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SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION MAJORS

OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

ADMINISTRATORS/STAFF

- Please describe an outstanding teacher to me? What kind of person do you like to work for?
- If you could establish an ideal school, what would it be like?
- If you were to tailor-make an in-service program for you, what should be included? Describe how you could be an effective communicator as part of the school community. (parents / staff)
- What kind of people do you find it difficult to work with and why? – Applicable to all three categories. (faculty, parents, students)
- What do you do when a supervisor or principal criticizes a teaching technique that you are using?

CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

- Describe your philosophy regarding discipline.
- What was the most challenging discipline problem you've encountered and how did you handle it?
- What techniques would you use to handle discipline problems that may arise in your classroom? What kind of rules do you have in your classroom? How are they established?
- What do you feel are the most important factors in classroom control?
- What techniques do you use to increase the probability that pupils will behave appropriately? How would you create and promote a safe atmosphere within your classroom?
- How do you recognize and respond to individual differences and what behavior might you expect?
- After school you come across a pupil whom you know who is crying. He's 16 years old. You ask him what is the matter, and he says he was caught cheating. What would you do?

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

- What is your classroom management plan/style? What are your goals? I walk into your classroom. What would it look, feel, and sound like? Describe the first day of class.
- Describe your organization, management strategies.
- What role does classroom management play in the educational process? What does "teamwork" mean to you? Give an example.
- Given the multitude of material that must be taught what is the optimum way to cover all subjects and still meet individual needs? How does your management of your classroom facilitate this?
- How do you evaluate student learning in your classroom (formally and informally)? Do you know a person who is a good listener? Describe that person as a listener. How can you tell when you are doing a good job of listening?
- When students say they want their teacher to be fair, what do you think they mean? Describe a situation in your last job when you felt pressure. How did you handle it? What would you do if 50% of a class did poorly on a test?
- A student tells his teacher that he forgot to bring his paper which he had written the night before. The teacher says, "I understand. I sometimes forget things like that too." How do you evaluate the way this teacher responded to the student?
- Describe your classroom management?
- If a student with a significant behavioral concern is disruptive, what strategies would you use? How would students in "your" class describe you as their teacher? Why?

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

- Describe the best lesson you have delivered. Why was it successful? Tell us two ways you can grade and evaluate student work.
- Describe your typical lesson. What does it include and who participates – how do they participate (what activities occur)?
- How important is success in learning? How do you help pupils experience success? Tell us how you assess your students to determine how well they are learning.
- Do you feel that the teacher should be responsible for developing objectives or should they be provided in the curriculum?
- It seems like there is never enough time to cover the curriculum or to get children to master content and skills. Would you comment on that?
- How would you assess your effectiveness as a teacher?
- What was your most creative lesson for reading to help the struggling reader?
- What are the most current and effective trends in teaching mathematics and reading? Describe the teaching techniques or strategies that are most effective for you.
- How would you include cooperative learning in class teaching?
- If pupils were having difficulty learning a skill or concept, what would you do? What techniques would you use to be sure that pupils understand?
- What do you include when you write objectives?
- How can individualization actually be practiced in the classroom? How would you put individualization into practice?
- How do you feel when a student fails?
- What techniques do you use to keep pupils actively involved during a lesson? What are your beliefs about reinforcement of pupils?
- How do you end a lesson?
- Is drill and practice important? How and when would you use it?
- What would you do to insure that children understand exactly what is expected of them in a homework assignment?
- Are you constantly searching for things you can show, tell, or demonstrated to pupils? Tell us about some recent discovery, something that you have found.
- How do you deal with the unmotivated student?
- Tell me about some specific motivational strategies to get students excited about learning. Given the multitude of material that must be taught what is the optimum way to cover all subjects and still meet individual needs? How does your management of your classroom facilitate this?
- What is the most important "thing" a student could learn in your class?
- Explain how you have changed your lesson plan preparation and presentation to students as you have gained experience.
- How do you differentiate instruction?
- Teaching Algebra to students entering the ninth grade in September will be a challenge. Many of the children have not acquired successful strategies for problem solving and critical thinking. Where would you begin if this were your classroom? What would you do at your grade level to better prepare students for this challenge?
- Describe some ways you would teach literacy skills in a content area. What strategies might you incorporate to meet the needs of all learners?
- Share how you would go about the process of determining accommodations for a special needs student.

KNOWLEDGE OF CONTENT/MATERIALS

- What special course work have you taken that you feel has made you especially suited for the position you are applying?
- What kinds of materials and supplies would you need to do your best job?
- What kinds of materials have you used to assess pupil strengths and/or weaknesses?
- Are there any materials you have used that you find are especially effective for slow learners or bright students?
- What kinds of tests do you like to give?
- How do you organize your teaching supplies and/or materials?
- Describe your educational background and teaching experience related to your subject area? What curricular changes do you hope to see over the next few years?
- How do you stay current in your field?

