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Communicating job skills to individuals living with developmental disabilities: Preparation of a wireframe prototype

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# Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................. 1

LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................................................... 2

BEST PRACTICES FOR JOB CANDIDATES PREPARING FOR JOB INTERVIEWS ......................... 2
BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING JOB INTERVIEWS .......................................................... 6
COMMON PRELIMINARY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .................................................................... 10
INTERVENTION-BASED LEARNING FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ........ 13
WHAT WORKS AND DOES NOT WORK IN ONLINE INTERACTIVE SIMULATION TRAINING .......... 15
BEST PRACTICES FOR STORYBOARDING AND WIREFRAMING ............................................. 18
IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING USER EXPERIENCE (UX) GUIDELINES .................................. 23

CREATIVE COMPONENT DELIVERABLE ...................................................................................... 26

FLOWCHART ................................................................................................................................. 29
QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND FEEDBACK .................................................................................. 30
INITIAL DESIGN FEEDBACK: HIRING REPRESENTATIVES ......................................................... 31
WIREFRAMES .............................................................................................................................. 34
CONTINUED DESIGN FEEDBACK: DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS ..................................... 36
FUTURE OF THIS TRAINING .......................................................................................................... 37
WHAT I LEARNED ......................................................................................................................... 39

APPENDIX .................................................................................................................................... 41

FIGURE 1: FLOWCHART LEGEND AND SHAPES ......................................................................... 41
FIGURE 2: FLOWCHART .................................................................................................................. 42
FIGURE 3: CONFIDINT WIREFRAMES .......................................................................................... 46
FIGURE 4: CONFIDINT BRANDING .............................................................................................. 51
TABLE 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWER OPTIONS .................................................. 52

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................................. 55
Introduction

Being able to get a job and keep it has been shown to improve quality of life for all individuals, including individuals living with developmental disabilities (Humm et al., 2014). Despite the majority of these individuals wanting a job, there continues to be a low employment rate among people with developmental disabilities (Luciano & Meara, 2014; Mechanic et al., 2002; Zivin et al., 2011). The job interview presents one of the main challenges to getting hired for individuals with developmental disabilities (Smith et al., 2015b; Strickland et al., 2013), so providing pre-interview support to ensure proper preparation before attending the interview is one way to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome of the interview process (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Higgins et al., 2008; Lindsay & DePape, 2015; Smith et al., 2015a; Smith et al., 2015b; Strickland et al., 2013).

While traditional job development and rehabilitation programs exist to assist individuals to practice for interviews (Langer et al., 2016), there are some benefits to using technology for interview preparation rather than classic training methods (e.g., Langer et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2017). For instance, human-computer interaction technologies are useful for those diagnosed with a disability because the user interface adjusts the screen, content and other visual details to increase user-friendliness (Yang et al., 2016). One piece of technology tailored to job interview training is the Virtual Reality Job Interview Training (VR-JIT). While it has been shown to improve a variety of skills related to interviewing, it has a variety of barriers to being implemented by individuals with disabilities, including cost and feasibility of use (Smith et al., 2017).

The purpose of this project is to present a sustainable, low-cost simulated job interview training that is for individuals living with developmental disabilities to use, whether
independently or in a community, and provides feedback focused on improving the confidence of these individuals in their interviewing skills.

**Literature Review**

**Best Practices for Job Candidates Preparing for Interviews**

Companies use job interviews to question enough people to find the right person for a particular job based on interviewee answers demonstrating they are capable of doing the job, want the job, and are confident they can complete the job (Caspian One, 2018; Koonce, 1997; Millman, 2016; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). With the job interview acting as the primary way for employers to select the proper candidate for a job (Huffcutt et al., 2011; Macan, 2009; Millman, 2016; Posthuma et al., 2002), interviewees find the interview process stressful (Joyce, 2008; Koonce, 1997; Kusenbach, 2002 in Hoffmann, 2008), as well as anxiety-inducing (Kwon et al., 2013) in the areas of communication, appearance, socializing, performance, and behavior (Huffcutt et al., 2011).

The job interview is stressful for job applicants because the job interview is itself a “significant goal” for a job candidate to reach (Joyce, 2008, p. 376) and interviews are gateways to getting hired by a desired employer (Hogue, 2012). How the job candidate performs in the interview affects the decision to hire a job candidate and the choice is made often within the first 30 seconds of interacting with the interviewer (Joyce, 2008). Part of interviewing well requires interviewees to keep their emotions under control so as to not appear in a way that would be unappealing to interviewers (Hochschild, 1983 in Hoffmann, 2008). Knowing how to control emotions during a job interview will help interviewees feel calmer when interacting with the interviewer (Hoffmann, 2008).

