COFC CAREER CENTER

The College of Charleston Career Center offers a wide variety of services to students and alumni entering the field of education. These services include:

• Resume & Cover Letter Critiques
• Preparation for Interviews & Mock Interviews
• Job Search Resources
• Job Postings (Handshake)
• Career Counseling
• Graduate School Information
• Workshops
• Financial Wellness

VISIT CAREERCENTER.COFC.EDU
THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS

The job search process can be overwhelming at times. The best approach is to educate yourself on the process and develop a strong plan of action to achieve your goal. The job search and application process for education related positions involves:

1. Research and Identify Districts/Schools of Interest
2. Identify Employment Application Process - Online Application Options
3. Collect Application / Credential Materials and Letters of Reference
4. Complete and Submit Formal Application
5. Complete Screening and Interviewing Process

MANAGING YOUR CREDENTIALS & APPLICATION PACKAGE

In the education field, teacher candidates are often asked to submit their “credentials” when applying for teaching positions. Credentials are used by many school systems and other types of employers in their pre-selection process. Credential documents are a testament to your achievements and character in support of your entry into employment.

What does my application package include?
1. Resume
2. Transcripts
3. Test Scores (Praxis or other appropriate test scores)
4. Letters of Recommendation / References
5. Teaching Certificate or Letter of Intent
6. Official Application

What are the advantages of self-managing/credentialing?
- Allows you to take full responsibility for your job search and career correspondence
- Self-credentialing promotes efficient and timely delivery of application materials directly from you to the employer

How should I go about applying to school systems if I am self-managing/credentialing?
It is very important to recognize that every school district’s application procedures are different. Contact the school system in which you are seeking employment to determine their method of application, and follow those instructions precisely.
APPLYING FOR POSITIONS

SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL SYSTEMS

1. If you are applying to teach in SC, you may utilize the South Carolina Educator Employment Application System, which serves all SC public school districts. This site allows you to complete an online application form and supply online references to any school district in SC to which you wish to apply. The site may be accessed at https://cerra.mysmartjobboard.com/. (Referred to as CERRA.)

*Important Note:* When using the SC Educator Employment Application, you must also contact the school district to whom you wish to apply to alert them to the fact you have completed the online application and that your references will also be online. School districts will not automatically download these forms and consider you as a viable candidate until you have contacted them personally.

2. The online SC Educator Employment Application System also allows you to "Request a Reference," which will email the individuals you have chosen to serve as references with instructions on how to log into the system and complete an online reference form. A minimum of three references are typically requested by school systems, including those from your classroom co-operating teacher and faculty supervisor of your clinical practice assignment. An additional reference might be requested from a faculty member who is familiar with your work in class, from former employers, or from other teachers or administrators who have observed your performance in the classroom, etc.

3. Other materials typically required by school systems for application purposes (may include):
   - A resume
   - College Transcripts. You may usually begin the application process by sending an unofficial transcript. Some systems will ask for an official transcript later in the selection process if they are seriously considering you as a candidate. You should then make a request through the Registrar’s Office for an official transcript to be sent directly to the employer. You will be responsible for paying a fee to the Registrar’s Office for the service.
   - Appropriate PRAXIS II scores (send a copy - keep the original).
   - Teaching Certificate or Letter of Intent indicating that you have met requirements in order to qualify for certification. The Letter of Intent will be sent to you at the end of the semester from the School of Education. Once you receive your Teaching Certificate, you should include a copy (not the original) whenever you mail your credentials.

DISTRICTS IN OTHER STATES

Contact the school district of interest to find out how to apply and what credentials are required. To find positions:
- Visit the school district website or call the school district
- View the American Association for Employment in Education (AAEE) Job Search Handbook at www.aaee.org
- Visit Teachers-Teachers.com or EducationAmerica.net
- Network at Education career fairs, such as CofC’s Teacher Employment Expo or the South Carolina Teacher Expo held in Columbia each spring/summer.
- Find additional resources at http://careercenter.cofc.edu/students/educationcareer.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Confidential recommendations should be sent directly to the credential file by the writer.

- Most school districts look for recommendations from your classroom co-operating teacher and faculty supervisor of your clinical practice assignment. Additional recommendations should be requested from faculty who are familiar with your preparation in your major course of study and/or from former employers, especially education related jobs.
- Letters of recommendation may also be typed on the writer’s own letterhead stationery, but they should include the Recommendation Form in order to indicate whether or not you have waived your right to access the letter.

