Mock Interviews in the Workplace:
Giving Interns the Skills They Need for Success

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Abstract

How many people have walked out of an interview wishing they could turn around for a re-do? Mock interviews can provide interns with demonstrations of the types of inquiries that can be expected in a real interview as well as practice in responding to those questions successfully. A simulation that occurs in a high-stakes atmosphere with the potential for real consequences is an even more beneficial practice round.

This study was conducted with secondary education pre-service teachers during their final semester as student teaching interns, and the mock interviews took place with administrators in their assigned schools. Results are based on anecdotal evidence and surveys that were offered after the mock interview activities were completed.

Keywords: Mock interview, hiring simulation, internship, mentoring.

The old adage "practice makes perfect" has been proven true throughout history by those who have run through countless military drills and music recitals, and it consumes the lives of today's athletes and actors. Though relatively few people enter careers in which practice becomes a way of life, virtually everyone realizes its benefits. The theory of practice is so commonplace that most people either don't consciously consider it or take their successes for granted. Even a simple wedding relies on its rehearsal. Why, then, does the start of one's professional career, the realization of a life-changing goal at the outcome of The Interview, often occur without practice and result in a less-than-perfect performance? How many people have walked out of an interview wishing they could turn around for a re-do?

Most graduates have likely participated in or been assigned at least one role-playing activity during the span of their education, and these simulations can provide valuable learning experiences. Practicing for an interview, however, is less common. Many people

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are employed from the time they hold a driver's license, and most rely on the confidence of those early successful interviews. What applicants may not consider is that an interview for a professional career is vastly different and has much higher stakes. "Learning from the real experience alone can be both painful and not particularly constructive. Learning through guidance, example and 'dry runs' can be more constructive" (Walker, 1993, p. 74).

The drawback is that these exercises, however well-meaning in their intent, cannot muster the same gut-wrenching levels of adrenaline and panic that an actual interview elicits. It is creating that feeling that needs rehearsing, preparing to be able to perform confidently and professionally despite the rising emotion and tremors. It is difficult to create a comparable level of intensity during a simulation when the setting is artificial and all parties know the situation is a fabrication that has low, if any, stakes.

A simulation that does occur in a high-stakes atmosphere with the potential for real consequences is a more beneficial practice round. This is the setting of the mock interviews that are the subject of this study. Workplace simulations give interns greater skills for success.

Literature Review

Hiring Simulations

Simulations are easy to construct and inexpensive. They remove the element of danger. They can even be "paused" when real life cannot. The enactments may so closely reflect actual events that there is little difference between the simulation and a real-world experience. They are hands-on and motivating for learners. They can be inspirational and empowering as the participants experience success (Cairns, 1995). Through observation, participants are able to reflect upon the event. Not without their limitations, they are worth their price in that they provide realistic training in a challenging moment that does not create a threat of failure.

Wells (1982), in his review of business and office education, asserts that good hiring simulations perform valid functions and provide hands-on experiences. Those experiences are the invaluable practice rounds. Questions and examples of how the interviewee might handle them are all fodder for a simulation exercise. Walpert-Gawron (2017) also asserts that predicting interview questions is one of the best precursors to a successful interview: "There tends to be repetition to the questions that all interviews ask, and the challenge can be in how to prepare a unique response that includes your expertise and personality. This takes preparation and thinking ahead." Walpert-Gawron suggests that in addition to the expected questions about candidates' strengths and weaknesses, questions that are embedded as reactions of what may be said or done when presented with a particular situation are becoming more commonplace. These scenarios may carry a heavier weight in the overall evaluation of prospective candidates.

Smith and Glover (2002) found success in combining simulations with writing assignments. They emphasize that college students have a practical approach to learning and, therefore, the simulation provides an exciting learning experience for them. This is affirmed by their study, which was conducted through active research. Their study was quite elaborate, focusing not just on the simulation experience, but both cognitive and affective objectives (Smith & Glover, 2002). The combination of these objectives paints a much richer, more complex, experience for students.

