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ARTICLES OF INTEREST

• Using Behaviour-Based Interviewing with Teacher Candidates

“Past behaviour is the best predictor of future performance,” says Berry College professor Mary Clement. That’s why she believes so strongly in behaviour-based interviewing.

Clement believes in only asking questions that begin with phrases such as: “Tell me about a time when...”, “How have you...”, and “Describe your experience with...” The key, says Clements, is delving into the candidate’s actual track record with content knowledge, lesson planning, teaching methods, motivation, classroom management, assessment, grading, student diversity, communication, and professionalism.

“With high-stakes hiring,” she says, “interviewers no longer have the luxury of asking candidates to ‘tell about themselves’ or to ask random hypothetical questions.” She strongly suggests that hiring committees articulate a clear idea of what skills will be required for a particular position, write good questions in advance, and ask the same questions of each candidate. “Don’t ask questions that can’t be evaluated,” she says, and suggests a rating scale, perhaps Unacceptable/Acceptable/Target, with “I don’t know” earning an Unacceptable and the top rating reserved for answers that wow the interviewers. Candidates with the most Target answers should be offered the job.

Clement has two acronyms for evaluating answers. The first is PAR – Problem, Action, Result. For example, candidates might be asked about a time they encountered a problem, took action, and what the result was. The second acronym is STAR – Situation, Task, Action, and Result.

In answer to this question – “Describe a classroom management plan that you have used and why it worked”. A target answer would be: “In my student teaching placement [situation] in a 5th-grade, my teacher used a plan with three to five rules that were observable, enforceable, and in effect at all times. She taught me that having the rules with consequences and positives wouldn’t help at all if we didn’t teach the rules like part of the curriculum [task]. So, every morning the first few weeks of school, we actually taught the plan and the rules [action]. The rest of student teaching went well because students knew the rules and the class procedures [result].”

“A good interview allows the candidate to teach the interviewer the things they will be teaching students and parents,” says Clement. “Those who can’t explain basic answers to the interviewer, or who have had no previous experience with the topics, won’t be successful with the necessary demands of teaching.”

Here are sample interview questions, first some general questions, then some subject-specific questions:

- Describe two important curricular topics that you have taught in this grade or subject area.
- How have the state standards for this subject guided your teaching?
- Tell me about a lesson you taught and why it went well.
- Name a specific method or strategy you have used to teach in the past and why it is one you will continue to use.
- Describe a classroom management plan that you have used and why it worked.
- What have you done to start and end a class successfully?
- Describe an approach you have used to differentiate instruction for students.
- While a lesson is ongoing, how can you tell if students are “getting” the material?
- Describe positive communications with students’ families that you have used in the past.
- How have you evaluated your own teaching to improve?
- Elementary: What approaches to teaching reading have you used?
- Elementary: How have you used manipulatives in teaching math?
- Middle: How have you worked with a teaching team?

- Middle: Tell about integrating the teaching of reading into other subjects.
- High: How have you interested your students in the subject and motivated them to learn?
- Science: How have you used labs in the classes you have taught?
- Foreign language: What percent of a typical lesson do you teach in the target language?
- Art: What routines for safety and cleanup have you implemented?
- Music: Describe a performance or concert that went well and why it succeeded.
- Health/Physical Education: How have you built weight-consciousness topics into your course?
- Special education: Describe your experiences working with students in a mainstreamed/full inclusion/pullout setting.
- Special education: Tell us about collaborating with other teachers to help a student.

From "Hiring Highly Qualified Teachers Begins with Quality Interviews" by Mary Clement in *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 2009 (Vol. 91, #2, p. 22-24); purchasable at <http://www.pdkintl.org>.

- **Developing School Leaders: Staying Positive in Negative Times**

How can school leaders learn to sustain positive energy in negative times? How can they find enough inner positive strength to empower other leaders, who in turn support them in nurturing energy throughout the school culture? One key to claiming this positive attitude? Resilience. Resilience is not about merely surviving. It's about emerging from life's storms stronger than before. A resilient leader recovers, learns, and grows stronger in the face of adversity.

The full article is available on the SAHISA website under the *Library -> Articles of Interest* section.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **School Leader Welfare**

School Leader welfare is a significant and growing concern to principals and principal associations. A number of ICP member associations have developed a survey which assesses the extent and effects of job based factors on the wellbeing of principals.

We urge SAHISA members to read the survey request from Mr Ted Brierley, Executive Secretary of the International Confederation of Principals. The survey request flyer is available from the SAHISA website under the *Library -> Articles of Interest* section.

Associations have used the survey data collected as a basis for discussions within their association, or between the association and employer as a lever for improvement of working conditions for principals.

It is within this context that the ICP Council proposes to survey those of its member associations who wish to be involved. The aims of the survey are:

- to identify the impact of school leadership on the members' psychological and physical health.
- to ascertain the main stressors impacting on the daily life of school leaders.
- to identify factors which motivated principals to continue their work of education.

At the ICP Council Meeting in Singapore earlier this year, ICP Council directed that an internet based survey document be developed and placed on the ICP Website (www.icponline.org) for the use of associations who wish to collect data on the wellbeing of their members.

The survey can be accessed through the website, and completed online and the ICP Online Manager (John Hodgkinson) will collect and collate the data. It is intended that the survey will remain on the website until the end of April 2010.

The survey may be completed by accessing the following site on your internet browser:

<http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB229RJUZV2TZ>

Or by accessing the survey through the ICP Online Website (after your login on the main page) at:

www.icponline.org

Please note that:

- All contributions to the survey will be completely anonymous and strictly confidential.
- The ICP will use only the aggregated data, and no national or principal association will be identified or referred to individually.
- National results will be available only to the national associations of each country, or to the association of which the survey participant is a member.
- In addition, participating associations will be asked to provide feedback about the adequacy of the survey, its ease of application, your associations 'prima facie' view on its value and whether or not it will be used in your context, at the next meeting of Council in Scotland, June 2010.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

LEADERSHIP WEBSITES TO VIEW

• **Journal of Academic Leadership**

The online Journal of Academic Leadership is aimed at those in the academic world who are dedicated to advancing the field through their research.

The Journal provides an array of articles and essays that speak to the major issues of the field faced by those in leadership roles across all content areas and disciplines – from classroom instructors to university presidents.

Visit the Journal of Academic Leadership website at <http://www.academicleadership.org/>

• **SAHISA Website**

There have been calls from SAHISA members stating that they are unable to access certain documents on the SAHISA website. Please note that you will need to be a registered on the site in order to gain access to certain information.

SAHISA members that have not already registered on the SAHISA website are urged to do so as soon as possible. Registration will enable you to access SAHISA only documentation.

Registration will be performed on a request basis from the SAHISA office. Please email your name, school and preferred username and password to Jenny Mundell. The username and password can be of any length and do not have to be numerical.

Contact: Jenny Mundell. Tel: 011 648 1331, Email: jennym@isasa.org

GENERAL

- **"Get It Right"**

We try to "get it right" and communicate information that you can trust.

If we have neglected to communicate any relevant details or if you would like to contribute to the SAHISA Weekly Bulletin, please contact Jenny Mundell.

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- **Quote of the Week**

Leadership is not magnetic personality – that can just as well be a glib tongue. It is not "making friends and influencing people" – that is flattery. Leadership is lifting a person's vision to higher sights, the raising of a person's performance to a higher standard, the building of a personality beyond its normal limitations.

~ Peter F. Drucker