CREDENTIAL FILE MAINTENANCE

If you wish to establish a credential file (or dossier), you may wish to use the services of Interfolio (http://www.interfolio.com/services/dossier/) for this purpose. There is a nominal fee to use Interfolio to house your dossier. Or you may be able to upload credential materials to job search sites, such as aae.com, https://cerra.mysmartjobboard.com/ (CERRA), Teachers-Teachers.com, or others where you can refer school districts to view the documents. Check with each site and school district to learn more about preferred ways to store, receive, and access your materials.

CONFIDENTIAL VS NON-CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCES

Your credential file package contains Recommendation Forms which may be used for confidential (closed) or non-confidential (open) letters of recommendation. In 1974, the Buckley Amendment was passed into law, stating that all reference letters written after December 1974 are assumed to be non-confidential (open to you), unless you waive your right of access to these letters. The option to waive your right of access to your confidential letters of recommendation is contained on each Recommendation Form. You should read and sign this section of the form if electing to use confidential references.

Why would anyone waive their right to read their own reference letters?
Many school district officials feel that a confidential recommendation letter is a more honest appraisal of a job applicant, particularly when it comes to weaknesses, and therefore may be given more credibility by a prospective employer. However, it is up to the individual, in light of his/her relationship with the writer of a recommendation, to decide what he/she finds most appropriate.
DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

A resume is a concise, organized summary of your skills, accomplishments, experiences, and education, which is designed to capture the interest of a potential employer.

Before you can write an effective resume, you must first be able to identify your skills, abilities, and interests and be able to relate them to the job/industry/career field in which you are seeking employment.

HELPFUL TIPS:

• **Tailor your resume** to the specific job to which you are applying. Tweak your resume to highlight skills that relate to each job. Incorporate keywords from the job description into your experience section when applicable. This means you may write more than one resume if applying for different types of jobs.

• **Communicate your abilities** as well as your personal qualities that pertain to the job. These abilities may have come from activities, education, volunteer work, or from work experience.

• **Focus on the employer’s needs**, not on your own needs. Rather than focusing on what you hope to gain from the experience, focus on what you hope to bring to the organization.

• **Be specific, yet concise.** An employer must be able to read over your resume quickly (30 – 60 seconds), so provide detailed descriptions of your experience in a concise manner.

• **The purpose of a resume** is to secure an interview. Be strategic with your experience descriptions, highlighting tasks and skills that most relate to the job while knowing that you can elaborate or speak about other responsibilities in the interview.

• **Eliminate the first person pronoun “I”** from your resume. For example, “I am seeking a position in human services…” should read, “Seeking a position in human services…”

• **Quantify your experience** wherever possible. For example, “Supervised others” can be made clearer by stating, “Supervised three cash register attendants”.


• **Write a draft of your resume**, then refine and polish it. Writing an effective resume takes time and effort.

• **Check your grammar and spelling!** Have at least one other person proofread your resume before submitting it to an employer. The Career Center offers free resume and cover letter reviews.

• **Keep the resume to one page.** A resume should only be two pages if you have a great deal of related experience, activities, or training.

• **Be consistent.** The order of information, spacing, format, punctuation, or highlighting should be consistent throughout your resume. For instance, either use a period at the end of every bullet point or do not add a period for any bullet point.

• **Avoid using resume templates.** Don’t try to make your resume look like everyone else’s. Creating your own document demonstrates your computer skills and initiative. Also, templates can be difficult to edit, download, and format. There are also different ways of constructing an effective resume, depending on the type of skills, work experiences, accomplishments, activities, and so forth that you want to emphasize as being related to your career/job preferences.
RESUME FORMATS

MODERN RESUMES
Use caution when creating resumes that involve graphic design elements. Many modern resume templates suggest using bold design elements, but this can distract employers. Instead, focus more on developing strong content. If you decide to incorporate a more modern look, consider these guidelines:
- Do not include a photo. Employers should evaluate your qualifications based on your experience, skills, and education.
- Avoid distracting graphics, and consider incorporating mild colors rather than bold colors for dividers and headers.
- Avoid the use of graphs on your resume.
- Avoid layouts that do not have a clear compositional flow. In other words, the layout should make it clear to the employer which section they should read first, second, and last.
- Although your name may be larger than the rest of the text, ensure that it is not oversized.