More recently, simulations have moved to virtual reality. Some educational institutions have implemented Mursion, an authentic learning program that uses avatars in a combination of artificial intelligence and live actors to deliver powerful and personalized simulations (Mursion, 2017). Using large-screen projections and two-way video, an office setting can be the virtual reality where professional candidates "practice and master the complex interpersonal skills necessary to be effective in high-stress professions" (Mursion, 2017). The sessions provide "immersive and authentic workplace environments in which to simulate challenging interpersonal exchanges," including those that occur during interviews (Mursion, 2017). Conducted with a facilitator in communication with those behind the avatars, the simulation can be paused for discussion. This heightens the likelihood of using the experience for teachable moments and collaboration of ideas that can provide alternatives to missteps and suggestions for moving forward when candidates are at a loss.

Through hiring simulations, students learn about the process of obtaining employment, the tools they will need to participate successfully, how to read job announcements and descriptions, as well as how to write résumés, cover letters, and perhaps a guide for study and preparation before the interview. They learn to listen acutely as well as speak professionally. Students are also prompted how to act in a professional manner and communicate using professional language, and they are introduced to the professional environment in which interviews occur. Others in the business field have similar experiences with mock interviews (Marks & O'Connor, 2006; Newberry & Collins, 2012; Shea, 2007).

Mock Interviews

Mock interviews are a specific type of simulation structured to resemble real interview processes; they can be used as tools to help professional candidates equip themselves with the necessary confidence and training to successfully confront any real interview challenges. Mock interviews provide potential applicants with demonstrations of the types of inquiries that can be expected in a real interview as well as practice in responding to those questions successfully. Often, interviewers use examples from mock interviews to provide feedback that will help the interviewees improve their presentation skills and responses, and thereby increase the likelihood of obtaining a position of employment. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) supports the mock interview process. Students are advised to "take advantage of practice/mock interviews and interview workshops offered by your career center. Practice interviews will help you think through the answers to potential questions, polish your verbal communication

skills, and gain confidence that will show in the interview. They'll give you a chance to get feedback and advice from professionals" (NACE, 2017).

In an overview of career transitions, Brooks (2010) discusses the "simulation job interview" and suggests ways to handle role-play within the interview. These include thinking ahead about situations that might occur in the desired position: What are the responsibilities of the position? Are there products, such as reports, that must be produced, and what might they look like? In addition to rehearsing the interview process, interns need practice defending their résumés and lack of experience. In order to stand out as the desired candidate, an intern must appear confident, assertive, and fully capable of fulfilling the responsibilities of the particular position. Many suggestions concerning how to "act" during a mock interview and how to prepare for one are most frequently found in business publications (Hansen, Oliphant, Oliphant, & Hansen, 2009; Holt, 2005; Shea, 2007). Brooks (2010) reminds participants to put on their "best self." She suggests that they might seek to balance their talking with careful listening to the questions, seeking knowledge of the culture of the organization. Impressions are also important, and candidates learn the effects of body language, eye contact, and appropriate dress.

Faculty may also assign written responses to common interview questions or role-playing scenarios as class activities. Mock interviews help students develop oral communication skills, an ability that is all but neglected in the scope of one's educational career. Most speaking skills are developed in the form of prepared presentations or discussion contributions and are informational in design rather than interrogative. When faculty assign mock interviews in a "'question and answer' setting, there is, in contrast, little opportunity for precise preparation and both thinking and verbal communication have to be more spontaneous and immediate" (Walker, 1993, p. 73). Most often, students participate in mock interviews during class either with a partner or a panel of peers (Hansen et al., 2009; Kernodle, Turner, & Everhart, 1999; Reddan, 2008). Although this may be a beneficial experience for students, this cooperative learning activity in a classroom setting may be taken less seriously and not have as great an impact as formal situations (Hansen et al., 2009; Lundelius & Poon, 1997; Newberry & Collins, 2012).

Career Service Centers

Many colleges and universities have career centers that offer mock interviews and hiring simulations for graduating students to practice their skills in a more formal setting. Hanover Research (2012) lists résumé critiques and mock interviews among standard practices and an increase in job placement rates when career services are utilized. However, NACE's recent career services survey documents that the median number of dedicated interview rooms at doctoral Research 1 universities is six, and that number drops to zero for master's and baccalaureate institutions where there are only one or two rooms that *could* be used for conducting interviews (NACE, 2016). It is therefore not possible for career service centers to invite all students to participate in a mock interview and practice their skills.