Being able to control one’s emotions, however, is only part of succeeding at a job interview; applicants should also be prepared to provide examples that demonstrate their skills
pertinent to performing the job for which they are interviewing (Bryen et al., 2007; Heimbaugh, 2016). Applicants should know themselves well and know what they want out of the job (Heimbaugh, 2016; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). In addition to providing thoughtful answers, job candidates’ ability to speak fluently and spontaneously with minimal disfluencies is an essential goal to succeeding in interviews especially with behavioral type interviews being used more often (Brosy et al., 2016; Fox Tree, 1995). Speech disfluencies include mistakes made while answering questions, pauses in speech, and time fillers when thinking about how to answer a question, including “um” or “uh” (Brosy et al., 2016; Fox Tree, 1995; Schober & Bloom, 2004; Smith & Clark, 1993). These speech habits are seen as a problem and can signal to the interviewer that the interviewee does not understand the question, as well as influence the opinions the interviewer makes about the interviewee (Brennan & Schober, 2001; Brennan & Williams, 1995; Brosy et al., 2016; Clark, 1994; Schober & Bloom, 2004; Smith & Clark, 1993).

Answers given by job applicants should be quick and provide the right information to the question asked (Brosy et al., 2016). Brosy and colleagues (2016) conducted a study and found the pauses interviewees made before answering ranged from a "short pause" to "up to six pauses and 35 seconds" (see p. 385) meaning that some interviewees would give an unprepared answer in a shorter amount of time while others took more time to come up with a more thoughtful answer. Brosy and colleagues (2016) concluded that longer pauses led to fewer hiring recommendations, while answering quickly, despite the lack of thoughtful preparation, led to more hiring recommendations.

Deciding on how long to think of an answer to a question is part of a job applicant’s impression management, and impression management is often used by job candidates to influence interviewers to think about them in a particular way during their job interview (Fletcher, 1992; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Impression management can be physical including
smiling and holding eye contact (Roulin et al., 2014) or verbalization (Bolino et al., 2008). One form of impression management Ellis and colleagues (2002) studied was self-promotion, and they found that 89.9% of candidates used a self-promotion tactic during their interview. Impression management can be used both honestly and dishonestly (Bolino et al., 2008; Hogue et al., 2012; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Levashina & Campion, 2006). While interviewees may be honest about their skills, achievements, and job history, they may also be dishonest about their skillset or job history or choose not to include pertinent information that the interviewer should know (Levashina & Campion, 2006; Roulin et al., 2014). Ultimately, Roulin and colleagues (2014) found that the interviewer’s interpretation of interviewees’ impression management was more critical in the hiring decision than which forms of impression management interviewees implemented.

In addition to impression management, interviewees should come prepared with a list of thoughtful questions for and about the interviewer, or other people they meet during the interview (Caspian One, 2018; Heimbaugh, 2016). Having a list of questions prepared is also a form of impression management more so than a tactic used to gain information from the interviewer (Heimbaugh, 2016; Kador, 2010; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007). Questions about the interviewer help influence the interviewer to perceive the job candidate values the interviewer’s opinions (Heimbaugh, 2016; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007). Heimbaugh (2016) found interviewers thought candidates who asked questions were "more extraverted, open to experience, and motivated" compared to candidates without questions, but if candidates performed well in the interview and did not ask questions, the interviewer's perceptions continued to remain positive (p. 90).

When it comes to preparing for job interviews, Ayres and colleagues (1998) found that people with high communication apprehension (CA) differ in the ways they prepare than people
with low CA. Candidates with low CA were more likely to talk to people they know about their interview, think about what benefits they will bring to the company, and prepare for the interview with others (Ayres et al., 1998). Candidates with high CA were less likely to prepare and did not like to think about the interview (Ayres et al., 1998). During the interview, candidates with low CA were more confident, held eye contact, and gave answers specific to the questions asked (Ayres et al., 1998). Candidates with high CA were preoccupied about what the interviewer thought about them and did not communicate as thoroughly as those with low CA (Ayres et al., 1998). Based on these findings, Ayres and colleagues (1998) concluded that interviewees with low CA are at a “tremendous advantage” compared to those with high CA because those with low CA come more prepared to get the job (p. 7).