CHRONOLOGICAL
- Use if your education and/or experience closely relates to your career goals
- Lists education and work experience in reverse chronological order (most recent information in each section first)
- Most commonly used resume format

FUNCTIONAL
- Puts greater emphasis on skills and less on work history or educational background
- Effective when work experience does not show a direct relationship to the career goal (i.e. making a career change to a different industry) or when there are significant gaps in experience

COMBINATION
- Typically shows a short skills summary, while retaining the reverse chronological order on education and experience sections

CURRICULUM VITAE
- More detailed account of one’s background, and is usually much longer than a resume
- Required for teaching/research positions in higher education

Regardless of which resume style you choose, follow these formatting guidelines:
- Use conservative font styles (Times New Roman, Arial, Arial Narrow, or similar styles). Font size may range from 10-12.
- Set page margins between 0.5 and 1.0 inches (top, bottom, left and right).
- Print your resume using a laser printer; white or off white bond paper is preferred.
- Keep your resume up to date, with correct addresses and phone numbers.
- It’s always a good idea to include a cover letter when applying for positions even if it is not required. Always include a cover letter if mailing your resume to an employer.
- Don't make handwritten corrections.
- Don’t include age, marital status, height/weight, birth date, personal interests or a photograph.
- Don’t abbreviate (other than for the states - SC).
- Don’t use acronyms unless widely understood in the industry.
- Don’t exaggerate or lie on your resume. It will catch up with you.
EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, May 2022
College of Charleston, Charleston, SC
- Overall GPA 3.5
- Will be certified by the State of South Carolina to teach grades 1-8
- Passed Praxis II: PLT: Grades K-6, remaining tests required for initial certification scheduled for March 31, 2022

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Flowertown Elementary, Summerville, SC
Clinical Intern | Spring 2022
- Assumed full planning and teaching responsibilities in all academic areas for a classroom of 20 third grade students
- Teacher manuals were followed for math, science, social studies, spelling and reading; however, other activities were created to make the materials more hands-on and meaningful
- Created and instructed mini-unit on “Safety and Accident Prevention”
- Developed new materials for individual learning packets created for both remedial and accelerated students
- Actively participated in parent-teacher conferences

Field Experiences
- Mount Zion Elementary, Johns Island, SC, Fifth Grade
  - Observed and taught two lessons in social studies
- Oakland Elementary, Charleston, SC, First Grade
  - Observed and taught three guided reading lessons
- Stiles Point Elementary, James Island, SC, Third Grade
  - Observed and taught five science lessons on solids, liquids, and gases

Roper Child Care Center, Charleston, SC
Teacher Assistant | Summer 2021
- Conducted daily educational activities for groups of 5-7 pre-school aged children
- Established and enforced rules to maintain a safe and fun environment
- Collaborated with lead teacher in classroom management and parent/teacher communication

Private Home Tutor
- Charleston, SC (Spring 2021) First grader in all subjects
- Florence, SC (Summer 2020) Fourth grader in mathematics

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Publix Supermarket, Florence, SC
Assistant Bookkeeper (Summers 2019 & 2020)
- Balanced daily cash receipts
- Used Excel software to maintain information on accounts payable and to complete reports

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

- Zeta Tau Alpha National Sorority, 2019-2021
- Certified by Red Cross in Basic First Aid
- Computer literate in Mac & PC software programs
D A N I E L  C O L L I N S

• name@g.cofc.edu • 843-555-5555 • Charleston, SC •

E D U C A T I O N

Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), December 2021
The Graduate School of College of Charleston, Charleston, SC
• Overall GPA 3.9/4.0
• Special Education South Carolina License, k-12
• Passed all Praxis tests required for certification

Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies, May 2014
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

T E A C H I N G  E X P E R I E N C E

Clinical Intern • Wando High School • Mt. Pleasant, SC • Fall 2021
• Prepared units and lessons in co-ordinance with SC Employment Diploma program
• Developed plans of reinforcement for students with academic and/or behavioral needs
• Conducted behavioral observations and curriculum based assessments
• Facilitated appropriate techniques to aid students with severe reading difficulty
• Implemented points system that reinforced positive student behavior and significantly decreased classroom disruptions within the first four weeks of implementation