PLANNING SKILLS

- How well organized are you? Why is organization important for a teacher? What do you include in your daily lesson plans?
- Do you prefer to do long term or short term plans? How do you plan for instruction? How closely do you follow your plans?
- How do you feel when you don't meet a deadline? What do you do when pupils do not meet their deadlines?
- Describe for me the organization that goes into your planning for a lesson. I'm sitting in the back of your classroom; in some detail tell me what I see as you implement the lesson just described.
- What are some of the considerations you make when planning your lessons? How do you go about planning a unit?
- How much homework will you assign? How do you know how long it will take your student?

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Discuss your student teaching experience. What you liked/disliked? Changes you would have made?
- Please review for us your teaching experiences such as subjects, years, location, etc.
- Please tell me about your most challenging experience while working with children and how you handled it.
- Discuss your feelings/experience regarding your work in an urban setting. When did you first become interested in teaching?
- Tell us about your other school-related experiences such as extra-curricular activities, committees, curriculum development, etc.
- What experience do you have teaching writing skills? What experience do you have with in-class support?
- What opportunities have you had to bring multicultural education into your classroom? How well has your college/university prepared you for the field of teaching?
- What experiences have you had with students from culturally diverse backgrounds?
- What are some ways you establish an environment of respect and equity among students? What are some ways you see yourself being involved in your school beyond the classroom? How might you respond to an angry parent?

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATION MAJORS

OFFICE OF CAREER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

SLIPPERY ROCK UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

- Describe your professional experiences in education and counseling.
- What experience have you had working with other agencies, such as UST, Adult, and Family Services, etc.?
- What is your personal theory on student confidentiality?
- How would you work with a student who is failing most classes, not attending school and parents aren't very supportive?
- Describe your methods of monitoring your students academically. Describe your experiences working as a member of a Pre-Referral Team.
- If you had an opportunity to offer classroom workshops, what topics would you address and how would you approach them?
- How have you dealt with issues of bullying, depression, anxiety, and substance abuse & prevention?
- Tell us about a difficult interaction you have had with a parent?
- What is most important to know about you as an individual, and why do you feel this is important? (Note: doesn't have to be limited to teaching)
- How would you rate your computer skills? Do you have any questions for us?
- How do you perceive communication with other counselors/ administration/ staff?
- How would you handle this situation: parent calls you because a teacher allegedly acted inappropriately towards their child?
- How do you plan to implement the state/national comprehensive school counseling plan? Describe your section 504 experience. Your referral experience.
- Tell us about a time when you talked with a student about a personal matter when they were at risk/ in crisis/ stable. What if you had an important meeting to go to? How do you use data to assess your counseling?
- A student shares with you that they do not like a teacher. What do you do?
- What would you do with a student who frequently misses school and has failing grades?
- What role do you take when working collaboratively with others?
- Tell us about a time when you worked with a team on a challenge. What was the situation? How did you respond? What would you do differently?

MUSIC TEACHERS

- Why should music be a part of the school curriculum? Do you have any background with Orff-Kodaly?
- Would you be open to interdisciplinary projects with the classroom teachers? Can you give an example for a project?
- How would you go about recruiting students of band and orchestra? What is the purpose or value of an instrumental music program?
- Describe what we could expect for a kindergarten concert. (i.e., music, props, purpose, educational benefits, etc.)
- Describe the first day's general music class.
- What are your goals for kindergarten general music students? What are your experiences with special education students?
- How would you coordinate special education classes with regular classes? How would you schedule lessons?
- What lesson books, methods, and materials would you use?
- What are your teaching priorities in the first year? What skills are most important for the students to acquire?
- What would be the retention rate that you would expect after one year? After two years? How would you encourage students to remain in the band and orchestra program?

ART TEACHERS

- How would you handle special needs students in your art class? What would you do if an art lesson didn't work well?
- What five things do you want your elementary students to know when they leave the classroom? Middle school students? High school students?
- What do you expect elementary students to know when they leave the classroom? Middle school students? High school students?
- What projects do you introduce to develop your students skills in art?
- What are your specific art curriculum goals for elementary students? Middle school students? High school students?
- Please name for me three of the state standards for elementary art.
- What are some of the knowledge and skills that an art teacher needs to be effective in the classroom?
- What projects and art shows have you been involved with in teaching art? What is your experience with using computers in the art classroom?
- Do you connect your art lessons to other subjects? If so, how do you do this? Do you coordinate your lessons with other teachers?
- Does an art teacher play a role in assisting students as they prepare to take state standardized tests? If so, what is this role?
- How do you feel about students pulled from your art class for tutoring for standardized testing?
- How do you respond to a school board member who claims that art doesn't belong in the school?
- Briefly describe your philosophy of art education and how you intend to get that philosophy across in your teaching.
- How would you budget for your elementary or secondary art classroom? What supplies do you need to buy? What supplies would students have to supply?
- What does your ideal art classroom look like?
- How do you assess the progress of your students in art?
- What is your favorite aspect of art? What is your least favorite?
- What level of students do you enjoy teaching the most? What level is the least enjoyable?
- How will you get to know the names and dispositions of your art students, especially when you may teach several hundred students over the course of a week?

QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON STUDENTS

- Are you willing to sponsor any extra-curricular activities? How would your students describe you as a teacher? How do you want students to view you?
- Do you want pupils to like you? Why?
- As a teacher, should you intentionally try to build rapport with your students? How? How can you get students to be excited about learning?
- What do you value most in a child?
- Should a teacher intentionally use humor in the classroom? How do you use humor in the classroom?
- Have you developed any new ideas about teaching in the past few months? Describe one or two of them.
- If I were a child why would I want to be in your classroom?
- Do you have a specific grade level/age that you prefer to teach? Why?
- What do you feel is important for you to know about the students with whom you work? How do you go about gathering this information?

QUESTIONS REGARDING PARENTS

- Describe your approach with a parent who is upset with you – and you know you are right.
- What are some methods of communicating student progress to parents other than report cards?
- How do you feel about parent contact?
- Write a letter to a parent explaining why you will not recommend moving the child to a higher math grouping (or more advanced math class).

QUESTIONS REGARDING PERSONAL QUALITIES

- Why have you selected teaching as a profession?
- Tell us about yourself and why are you interested in this school district and/or position? What do you consider to be your major strength you bring to the classroom?
- What do you believe is the one area you want to work on improving? What distinguishes you from other candidate?
- Who influenced your choice to become a teacher? How?
- What are your career goals, short term and long term?
- What do you bring to the community besides your educational background?
- Is there anything you would like to add to help us evaluate your candidacy? Reason for leaving prior company/school?
- Describe yourself as "the teacher"? What makes you an effective teacher? What do you enjoy most about teaching?
- If I were to contact your references, what do you think they would say about you? What is your mission? What are your beliefs about the significance of education? Tell me three things you believe about teaching.
- What gives you pride?
- Describe your fears of being a teacher. Describe your heroes.
- Would you describe yourself as a team player or individual achiever?
- Would you tell us what you have read in the past two months? Why have you done this reading?

QUESTIONS REGARDING TECHNICAL SKILLS

- How would you apply technology to enhance instruction and increase student learning and achievement?
- Explain your skills using a computer – address classroom management (ex: grade book), instructional, etc.
- Are you comfortable with the use of technology in the classroom?
- What are some ways you and students will use technology in your classroom? Describe your experience and skills in terms of applying technology.
- What do you believe distinguishes a good teacher from a great teacher (values, skills, knowledge)?
- Discuss the processes of assessment and documentation of student learning in your classroom (rubrics, portfolios, student-involved-assessment, standards-based assessment, assessment of and for learning, quantitative/qualitative).

MISCELLANEOUS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- How has the American Education been successful over the past twenty years? Tell us what you know about the Pennsylvania standards and the PSSA.
- What educational research do you find most compelling and how have you incorporated it into your classroom?
- What current educational trends do you consider have the most impact and how do you implement them?
- Please respond to the following statement:
 - How would you define development as it relates to the children in your classroom?
- Important human characteristics are believed to be innate endowments, fixed at birth, distributed unequally among the population and among different population groups.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ADMINISTRATORS

- What is your method of training new employees? Is there a new teacher mentoring program?
- What are some of the common denominators among the districts successful employees? How does the organization define a successful individual?
- How does the administration work with teachers to improve instruction?
- How is performance evaluated and how often? What measures of success are used? In what area does the school district excel, or in what area does it have limitations?
- What is it about the organization that attracted you in the first place and kept you there?
- What technology resources will be available to me in the classroom?
- Based on what you have seen of me so far, where do you think I could contribute most effectively?
- Are the employees encouraged to take courses of graduate study? Is tuition reimbursed? What type of orientation would I receive?
- How can I become familiar with the policies and etiquette? Which grades are responsible for what topics?
- Who has the responsibility for a particular topic?
- Are there school psychologists, counselors, or public agencies that help students and teachers? What types of media resources are available?
- How is the budget for this academic program developed? What textbooks do you use in this subject area?
- Describe the district's textbook adoption policies. Tell me about supervision visits.
- How often are performance reviews done?
- How would you describe the typical professional staff member in this district? Does the staff spend time together outside normal school hours?
- How active are teachers working with community organizations? Tell me about the students who attend this school.
- How involved are parents in school activities?
- What do parents expect of teachers in the district?
- What are some of the major short and long-range goals that the district has? What are some of the characteristics that the district considers to be unique? How has the district changed over the past five or ten years?
- What new projects or ventures are contemplated in the near future? What future challenges does this department face? What is your biggest departmental problem?
- In reviewing your organizational literature, I noticed that you recently _____. How is that progressing?
- What types of school activities promote parent-teacher-student interaction? What discipline procedures does the district use?
- To what extent do staff members work collaboratively to solve problems and respond to the needs of the students?
- Can you tell me what kind of person you hope to hire for this position? What types of skills and attributes would be the most beneficial in the short/long run for an effective career here?
- What professional skills do you expect of the person you hire? What characteristics do you think are important for this position?
- Do employees of the department participate in professional associations? Conferences? Are employees encouraged to do so? What is the budget for this activity?
- What does the community expect of activity sponsors? Are there auxiliary groups involved in the activity?
- Are there fundraising requirements that are a part of this activity? Are other faculty members also assigned to this activity?