

# “Teacher Insight” Behavioral Interview Themes

Some school districts in Illinois and elsewhere (mostly city or suburban districts) use a screening interview called “Teacher Insight” (formerly “Teacher Perceiver”). It is based on research by the Gallup organization about effective teacher traits. The 12 themes that are the basis of the actual questions for this type of interview are paraphrased below. Whether or not you ever encounter this specific type of interview, the themes are a useful means of preparing to discuss your approach to teaching in advance of *any* interview for a teaching position. Note parallels with the **College of Education’s lists of Virtues!**

- 1) **MISSION** - believes that students can grow and attain self-actualization; wants to make a significant contribution to others.
- 2) **FOCUS** - has models and goals; activities and strategies are chosen in light of these goals; moves in a planned direction.
- 3) **EMPATHY** - effectively puts self in other’s place; tunes into students’ feelings and thoughts, states of mind.
- 4) **RAPPORT DRIVE** - having an approving and mutually favorable relationship with each student; likes students and expects them to reciprocate – sees this as necessary for learning.
- 5) **INDIVIDUALIZATION** - spontaneously thinks about the interests and needs of each student; makes effort to personalize the learning experience.
- 6) **LISTENING** - spontaneously listens to others with responsiveness and acceptance.
- 7) **INVESTMENT** - capacity to receive satisfaction from the growth of students.
- 8) **INPUT DRIVE** - continuously searches for ideas, materials and experiences to use in helping students.
- 9) **ACTIVATION** - capable of stimulating students to think, respond, feel – to learn!
- 10) **INNOVATION** - willing to try new ideas and technologies; has determination to design, implement new, creative configurations based upon information, experience.
- 11) **PERFECTION DRIVE (Gestalt)** - drives toward “completeness”, strives for perfection; form and structure are important, but individual students are considered first.
- 12) **OBJECTIVITY** - responds to the whole situation by collecting facts and understanding, not acting impulsively; has “perspective.”

**The interviewer will ask** a few (perhaps several) questions regarding *each theme area* in order to determine if the candidate basically “has the concept.” They typically are coached not to interpret questions for the candidate, but they will repeat questions if requested. Generally it is best to respond in terms of how you really feel or how you would react in a given situation, rather than try to figure out what “the right answer” is. The right answer to almost any hypothetical question is whatever you believe **your** “best practice” is or would be.

**Obviously every school wants** to hire motivated, student-centered candidates. These types of “structured” interviews really allow the candidate to do most of the talking. Thus, they provide the interviewer more information about the candidate’s beliefs and values in regard to their approach to teaching. The interviewer will be listening attentively, perhaps making a few notations while you are answering a question, so it may seem as though you are taking an oral exam, at least in comparison with interview styles that are less formal, or more “conversational.” Make your answers as complete as you can in terms of painting a picture of a well-prepared, thoughtful, motivated teaching prospect, but know when to stop talking, too! As in any interview situation, make your comments as concise, focused, and responsive to each question as you are able.

As you might know, **Bloomington District 87** uses a similar type of screening interview (“**Ventures for Excellence**”) in their selection process, which does include similar types of questions in their online application. This has become common practice for many Chicago area districts, as well as other metropolitan areas in the Midwest and nationwide, too. Some use a shorter form (6 or 7 questions) of “**Teacher Insight**” or “**Ventures**” in mini-interview form at job fairs as well.