Whether job candidates have low or high CA, waiting for the interview can be stressful, so candidates must occupy their mind (Caspian One, 2018). Heimbaugh (2016) found that many candidates research whom they are interviewing for, think about the questions that could be asked, and prepare answers for those particular questions. Other research, though, found that doing all research about the company right before the interview is not an excellent way to come prepared to interview (Caspian One, 2018). Rupani (2013) notes that preparation is vital to succeeding in a job interview. In addition to having prepared answers, having a copy of a resume to give the interviewer at the interview is also considered essential (Koonce, 1997; Petrina, 2008).

At the interview, there are a few supported tactics to follow to leave a positive impression on the interviewer. Continuing to smile and hold eye contact with good posture can help create a good first impression (Caspian One, 2018; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). Candidates should also remember to speak slowly and clearly with confidence about their skills proving why they deserve the job (Koonce, 1997) as well as stating they look forward to continuing their
learning on the job (University of Central Missouri, n.d.). Caspian One (2018) notes that keeping answers to the point through summarizing qualities, skills, and experiences is important in succeeding at the interview. Caspian One (2018) and University of Central Missouri (n.d.) suggest using the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) method when answering interview questions successfully. When asked a situational question, candidates should explain which tasks they would complete in that specific situation and what types of actions are needed in order to achieve the desired result (Caspian One, 2018; University of Central Missouri, n.d.).

Considering best practices for the interviewee in preparing for and participating in job interviews is only part of what makes a good job interview. The employer perspective in preparing for and participating in job interviews is just as important to consider. Research on best practices for individuals conducting interviews provides vital insight that is helpful in developing a training tool that can assist people with developmental disabilities prepare for job interviews. These tools assist them with learning about what to expect from interviewers regarding common types of questions asked, behaviors from interviewers, and what to do when approached with questions regarding revealing a disability.

**Best Practices for Conducting Job Interviews**

Conducting interviews and then subsequently deciding on the candidate who will be the best fit for the job and company culture while also adding to the skilled workforce is an important and challenging decision for organizations to make (Bugg, 2015; Hartwell et al., 2019; Hosking, 2000; Joyce, 2008; Millman, 2016). Job interviews are as important for employers as they are for job candidates and continue to be the most used method to find the right future employee (Hartwell et al., 2019; Kinicki et al., 1990; Langer et al., 2016).

Part of hiring the right person for the job is convincing the best person to take the job (Knight, 2015). Best practices to help convince the right interviewee to accept the job include
letting job candidates know what questions could be asked, limiting the number of interviewers to no more than three, asking questions about how a candidate would handle real-life situations, and "selling the job" (Knight, 2015, Sell the Job section, para. 1). Bugg (2015) suggests finding someone who fits within the company culture. Finding an interviewee who fits into the culture can be done by welcoming the job candidate positively, staying interested in what the job candidate is saying, and holding eye contact during the interview (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Hosking, 2000; Huffcutt et al., 2011).

Not only is interviewer positivity important, preparation is also because an interviewer's lack of preparation can lead to an unsatisfactory interview, which not only wastes the candidate's time but the employer's time as well (University of Maryland, n.d.). Interviewers are best prepared when they have determined goals, thoughtfully chosen a list of questions, conducted background research on the interviewee, organized questions in a thoughtful way, planned to ask follow-up questions during the interview if better understanding is needed, and planned to summarize a candidate's answer so any misunderstandings can be clarified (University of Maryland, n.d.).

Another part of pre-interview preparation is determining which type of interview to conduct- a traditional interview or a structured interview (Millman, 2016). A traditional interview involves a list of questions typically created by a manager who will also be conducting the interview, and it has many issues with its structure (Caspian One, 2018; Millman, 2016). The first issue occurs if two managers want to conduct the interview, and they have entirely different ideas of what skills and knowledge are essential for a candidate to have, which leads to mixed results as to who they believe is the best fit for a job (Millman, 2016). Second, traditional interviews may not cover the most "necessary job requirements" which could lead to wasting time obtaining unnecessary information; for example, when interviewing people who use
augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, it is good to know whether spoken communication is vital for the job so the interview can be tailored to the individual accordingly (Bryen et al., 2007; Millman, 2016, p. 298). Third, since the questions created do not have determined best answers, multiple managers are less likely to be able to agree on whether an interviewee's answer is appropriate or not (Millman, 2016). Lastly, when managers do not prepare criteria to determine whether an answer is fit or not, candidates are often compared to each other rather than rating each candidate's answers to the job requirements (Millman, 2016).

