interviewing
principles and practices

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INTERVIEWING

Principles and Practices

TENTH EDITION

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This 10th edition of *Interviewing: Principles and Practices* continues to reflect the growing sophistication with which interviewing is being approached, the ever-expanding body of research in all types of interview settings, recent interpersonal communication theory, and the importance of equal opportunity laws on interviewing practices. We have made a concerted effort to include the latest research findings and developments throughout the text while continuing to maintain the emphasis on building interviewing skills for both interviewers and interviewees. The increasing diversification of the American workplace and the influences of the global village receive special treatment in several chapters.

We have attempted to make this edition more student friendly with more precise paragraphs, additional subheadings, bullets that help to identify principles and guidelines, and bold print that calls attention to important words and phrases. Important guidelines, observations, principles, and cautions appear in the margins. A list of key words is provided at the end of each chapter as well as a glossary of important terms and theories at the end of the text.

Each chapter includes new or revised examples and illustrations, student activities, suggested readings, and an interview that gives students an opportunity to apply theory and principles to a variety of realistic interviews. In each interview, the parties do some things well and others poorly. We want students to be able to identify these and to offer alternatives to the shortcomings. We have restructured several chapters so they follow a more natural sequence of steps when conducting or taking part in probing, survey, recruiting, employment, performance review, persuasion, counseling, and health care interviews.

Chapter 1 develops a definition of interviewing in detail, identifies types of interviews, discusses the uses of interviewing, and addresses common criticisms of interviews. Students are introduced to the growing use of electronic interviews such as telephone interviews, conference calls, video talk-back meetings, and the Internet. This chapter gives students a thorough introduction to the nature, types, and uses of interviews to prepare them for the interviewing process discussed in Chapter 2.

Chapter 2 takes students through a step-by-step development of the Cash-Stewart model of interviewing as it treats the interview as a complex interpersonal communication process. It contains a theoretical treatment of relationships in interviews, how perceptions affect relationships, the nature and development of relationships in other cultures and countries, and how women and men differ in their relationships. This chapter emphasizes the importance of self-concept and self-esteem in interviews and how concepts such as self-image, self-esteem, and self-reliance differ in non-Western cultures that are collectivist rather than individualist. The discussion of the importance of self-disclosure in interviews incorporates politeness theory and notes how self-disclosure differs between sexes and among cultures. The nature and uses of verbal and

nonverbal communication are highlighted and so are language use and space according to age, sex, culture, and ethnicity. John Stewart's notion of dialogic listening is developed as listening for resolution and presented with the traditional treatments of listening for comprehension, empathy, and evaluation. And students are introduced to the potential influences of "outside forces" on each interview party.

Chapter 3 introduces students to the many types and uses of questions in interviews, literally the tools of the trade. It contains an expanded identification and illustration of common question pitfalls that plague both parties in interviews. This chapter discusses the apparent relevance of questions to interviewers and interviewees from other cultures. It also addresses responses to questions that require personal disclosure and how men and women and those of differing cultures may disclose information differently.

Chapter 4 focuses on the structure of interviews including openings, body, and closings. It emphasizes how verbal and nonverbal communication in openings and closings differ between males and females and how cultures other than Western ones regard handshaking, touching, and eye contact. This chapter now contains a discussion of question sequences as well as outline sequences in discussions of interview guides and schedules to help students develop the bodies of interviews.

Chapter 5 on the probing interview introduces students to the journalistic interview but focuses primarily on ways to enhance the effectiveness of probing interviews in a wide variety of situations. It applies probing principles to interviews conducted by attorneys, police officers, recruiters, health care professionals, insurance claims investigators, and teachers, as well as journalists. There is strong emphasis on preparation, relationship, and motivation.

Chapter 6 on the survey interview stresses the importance of meticulous preparation, structure, question development, and conducting of interviews when replicability and reliability are essential to successful outcomes. Special attention is given to question strategies and scales and to methods of sampling the target population.

Chapter 7 is now called The Recruiting Interview to reflect more accurately the employer's roles of attracting as well as selecting new employees. It contains new discussions of recruiting in a rapidly changing world, assessing what applicants want in positions and careers, use of computers and the Internet to attract and inform applicants, and job fairs. This chapter continues to refine its discussion of electronic systems for scanning resumes, quantitative tests to assess applicants, videotaping and videoconferencing, the behavior-based interview, nontraditional interviewing approaches, and on-the-job questions.

Chapter 8 addresses the selection interview from the applicant's perspective. It contains new discussions of the changing world of work, the reality of cultural diversity, the universal skills and attitudes essential for work in the 21st century, databases and Internet resources for searching for positions and learning about organizations, positions, and career or job fairs. There are additional guidelines for preparing resumes and cover letters and sample resumes, including one designed for electronic scanning.