Field Experience • Wando High School • Mt. Pleasant, SC • Spring 2021
• Observed lead teacher and taught two lessons on reading in TMD classroom

Teacher’s Assistant • Wando High School • Mt. Pleasant, SC • August 2018 – May 2020
• Followed all instructions of the lead teacher in 10th grade classroom
• Prepared activities to promote basic, social, behavior, writing, and motor skills
• Job shadowed students at internships

Substitute Teacher • Charleston County School District • Charleston, SC • April 2018 – June 2018
• Assumed responsibilities of teacher, implemented existing lesson plans, and oversaw classroom activities
• Became permanent substitute teacher at Wando High School, Physical Education Department

A D D I T I O N A L  E X P E R I E N C E

Assistant General Manager • Hampton Inn • Greenville, SC • August 2016 – April 2018
Assistant General Manager • Hampton Inn • Columbia, SC • June 2014 – June 2016
• Supervised, recruited, and trained employees
• Maintained hotel budget, sales, labor, and supply costs

S K I L L S  A N D  A C T I V I T I E S

• Special Olympics of SC, Committee Member (August 2019 – Present)
• Boys and Girls Club, Volunteer (August 2018 – Present)
• Best Buddies, Volunteer (January 2017 – June 2019)
• Safe Haven, Mentor (October 2016 – May 2019)
• American Red Cross First Aid / CPR Certified through August 2022
**ACTION VERBS**

Remember to use the correct verb tense.

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p. 8
In many cases, your cover letter for a job in a school will receive more attention than cover letters in most other industries. Administrators view your cover letter as an indication of your enthusiasm for teaching and of your ability to communicate. The best cover letters convey something of your personality in a way that your resume generally will not. Cover letters present the opportunity for you to:

- Demonstrate that you are interested in applying to that particular school district.
- Highlight your two or three strengths as a teacher and reflect your unique experiences as a teacher.
- Express your enthusiasm for teaching, for working with young people, and/or for the particular grade level or subject you will teach.

**HOW TO DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN A DISTRICT**

Research the district and include snippets of what you find in your cover letter. For example, if you went on a district’s website and saw that they offer a variety of teacher mentorship programs, you might write a sentence or two about how the mentoring you have already received as a clinical practice intern has influenced your teaching style, and that you are excited about the opportunities to be mentored by experienced teachers in the district if this is the truth for you. Research is also good practice to prepare for an interview.

**HOW TO HIGHLIGHT STRENGTHS**

While your resume presents your background in chronological form, your cover letter offers you the opportunity to draw your readers’ attention to a couple of your main strengths (preferably as they relate to the expressed philosophy or needs of the district, though often it is difficult to make such a direct link). The best cover letters use specifics to back up general statements. These specifics can reflect your unique experiences in the classroom and the strengths they represent. For example:

"To my field experiences, I have brought classroom management techniques that were honed in my two camp counseling jobs, where I was frequently in charge of 30 to 40 seven- and eight-year-olds, without any assistance."

"I strongly believe that every child is teachable. This was made real for me when a first-grader who had been diagnosed with a learning disability, and with whom I had been working one-on-one for nearly a semester, had a breakthrough in his reading ability that surprised even his classroom teacher."

**PRACTICAL TIPS**

1. Keep a record of all correspondence.
2. The letter should be addressed to a particular individual in the district. If that person is not apparent from the website, call the district office for that person’s name and title.
3. Use simple, direct language and correct grammar.
4. If mailing or hand-delivering your materials, use plain bond paper in white, off-white, light beige, or light gray. Use the same paper for your cover letters and resumes, and you can use matching envelopes as well.
5. Strive for a “picture frame effect” with your margins. Business letters are folded in thirds and mailed in long envelopes, about 9.5 inches long.
6. Have the Career Center or a mentor carefully proofread your letters for errors.
7. Sign your cover letters. Even when submitting the document digitally, consider printing out your cover letter, signing it, and scanning it to your computer.
8. Make sure your contact information is plainly visible. Ask for an interview and include your phone number and email address in your closing paragraph.
December 3, 2021
Ms. Susan Holiday
Teacher Recruitment
Charleston County Schools
75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29403

Dear Ms. Holiday,

I am a College of Charleston senior graduating in December with a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education with a certification in Math, grades 7-12. Through friends, family, current teachers, and local newspapers, I have heard that the Charleston Charter School for Math & Science will be hiring teachers to fulfill new upper-level mathematics positions. I believe that my education, skills, and teaching experience have prepared me well for a teaching position with CCSMS.

