

Tips to Help Student Teachers Crush a Video Interview

For many pre-service teachers, the chances of landing a teaching position have never been higher. School districts nationwide are desperately seeking applicants to fill their vacancies and are turning to technology to help them expand their recruiting efforts. According to IDG, the world's leading technology media, data and marketing services company, the infusion of video interviews into the talent acquisition process was one of the top five recruiting trends for 2018. As a result, your chances of being granted a video interview have increased dramatically too!

Video interviews come in two forms; however, the fastest growing type is called the one-way or pre-recorded video interview. With this type the candidates are granted a set amount of time to record their answers to questions that are posed to them either in print on their device screen or through a video clip. Often, a recruiter is shown "asking" the questions and then the candidate has 2-4 minutes to respond to each question. Generally, you can expect to receive 4-6 questions and your recorded responses will then be shared with other employees within that school district. While they do take some getting used to, one-way video interviews are convenient for both the employer and the candidates, such that candidates can complete their interviews as their schedules allow without taking time off work or student teaching to travel to the interview site.

If you receive an invitation for a one-way video interview, treat it just like a regular interview, as these are often used to screen applicants and determine who will be granted a live interview later. Most software systems will guide you through a practice recording session to familiarize you with the technology, but often you will not be allowed to erase and record a second response once you've seen the interview questions so be sure to practice first! Also, you will be allowed some time after the question is presented to gather your thoughts...generally about 30-60 seconds. After this "question-processing time" expires, the system will start recording your image and you should then begin answering the question. Lastly, a countdown timer is displayed on the screen so you know when to start answering the question and to help you gauge the length of your responses. Once the timer reaches 10 seconds, you need to begin concluding your response. Remember, if you have satisfactorily answered the question with time remaining on the clock, it is perfectly acceptable (and expected) to stop the recording and move on to the next question.

Webcam & Lighting

Most laptops sold today have built-in web cameras; however, you can use your smartphone to complete your video interview, as well. You should position yourself directly in front of the camera and have your upper arms, shoulders and head in view on the screen. Do not zoom in on your face or zoom out such that you appear far away. Also, you should position the webcam slightly higher than forehead height and tip the camera down towards your face. You do not want to appear like you are staring down at the interviewers, so adjust the camera so it looks like you are positioned below them or at eye level.



To avoid appearing on the screen as a dark silhouette, aim light at your face coming from behind the camera. Too much background light will blind the interviewer, while too little lighting will darken your image.

Practice Makes Perfect

Many university career centers have purchased software programs to help students practice their interviewing skills. Ironically, these types of programs are very similar to the programs school districts use to conduct their video interviews.

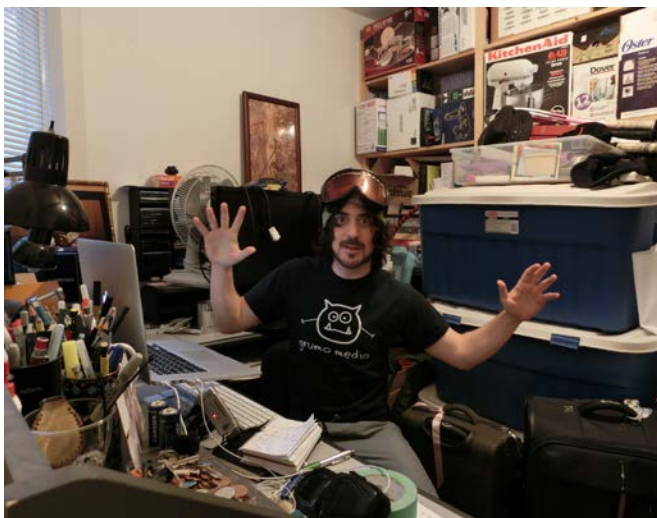
Search your university's career center website for links to such practice software or simply inquire with an advisor. Over 600 colleges and universities nationwide use a platform called InterStream, so check it out. Not only will you be able to practice your interviewing skills, you will become more comfortable using such technology when it is time to interview for real.

Eye contact & Speech Fillers

You should try to make eye contact with the webcam lens as much as possible. Avoid staring intensely at the screen or leaning in real close to the camera. One trick is to cut a hole in a photo of a friendly face and tape it over the camera lens. This allows the candidate to look at the photo while answering the questions to maintain good eye contact with the lens. Also, you should be aware of your use of filler words like "um" or "you know" as their overuse can be distracting to the interviewer. Remember, recruiters are looking to hire people who can keep students engaged in the learning process, so it's perfectly acceptable to smile and let your personality, sense of humor and enthusiasm for teaching shine through.

Background View & Attire

No matter how well you've set up your lighting, or how well you interview, if your workspace is messy, it will reflect poorly on you. Make sure any background space visible to the camera is void of clutter and distractions. You want the interviewer's attention on you, not on your wall posters or eclectic office decor. The old saying, "*dress for success*" holds true for video interviews just as it does for in-person interviews. Bold patterns can look messy and distracting on the interviewer's screen and too much jewelry takes the focus off what you have to say. A black or navy blue business suit with a solid, neutral background will help you come across as more professional.



No Disturbances

No children, spouses or pets should appear in your interview, so choose a time and space where you will not be interrupted. You would never bring your cat to a live job interview so take measures to prevent those uninvited guests from showing up in your video interview. I suggest you let others in your home know that you will be unavailable for 20-30 minutes and should not be interrupted. If you're expecting a package delivery, you should post a sign on your door asking that deliveries to be left outside and be sure to turn off your phones.

One last piece of advice is don't be scared of video interviewing technology. It is meant to make the selection process more efficient and allows you to interview at a time and place that is most comfortable for you. Given that pre-service teachers often have professional resumes that cannot stack up to those of more experienced teaching candidates, video interviews help level the playing field by allowing more applicants the opportunity to interview for a position. Following these tips will help you showcase your skills and get you hired!

