

Job Interviews, Part 3

SUBMITTED BY: Kathryn McGinn

SUBJECT(S): Career Development

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

In this culminating lesson, students will participate in mock interviews. Partners will provide feedback, using a rubric and evaluation form, and offer suggestions for improvement. Volunteers will “perform” their interviews for the class.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Career Development, V. School-to-Career Transition

≡ WHARTON GLOBAL YOUTH PROGRAM ARTICLE:

- [“Career Insight: Nick Halla on the Culture Inside a Silicon Valley Startup”](#)

Common Core Standard(s):

- ELA CCR Reading 1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ELA CCR Reading 7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
- ELA CCR Reading 10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 3: Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ELA CCR Speaking and Listening 6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Objectives/Purposes:

- Students will practice interviewing skills.
- Students will offer constructive feedback to each other.

Knowledge@Wharton Article:

- ["Women Who Step Out of the Corporate World Find It Hard to Step Back In"](#)

Other Resources/Materials:

- Interview Rubric (either use handout from previous lesson or rubric co-created with students)
- Peer Evaluation Form ([Handout A](#))

Activities:

1. From "Women Who Step Out of the Corporate World..." Read the sections "Keeping Up with the Competition" and the first paragraph from "Four Sons and Teamwork." Discuss the following questions:
 - What do we learn from this article about phrasing potential weaknesses as strengths? What strategies can women use when they return to the workforce?

These two paragraphs from the article are particularly helpful:

McGrath advises women to be honest and unapologetic about the time they stepped out, but to quickly return the focus to the present. “You can say, ‘I felt I could make a bigger impact with my parents who were sick, and here is how I’ve been keeping myself up-to-date on skills.’” The best way for a woman to make her case is to take a proactive stance, not apologizing for taking time off for family but framing her story in business terms and adopting a tone that exudes strength.

For example, one woman spent her years out of the workforce raising four sons. “This person was very confident and said, ‘Let me tell you how managing a family with four sons is like managing people at work,’” says McGrath. “She was able to cite a long list using business language.” McGrath gave another example: “Don’t say, ‘I helped raise \$100,000 for my kid’s school.’ Say ‘I was part of a team that put together a fundraising program.’ There are ways to frame it.”

- How can students frame potential weaknesses as strengths during job interviews? (Students were particularly worried about how to answer the question “Describe your biggest weakness.”)

Allow students to brainstorm some possible responses to this question. Some examples from my lesson included:

I’m very independent, and sometimes that prevents me from asking questions. While I like to take initiative and solve problems on my own, I must be careful to ask for help if I need it.

I’m a perfectionist, and sometimes I want everything to be exactly right before I finish a job. I need to let go a little sometimes so that I can see the bigger picture and work efficiently.

We discussed how these weaknesses, when framed a particular way, were also potential strengths. We also talked about the importance of describing your plan to address weaknesses you’ve identified in yourself.

(5 mins)

2. Today students will take part in mock interviews. Hand out a completed Interview Rubric (either one compiled from student feedback or Handout C from Lesson 8) and Peer Feedback form ([Handout A](#)). As students interview each other, they should make note of the following:

- What specific details does the interviewee provide about his/her experiences?
- Where could the interviewee provide more information?

- How confident/poised is the interviewee?

Give students 6-7 minutes to interview each other in pairs.

(15 mins)

3. Students complete peer evaluation for the interviews and then share feedback with their partners.

(10 mins)

4. Volunteers present their interviews for the class. Discuss what the interviewees do well and areas in which they could develop their answers.

(10 mins)

Tying It All Together:

Ask students what surprised them most about being interviewed. What was most difficult? What questions do they need to prepare for more?

(5 mins)

Practice Outside of the Classroom:

- Think about what questions that gave you the most trouble and work on improving your responses.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently:

Students enjoyed the opportunity to participate in interviews, and the class truly enjoyed watching students “perform” their interviews. Students were able to offer a lot of constructive criticism to one another.

In one class, students were particularly giggly as they tried to interview one another and seemed to have a hard time taking the experience seriously, because they were friends and it was difficult to create a formal interview environment. One student suggested inviting adults into the class to conduct the mock interviews so that students would have a more serious experience. I think if

there were other teachers or parent volunteers who would be willing to participate, that would be a great opportunity for the students.

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