Chapter 9 on performance review interviews contains new discussions of visions for organizations in the 21st century, the balanced scorecard approach, preparing for the review, and the force choice review model. This chapter continues to introduce students to a variety of models for conducting performance reviews. It also introduces students

to the performance problem interview that avoids the negative connotation and implication of guilt associated with the old discipline interview.

Chapter 10 on the persuasive interview incorporates discussions of several persuasion theories, including identification, balance or consistency, inoculation, forced or induced compliance, and psychological reactance. Its focus is on persuasion in everyday life, not merely sales situations. This chapter also addresses values differences in cultures and how cultures view time, bargaining, and relationship building. Cultures and genders differ with respect to socializing, small talk, and turn-taking during interviews.

Chapter 11 focuses on preparing, structuring, and conducting counseling interviews by lay counselors who have minimal training in counseling. It emphasizes the need for self-analysis as well as analysis of the interviewee, selection of appropriate interviewing approaches, listening, observing, and responding in appropriate and effective ways. The interviewer must be people-oriented rather than task-oriented. Students are introduced to a sequential phase model and a client-centered approach to counseling.

Chapter 12 on health care interviews is reorganized to focus more clearly on the roles, relationships, and interactions of the two parties, health care provider and patient. It discusses the effect of gender, age, ethnic group, and culture on the provider-patient relationship. This chapter notes differences in information seeking, nonverbal interactions, and preference for verbal communication among differing cultures.

Some of the principles and guidelines presented in these 12 chapters may seem simple or obvious. However, in our experiences as professors, managers, practitioners, and consultants in the area of interviewing in academic, professional, industrial, business, and social settings, we have found again and again that overlooking the simple and the obvious creates problems in real-life interviews.

We have included a sample interview at the end of each chapter, *not* as a perfect example of interviewing but to illustrate interviewing types, situations, approaches, and *mistakes* and to challenge students to distinguish between effective and ineffective interviewing practices. We believe that students learn a great deal by applying the research and principles learned in a chapter to a realistic interview that allows them to detect when interview parties are right on target as well as when they miss the target completely. The role-playing cases at the end of Chapters 5 through 12 provide students with opportunities to design and conduct practice interviews and to observe others' efforts to employ the principles discussed. Student activities at the end of each chapter provide ideas for in- and out-of-class exercises, experiences, and information gathering. We have made many of these less complex and time-consuming. The up-to-date readings at the end of each chapter will help students and instructors who are interested in delving more deeply into specific topics, theories, and types of interviews. The new glossary provides students with definitions of key words and concepts introduced throughout the text.

This book is designed for courses in such departments as speech, communication, journalism, business, supervision, education, political science, nursing, and social work. It is also useful in workshops in various fields. We believe this book is of value to beginning students as well as to seasoned veterans because the principles, research, and techniques are changing rapidly in many fields. We have treated theory and research findings where applicable, but our primary concern is with principles and techniques that can be translated into immediate practice in and out of the classroom.

CONTENTS

An Introduction to Interviewing

Interviews are daily occurrences.

Did you take part in an interview today? Don't think so? Well, think about your day. Did you talk to a professor about a grade? Schedule next semester's classes with your advisor? Talk to a friend about a personal problem? Sell your old waterbed? Rent a new apartment? Give directions to the Admissions Office to a family visiting your campus? Try to convince a roommate to visit elsewhere with a significant other? Respond to a telemarketer at dinner time? Take part in a performance review with your manager? Talk to a physician about a painful knee? If you took part in any of these or similar activities, you took part in interviews. Rarely does a day pass without our being involved in a variety of interviews because they are the most common form of purposeful, planned communication.

Interviews range from the simple to the complex.

Interviews range from informal to formal, unstructured to structured, simplistic to sophisticated, a few minutes to a few hours, supportive to threatening. During an interview, you may give or get information, counsel or be counseled, obtain a position or recruit a good employee, review or be reviewed, persuade or be persuaded. Your relationship may be as stranger or intimate acquaintance, friend or antagonist, competitor or team player, superior or subordinate.

This chapter defines each essential element of interviewing, distinguishes interviewing from other forms of interpersonal communication, identifies types of interviews, and discusses the uses and abuses of interviews.

Interviewing Defined

Interviews share many characteristics with intimate interactions, conversations, small groups, and presentations, but they are significantly different.

Interactional

Interviews involve exchanging and sharing.

An interview is **interactional** because there is an **exchanging**, or sharing, of roles, responsibilities, feelings, beliefs, motives, and information. If one person does all of the talking and the other all of the listening, a speech to an audience of one, not an interview, is taking place. You may exchange the roles of interviewer and interviewee as an interview progresses. For instance, if you ask questions about a new computer, make a counteroffer for an apartment, ask questions of a recruiter, or request a nurse or physician to clarify a question or information, you assume the role of interviewer for the

Roles may switch from moment to moment.

moment even though your primary role may be interviewee. When the other party replies to your questions or makes a counteroffer, he or she reassumes the role of interviewer.

