark and Molefi K. Asante. 1976. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Introduction to Film Making by Robert E. Davis. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Nonverbal Communication in the Elementary Classroom by Mary O. Wiemann and John M. Wiemann. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Observing and Writing by George Hillocks, Jr. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and NCTE) NCTE Stock No. 33967, members $1.00, nonmembers $1.10.*

Perception and Communication by Beverly Wakefield. 1976. (ERIC/RCS and SCA) SCA members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.

Theater Games: One Way into Drama by James Hoetker. 1975. (ERIC/RCS and NCTE) NCTE Stock No. 53623, members $1.40, nonmembers $1.50.*

*Available from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801.

Another educational publication is also well-known by the title *Theory Into Practice* (TIP). Although ERIC/RCS is not affiliated with that publication, published five times yearly by the College of Education, The Ohio State University, we endorse its goals and purposes. Each issue of this award-winning journal focuses on a single topic of interest to educators. For subscription information contact Dr. Charles M. Galloway, editor, 29 West Woodruff, Columbus, Ohio 43210.