GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are two types of skills required for success in any job: technical and behavioral. Technical is the knowledge, skill, or ability to complete specific tasks of the job (such as typing, filing, word processing for clerical positions or content knowledge, lecture skill, group facilitation skill, ability to evaluate student work, computer/media skills, and classroom management skill for faculty positions). Behavioral, however, is controlled for within a person (example: punctuality, attendance, flexibility, ability to handle stress or to prioritize work effectively, etc.). No matter how technically qualified an applicant is, the job cannot be completed successfully unless the appropriate behaviors are applied as well. Questions in an interview should be designed to elicit information regarding both kinds of skills: technical and behavioral.

Open Ended or Behavioral Questions
- Since the candidate should talk 80% of the time in an interview, your questions should be designed to elicit specific information about past teaching, academic and/or work experience. These types of questions are called performance based or behavior based.
- They should be the first kind of questioning technique used in an interview because the sooner a candidate begins to talk, the sooner he or she will relax.
- At least 50%, and ideally 65%, of an interviewer's questions should be this type.

Open Ended questions begin with words such as "Describe", "Tell me about", "Explain your feelings about," "Summarize:"

Examples of Open Ended Questions
1. Tell me about your current job (A GOOD FIRST QUESTION)
2. Describe the most challenging assignment you ever worked on using Microsoft Excel, or describe the most challenging teaching assignment you have ever had (ASK ABOUT CANDIDATE'S RANGE OF EXPERTISE.
3. Tell me about a time that you had to teach or do a job for which you had insufficient background or no training. (ASK FOR EXAMPLES.)
4. How did you handle an irate student/customer who was clearly out of line? (ASK ABOUT PAST EXPERIENCES.)
5. Summarize the aspects of teaching or things on your job you feel you did particularly well, or in which you have achieved the greatest success, and tell me why you feel this way. (ASK ABOUT VALUE JUDGMENTS.)
6. Tell me about the things about teaching or your job that you found most difficult, and why they were difficult.
7. How would you characterize the progress you have made academically and professionally?
8. In what ways has your present job developed you to take on even greater responsibility?
9. What would you say was the most (or least) promising job you ever had, and what are your reasons for feeling this way?
10. Have you been disappointed in any aspects of your present job? Why?
11. What were your reasons for leaving your last job? (ALWAYS LOOK FOR MORE THAN ONE REASON FOR A VOLUNTARY RESIGNATION.)
12. If you could be a highly paid and respected chief technician or researcher in a university, or the department manager or a community college teacher making less money, which would you choose and why? (ASK ABOUT CHOICES IN LIFE.)

Behavioral questions are designed to have the candidate demonstrate the presence or absence of desired behavioral traits. One of the most effective means of eliciting these examples is by using a series of related questions:

Behavioral questions should probe for evidence of all necessary traits, for example:
- Perform as a part of a team
- Work entirely alone
- Work under stress
- Make decisions independently
- Get along with a very difficult employee, student or colleague
- Oversee the work of others
- Evaluate student work
- Lead others

Fact- or List-Type Questions
- These are the second type of questions asked in an interview.
- They can be answered with a short list or a brief series of facts.
- 25-35% of questions asked should be this type.

Examples
1. In your last job, what were the five things on which you spent most of your time, and how much time did you spend on each?
2. What three characteristics do you feel are most important in an effective supervisor/administrator?
3. What were the three most challenging (frustrating, boring, rewarding, etc.) aspects of your last position?
4. What were your major responsibilities in your last job?
5. What three responsibilities in your last job took the greatest amount of time?

Detail Questions
- The last questions an interviewer asks should be designed to fill in some facts.
- These questions can be answered with a "yes" or "no" or a date, grade or number.
- Only 5 or 10% of an interviewer's questions should be Detail Questions.

Examples
1. This job will require 20% travel or teaching an 8:00 class. Is that a problem for you?
2. What were your dates of employment at the ABC company/college? (VERIFY FACTS FROM THE RESUME.)
3. Are you able to work on Sundays or teach evening classes? (ASK QUESTIONS THAT ARE CLEARLY RELATED TO THE JOB.)
4. This job will require you to work every other weekend. Can you do that?
5. What was your GPA in your major?
6. When does your license expire?