

# Conducting a Mock Faculty Panel Interview

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**Abstract:** *This conference proceeding paper regarding the presentation made at the NRMERA 2019 conference focused on the purpose to develop candidates who possess dispositions so that they will be successful in the classroom. This presentation included a mock panel interview including four undergraduate teacher candidates as the participants along with two education faculty members. The panel interview demonstrated to the audience the format, the physical arrangement, professional dispositions and dress, and questions strategically developed identifying 4 major human attributes: Verbal and Listening, professionalism, and human interaction.*

**Key Words:** remediation, teacher preparation, accreditation, professionalism, reflective practice, disposition

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many stakeholders have expressed concern that there seems to be a dilemma that many of the interviews that take place in order to evaluate verbal skills, social skills, and interpersonal abilities lack the reliability and validity to use as an assessment to determine whether or not he/she should be considered for the teacher education program. Although it might be difficult to judge competencies in this setting, the panel interview might help identify in extreme situations someone that may need further remediation allowing for faculty to provide feedback and the opportunity to address concerns before moving forward in the teacher education program. (Shosh, L. 2012). By having this process in place, the experience will help communicate the overall expectations for teacher candidates, allow remediation and opportunities for growth, and identify competencies that would suggest that a teacher candidate is not qualified to teach in the regular classroom (Zost, L. 2014).

Avoiding the assessment as a process that's "Done to" teacher candidates, like a "gotcha" (Danielson, C. 2012) supports the goal of the teacher education program to retain more teacher candidates allowing for further remediation, allowing teacher candidates to demonstrate reflective practice while making self-initiated change. Conderman and Walker (2015) made an interesting point about teacher perceptions including: perceptions about self, others, subject field, purpose and process of education, and one's general frame of reference perceptions, and that teacher candidates should model these appropriate dispositions.

### **LIMITATION OF PREVIOUS PROCESS**

The Faculty and Teacher Candidate Panel interview is a required step in the teacher preparation program at a small public college in Nebraska. The process previous to the panel interview included two separate individual faculty interviews with each teacher candidate. The teacher education candidate had to complete these interviews successfully, as assessed by the faculty, in order to be admitted in the teacher education program. This process resulted in inconsistent feedback given by different faculty in the different settings. Some faculty would stress the professional dress as critical, while some faculty would not. Other faculty would offer a more relaxed interview setting while another would have more formal expectations. The inconsistent feedback and assessment from faculty caused issues not only with data collection but with the student experiences during the process.

In response to these concerns, a panel interview process was implemented. This panel interview would help clarify expectations, align feedback and increase consistency for the students while at the same time strengthening the reliability and validity of the interview assessment. The student no longer met with two faculty members at different times but rather a group of 3-4 students would interview with a panel of 2-3 faculty members. Students were given opportunities to expand on answers others students had given. Students were able to interview in a collaborative setting and support one another. During this experience, the faculty mentored 3-4 students strengthening professional growth and professional maturity. The faculty panel took turns asking interview questions of the candidates, calling on the candidate by name and then asking the other candidates on the panel to expand on the answer given previously by the original response. The candidates were then evaluated on a disposition assessment instrument based on faculty observations during the interview process and a recommendation was made on the admission to the teacher education program for each teacher education candidate.

The mock panel interview presented at the NRMERA conference included four undergraduate teacher education candidates along with two faculty members. The panel interview demonstrated the format, physical arrangement, professional dispositions, professional dress, and questions strategically developed for identifying three major human attributes essential for teacher candidates: verbal and listening, professionalism, and human interaction.

This experience prepared teacher candidates to demonstrate professional competencies emphasizing four human characteristics aligned to national, state, and local standards that would support the professionalism and preparedness that was expected. The opportunity for faculty to model these standards was evident, giving teacher candidates a real-life experience that would allow for self-reflection and professional growth.

### **EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY**

The implementation of the teacher candidate panel interview was presented at the fall NRMERA conference, 2019. Implementation of the Faculty Panel Interview combined with the EDA (Educators Disposition Assessment) was the focus for sharing the overall process, steps taken, revisions, and structure. The educational importance of this study was to strengthen a process that will better communicate the expectations for teacher candidates, allow for remediation and opportunities for growth, and to better judge competencies that would suggest

whether or not a teacher candidate is qualified to teach in the classroom. The impact of this study would increase the likelihood that teacher education candidates will be better prepared to enter the classroom and thusly be more successful in their teaching, impacting the overall experience for their future students.

The overall experience will further prepare teacher candidates to demonstrate professional competencies emphasizing human characteristics aligned to national, state, and local standards that would support the professionalism and preparedness that was expected. The is the opportunity for faculty to model these standards, giving teacher candidates a real-life experience that would allow for self-reflection and professional growth

### **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future research includes the plan to analyze the data from the panel interview informing and/or potentially suggesting program changes. The data gathered from the rubric in LiveText will be reviewed in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of teacher candidate preparation, ways to improve and/or strengthen the interview process, and ways to support teacher preparation throughout the program. In addition, the information collected during the panel interviews will also allow faculty to identify characteristics, behaviors and interactions that may need to be addressed more frequently and throughout time spent in the teacher education program. Further research will be continued and further development after collecting more data in LiveText identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses on the rubric in which identifies 3 areas: Verbal and Listening Communication, Professionalism, and Human Interaction.

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