In contrast to traditional interviews, structured interviews have been better at determining which candidates have the appropriate knowledge and skills needed to perform a job well through more relaxed conversation and asking each interviewee the “same questions in the same order” leading to obtaining the same type of information from each candidate (Caspian One, 2018; Levashina et al., 2014; Macan, 2009; McDaniel et al., 1994; Millman, 2016, p. 298). Structured interview questions are often more open-ended, which allows job candidates to share more information, and this helps lessen the possibility of hiring the wrong person (Caspian One, 2018; Lindsay & DePape, 2015). Another benefit to using structured interviews includes the use of situational and past behavior questions, which give interviewers the opportunity to ask questions about actions in a particular situation or how a specific behavior or skill was displayed in the past in lieu of experience questions (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Hartwell et al., 2019; Taylor & Small, 2002).

When it comes to determining which types of questions to ask in an interview, Conway and Peneno (1999) found that a combination of past behavior, situational, and general questions would provide the most considerable amount of information about a candidate to an interviewer. Past behavior questions provide information about past work experiences of candidates, situational questions exemplified their basic job knowledge, and general questions showed a
candidate’s personality and job understanding (Campion et al., 1997). General questions can be useful because they do not limit an interviewee’s answer, and they have been found to measure a candidate’s level of agreeableness (Conway & Peneno, 1999). Multiple studies have found past behavior and situational questions are better indicators of future job performance (Day & Carroll, 2003; Huffcutt et al., 2004; Klehe & Latham, 2006; Taylor & Small, 2002). Similarly, Hartwell and colleagues (2019) found all question types, excluding job knowledge questions, adept at predicting how well a job candidate would perform if hired.

While certain types of interview questions have been proven helpful in determining which interviewee to hire, another type of interview question that has been proven unhelpful is a brainteaser (Highhouse et al., 2019). Brainteasers are useless in assessing negative qualities in candidates (Highhouse et al., 2019). Highhouse and colleagues (2019) found that brainteasers are used to increase the interviewers' self-esteem rather than to learn any relevant information from the interviewees and were more likely to make interviewees more anxious. Interviewers who used brain teasers were also found to be "more narcissistic, more sadistic, less socially competent" (Highhouse et al., 2019).

Another anxiety-invoking issue job candidates may face involves being asked “inappropriate and discriminatory” questions during the interview process (Ababneh & Al-Waqfi, 2016, p. 393; Bennington, 2001; Madera & Hebl, 2012; Mullen et al., 2007; Saks & McCarthy, 2006). Examples of questions interviewers should not ask, but have, include those that ask about age, race, disabilities, and other protected grounds. (Ababneh & Al-Waqfi, 2016; Bennington, 2001; Marshall, 2007; Mullen et al., 2007; Saks & McCarthy, 2006). Saks and McCarthy (2006) found that participants asked four discriminatory questions were less likely to accept a job at the organization or recommend it to others. Similarly, Ababneh and Al-Waqfi
(2016) found that candidates view organizations as unfair and overall negatively when asked inappropriate questions, even if no established laws exist stating the questions are illegal.

Given the vast amount of interview questions available for interviewers to ask job candidates, research on common preliminary job interview questions will be helpful in determining which questions are most likely to be asked and what types of answers are expected from interviewees. Researching this information will be key in developing a training program for individuals with developmental disabilities so they can learn what types of questions they should be prepared to answer, including how to describe one’s self and accomplishments, explaining why one wants the job they are interviewing for, describing one’s future goals, and more.

**Common Preliminary Interview Questions**

Questions companies ask at the first interview help them discover the different skills and previous experiences of job candidates, and job candidates should come prepared to answer a variety of questions ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Myers, 2006). Questions asked search for skills in candidates, including "time management, problem-solving, communication...and basic technology" (Bryen et al., 2007, p. 126).

Out of all the preliminary interview questions, one of the most commonly asked is for the job candidate to tell the interviewer about one’s self ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Lindsay & DePape, 2015; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). Interviewers ask this question to learn about the candidate but also to measure the candidate’s “truthfulness and self-awareness” ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Caspian One, 2018, p. 10; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). When asked this question, candidates should explain their current position then briefly explain background experience and skills that could apply to the position the job candidate is interviewing for rather than overshare information ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d., Caspian One, 2018;
Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). Other information to share includes why candidates want this job, strengths and weaknesses—including how the weaknesses are currently being addressed by applicants (Caspian One, 2018; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.).

