



*"Dedicated to the individual development of students and meeting the recruitment needs of employers."*

## Interviewing: Teacher Candidates

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### Questions Often Asked by an Interviewer

Before answering the following questions, it is important to remember that most interviewers will be looking for three things when you answer questions: 1) your answer; 2) how well you can organize your thinking; and 3) how well you express yourself. For more information about preparing for interviews and answering questions, refer to the [Interview Like a Professional](#) handout.

### Background Questions

1. What can I do for you today? (“I’m here to discuss the position of...”)
2. How have your past experiences prepared you for teaching?
3. What grade level do you prefer?
4. Describe your educational background. What are your educational goals? What was your favorite subject in college? Why?
5. How would you describe your last principal? Department head? Master teacher?
6. What five adjectives describe you? What five adjectives describe your teaching style?
7. How did you select your major?
8. What do you know about our district? What part of your background matches our goals. What new or different ideas would you bring to our district?
9. Tell me about your teaching internship experience. What was most effective about you? What have you learned in your experiences? What kind of problems did you have? If you had your internship to do over again, what would you do differently?
10. What were your three most important accomplishments during your internship? What has been your most positive teaching experience? Negative experience?
11. How have you involved parents in the learning process? Describe how you would establish and maintain positive working relationships with parents.
12. What curriculum materials have you developed?
13. How have you used paid aides in your classroom?
14. What books, concepts or experiences have influenced you the most in your professional development?
15. How have you contributed toward the development of the total school program in your current position?

### Subject Area and Grade Level Questions

16. What do you feel is your strongest subject (or teaching) area? What subject is most difficult for you?

17. How would you teach reading in your classroom (math) (science)? Describe a typical lesson.
18. What activities do you use with your independent workers during reading?
19. What supplementary reading (or other subject) materials do you find most helpful? What resources do you use other than the basal text?
20. What do you feel are the most important things students should learn at your grade level (in your classroom, subject area)?
21. How do you use math manipulative?
22. Describe an ideal curriculum in your area of study.
23. Discuss a critical issue in your subject area.
24. How have you emphasized the development of basic skills? What skills do you feel are most important at this grade level (or subject)? What math series are you using? Reading series?
25. Have you used calculators in your lessons? Computers?
26. What should students have gained from having taken your course? Why is your field important for a student to study? How do you view your subject in relation to the total school curriculum?
27. (Elementary) Can you handle instruction in physical education, art and music?
28. (Secondary) Can you handle three or more preparations at the secondary level?

### **Teaching Technique Questions – Motivational Skills**

29. There are times when you have an extra five or ten minutes left at the end of the period. What types of sponge activities do you use to make the best use of this time?
30. Define cooperative learning and give an example of how you have used it.
31. How would you individualize instruction to meet the needs of all your students? Would individualized instruction be a part of your teaching day?
32. Describe a teaching strategy you used to maximize the learning potential of all students.
33. Share with me a recent learning experience you developed for your students and how you organized that experience to enhance each student's success.
34. What role does active-participation play in your teaching techniques? Describe an active participation technique you use so you know the students understand the concept.
35. How do you motivate students? Name three effective ways to motivate students.
36. What innovative ideas would you like to initiate in your classroom?
37. What are some examples of your classroom creativity? What strategies would you use to aid students in developing creativity?
38. What extracurricular activities would you be willing to supervise?
39. How have you stressed the development of cognitive skills within your classes?
40. What kind of relationship do you have with your students?
41. How do you reinforce self-esteem in students?
42. Describe your typical teaching style. What techniques do you use?

### **Philosophy of Education Questions**

43. What would be your ideal educational philosophy of a school (district)?
44. What do you consider an ideal class size?

45. What is your philosophy of homework?
46. What are you looking for in a school? A district?
47. Would you rather teach the slow learner or the advanced learner? Why?
48. What is your philosophy on team teaching? Are you willing to work in a team-teaching situation? An open classroom situation?
49. What is your position on behavior modification? Special education? Learning centers? Time-out discipline methods? Competency-based instruction? Use of cooperative learning groups? Computers in the classroom? Career education? Sex education? Open-space classrooms? Individualized instruction?
50. What is your philosophy on grading, report cards, classroom management?
51. What are your practices in dealing with controversial subjects?
52. What issues in education are of greatest concern to you? Why?
53. Describe the role of the teacher (the principal, the student, the counselor) in the learning process.
54. How do you personally feel students learn?
55. What is the most satisfying aspect of teaching (or managing)? Least satisfying aspect?
56. What is most important to you in a position?
57. Why do you want a career in teaching? Why do you think you will be a good educator?
58. What prompted you to go into the field of education?
59. What should schools do for students?
60. What is the toughest aspect of teaching today? What are some of the greatest challenges of being an educator?
61. What is your greatest concern when in a classroom?
62. Define a superior educator/ Describe some of the characteristics of an outstanding educator.
63. How would you change the public schools if you could make any changes you wish?
64. What does teaching really involve?
65. What do you like most about being an educator? Least?
66. What motivates you?
67. How do you cope with stress?
68. What are your concerns and outlook for the future of public education?