My resume, which has been uploaded on the CERRA online application, notes my experience in teaching mathematics to high school students. High school students need motivation, which I provide through the integration of math concepts into students’ personal interests. During my student teaching at James Island Middle School, I was given a project to create a 21’ x 30’ American flag with my students. I explained how Pythagorean’s Theorem works to create right angles and the students then used this technique to create the flag. Additionally, I created a lesson that integrated other cultures into mathematics, which demonstrates the interdisciplinary skills that I use in my teaching. During the summers, I am an assistant pool manager and a swim coach. Through those jobs I have had the opportunity to hone my interpersonal skills by listening to the concerns of parents and members of the pool.

In addition to my specific interest in this position, I also am interested in the extra-curricular activities that I may be involved with at CCSMS. My solid foundation as a liberal arts student has provided me with the ability to learn quickly, adapt to new situations, and work in a team environment. I believe these qualities make me a competitive candidate for your program.

Thank you for considering my qualifications for the Mathematics teaching position. I will call you the week of December 17th to further discuss this position. In the meantime, if you would like to contact me, please feel welcome to reach me via phone at (843) 555-5555 or email at name@g.cofc.edu.

Sincerely,

Alice Walker
March 5, 2022  
Ms. Linda Huff  
Personnel Director  
Danville County School District  
123 River Blvd.  
Danville, SC 12345  

Dear Ms. Huff:

I am writing to inquire about a teaching position in elementary education listed in the job postings on the CERRA website. I am excited about the possibility of becoming a teacher within the Danville County School District because of your reputation as one of the nation’s finest in education. The students who graduate from your schools outperform the national averages by 20% on the SAT and 10% on the ACT. The focus of instruction in DCSD is in accordance with my own philosophy of teaching—the focus is on what is learned and not what is taught. I believe that my skill incorporating technology and interactive teaching techniques into the classroom and my desire to work in a diverse environment would be an asset to your already remarkable, award winning teaching staff.

In May, I will graduate from College of Charleston with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and will be certified to teach grades 1—8. After studying at College of Charleston, I feel I am fully prepared to take on the position of teacher. I have gained an exceptional amount of experience in the classroom, outside the classroom, and in the schools. Although I was told I would be teaching certain units to the students at Flowertown Elementary School, my cooperating teacher allowed me great freedom in developing and implementing my self-created lessons and assignments in the classroom. Through the experience of creating, teaching and assessing lessons, assignments, quizzes and tests at my elementary school placement, I gained tremendous knowledge in teaching strategies and lesson plan development for elementary school students.

In addition, I have been involved in various organizations and activities while attending College of Charleston. I was part of the Emerging Leader program, President of my fraternity, and participated in numerous community service projects. I have many skills such as being able to work with Microsoft programs, classroom media/technology, and can speak basic Spanish. While attending school, I held several part-time jobs. My ability to multi-task and successfully manage multiple priorities is evident through maintaining my strong GPA while balancing my extracurricular involvement and part-time jobs.

Thank you for considering my qualifications for a teaching position in the Danville County School District. I will send a credential file within the next five days and will follow-up with you the week of March 27th. If you would like to contact me, I am available by phone at 843-555-5555 or via email at name@g.cofc.edu.

Sincerely,

Nate Dame
CAREER FAIR TIPS

BEFORE AN EXPO/FAIR

1. If available, study the list of participating districts/organizations before the event to identify the employers you most want to contact. This will give you extra time to research their organizations and find out more information about available positions. When you arrive at the expo/fair, you’ll have an immediate sense of purpose in seeking out these employers. Based on your research, prepare strong questions to ask the employers to gain a better understanding of fit.

2. If it is a virtual expo, get familiar with the platform prior. Prepare a quiet space that is free from distraction and be mindful of your background. Troubleshoot beforehand and log in early.

3. Dress appropriately. Remember, first impressions count. You want to be taken seriously as a potential candidate for career opportunities, so you should dress as if you were ready to go to work in the organization, even if it is a virtual event. Business professional or business casual attire is acceptable in most cases. If in doubt as to how to dress, ask the Career Center. See the article below for more information.