Similar questions to telling the interviewer about one’s self are questions about describing one’s self and what makes one unique. According to “18 Most Common Interview Questions” (n.d.), when asked to describe one’s self, the interviewer wants to hear about qualities and quantifiable skills a candidate has that would be useful within the position. When answering what makes a candidate unique, interviewers are looking for a confident answer that demonstrates the benefits a job candidate would bring to the company if hired ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Caspian One, 2018). Research suggests that candidates should refrain from comparing themselves to other candidates since it is likely they do not know the other candidates interviewing for the same position (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d., Rupani, 2013). Candidates can give similar information if asked why a company should hire that specific candidate ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Rupani, 2013).

In addition to asking job candidates why they should be hired, interviewers will also ask why job candidates want to work for them and why they are interested in the position (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Rupani, 2013). These questions are prompting candidates to share information they discovered while researching the company and how their skills will apply to the position they want (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018, Rupani, 2013). Along with wanting to know why candidates want to have the job they are interviewing for, interviewers may also ask why job candidates want to leave their current position (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d., Rupani, 2013). When
answering this question, it is crucial interviewees not speak negatively about a previous position or former co-workers; answers should revolve around “career growth” and “enthusiasm for joining their organization” (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d., p. 13, Rupani, 2013).

To further understand a candidate’s ambitions, interviewers will ask about a job candidate’s future goals or what their five-year plan is (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.). When asking this, interviewers are looking to see if candidates plan on staying with the company for a while and whether the company’s goals will align with the skills candidate’s hope to build upon (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018). Another common question related to candidates’ ambitions and perseverance is discussing previous difficult experiences at work or with co-workers (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). Interviewers want to hear about candidates’ abilities to “perform under pressure,” their “problem-solving abilities,” and how they turned a bad situation more positive (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d., p. 10, Rupani, 2013).

After learning about the job candidates’ previous experiences, interviewers typically ask two of the most challenging questions candidates face, which are about salary expectations and questions they have for the interviewer (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). When candidates answer the salary question, they should demonstrate that they know their worth and state that they are flexible ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Rupani, 2013). When answering whether a candidate has questions, interviewers are looking to see that a candidate is excited about the job and has come up with a list of questions that are unanswerable through research conducted beforehand ("18 Most Common Interview Questions", n.d.; Rupani, 2013).
Knowing how to answer interview questions is important (Caspian One, 2018; Koonce, 1997; Millman, 2016; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.), and individuals living with disabilities typically need additional types of supports, or interventions, to learn how to answer interview questions appropriately in order to gain employment as these groups of individuals have lower employment rates than the rest of the population (Smith et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2015a; Smith et al., 2015b; Smith et al., 2017). Interventions not only help in the area of employment for individuals with disabilities but in a variety of other areas in their lives as well (Brown & Percy, 2017; Isaacs, 2017).

**Intervention-Based Learning for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities**

Interventions are used as a variety of methods to help individuals with disabilities improve various parts of their lives in learning skills and increasing knowledge (Brown & Percy, 2017; Isaacs, 2017). Some examples of interventions include service coordination, behavior management, and psychotherapy (Isaacs, 2017). Interventions are structured and typically carried out by professionals and specialists that are around the individuals who receive the intervention (Brown & Percy, 2017; Perry et al., 2017).

Interventions have been shown to be most effective when implemented early in an individual’s life, such as in grade school, and continued and adjusted throughout an individual’s life as needed (Perry et al., 2017). Some of the first interventions an individual may receive is through Individualized Education Program (IEP) while in grade school provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Your Special Education Rights, 2013). An IEP is a plan put in place once a child has qualified for special education services that outlines various supports the child needs as well as objectives the child should reach while monitoring their progress in school (Your Special Education Rights, 2013).
To ensure any intervention an individual receives at any point in life is effective, Brown and Percy (2017) recommend ensuring the intervention is addressing the right need, setting objectives that are specific and attainable, basing the intervention on theory or rationale, using methods the individual that receiving the intervention agrees with, continuously evaluating progress of the individual and changing any methods if necessary throughout the process, planning for a transition out of the intervention once applicable, and planning a follow up intervention if necessary. Evaluating interventions is important because it holds agencies implementing the interventions accountable (Isaacs, 2017).