Career service centers have undergone a comprehensive transformation in recent years, including an online presence (NACE, 2016). Many career centers are transitioning their mock interview sessions to video platforms. InterviewStream Prep is an online application designed to help colleges and universities prepare students with mock video interviews "by creating a no-pressure environment to practice and develop their skills" (InterviewStream, 2016). Using a computer or mobile device, students can access open or assigned interviews that draw from a bank of questions, record their video responses, then either complete self-assessments or share their videos for feedback from peers or review by faculty and others (InterviewStream, 2016). Offering mock video interviewing to students is a solution to the lack of physical space and also enables every student to practice interviewing techniques.

Among other services career centers provide are access to online job portals, career fairs, and on-campus interview programs. However, both Hanover Research (2012) and the research of Reddan (2008) found that even when job search seminars and other services are provided for all students, these services are voluntary and the majority of students choose not to participate.

The Problem

Even after students do participate in mock interviews and hiring simulations, they don't always feel interview-ready. Schaff and Randles (1972) found their students frustrated and nervous because no matter how much they practiced and discussed good interviewing tactics, it did not alleviate the fear the students felt when the real event presented itself. "Many students find such occasions intimidating and unfamiliar, unable to 'do themselves justice,' not because of a lack of intellectual ability but through their lack of experience with a demanding and highly pressurized situation" (Walker, 1993, p. 74). This remains a problem for today's students. While mock interview and hiring simulation opportunities are helpful, the artificial environment of a campus conference room or classroom, obvious role-playing of campus personnel and avatars, and independently recorded video responses cannot instill the feelings caused by adrenaline and nerves that can be generated by a worksite setting during a simulation conducted by professionals in the field.

As a solution to the problem, this study was conducted with college students during their final internship semester, and the mock interviews took place with administrators in their assigned field experiences. Participants were not role-playing, unlike those who take part in traditional simulations. The settings were job-embedded, at their actual worksite locations – a high-stakes atmosphere with the potential for real consequences.

Participants

The participants in this study were secondary education pre-service teacher candidates during their student teaching internship. The pre-service teachers were within weeks of graduating and receiving their licensure and embarking on their search for employment; the administrators were those who had the responsibility of conducting interviews in their

schools, positions the graduating interns could fill. Thus, each mock interview had the potential for a high-stakes outcome.

Process

Preparation Prior to the Mock Interview

During the capstone seminar course of their student teaching internship, pre-service teachers were given the assignment of a mock interview. The assignment had three parts: constructing a professional résumé and application letter, arranging and participating in a mock interview at the assigned internship school, and reflecting on the experience.

In preparation for one of the seminar sessions, interns were asked to bring drafts of their qualifications and experiences they felt were important to include on a résumé. Class discussion focused on the elements, organization, and layout of that document, as well as the contents of the résumé's accompanying letter of application and the appropriate format for that business letter. Later, draft copies of each were collected, then returned with suggestions for editing and improving the layout before the final copies were submitted for grading.

Scheduling the Mock Interview

Next, the interns were instructed to schedule mock interviews at the schools hosting their internship experiences. Students received the following instructions:

> Arrange a time with your building principal or a team of teachers to conduct a mock job interview with you. Please ask your supervising teacher to help you set this up. You should provide your principal with a cover letter and résumé at least a day prior to the interview. As your mock interview comes to an end, you will have the opportunity for a conversation about the strengths and weaknesses of your interviewing skills and responses, as well as feedback on your cover letter and résumé format.

Each intern was responsible for arranging his or her own experience during a two-week window between the due date of the final résumé and cover letter and the end of the internship experience.

Appropriate interview behaviors were discussed in a large-group setting. These included the importance of dressing appropriately, arriving early, maintaining good posture and eye contact, using academic and professional language, and following the interview with a thank-you in a timely manner.

Follow-up After the Mock Interview

After the completion of the mock interview, the interns were asked to reflect on their experience in a short paper. The directions were as follows: summarize your experience in

regard to what you learned and how it will help you prepare for an actual interview in a two-page paper. The purpose of the journal activity was for students to be able to carefully consider the outcome(s) of the activity in a personal and meaningful way so it could have a positive impact on their future performance during real interviews.

The interns were told that this series of assignments would do several things for them: it would provide them with a professional résumé and letter of application and feedback; it would provide them with an interview opportunity and feedback; and it would provide administrators with an opportunity to learn about their skills and experiences, which could have the potential to result in either an actual opportunity for employment or a letter of recommendation for another opportunity.

