Acing the Interview Outline

(Fill in details on reverse side as you listen and then perform the exercise)

How do employers evaluate candidates? – Competencies, Interest, Fit or Strengths/Skills; Motivation; Match

Strengths/skills – Can you do the job and have all/most of prerequisite skills at a high level?
Motivation - Will you be enthusiastic and love your work, be self-driven to excel?
Fit/match – Can you tolerate/enjoy the others you will work with and will they tolerate/enjoy working with you? How will the company be better off, over time, from your efforts and contributions?
[John adds, Do you have a passion/calling in life for the goals of the job or this industry?]

Interview Preparation...

Know yourself and what you are looking for: in your life in general as well as your employment responsibilities

Research: 1. What the Company, Specific Job, and Work Team offers for you and your interests & aspirations

   2. What excites you about the company & Job? What do you offer the company/job, i.e. what will you do to help meet their needs and goals?

   3. Repeat this analysis for each specific job or opportunity

   4. Prepare to make your case using specific examples from your personal past experiences

A Few Typical Interviewing Questions...

• Why should we hire you? – Advice: pick something memorable; think what sets you apart? (think about feedback you’ve received from past experiences or interviews or performance reviews)
• Describe how you have solved a problem at school or in a work setting.
• Describe a situation at work or school when you did not do well or did not achieve the desired result.
• How do you handle failure? (I.E. How is it that you see/use failure as a learning experience?)
• Name an Accomplishment of which you are proud? - Demonstrate competencies related to the job
• Weaknesses? - What are you doing to work on these issues and minimize their impacts?

Check sites such as OptimalResume to see live (mock) interviewing insider hints to help practice your approach

Importance of the concise and tailored answer – i.e. a well-thought out and developed story that will make your point with evidence, not self-assessment.

Do not just say, “I’m a great leader, believe me!” Instead, tell a compelling story whose conclusion demonstrates that you are a great leader and for which you have given a concise but impressive example.

S – The Situation (context) of the story in a brief and focused manner. Can mention a team goal here briefly.

T – The Task that was Your role or that You assumed. Use “I”, not “WE”. Here YOUR role is paramount.

A – The Actions YOU designed and then took which related to the point you are trying to illustrate.

R – The actual observed Result of YOUR actions, focusing on how your actions helped the situation or solved a problem in a valuable/impactful/innovative/cost-effective manner AND acknowledge others who helped!

N.B.
Stories that indicate your skills, talents, interests, knowledge, motivations, fit, and personal traits must be fleshed out in advance and practiced with others who know you and your goals. A good way is to use index cards to record the relevant issues or traits you wish to highlight and create a concise and meaningful narrative of key points that you will be able to recall the gist of - not memorize a monologue. Then: Practice, practice, and practice the STAR stories for typical characteristics that relate to your jobs of interest and the
questions that may likely come up in the interview. Remember, story topics vary for each type of employment position you are seeking. You must know the ranked order qualities the company is looking for and be prepared to address the highly rated characteristics as possible.

**Activity: In pairs, practice two interview questions: 10 minutes total per student, then switch**

Everyone needs the opportunity to practice the following two questions: Why should we choose you? and Why is this job ideal for you? (Or another question from above) It is all about interests, competencies, and fit. Use a STAR story if you can to add impact to your answers. Share your resume and the job description you brought along to the Orientation meetings with your interviewing practice partner – use the job description in the mock interview situation.

**Giving feedback:**
Relate 1-2 things the person did very well in answering the interview questions.
Did anything said make your interview partner noteworthy, seem memorable, or standout?
Optional: Share one thing about answering questions your partner might work on.

**Exercise timing Details:** Each person: 7 min for Q&A, then a (firm) 3 min for Feedback
We will rotate after 10 minutes and change roles.

**Session Notes Space** -