### **Evaluation Questions**

69. How will you appraise your own teaching performance? How will you determine if your students are learning?
70. What evaluation techniques do you use? Do you grade on ability or effort? Why?
71. How would your students describe you? Your colleagues? Principal?
72. How do you feel about observations by supervisors?
73. How do you communicate with parents about a student's progress?
74. How would you discover your students' feelings regarding your class?

### **Classroom Organization/Lesson Planning Questions**

75. How is (was) your classroom organized?
76. What type of learning environment do you try to create?
77. If I visited your class, what could I expect to find? What would I see that would

- indicate your program is meeting the needs of each student?
78. What kind of grouping do you think is best?
  79. Do you use homogenous or heterogeneous grouping?
  80. How would you work with a main streamed learning handicapped student?
  81. Describe independent student projects your students have complete.
  82. How do you structure your class to achieve maximum benefit from teacher/student contact?
  83. How do you handle the different ability levels of students? Different cultural levels? The gifted? The educationally or culturally deprived? Limited English-speaking students? How would you help a student who is having difficulty?
  84. Are you well organized?
  85. Do you believe in detailed lesson plans? In lesson planning, how do you organize and prepare your material? How do you use lesson plans?
  86. Describe the specific components or steps of an effective lesson plan.
  87. Outline your approach for preparing a science unit.

### **Classroom Control/Management Questions**

88. What is your philosophy of discipline? What are your convictions regarding discipline?
89. What classroom management system do you use?
90. Explain the structure of your discipline plan. What rules do you establish in your classroom?
91. How do you handle discipline problems?
92. What is the toughest aspect of discipline?
93. How would you handle a student who is a consistent behavioral problem in your class?
94. How would you handle cheating?
95. How would you handle a student who refused to do what you asked?
96. Should schools practice corporal punishment? Why or why not?
97. If students tell you they have engaged in some illegal or immoral activity, what would you do?

### **Professional Activities and Knowledge**

98. What do you think about the current events or happenings in education? What is the most exciting event happening in the area of education today?
99. In what professional organizations do you hold memberships?
100. How have you recently improved your professional skills? What re your plans for future improvement of professional skills?
101. Comment on some leaders in education. Cite several authorities in your subject or preparation and comment on them.
102. What professional journals do you read regularly? What have you read in the last six months or year?
103. Do you plan to continue your education?

## **Closing/Ending the Interview Questions**

104. What questions have I not asked, that you wish I would have raised?
105. What were you prepared to tell me that I have not asked? And, why is this particular information important to communicate?
106. Why should I hire you?

## **Teacher Perceiver Interviews**

The Teacher Perceiver Process is based on a twenty-year study of teachers who stimulate students' learning. The process begins with a person who is concerned about identifying teachers who will truly be helpful to students. This person is referred to as the Teacher Perceiver Specialist. All questions are used with each candidate and the questions are asked in a prescribed manner. The Teacher Perceiver Specialist is encouraged to tape record the interview that takes approximately 45 minutes.

### **The Teacher Perceiver Themes are:**

**MISSION** - Deep underlying belief that students can grow and attain self actualization. Goal to make a significant contribution to other people.

**EMPATHY** - Understanding of the state of mind of another person. Put ourselves into the other person's place.

**RAPPORT DRIVE** - Mutually favorable relationship with each student. Likes students and sees it as a necessary condition of learning.

**INDIVIDUALIZED PERCEPTION** - Thinks about the interests and needs of each student.

**LISTENING** - Spontaneously listens to others with responsiveness and acceptance.

**INVESTMENT** - Capacity to receive satisfaction from the growth of students.

**INPUT DRIVE** - Continually searching for ideas, materials, and experiences to use in helping students.

**ACTIVATION** - Capable of stimulating students to think, to respond, to feel--to learn.

**INNOVATION** - Willing to try new ideas and techniques.

**GESTALT** - Drive towards completeness - is uneasy until work is finished - tends toward personal perfectionism. Even though form and structure are important, the individual student is considered first.

**OBJECTIVITY** - Gets facts and understanding first - responds to the total situation.

**FOCUS** - Has models and goals - moving in a planned direction. Selects activities in terms of goals.

## SAMPLE TEACHER PERCEIVER QUESTIONS

- What do you want to accomplish as a teacher?
- How will (do) you go about finding out about students' attitudes and feelings about your class?
- An experienced teacher offers you the following advice: "When you are teaching be sure to command the respect of your students immediately and all will go well." How do you feel about this?
- How do you go about deciding what it is that should be taught in your class?
- A parent comes to you and complains that what you are teaching his child is irrelevant to the child's needs. How would you respond?
- What do you think will (does) provide you the greatest pleasure in teaching?
- How do you go about finding what students are good at?
- Would you rather try a lot of way-out teaching strategies or would you rather try to perfect the approaches that work best for you? Explain your position.
- Do you like to teach with an overall plan in mind for the year, or would you rather just teach some interesting things and let the process determine the results? Explain your position.
- A student is doing poorly in class. The students tell you that you are the poorest teacher the student has ever met. What would you do?
- If there were absolutely no restrictions placed upon you, what would you most want to do in life?

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Last revised:

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