After the mock interview assignment activities were completed, the interns were offered both paper surveys and an opportunity to engage in a group discussion in order to provide feedback about their experiences. These two methods were used to generate the data collected for this study. Additional anecdotal information was contributed by an intern whose results were not included in the data set.

Results and Conclusions

An Intern's Perspective

During my teacher preparation coursework, I had the opportunity to experience a mock interview conducted by the principal of the school where I was placed for my student teaching internship. Reflecting on that interview, I realized how much it helped me prepare for the real one.

The day of my mock interview was terrifying. As I walked into the office wearing a suit and holding my résumé and transcripts, I was greeted by a receptionist who informed me that the principal was at a meeting and requested that I wait. Although it was a mock interview and I was well acquainted with the principal and school, everything felt unfamiliar and strange. As I was waiting, I could hear footsteps and voices in the hallway; with every step and voice that approached the door, my sense of nausea increased. To distract myself, I started reviewing the résumé and transcripts I had brought. Between checking the clock every thirty seconds, I asked myself mock questions and answered them in my mind. I reviewed my notes as if preparing for the most important test of my life. Never did I remind myself that it was only a mock interview with no possibility of future employment at that institution.

After what seemed hours, at the point of a miniature panic attack, I heard a pleasant voice call my name. As I turned around, I found Ms. Adamson – the school's principal – with her hand extended. The moment I shook her hand, I realized how sweaty my palms had become. I took a last look at the clock. I had waited for twelve minutes – and those twelve long minutes had caused a turbulence of emotions. As we walked into her office, Ms. Adamson started a conversation unrelated to our purpose. As we spoke, I completely

forgot about the mock interview and the trembling fear I had experienced in the waiting room. I began to relax and breathe.

At one point, Ms. Adamson started asking me questions about my college experience. She picked up my folder and looked through the documents. She asked me several questions, which included why I had selected biology with a pre-med concentration as opposed to an education concentration, what motivated me to transition to a career in education, what strengths and weaknesses I had discovered of myself during my student teaching, what challenging situations I had experienced during my student teaching and how I handled them, ways that I differentiate in a classroom, which situations would be appropriate to contact parents, and finally questions about classroom management. Ms. Adamson asked the questions in the same conversational tone as our previous casual topics, which helped me answer honestly and meticulously with ease and confidence. I made several references to my teaching experiences, limited though they were at that moment, and to my supporting documents.

Although the majority of the interview passed rather smoothly, Ms. Adamson's last question caught me by surprise, reminding me of my earlier anxiety. She noted that I was not much older than the seniors and juniors at the school. Therefore, considering our close age and the various types of teacher-student scandals that had surfaced in recent years, how was I planning to maintain a professional boundary from the students? For a moment I could not think of a satisfactory answer, as I had neither anticipated that question nor rehearsed a proper response. I informed Ms. Adamson that I would always wear professional attire and maintain a professional attitude to distinguish myself from the students. Furthermore, I would refrain from sharing any excessive personal information with my students and conduct all types of communication with my students via the school email. Ms. Adamson seemed content, though to this day, I am not satisfied by my response. I was ill-prepared for that unexpected inquiry, and as a result, I said the first things that came to mind.

The mock interview provided me with insight to the types of information and documentation that potential employers might seek. It also helped me learn the level of detail to provide in addressing their inquiries. I even learned that relaxing during interviews helps candidates form more meticulous and well-constructed responses. Interviews, mock or real, are intimidating by nature; however, I have learned that it is vital to be both confident and comfortable while making those first impressions.

When the time came for my real interview, instead of being intimidated or nervous, I was confident and well prepared. I had anticipated almost all of the questions that my current employer would and did indeed ask me during the interview. Based on feedback acquired from my mock interview, I was able to provide my employers with "right" answers that not only seemed impressive to them but also assured them that I was indeed capable of fulfilling the responsibilities required by that employment position. In addition, I had taken relevant supporting documents with me to the interview and thus was able to provide my employers with any physical evidence they requested. My level of confidence and assertion during the interview, in addition to having ready answers and documentary evi-

dence, compensated for my lack of experience and strengthened my application for the position. As a result, I am now successfully employed as a classroom teacher.

