

NASSP Bulletin

<http://bul.sagepub.com/>

The Structured Interview: Three Dozen Questions To Ask Prospective Teachers

George E. Pawlas

NASSP Bulletin 1995 79: 62

DOI: 10.1177/019263659507956709

The online version of this article can be found at:

<http://bul.sagepub.com/content/79/567/62>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

On behalf of:



National Association of Secondary School Principals

Additional services and information for *NASSP Bulletin* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://bul.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://bul.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Jan 1, 1995

[What is This?](#)

The Structured Interview: Three Dozen Questions To Ask Prospective Teachers

By George E. Pawlas

Administrators today may find that the structured interview can effectively identify qualified candidates from among a lengthy list of applicants for every teaching vacancy.

The structured interview, which uses a standard list of questions, gives the interviewer solid evidence on which to base a hiring decision. The questions require applicants to think and offer substantive responses.

Targeted Selection

In one type of structured interview, called “targeted selection,” the applicant responds to a list of prepared questions. Interviewers evaluate candidates based on the STAR (Situation, Task, Action, and Result) procedure. Each applicant describes a situation, the action that was taken, and the result.

George E. Pawlas coordinates the undergraduate and graduate educational course offerings at the Cocoa Campus of the University of Central Florida. He also teaches courses in educational leadership.

Structured interviews focus on four areas.

- What kind of person are you?
- What have you done in the past?
- What can you do for us in the future?
- How will you fit in?

Prospective teachers who have experienced the structured interview were impressed by the process. They felt the school knew what kind of teachers they were looking for.

The 36 questions that follow are designed to secure information that is not provided by transcripts and application forms. They also allow the applicant's interpersonal skills, responses, values, and aspirations to be judged.

The 36 questions have been grouped into five major categories: teacher relationships with students, teacher relationships with colleagues, teacher relationships with parents, instructional techniques, and a pot-pourri of topics and background information. The list of categories and related questions follow.

Teacher Relationships with Students

1. What kind of students do you like to work with? What type of students could you teach most effectively?
2. You give an assignment. A student ridicules the assignment, saying it doesn't make sense. What would you do?
3. How do you help students experience success?

4. A student tells you he or she is being abused at home. What steps would you follow?

5. How would you individualize instruction for students?

6. What procedures do you use to evaluate student progress besides using tests?

7. How would you challenge the slow learner and the advanced student within the same class?

Teacher Relationships with Colleagues

8. What kind of teachers do you would prefer to work with? Why?

9. What activities would you like to work with in our school?

10. What quality or qualities do you have that would enhance our teaching staff?

11. What task would you find most difficult in this position? Why?

12. What are some personality characteristics you find undesirable in people?

13. Who should be responsible for discipline in a school? Why?

14. What needs and/or expectations do you have of the school administration?

Teacher Relationships with Parents

15. A parent walks into your room before the school day begins, yelling and complaining about something you don't even understand. The par-

ent is obviously very upset. What would you do?

16. What do you feel is the most effective way to communicate with parents? Describe how you have used this/these technique(s).

17. Describe the reasons why you would contact parents.

18. What would you include in your Open House presentations to parents?

19. What role do parents play in the education of their children? How would you communicate that to them?

20. What community activities would you like to be associated with? Why?

Instructional Techniques

21. Describe any school experience you have had, particularly in student teaching (or in another teaching position) that has prepared you for a full-time position at our school.

22. How would you integrate technology into the curriculum you would teach?

23. Describe any innovative projects you have been involved in developing.

24. Give an example of how you have used cooperative learning in your classroom.

25. What four words would students use to describe your teaching strategies?

26. What rules do you have for your classroom?

27. Describe your teaching style and how you accommodate the different learning styles of the students in your classes.

28. What do you consider to be your strengths, and how will you use them in your teaching?

A Potpourri of Topics and Background Information

29. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

30. What are your hobbies and interests?

31. Tell about an experience that has greatly influenced you in your professional development.

32. What are your plans for continuing your professional growth?

33. Tell me about an interesting article you have read recently in a professional journal.

34. What contributions can you make to our school?

35. What current trends in public education please you? Displease you?

36. Tell me about the three people who have most influenced your own education and educational career.

While no one expects applicants to respond satisfactorily to every question, they should be able to answer most of them.

Remember, the chief purpose of the interview is to eliminate from consideration candidates who, for whatever reason, are clearly unquali-

fied. At the same time the interview will identify candidates who have the credentials to meet the needs of the position.

Applicants' responses should indicate they understand the purposes,

programs, methods, and materials of instruction, and that they are career-minded, understand the subject matter, are enthusiastic about teaching, are eager to improve their competencies, and are open-minded. ~B

Parental Involvement at a Glance

Percentage of children (grades 6–12) experiencing problems in school, by level of parental involvement

