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Mock Interviews in the Virtual Environment

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Teaching Practice & the Need it Addresses

Successful interview skills are pivotal in the transition to post graduation careers and mock interviews provide the opportunity for students to practice and receive real-world feedback on this critical competency (Lord et. al., 2019). With 84% of recruiters adapting their hiring process to online (Steinberg, 2020), facilitating virtual mock interviews allows students to practice an essential hiring competency in a modality reflective of current recruitment practices.

The College of Hospitality is well-known for its experiential learning efforts. In a typical semester, the college hosts a mock interview event for students in HMD 200, Hospitality Milestone course, in which students are interviewed and evaluated by a hospitality industry professional as part of an on-campus event. With the support of the Bob Boughner Career Center, the event for Fall 2020 was changed to the virtual environment in which students interviewed with industry professionals using Zoom technology. Along with students receiving feedback on interview skills, they also had the opportunity to network.

As part of the assignment, each student participated in a 30-minute mock interview with a hospitality industry professionals in which 10 pre-written interview questions were asked. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewer completed an evaluation ranking the student on general interview attributes (nonverbal, attentiveness, and presentation skills) as well as answers to each interview question using a 5-point Likert scale.

The evaluation was not shared with the student at the time of the interview. The student concluded the interview and completed a self-evaluation ranking his/her performance in the interview using the same evaluation form and ranking scale as the interviewer. Both the interviewer's evaluation and the student's self-evaluation were returned and reviewed during an online discussion the following week. This allowed students to see how closely their evaluation of performance compared to the industry professional's appraisal.

Mock Interviews in the Virtual Environment

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Evidence it Benefits Students

10% of students who participated in the mock interview event were offered opportunities to have additional interviews for job opportunities with participating industry professionals. This is significant as a goal of hosting mock interview events is for students to practice networking and professional communication skills prior to an actual interview (Self et. al., 2019).



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Below is a sample of student comments on the feedback received:

- She said I have a lot of great experience and answered the last question very strongly. I can improve on preparing a bit more because I said of lot of filler words.
- Need to be more concise with goals, find the long-term goals and career-end.
- Try to keep better eye contact, relax a little bit, and breathe.
- Interviewer said to be more confident in myself and prove more that I actually really want to be in the hospitality industry.
- Some feedback for myself would be to focus on STAR and the result of a situation. I would also make sure I bring questions to ask towards the end of the interview.

How Others Can Adopt This Practice

Regardless of discipline, each college/unit has the opportunity to engage with both alumni and employers to create this teaching practice. Mock interviews with industry professionals aligned with degree programming not only facilitate an effective learning activity for students, but also provide an avenue for external engagement.

Resources and Where to Find Them

Instructors are encouraged to work with their college's career center or individuals that handle alumni and external engagement. Another alternative is to engage with the UNLV Career Center. Select a mixture of general interview questions and those that directly relate to careers within your discipline.

References

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