Survey Findings

After the mock interview assignment activities were completed, the interns were offered paper surveys as a means to provide feedback about their experiences. The survey instrument was constructed using seven statements, each assigned Likert-rated multiple-choice response options that included Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). Additionally, three open-ended perception prompts addressed participants' attitudes toward future real-world interview opportunities, the value of the mock interview, and how to strengthen the effectiveness of future simulation exercises. Participants were told that participation in the survey was voluntary, with no penalty imposed on those choosing to decline. Of the pre-service teachers who arranged a mock interview at a school during the semester of their student teaching internship, 16 candidates elected to take part in the feedback process.

Completed survey data were analyzed for evidence of patterns resulting from the frequency of responses. The Likert ratings for 16 interns are summarized in Table 1, and the means are compared in Figure 1.

It is important to note that while the results show a range of Likert scale responses for each statement, the mean scores are all above 3 and thus in the positive range; most of them are in the range between 4 "agree" and 5 "strongly agree."

The survey rankings were consistently lowest for the two statements about résumés and cover letters: the interviewer(s) did not appear familiar with these documents and the teacher candidates did not receive feedback to improve them. Though the teacher candidates were instructed to provide these documents to their interviewer(s) in advance of the mock interview, it is unknown whether the interns actually did so and/or whether the interviewer(s) took the time to review them in preparation for the simulation exercise. The amount and quality of feedback the candidates received in regard to these documents is dependent upon whether the interviewer(s) had and took advantage of the opportunity to review the documents. If feedback regarding these documents was not received, it could also be because it is not standard practice during actual interview situations; therefore, the interviewer(s) may not have realized this feedback would be helpful. It is also possible that during the debriefing sessions the candidates themselves were only focused on their interviewing skills and did not take advantage of the opportunity to ask about the presentation of their preceding paperwork. Though these statements had low rankings, they both fell in the range between 3 "neutral" and 4 "agree."

The only other question that had a mean score ranking in the range between 3 and 4 was the statement, "The experience of the mock interview was about what I expected." Unfortunately, this was not a useful statement because the survey did not provide for a means to determine whether the experience was better or worse than expected, just different.

Table 1. Intern Survey Results: Statement Rankings.

Survey Statements	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The interviewer(s) asked relevant questions pertaining to my content area.	16	1	5	4.06	1.289
2. The interviewer(s) seemed familiar with my résumé and asked about my experiences.	16	1	5	3.50	1.211
3. The experience of the mock interview was about what I expected.	16	2	5	3.69	0.946
4. I was able to receive important feedback about my résumé and/or cover letter from the interviewer(s) that I may not have gotten without this experience.	16	1	5	3.75	1.390
5. I was able to receive important feedback about my interviewing skills from the interviewer(s) that I may not have gotten without this experience.	16	1	5	4.56	1.031
6. Participating in the mock interview sets me at ease for future interviews.	16	2	5	4.25	0.931
7. Overall, I believe I have become a better interviewee after participating in the mock interview process.	16	2	5	4.63	0.806

The three highest-ranked responses were related to important qualities the interns were able to take away from the experience: feedback about interviewing skills, feelings of ease toward future interviewers, and becoming a better interviewee. Each statement had a mean rank in the range between 4 "agree" and 5 "strongly agree," with the highest rating for the statement, "Overall, I believe I have become a better interviewee after participating in the mock interview process." The scores for this statement also had the least deviation from the mean. This is an important and significant finding because it shows that the ultimate goal of the activity was attained.