4. Take copies of your resume to leave with recruiters, and prepare more than you think you will need.

DURING AN EXPO/FAIR

1. Once you arrive at an in-person expo/career fair, you will sign in and pick up a name tag. Be sure to pick up the list of participating school districts at the registration table. Before you go into the event, review the list and prioritize your list of recruiters to visit.

2. At the expo/career fair, you should approach all recruiters representing districts of interest to you. Talk with as many representatives as possible! If you are not familiar with the district/organization, ask questions! These employers are attending this event in order to talk with you about available positions.

3. Broaden your focus and include many different districts. For instance, you may not have considered working in another district or even a different part of the United States.

4. Be prepared to introduce yourself and to let the recruiter know your qualifications and interests. For example, “Hello, my name is Jane Smith, and I am a senior majoring in Special Education. I am very interested in your district and would like to speak to you about current or upcoming opportunities.” Once you know what to say when approaching recruiters, you’ll feel more comfortable. (See the Interviewing section for tips!)

5. When you leave your resume with an employer, or toward the closing of a virtual session, ask what the next step is in the application/interview process.

6. Collect literature, including the recruiter’s business card, for follow-up discussions or later correspondence purposes. In a virtual event, be sure to write down the recruiter’s email address.

7. Don’t be surprised if you are interviewed on the spot. Do not rush into signing anything without considering your future goals and plans. It is okay to ask the recruiter for additional time to consider the offer.

ATTIRE

The most professional attire involves a two or three button dark suit with a tie for men and a conservative skirted suit or pant suit with medium to low heels for women. Shoes should match the suit and accessories should be minimal. Should you choose to dress business casual, focus more on the word “business” than the word “casual.” Attire should still be professional, but less formal than business professional. Nice slacks and a blouse, a button-up, or a polo would be appropriate. Avoid sleeveless shirts or spaghetti straps, and avoid jeans and tight pants. Consider adding a blazer for a more polished look. Add professional closed-toe shoes and accessories.

Jewelry should be kept simple and non-distracting. Add a tie that is solid colored or that has a plain pattern. Select a handbag that compliments your attire and that can hold all your belongings so your hands will be open to initiate a handshake. Avoid perfume or cologne.
AFTER AN EXPO/FAIR

1. Follow up with a short note of thanks to the recruiters who are employed with the districts/organizations that remain of interest to you after the career fair. Students often ask how they can “stand out” above the crowd at events such as this. Sending a follow-up letter within 48 hours of the fair is one way.

2. Follow up with formal applications. Make sure your application package is complete and submitted as directed by the district or school.

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTER

Ms. Susan Holiday
Teacher Recruitment
Charleston County Schools
75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29403

Dear Ms. Holiday,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to interview for the 7th grade Mathematics teacher position with Charleston Charter School for Math & Science. I particularly enjoyed learning more about the creative opportunities this position has to offer.

My enthusiasm for the position strengthened considerably as a result of my interview with you yesterday, especially after learning about the availability of advanced technology resources in the classrooms. I am confident my education, experience, and SMART Board training continue to match those required of your posted position. As you may recall from my interview, my experiences as a clinical practice intern with Wando High School and my field experiences have given me the knowledge necessary to meet the growing demands of this position. I am confident I will be able to make significant contributions to your students and the Charleston County School District.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my very strong interest in the position and in working at CCSMS. If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me at (843)-555-5555 or name@g.cofc.edu. Again, thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Antoine Anderson
DEVELOPING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

“Tell me about yourself.” If you have ever been on a job interview, you have probably been asked this dreaded question. Interviewers ask this question to get an overall sense about you, but they are not interested in hearing a 15-minute recitation of your life story. Rather, they are interested in a brief overview of your career-related background, which is why a 60-second elevator pitch is the best strategy to use when faced with this vague question. You want to make sure to give a positive first impression when answering this question as it can set the tone for the entire interview.

The key to an effective elevator pitch is to keep it career-related. This strategy should highlight your education, experience, and goals. Your pitch can be easily organized by answering the three following questions:

Who are you and where are you now? Focus on your college education: Major, certification, graduation date, etc.

Where have you been? Focus on your experiences, particularly your career-related experiences, as these will be most relevant to the employer. Be sure to include specific skills that are transferable to the position for which you are interviewing.

Where are you going? Focus on your career objective or future goals and the ways in which you can be of assistance to the school or district with which you are interviewing. Do your homework on the school/district(s) beforehand. You will want to explain how your unique skill set meets their needs.

