

4. Advertise the agriculture employment opportunities through District 521's on-the-job training program.

References

- Best, John W. (1981). *Research in education* (4th ed.). Prentice-Hall, Inc. 179.
- Kerlinger, Fred N. (1973). *Foundations of behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. 458-461.
- Scott, David. (1984). District 521 Agriculture Department chair. *Personal Communications*, August 1984.
- Clark, Terry. (1984). District 521 Agriculture Department instructor. *Personal Communications*, August 1984.

Improving Students' Job Search Techniques

Dee M. Wellan

Can replay of video-taped simulated interviews increase students' competitiveness in the job search by increasing self-awareness and improving communications skills?

Introduction

According to recent economic indicators, unemployment in the United States has averaged about 9 percent. This large proportion of unemployed Americans creates difficulty for prospective graduating seniors. These students usually have little or no employment experience in their chosen careers. Upon graduation, they must compete for available positions with other job seekers who have experience and are familiar with the process of acquiring a job.

A crucial factor in obtaining a first job is the performance of the interviewee during the initial screening interview. Sharpened interviewing skills provide the interviewee with a competitive advantage during the job search process. The fundamental objective of this study was to evaluate the use of video replay as a way to assist students in their self-evaluation of interpersonal skills after they simulated job interviews. The assumption was that well-developed interpersonal skills can be learned and that they will increase the probability of successful interviewing.

Purpose

Students need accurate feedback so they can correct misconceptions in self-concepts (Scott, Sollie, and Duffey, 1983). The question is, can videofeedback, functioning as a mirror image, increase the individual's objective self-analysis? Videotaping as a feedback device has been mainly used in therapeutic settings in clinical training, and in teacher or salesmanship training.

Playback of video tapes is lauded by numerous writers and many advantages are ascribed; however, empirical support for these benefits is lacking. This has

been pointed out by other researchers including Bailey and Sowder (1979) and Sollie and Scott (1983). One aspect of this study was to observe any change which may have occurred in the self evaluations after replay of the videotape.

The objective of this research was to investigate change in students' self-evaluations of interpersonal skills after replay of videotapes. The videotapes were of simulated employment interviews. The videofeedback, through replay of the tapes, gave students the opportunity to see and hear themselves as they had been seen and heard. In addition to self-evaluation, each student was given structured feedback through peer-evaluations and an additional assessment was made by the interviewer.

Interviewing Techniques

Prior to an interview, the job seeker must realize that a first impression is an important form of communication. During the initial job interview, first impressions are rapid and, in most cases, lasting. The first impression may become the last impression if a negative perception is made by the recruiter.

Company recruiters judge the interviewee on verbal as well as on non-verbal communication. Aspects of non-verbal behavior include posture, poise, eye contact, dress, and bodily movements such as gestures and facial expressions. These non-verbal cues convey silent messages to the interviewer. Some communication specialists consider body language and dress a more "honest", direct, or straight-forward method of communication when compared to verbal expressions. This conjecture may be based on the hypothesis that people often mask their true feelings.

After scheduling an interview, one must think about the impressions, facts, and ideas which should be conveyed to the interviewer. Interviewing success is increased with the ability to "sell" one's services to a company recruiter by being alert, enthusiastic, and confident. It is generally accepted that a person feels more confident and at ease when giving the best possible visual and oral presentation.

During the dialogue of the interview, the recruiter will note voice quality, articulation, and questions asked by the interviewee. These verbal communication skills play an important role in the hiring decision. The first objective of a recruiter is to obtain as much valuable information from the prospective employee as is possible in the limited time available. An initial interview is brief, usually lasting from fifteen to thirty minutes.

There is a great difference in being talked at and being actively involved in a conversation. Being talked at is one-way flow of information. Maintaining a two-way flow of information throughout the conversation can give the applicant a more favorable position and the chance to create a positive first impression.

When entering the job market, one can look at each interview as a learning experience. Every time the "service selling" story is told by the interviewee it can

Wellan is assistant professor in the School of Home Economics, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, L.A. 70803-4301

be used as a means to improve the ability to tell it better the next time. Good advice is to rethink the interview and note weaknesses as well as strengths. Recommendations from company recruiters include pointing out shortcomings and giving attentions to communication skills which require improvement. Modification of behavior to strengthen weak areas can help create favorable impressions during future interviews.