The first open-ended survey question asked participants, "As you prepare for actual interviews in the future, what will you take from this experience?" Over one-third of the 14 respondents to this question noted that they will be better prepared to support their re
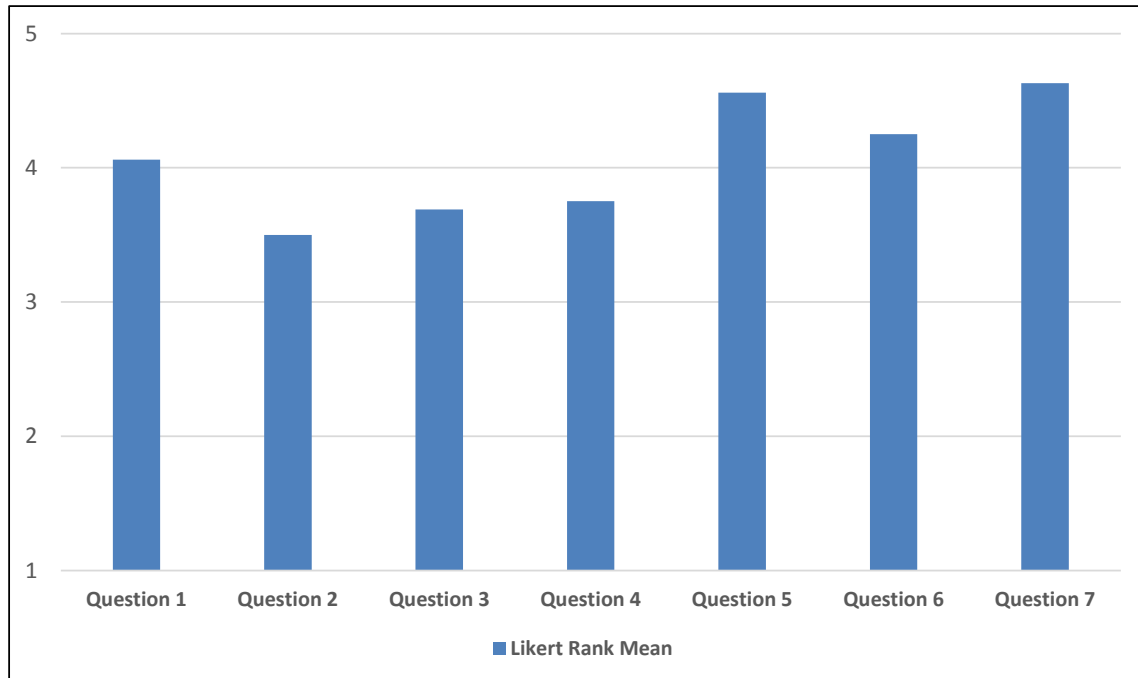
Figure 1. Intern Survey Results: Statement Ranking Comparisons.

sponses, from examples of their teaching practices, including work samples, to details about information found on their résumés. Two of the interviewees noted that they will be more aware of body language and the importance of making good first and last impressions. All of the respondents indicated that the experience was helpful and they took away useful tips and information.

The second open-ended survey question asked participants, "What aspect of the interview process was most valuable to you personally?" All 16 of the survey participants elected to respond to this question. The overwhelming response was the value of the debriefing session following the mock interview and the feedback that was provided to the candidates. Two-thirds of the interviewees commented that they received useful feedback regarding their responses, learned of the types of information that could be offered in an ideal response, and noted qualities that administrators look for in a successful applicant. These are valuable insights for interns as they move into the job market.

Discussion Findings

Immediately following the paper survey, the interns had an opportunity to engage in a whole-group discussion about their experiences. The discussion was led by a fellow intern. The discussion was planned using key points derived from the paper survey, and many students reiterated the responses they had written for the open-ended questions.

Several students voiced concern about their preparation for the university's current process of the mock interview. Students collectively indicated that in order to prepare for a real interview, they were advised to gather more information from their field experiences since most administrators appeared more interested in their classroom experience. Many students additionally expressed that they wished they had shared more information about classroom management and had made references to the troublesome situations that they had resolved in the classroom. A key point that the majority of participants emphasized was the importance of being confident and assertive, especially while handling unmotivated or challenging students.

Students also voiced concern about the questions that they had failed to answer. Rarely were applicants asked content-related questions, and those who were asked rarely responded incorrectly. Most of the participants could not satisfactorily answer questions relevant to professional development. Several of the school administrators inquired about candidates' growth or experience in the area of professional development and collaboration within departments. Not many interns had the opportunity to attend professional development meetings. For instance, one candidate reported that the professional development meetings were held before school and appeared to be exclusive to the faculty. In addition, the departmental meetings were also exclusive to the faculty. Therefore, she did not get an opportunity to attend either of the meetings.

Fortunately, most of the candidates stated that their interviewers had reviewed their résumé, application letter, and content knowledge prior to their interviews. Nearly all the candidates were asked questions pertinent to the content displayed on their résumé and letter. However, none of the candidates were asked many questions related to their area of specialization.

Through all the hurdles and surprises, several aspects of the mock interview process were valuable to the candidates. Unexpected questions during the mock interview taught applicants to avoid panicking and answer to the best of their ability with a tranquil demeanor. All of the candidates agreed that the mock interview process helped them build confidence in their interviewing skills as well as taught them to defend their internship experience in detail and display a "Go-get-'em" attitude. In addition to feeling comfortable and confident during an interview, the mock interviews taught the candidates to mention specific classroom examples and have physical evidence to help make a good first and lasting impression. The mock interview process also provided candidates with a sample set of questions, which would become useful while practicing for a real interview. These key benefits should be noted by future applicants while preparing for their anticipated professional careers.