Interactional does not mean equal. In some interviews, such as journalistic, counseling, and recruiting, an ideal division of speaking time might be 70 percent to 30 percent, with the interviewee doing most of the talking. In others, such as information giving and sales, the ratio might be reversed with the interviewer doing most of the talking and questioning. A key to successful interviewing is for both parties to determine an appropriate ratio.

It takes two to make an interview a success.

Interactional also means a sharing of responsibilities during interviews. When thinking of common interviews such as recruiting, journalistic, health care, and persuasive, we tend to focus on the responsibilities of one party—the applicant in the recruiting interview, the investigator or correspondent in the journalistic interview, the health care professional in the medical interview, and the salesperson in the persuasive interview. Both parties are responsible for the success or failure of each interview. For example, the recruiter is responsible for studying the applicant's credentials, preparing insightful and challenging questions, being up-to-date on information about the organization, and replying honestly and fully to the applicant's questions. On the other hand, the applicant is responsible for doing a careful self-analysis, preparing thorough and honest credentials, researching the organization and position, replying honestly and fully to questions, and asking carefully phrased questions about the position and organization. You cannot expect assistance from a counselor or instructor without disclosing information about a problem and a willingness to accept and abide by the counsel received. It takes two parties to make an interview a success. That is why we will address the roles of both interviewer and interviewee throughout this book.

Disclosure is essential in interviews.

Few interviews are successful if either party is unwilling to share feelings, beliefs, motives, and information. Before an interview begins, be aware of your **feelings** (pride, fear, anger, sympathy), **motives** (security, belonging, freedom, ambition), **beliefs** (social, political, historic, economic, religious), and **information** (facts, data, opinions) and those of the other party. Sarah Trenholm and Arthur Jensen address this as a "mutual activity" of creating and sharing meanings.[1] Our creating and sharing comes from words and nonverbal signals—touches, hugs, handshakes, and facial looks—that express interest, concerns, and reactions.

All interviews involve risk.

An interview cannot succeed if either party withholds important feelings, motives, beliefs, and information. Imagine how an interview would turn out if you were reluctant to tell a supervisor about defects in a product, express your feelings about a person your company wants to hire or promote, or reveal attitudes that conflict with those of a client. Close interpersonal interchanges such as interviews involve risk that can be minimized but never eliminated, and if either party "plays it safe," the interview is likely to fail.

Process

An interview is a complex, ever-changing process.

A **process** is a dynamic, continuing, ever-changing interaction of variables with a degree of **system** or **structure.** The parties in each interaction generate energy through their desires to achieve specific goals. Communication interactions are not static. Role changes, exchanges of information, and revelations of feelings and motives produce reactions and

insights that lead to new and unexpected areas of insight and exploration. Although each interview is unique in some respects, all involve an interaction of communication ingredients such as perceptions, verbal and nonverbal messages, levels of disclosure, feedback, listening, motivation, expectations, and assumptions.

No interview occurs in a vacuum.

Recent research reveals how sex, age, and culture may affect the dynamics of the communication process and the outcome of an interview. Each interview occurs at a specific time and on a specific date; takes place at a specific place surrounded by objects, persons, and sounds; and is preceded or followed by events that may impact it for good or ill. Each party brings knowledge, experiences, expectations, pressures, and personal limitations to the interaction.

Once initiated, the interview is an ongoing process.

Like other processes, once an interview begins, we "cannot not communicate."[2] We may communicate effectively or poorly, but we will communicate something as long as we are within sight or sound of one another. The result may be success or failure in obtaining or offering counsel, an employment opportunity, accurate information, health care, or a performance review. Chapter 2 develops a general summary model that introduces, discusses, and illustrates the many variables that interact in the interviewing process.

Parties

Interviews may involve two or more *people* (two recruiters interviewing an applicant, a reporter interviewing a family about a fire in their home, three friends discussing spring break plans with a travel agent, mother and father discussing a child's behavior with a psychologist). An interview never involves more than **two parties**—an interviewer party and an interviewee party. If more than two parties are involved (four students discussing how to conduct a field project or three potential buyers from different companies checking out a piece of land), a small group interaction may be occurring, but not an interview.

A dyadic process involves two parties.

There are no distinct interviewer and interviewee parties. The interview is a **dyadic** process, and adding parties transforms it into a distinctly different communication process with multiple parties interacting.

More than two people may be involved in an interview, but never more than two parties—an interviewer party and an interviewee party.

photo by Jose L. Pelaez

Purpose

At least one of the two parties (and preferably both) must come to an interview with an important goal—other than mere enjoyment—and intention to focus on specific subject matter. This **predetermined** and serious purpose distinguishes the interview from social **conversation** or informal, unplanned interactions such as meeting an acquaintance at the mall. While conversations are rarely