Videofeedback And Self-Assessment

One of the most difficult observations to make is to see ourselves as we really are (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1971) Close your eyes and try to visualize your own face and body. Then try to visualize another person, a parent or a good friend. The visualization of the self is usually more difficult for most of us.

Self-concept, as defined by Ryan (1966), is the individual's perception of his own characteristics, his abilities or failing, his appearance, and the total organization of characteristics which he perceives as distinguishing him as an individual. The self-concept may or may not agree with what is perceived by other people.

A person may misperceive how others actually see him. One's idea of how he is seen by others can be unrealistic, even distorted. The failure on the part of some individuals to view themselves with the same degree of objectivity as they are viewed by others can create stress as the concept of self is repeatedly challenged.

Objectivity occurs only on one of the most complex levels of learning. It is achieved through conscious effort and practice and requires a degree of analytical thinking, insight, and maturity. The development of an accurate and desirable self-image or self-concept begins with an objective self-analysis. Most individuals are not given such an opportunity nor do they receive structured feedback about how they are perceived by others.

Objective self-assessment, an unbiased analysis of oneself through evaluation of performance, is assumed to be an effective procedure when learning communication skills. The development of a realistic, positive self-concept and the disclosure of this self through verbal and non-verbal communication can strengthen interpersonal skills and may lead to successful interviewing.

Method

To put to use the techniques studied in class, ninety-eight graduating students were videotaped as they individually simulated an interview with a professional interviewer. These simulated interviews provide the opportunity for each student to receive three evaluations of their performance as they enacted the role of interview respondent.

Evaluations

Ratings of individual performances were based on evaluations by self, by peers, and by professional in-

terviewers. Relying on recall, each student did an immediate self-evaluation using an instrument which contained eight criteria. The same rating instrument was used for peer-evaluation and a second self-evaluation following playback of the videotapes. It was also used by the interviewer immediately after the interview.

It is assumed that interviewees communicate many things to a recruiter through verbal and non-verbal messages. Stone (1962) points out that social transactions have two distinct dimensions: appearance and discourse. Appearance is the phase of the interaction which establishes visual identification of the participants while verbal symbols are communicated during the discussion or conversation.

A review of relevant literature failed to produce an existing instrument which could be used to evaluate appearance and conversation during the social transaction of an interview. Therefore, the ratings used were specifically designed for this study. The four criteria selected to indicate appearance were clothing, self-confidence as evidenced by poise, gestures plus posture, and facial expression. Voice quality, answers to questions, questions asked, and expressed self-appreciation were the factors selected to reveal verbal skills in conversation. Scores were based on a rating, similar to that used in Likert-type scales, of 1 to 5 points for each criteria; thus, a maximum of 40 points was possible.

Since most students were unfamiliar with interviewing and the process of rating performance during an interview, it was necessary to provide detailed descriptions of all levels of effectiveness for each criteria. These descriptions were given to the students for their review prior to the descriptions as they assigned scores to performance.

Findings and Discussion

The fundamental purpose of this study was to observe change in students' self-evaluations after the viewing of their interviewing performances on videotape. It was assumed that replay would give individuals an opportunity to view themselves in a similar manner as they had been viewed by others. The paired t-test was used to compare difference in self-evaluation ratings based on recall and those based on replay of videotapes. The average score on the recall self-evaluation was 28 points and the average replay self-evaluation was 31 points. The paired t-test value revealed a significant difference in the ratings of self before and after videotape feedback ($p > 0.01$).

Before playback of the videotapes, most participants feared they had performed in an unacceptable way. The overall average self-evaluation score after replay increased to 31 points. This increase was unexpected since many students expressed anxiety as they anticipated self-confrontation.

The majority of the students had never experienced an interview prior to the simulated one nor had they come face-to-face with themselves on

videotape. Many expressed a feeling of uneasiness during the interview. Seventy percent recalled feeling nervous and uncomfortable and thought this had been obvious to the interviewer. These feelings of uneasiness were perceived as an inhibiting factor which created difficulty as they tried to present themselves in a positive way.

In general, the ratings of appearance were about 20 points higher than the ratings for conversation or verbal skills. This apparent lack of verbal proficiency may possibly be attributed to inexperience in interviewing and the anxiety that resulted from a feeling of incompetence.