Implications for Future Research

The survey rankings were consistently lowest for the two questions about résumés and application letters: interns reported that the interviewer(s) did not appear familiar with these documents and the teacher candidates did not receive feedback to improve them. In the future, it will be important for faculty to stress the added value for the candidates to

receive feedback on their written work, whether these submissions are electronic or print-ed, as this review is when the decision is made whether or not to schedule a face-to-face interview. The interns will be given reminders to provide the résumé and its accompany-ing letter of application in advance of the interview and to follow-up with specific ques-tions focused on ways to improve each of them during the debriefing conversation. In support of this recommendation, the third open-ended survey question, asking what could be done differently to make the process more meaningful, prompted one intern to write that s/he "would have asked for feedback on résumé and cover letter."

Although nine participants responded to the third open-ended question about ways to im-prove the experience, the improvements were of a personal nature; none of the sugges-tions related to the process itself. However, several of the participants offered suggestions to help improve the mock interview process during the whole-group discussion. One of the most important suggestions was to instruct future applicants to complete their résu-més and cover letters before beginning their internship courses. In addition, it will be helpful if future interns can experience two mock interviews – one at the beginning of the internship and the one at the end. The differences in performance in the two interviews over a course of student teaching will allow applicants to monitor their progress in their interviewing skills. Experiencing a mock interview earlier in the semester will help to develop skills for a real interview, which several of the applicants underwent toward the end of their student teaching.

The interns in this study were within weeks of graduating and receiving their licensure and embarking on their search for employment, and the administrators were those who had the responsibility of conducting interviews in their schools, potentially for positions the interns could fill. Thus, each mock interview had the potential for a high-stakes out-come. However, no data were gathered to determine whether any of the mock interviews resulted in either an actual opportunity for employment or a letter of recommendation for another opportunity. Future surveys should include a question to elicit this information in order to strengthen the results of this mock interview process.

For today's graduates, online applications are the norm, and many employers are seeking electronic means to narrow their interview pool. Video conferencing through online plat-forms is now the most common method of conducting first-rounds of interviews. This cost-saving trend has been on a steady incline over the past decade, with the most signifi-cant growth recently reported in 2016; over 55 percent of employers reported using video interviewing as a college recruiting tool (NACE, 2016). Video job interviews have their own set of additional caveats, from background staging and lighting to a different type of eye contact and reliable technology. For this reason, the inclusion of a video component will be important for future studies about the effects of mock interviewing for interns.

Applications Beyond the Scope of this Study

Effective teaching makes a lasting impression and instills value in learning and the result-ing application of one's education. It is not enough for faculty to simply provide requisite coursework and grades. "In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and the ever-rising cost

of college, students expect higher education to help launch their careers, not just make them smarter" (Young, 2016, p. B4). Students appreciate course assignments that have practical application to their career fields, and requiring students to participate in a mock interview during their final semester sets them on an immediate path to finding employment following their graduation. The ceremony itself is called a commencement because students are beginning their new lives on their chosen career path. Faculty members who strive to provide authentic learning experiences for their students will guide them toward a path that leads beyond the scope of a college course.

Overall, the assignment to have students participate in a mock interview in the workplace has proven to be a valuable tool to help interns successfully prepare for a real interview. Although this study was conducted with education majors, it can easily be replicated for use with interning business majors, those preparing for a medical profession, and those enrolled in any other degree program that places students in a field experience.

In addition to providing benefits to students, field-based mock interviews also help prospective employers increase their number of credible candidates. Career service centers and/or advising centers can emphasize this rationale to create partnerships with local businesses and professional organizations for the purpose of conducting mock interviews on site for students who do not have a field-based internship as part of their academic program. For students who wish to pursue a higher degree instead of entering the workforce upon graduation, mock interviews with academic leaders in the dean's office can help students learn skills to promote themselves for graduate studies.

A productive mock interview can be conducted in as little as twenty minutes and can yield amazing feedback for both the candidate and the interviewer. With such a low investment cost but high profit margin, mock interviews in the workplace offer foolproof success.

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