Interventions are especially important when individuals are going through transitions in their lives such as gaining employment, becoming independent with their finances, living outside of their family homes, and transporting themselves around the community (Wehman, 2013). Learning how to handle transitions and function successfully in the community requires practice (Wehmeyer & Webb, 2012). Implementing evidence-based intervention practices should begin early in school to be most beneficial for individuals who need these practices (National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, 2019; Perry et al., 2017). Some examples of evidence-based intervention practices include improving community and life skills through banking, grocery shopping, etc.; increasing independence through practicing good hygiene; building knowledge on job and employment skills through learning about various careers and how to get a job; improving social skills by participating in community activities; and transitioning to postsecondary education to increase employment opportunities (National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, 2019).

Interventions have been shown to be helpful in a variety of areas as discussed. Interventions can be implemented in-person or with technology, specifically as online interactive simulations (Boyd, 2017). There are a variety of benefits to using online interactive simulations
compared to traditional intervention methods, especially when it comes to building skills that are helpful in preparing for and gaining employment (e.g., Proctor, 2016).

**What Works and Does Not Work in Online Interactive Simulation Training**

Interactive simulations are “online depictions of real-world environments” and assist in online learning (Boyd, 2017, p. 31). Simulations give learners a tool to safely gain new knowledge, skills, and experiences as well as confidence and motivation to advance in learning (Boyd, 2017; Kapp, 2012). How online learning is structured affects how people learn (Boyd, 2017). A constructivist approach has been used in the past to build simulations that are self-paced, which is beneficial because learners can learn at their own speed and build upon their own individual knowledge (Driscoll, 2005; Smith & Ragan, 2005).

In addition to an online training’s structure, there are also two simulation types: operational simulations and conceptual simulations (Boyd, 2017). Operational simulations allow learners to put a specific skill into action, while conceptual simulations involve gaining more knowledge and learning how to think more strategically (Boyd, 2017). Interactive simulations also allow learners to receive feedback on how well they are doing throughout the training (Akilli, 2007; Clark & Mayer, 2016; Kapp, 2012).

Online interactive training simulations assist learners develop various skills, including communication, critical thinking, decision making, and problem-solving skills, which are essential to have in order to be able to find employment opportunities (Crawford et al., 2011; Eisner, 2010; Robles, 2012). Communication is one skill many companies find job applicants lacking after graduating; therefore, additional training would be beneficial in preparation for interviews (Crawford et al., 2011; Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2010). Additionally, through practicing with interactive simulations, learners can improve their confidence and preparedness, which will help them perform better in interactions with others (Proctor, 2016).
Forms of training that have been successful in helping job candidates prepare for interviews and develop skills are games and simulations (de Freitas & Routledge, 2013; Hubal & Frank, 2001; Morgan & Adams, 2009; Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2010). Game-based learning is a newer field of training and can be created for use by an individual learner or multiple learners at one time (Akilli, 2007; Arnold et al., 2013b; Boyd, 2017; Proctor, 2016). Game and simulation forms of training help learners prepare more precise answers for interview questions and increase interviewee assurance, the more the training is completed (Reddan, 2008).

Regarding interview preparedness, Proctor (2016) conducted a study with Perfect InterviewTM Interview Coach that found there was no difference in perceived confidence or preparedness between the group that used the online simulation for four sessions and the control group that did not use the simulation. In another study, Kerr and colleagues (2013) found no differences in the amount of new knowledge gained, retention of knowledge, or comfort between a group who used a traditional-based training and a group who used a simulated training.

Kesten and colleagues (2019) and Boyd (2017) also conducted studies that have looked at the amount of knowledge retained from using interactive training simulations. Kesten and colleagues (2019) gave healthcare providers an interactive training session to learn more about HIV testing in order to help overcome anxiety regarding patients’ responses as well as their lack of knowledge on HIV testing. While one HIV training session helped health care providers learn more about testing and healthcare providers appreciated it, more than one session was needed to continue to "encourage increased HIV testing rates" (Kesten et al., 2019, p. 8). Boyd (2017) conducted a study to see if electrical apprentices would remember and understand more about the work safety standards when using online interactive simulations compared to those who used online training without interactivity. The study concluded that there was no difference in
knowledge retention between groups and there were no results indicating feedback provided during the training was helpful or not (Boyd, 2017).

While using interactive training may help build knowledge, skills, confidence, and preparedness, another benefit of online simulation training is that it can be accessed at any time and conducted at any pace by the learner (Delaney et al., 2012). This benefit was demonstrated in Douglas and colleagues’ (2017) study in which parents used online training to develop communication skills to better interact with their children that lived with complex communication needs (CCN). Parents had access to online training they could complete at any point in time, which was beneficial to them given the barriers to being able to complete training in-person— including geographic location and time spent raising a family (Delaney et al., 2012; Wainer & Ingersoll, 2014). Douglas and colleagues (2017) ultimately found this form of training, compared to classic training, led to “higher levels of communication opportunities” for parents to give their kids with CCN (p. 288).