Another general observation was that eye contact with the interviewer needed to be improved. Other distracting gestures and undesirable non-verbal traits, for example frequent crossing and uncrossing of legs and jerking foot motion, were obvious during replay. There was an agreement, among the subjects, that such negative, silent cues could distract the interviewer and jeopardize interviewing success.

The average rating by peers after replay of the tapes was 33 points. This indicated a slightly higher peer-review when compared to self-appraisal whether before or after replay. The students' ability to give accurate, appropriate feedback to their peers has been questioned in other studies (Scott, Sollie and Duffey (1983) and Sollie and Scott (1983)). With few exceptions, the ratings of the three interviewers ranged from 10 to 15 points lower than those of the students, whether done by self or by peers. As mentioned earlier, it is not easy to see ourselves as others see us; objective self-evaluation requires deliberate effort and practice.

Although the t-test indicated significant change in self-evaluations after replay of videotapes, the question whether replay can increase self-awareness and thereby create the possibility of improved communication skills remains unanswered. Agreement is with Scott, Sollie, and Duffey (1983) as they point to the need for further examination before any conclusions can be drawn regarding the effectiveness of videofeedback in changing behavior or increasing skills of university students.

References

- Bailey, K. and Sowder, W. (1978) Audiotape and videotape self-confrontation in psychotherapy. *Psychological Bulletin*, 74, 127-137.
- Black, J.M. (1977) *How to Get Results from Interviewing*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Bochner, A. and Kelley, C. (1974) Interpersonal competence: Rationale, philosophy, and implementation of conceptual framework. *Speech Teacher*, 23, 4, 179-301.
- Cozby, P. (1973) Self-disclosure: A literature review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 79, 2, 73-91.
- Erdlen, J. (1979) *Job Hunting for the College Graduate*. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath.
- Gonos, G. (1977) "Situation" versus "Frame: The interactionist" and the "structuralist" analyses of everyday life. *American Sociological Review*, 42, 854-867.
- Kefgen, M. and Touchie-Specht, P. (1971) *Individuality in Clothing Selection and Personal Appearance*. New York: Macmillan.
- Maier, N. and Thurger J. (1968) Accuracy of judgments of

deception when an interview is watched, heard, and read. *Personnel Psychology*, 21, 23-30.

Mehrabian, A. (1971) Non-verbal betrayal of feeling. *Journal of Experimental Research in Personality*, 5, 64-73.

Myhre, D.C., Harrison, B.C., Harris, R.D., and Garman, E.T. (1977) *Observing Non-verbal Behavior and Active Listening: Two Basic Skills for Financial Counselors*. VPI, Blacksburg, Virginia, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education.

Slater, S. and Cibrowski, L. (1982) *What Do You Like About Yourself? Developing A Positive Self-Concept!* Washington, D.C.: HHEA.

Scott, J.P., Sollie, D.L., and Duffey, N. (1983) Teaching communication skills with videomodeling and videofeedback in the university classroom. *Home Economics Research Journal*, 12, 1, 17-23.

Sollie, D. & Scott, J.P. (1983) Teaching communication skills: A comparison of videotape feedback methods. *Family Relations*, 32, 503-511.

A TESTED MODEL

Recruitment Program

Richard F. Welton

Abstract

Although developed for the recruitment of agricultural education students, this tested model can provide ideas on effective activity in recruiting students for other disciplines in Agriculture.

Introduction

Enrollment of undergraduate students in colleges of agriculture has shown a dramatic decrease in recent years. The consequences of this decline is effecting the availability of trained agriculturists. While declining enrollment is a recent phenomenon in colleges of agriculture, the shortage of agricultural education graduates has existed for some time. This shortage has been called one of the most far reaching problems nationally for agricultural education.

A lack of qualified vocational agriculture teachers in Kansas prompted the agricultural staff at Kansas State University to become actively involved in an effort to expand the undergraduate program. Major recruitment activities began with a project funded by the College of Education. This study became the cornerstone for planning and organizing departmental efforts to attract students into agricultural education.

Procedures

The study was based upon information provided by teacher educators in the Central Region and agricultural education students enrolled at Kansas State University. Responses were received from 121 of the 134 persons contacted. This represents a response rate of 90 per cent.

Welton is a professor in Agricultural Education at Kansas State University. The study reported was funded by the College of Education at Kansas State University. Additional monies to support recruitment activities came from the Kansas State Department of Education.