Advisory Lesson Plan: Grade Level 9&10

Topic: How to conduct an interview

During advisory today, please review with students these two handouts:

**How To Conduct an Interview**

Before you learn on how to conduct an interview, here is a quick lesson on soft skills.

**SOFT SKILLS**

This lesson is about “soft skills” such as effective communication and making good impressions. These skills may or may not be essential to life, but often go unnoticed, and this is a time for the students to reflect on skills such as:

* Clearly articulating words
* Using full sentences
* Being polite
* Shaking hands
* Saying please and thank you
* Dressing appropriately and comfortably
* Eliminating potential distractions so that students are able to put their best foot forward when you speak with someone.
* Firm hand shakes
* Looking people in the eye
* Learning and repeating names
* Not touching one’s face and wiping nose in public
* Not talking on cell phones or texting while waiting
* Using small talk effectively

**SOFT SKILLS+(ARRAGEMENTS+PREPARATION+INTERVIEW+RECONSTRUCTION) = SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW**

Interviews have four stages that precede the writing of a story:  arrangements, preparation, the actual interview and the reconstruction.

***1. ARRANGEMENTS***

Spontaneous interviews, except in connection with breaking news, seldom contribute to thoroughness.  Once you have decided to interview someone, **call in advance**to make an appointment.  **Identify yourself** by your name and the name of your school.  If you feel the need to do so or are asked to describe what your project is about, be brief and general.  If you are interviewing several people in connection with your story, interview the most important person last, because you will be better prepared based on what you learn from the earlier interviews.

*Arranging Teacher Interview at Burton Technology Academy: You have been assigned a teacher for you to interview. You will be interviewing them this Wednesday, December 5th, after school within the hours of 1:30pm-3:30pm. Prior to the interview make an effort to meet with the teacher first and introduce yourself.*

***2. PREPARATION***

Do as much **research** as possible in advance on the topic you are working on.  Prepare your **questions** in advance in writing and bring them to the interview.  Refer to them but don't show them to the interviewee, because it creates too formal an atmosphere.  Ask other questions as they might arise, based on what the interviewee says or something new that might come to you on the spur of the moment.  Do not feel that you have to stick to your questions. Bring two **pencils** (or pens) **and paper**.  Bring a **recording device** if you can but be sure to get the permission to use it from the person you are interviewing.  You also should take notes, because it will help in the reconstruction phase, and, yes, recording devices may fail.

*Preparing Teacher Interview at Burton Tech: First ask if it is okay that you record your interview via IPAD or Computer. Prior to the interview, review the questions that you will ask your teacher. Make sure you research the career interest and the questions are relevant to the job interest.*

*Arranging Community Member Interview:*

*In person: If you are meeting with them in person, first ask if it is okay that you record your interview via IPAD or Computer. Prior to the interview, review the questions that you will ask your teacher. Make sure you research the career interest and the questions are relevant to the job interest.*

*Over the phone: Prior to the interview, review the questions that you will ask your interviewee. Ask for permission to record the interview. You will then place the phone on speaker and you will record the conversation. Make sure you research the career interest and the questions are relevant to the job interest.*

***3. THE INTERVIEW***

Introduce yourself once again and state the reason as to why you are having the interview. Some casual conversation to start with will relax both of you (for example, ask how they are doing?).  Your questions should be as **short** as possible.  Give the person you are interviewing time to answer.  Be a good listener.  Try to draw out **specifics**:  How long, how many, when, etc.?  During the interview be sure to do the following:

1. **Come prepared with:**
   1. A pencil
   2. A notebook
   3. A list of good questions
   4. A recording device (always ask permission before recording an interview)

**2. Be on time!** Arrive at your interview with plenty of time to spare. If you’ve never been to the place where your interview is taking place, go early and scout it out. There is nothing more unprofessional than a reporter who is late.

You can also use the time you are waiting to make notes about the surroundings. You won’t remember details later, so write them down.

**3. Conduct your interview in an organized, timely manner**. During the interview:

* Be courteous to the person that you are interviewing.
* Always take time to ask for an explanation about things you don't understand.
* Don’t be afraid of uncomfortable silences and pauses.
* Let the interview take its natural course.
* Look the person in the eye when asking questions.
* Always listen carefully to the answers. Each answer could lead to more questions or include an answer to a question you haven’t asked yet. Don't ask a question that has already been answered. Your subject will know you weren't listening and be insulted.
* Don't read through your questions one right after another like you can't wait to be finished. Conduct your interview like a conversation. One question should lead naturally into another. If you are LISTENING to the answers this will come naturally!
* Also, take notes on what the person looked like, what the person was wearing, where he or she sat. If the interview is in an office, make notes of what is on the walls and on the desk. The objects people surround themselves with hold important clues to their personalities. Ask about any object that interests you. You’ll find some good stories!

**4. Even if you are recording an interview, take notes**. Don't try to write every word said. It will show down the interview. Just take down the highlights.

After the interview, while the details are still fresh in your mind, write everything down you can remember about the person you interviewed. Don’t forget to make note of the sounds in the background. Take not of what was happening around you. Write it all down as soon as possible.

At home, expand your notes by following up on things you learned in your interview with more research!

***4. RECONSTRUCTION***

As soon as it's practical after the interview, find a quiet place to review your handwritten notes and recording device if you recorded the interview.  Underline or put stars alongside quotes that seemed most the most interesting to you. One star for a good quote, two stars for a very good one, etc.   It will speed the process when you get to the writing stage.  One other thing to look for in your notes:  the quote you wrote down might not make a lot of sense, unless you remember what **specific** question it was responding to.  In short, fill in whatever gaps exist in your notes that will help you better understand them when writing.

Sources:

<http://stringers.media.mit.edu/interview.htm> (retrieved 03/14/2012)

<http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3752516> (retrieved 03/14/2012)

During advisory:

1. Review the advisory lesson plan: How to Conduct an Interview
2. Have students research on their career interest
3. Have students create 3 additional questions that they would like to ask their interviewee.
4. Teachers will review the questions and approve them for the teacher interview.

When coming up with additional questions, make sure that the questions are relevant to your project. In making your questions:

1. Avoid yes/no answer questions. Ask them questions that will make them elaborate and give you more information that is related to you career interest.
2. Make sure you that your questions are direct, short, and to the point. Avoid wordy questions.

**9th Graders**

**Questions for Teacher interview:**

1. **How is the subject that you teach related to my career interest of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?**
2. **How will your class prepare me for my career interests?**
3. **Student Question?**
4. **Student Question?**
5. **Student Question?**

**10th Graders**

**Questions for the Teacher interviews**

1. **What factors did you consider in selecting what college to attend?**
2. **What was most favorite part of college?**
3. **Student Question?**
4. **Student Question?**
5. **Student Question?**

**STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR COMING UP WITH THREE ADDITIONAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS!!!**