*The best way to prepare is to first write a rough draft response to these questions. Next, practice! Say the words out loud so you are accustomed to hearing yourself talk about your skills and experience. And don’t forget to come up with questions to ask them – research the school/district!

COMMONLY ASKED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Getting to Know You
- Why did you choose this profession as a career?
- What makes you the best candidate for this position?
- Describe a personal experience which had an impact on your teaching.

Interpersonal Skills
- If I spoke with your students (cooperating teacher, supervisor, principal, or friends), what three words would they use to describe you?
- If confronted by an angry parent (colleague) on an issue, how would you best respond?
- How would you facilitate collaboration between home and school?
- How would you respond to a student who asked for your advice on a difficult personal situation?

Instruction
- Describe a typical class period.
- What instructional strategies have you found most effective?
- Describe a lesson which was particularly successful by walking me through each stage from planning through delivery.
- Describe how you have differentiated a lesson to accommodate varying student needs.
- How would you motivate a reluctant learner?

Assessment
- How do you measure student success?
- What would you do to improve student achievement?

Classroom Management
- What type of classroom management plan would you implement?
- Describe the toughest discipline situation you encountered and how you handled it.

Self-Analysis
- During your student teaching experience, what did you find most challenging?
- Describe a time when you were in a difficult situation and explain how you resolved it.
- Describe in detail your best and worst days in the classroom.
- Describe the best lesson you taught and explain why it was great.
- Describe a challenge you encountered during student teaching. What did you learn from it?

Other
- What are your long term goals?
- What new ideas would you bring to our school?
- Is there anything that I didn’t ask you that you were hoping I would?
AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Ask for a business card at the close of the interview to ensure that you have proper contact information. Thank the interviewer(s) for their time and shake hands firmly. Indicate that you look forward to hearing from them and welcome them to contact you if they need any additional information. Send a thank-you letter within 48 hours reiterating your interest in the position.

If you do not hear from the employer within the time frame indicated, make a follow-up phone call to let him/her know you are still interested in the position and to find out if there are additional questions you might address.

SECOND INTERVIEW

You may be asked for a second interview after your initial screening interview. If the initial interview was held at a location other than at the school/district’s facility (i.e. at an expo/career fair), you may be asked to visit the school/district’s office for this subsequent interview. The follow-up interview will allow for a more in-depth conversation with the employer and often with additional members of the organization. An invitation for a follow-up interview suggests that the employer is very interested in considering you for employment.

You will be expected to expand upon the areas you discussed in your first interview, and you will have more opportunities to ask questions. Be prepared to do so. Plan to spend most of one day for this interview.

During the second interview:
- Be professional at all times – from interviews to dinner engagements. These are not social events. Stay away from messy foods and from alcoholic beverages.
- Stay away from ordering the most expensive or least expensive item on the menu if your visit includes a dinner engagement.
- You may be asked to take a test on anything from your basic skills to your personality. Relax, take your time, and do your best.
- You should view the second interview as an opportunity to evaluate the school/district and decide if this is an organization you want to work for.

If you are asked for feedback about your experiences in the second interview, be positive and constructive if you are interested in the position. After the interview, review and record your recollections. This will be helpful if you are interviewing with a number of schools and want to compare them on several points. Write a thank-you letter to each person with whom you spent a portion of the day.

TRAVELING FOR AN INTERVIEW

- Be sure to check your schedule regarding classes, tests, etc. before confirming a date for a follow-up interview, as prior arrangements may have to be made with professors and for travel. The employer will most likely be willing to work with you in arranging suitable dates for your interview.
- The school/district contact person should provide you with an itinerary of what will be involved in the second interview/site visit. It is acceptable to request an itinerary, information on how to dress, and items you should provide, such as college transcripts.
- Travel arrangements can be handled in a number of ways. You may be asked to make your own arrangements or the organization may coordinate your travel arrangements. If the school/district is making your travel arrangements, verify what expenses will be prepaid and what will be reimbursed.
- If the employer is paying for your hotel expenses, be considerate of this and do not charge personal calls to your room, order movies, etc.
- If you are to be reimbursed for expenses, keep receipts and document the mileage on your personal car.
- Be sure you have clear directions to your hotel and the location of your interview. Check on parking options if you are driving.
- Take a major credit card and/or cash to handle unexpected expenses and incidentals.