Before creating an online interactive simulation training, many designers take time to plan what they want the training to look like (Farra et al., 2016; Roth et al., 2016; Tversky et al., 2006; Van der Lelie, 2006; Wahid et al., 2011; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013). There are two common practices used during the planning process: storyboarding and wireframing. Storyboarding is a design method used for portraying narratives, specific events, characters, and other experiences in “hierarchically structured graphs” for human-computer interaction, game-based training, and other forms of online learning that feature a storyline of some sort (Arnold et al., 2013a; Arnold et al., 2013b, p. 69; Jones, 2008; Wahid et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2013; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013), wireframing is the process of planning a website, its various web pages, and all the content that goes on them (Bank, 2014; Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010; Van de Lelie, 2006; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013).
Best Practices for Storyboarding and Wireframing

Storyboards are used to create an easier way of understanding what is occurring in a narrative as well as lessening the pressure to have to remember all the ideas created (Farra et al., 2016; Tversky et al., 2006; Van der Lelie, 2006; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013). Storyboards typically involve a set of rectangles, which feature a sketch of what is going on in the scene along with a description of what is going on, as well as arrows and numbers that specify the direction of the storyline (Farra et al., 2016; Goldman et al., 2006; Wahid et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2013). Farra and colleagues (2016) determined that simulation storyboards should feature the action occurring in the scene as well as the specific challenge or objective for that particular scene (Farra et al., 2016).

When it comes to planning the storyboard, Tweed (2005) found there are two phases: creative thinking in which various ideas of objectives are brainstormed, as well as critical thinking in which any overlap is deleted and ideas are more fleshed out. Alternatively, Howard (2014) found there should be no more than three phases when storyboarding for simulations. These phases include planning in which naming the simulation takes place, as well as discussing objectives and all the finer details about what equipment is needed, how realistic the simulation will be, and what the script is; scenario implementation; and evaluation (Howard, 2014). Language is also a central part in creating storyboards, and Walker and colleagues (2013) found that there are three different parts to the language in the storyboarding process. These include scene composition, which explains what is occurring in the scene; the points of view shown in the scene; and how each frame leads into the next (Walker et al., 2013).

After knowing what details are essential to include in a storyboard, Arnold and colleagues (2013a) elaborate on the actual process of creating the storyboard. After getting an idea for what the storyboard narrative will cover, deciding on the main objectives and challenges
should occur (Arnold et al., 2013a). Next, the first version of the storyboard should be created then adjusted after reviewing it, if needed (Arnold et al., 2013a).

Storyboards for learning games are not always formatted the same way as traditional storyboards (Arnold et al., 2013b). When creating storyboards for game-based learning, it is used to guess the likely paths learners would take throughout the game (Arnold et al., 2013b). The storyboard consists of nodes, which represent different scenes and choices the learner can make, and branches connect various nodes in a path (Arnold et al., 2013b). With this form of storyboarding, designers can see which nodes and branches lead where and have an easier time visualizing and debating if any changes to the game paths are needed (Arnold et al., 2013b).

In addition to storyboarding, wireframing is a similar process that roughly plans the content and visual details of applications used by those in human-computer interaction and user experience (Roth et al., 2016; Wahid et al., 2011). The term wireframe has been used interchangeably with a variety of terms, including sketch, mockup, storyboard, and prototype, but wireframe is the typical term used in relation to sketching layouts of websites (Bank, 2014). Wireframes are considered a “cognitive tool” that help establish an idea early in the website planning process and are used as a way to organize content and the basic appearance amongst many individuals to create a common understanding of what a website will look like and lessen the chance of errors occurring during the actual website development process (Bank, 2014; Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013, p. 4).

Wireframing is important for product design and creation, specifically websites because it keeps those involved in the design process (e.g., designers, developers, clients) up-to-date and clear on what the design plan for the website is (Bank, 2014; Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.). Wireframes are also beneficial because they can be updated quickly upon reflection in a collaborative environment and mistakes can be corrected throughout the many versions of
wireframes (Bank, 2014; Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Van der Lelie, 2006). Another
important part of the wireframing process is identifying who will be using a website and for what
reasons (Schewe & Thalheim, 2010).

