Using a Rubric to Assess Practice Interviews

Career Center Assessment Committee
Peter Hunt (chair), Dom DeLeo, Lou Gaglini, Rachel Greenberg

Practice Interviews
• Students may schedule a one-hour practice interview session with our professional career advising staff at any time during the year or with a Peer Advisor during the school year.
• At the conclusion of a practice interview, the career advisor or Peer Advisor offers the student insights and suggestions on improving their interview skills.

Learning Outcomes
The key learning outcome is that students will understand their interview strengths, know the skills that need improvement, and understand how to improve those skills. The rubric provides a concise description of the skills that students will need to attain the learning outcome.

Creating and Testing the Rubric
We started with a rubric developed by the career center at the University of Michigan and made significant changes to make the rubric more accessible and easier to use:
1. We replaced the usual rubric structure of placing text in each column with one list of behavioral indicators for each skill area.
2. Because we were not filling each text box, we actually had room to add more behavioral indicators for each skill area.
3. We reduced the skill areas from 5 to 6.
4. We replaced the commonly used categories of Beginner, Developing, Accomplished, and Advanced with Occasionally, Often, and Consistently, and we defined these words.

Assessment Method
What's a rubric?
“A rubric is a scoring tool used to evaluate student performance or work. It is particularly useful at the higher levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Rubrics include descriptions of what something looks like at different levels of mastery, and thus provides consistency between different raters.” (BC Student Affairs Assessment Handbook, p. 18)

How do we use the rubric?
At the end of a practice interview, the counselor or Peer Advisor employs the rubric as a teaching tool, reviewing each section of the rubric and helping the student identify areas of competency as well as potential areas for improvement.

Inter-Rater Reliability
All Career Center counselors and Peer Advisors viewed a taped student practice interview, and rated the student on all criteria. The wide range of counselor responses to certain questions helped us identify and eliminate ambiguous wording AND reaffirmed that there is a subjective element in reviewing interviews.

Evidence of Student Learning
Using a rubric to quantitatively measure progress toward our learning outcomes was not practical or necessary. However, we do use our rubric as a teaching tool, to add a learning element summarizing a student’s practice interview.

Possible changes
Each student’s rubric results are entered into StudentVoice. We will look for patterns – areas of weakness or strength beyond what one would expect. These patterns could indicate the need for any of the following possible changes:
• Changes to interview workshops and/or practice interviews – emphasis on areas of weakness as identified through Practice Interview rubric.
• Changes to the language of the rubric itself, based on feedback from counseling staff and Peer Advisors.
• Further training for counseling staff and Peer Advisors on use of rubric, to standardize scoring and to enhance our ability to use the rubric as a teaching tool.
• Expanding the interview preparation services we provide (e.g. online interview workshops).

Lesson Learned
Listen to the people who will use your assessment instrument.
The career counseling staff and Peer Advisors assisted the committee in defining our learning outcomes; pointed out ambiguous wording; and, through the practice session with the taped interview, helped us identify obstacles to inter-rater reliability.