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My Favorite Assignment Panel—ABC, November 2013

MOCK INTERVIEW FISH BOWL

- (1) As a homework assignment or class activity, ask students to write down five tough interview questions (those they would not want someone else to ask them). Have them write these questions on index cards or small pieces of paper.
- (2) Take the questions and mix them up. Ask each student to pick three questions.
- (3) Ask students to pair up and practice asking the questions. I do this in conjunction with our resume unit, where they have to apply for a specific job or internship, so any job-related questions can be answered with the focus of that job or internship in mind. Remind students of good interview etiquette: introductions, body language, eye contact, tone, etc.
- (4) After the paired session, ask students which questions were hard. Discuss and debrief how to answer those questions with the class.
- (5) Randomly call on two students to do a mock interview in front of the class. (I make this fair by asking a student to pick two numbers and then call those numbers from my role book.)
- (6) Conduct a practice interview in front of the class: each student picking three questions, and telling the class the “job” they’re applying for.
- (7) Debrief, with students offering feedback on what each student did well and what they can improve, as well as suggestions on answering difficult questions. Include body language, as well as answers.
- (8) I also offer suggestions and encouragement to the interviewer to ask follow-up questions and to promote friendly engagement.
- (9) Repeat the exercise as a warm-up class activity over the next several sessions, until everyone in the class has had a chance to practice.

BENEFITS

- (1) Students practice interviewing in a low-threat, impromptu situation.
- (2) In listening to other people, students recognize tough questions to prepare for.
- (3) Students practice and gain coaching on social engagement and overall speaking skills.
- (4) Promotes community building and breaking down of fear.