The wireframe process is a time to make decisions regarding the website’s structure—
how the content on the site interacts, content—what information will be on the website, and
functionality—how the website will work (Bank, 2014; Hamm, 2014; Commonplaces
Interactive, n.d.). Ultimately, wireframing is a time for multiple people on a team to be creative
and collaborate on a website that will serve a specific purpose to users, and it is also a time for
everyone on the design team to ask questions and bring any new issues they may find throughout
the process with the main goal of creating a successful website (Hamm, 2014; Wikstrom &
Verganti, 2013).

The wireframing process begins without sketching anything and first begins with
determining what the purpose of a website is and what it will do for users (Commonplaces
Interactive, n.d.). After the purpose is determined, a sitemap is recommended to be created next
(Vitols et al., 2011). A sitemap displays in a basic chart where each page will exist within the
whole of the website and how any actions will lead to a new page (Commonplaces Interactive,
n.d.; Vitols et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2016). The visuals of a sitemap typically include rectangles
that represent a webpage while a diamond represents an action or decision with arrows guiding
designers through the flow of the website (Hamm, 2014; Vitols et al., 2011). A sitemap is
beneficial to use at the beginning of the wireframing process because wireframes cannot always
communicate the flow of how a user will interact with a website (Bank, 2014).

After a sitemap is completed, the planning process continues with determining the
website aesthetic and planning how to make sure the website is engaging and easy-to-use
(Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.). This is when users’ needs and experiences enter into the
design process. It is important to determine what the users’ needs are at this point; it will be much more difficult to implement changes to address their needs later in the design process since it will take much more time (Bank, 2014; Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006; Shitkova et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2016).

To further understand users’ need for a website, creating personas—prototypes of individuals created from the target audience—is recommended (Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010). Personas typically involve creating a name, profession, interests, behaviors, skills, disabilities, and more (Hager et al., 1999; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010). Sometimes designers choose to go in even more depth with character personas by determining the persona’s possible user errors, their technological expertise, and other websites they may be familiar with already (Hager et al., 1999; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010).

Once the needs of users and personas are identified, the actual wireframes are created (Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Robinson, 2018; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010; Walker et al., 2013). A wireframe often consists of a rectangle representing the interface and a sketch of what actions and basic details are located on that webpage that a user would interact with (Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Robinson, 2018; Schewe & Thalheim, 2010; Walker et al., 2013). Wireframes are like a “blueprint for design” (Bank, 2014, p. 6). Most initial wireframe sketches are done with pencil and paper, and they do not need to be incredibly detailed like it would be in a prototype (Bank, 2014; Narendra et al., 2017; Robinson, 2018; Vitols et al., 2011). Wireframe sketches typically use a standard set of symbols understood throughout the industry, including images, titles, paragraphs, and buttons (Robinson, 2018). Every symbol and sketch in a wireframe should mean something—every shadow, shape, etc. (Bank, 2014).

Wireframe sketches primarily consisting of basic shapes and text are referred to as low-fidelity (Hager et al., 1999; Shitkova et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2016). Since web developers are
the ones typically getting the wireframes to create a website, and they mainly use them to understand the website structure, the wireframes are acceptable to be low-fidelity and free from specific design details such as color (Bank, 2014; Robinson, 2018; Shitkova et al., 2015). Sketching low-fidelity wireframes does not mean no details are needed though (Bank, 2014). Some rough details needed are dimensions of different content and photos, where on the screen certain elements should go, etc. (Bank, 2014). Once the wireframe has been reviewed multiple times by designers and/or clients, higher-fidelity mockups can be created, especially for those concerned with implementing specific design elements on the website, such as color, media, and specific text (Bank, 2014; Hamm, 2014; Robinson, 2018).

During the wireframe revision process, having actual target users involved in reviewing the wireframes can be beneficial as well to ensure the users are happy with the visuals and the terminology used, among other details (Hager et al., 1999). This user design evaluation can begin once a more detailed wireframe is created, and users can pretend they are interacting with it (Hager et al., 1999). Any comments or worries of the users are discussed, and then the next user testing occurs when a functional prototype of the website is created, and the user interacts with it (Hager et al., 1999). This time designers can track how long it takes users to complete a specific task, how many errors are made, and whatever other comments are made (Hager et al., 1999).

Once revisions are finished, wireframes are given to developers to begin creating the code to build the website (Bank, 2014; Hager et al., 1999; Robinson, 2018; Yang et al., 2016). Since coding takes a lot of time relative to wireframing, the planning process is the time to make any changes, as stated previously, and it is also expensive to pay developers to continue taking time to fix a website’s errors due to lack of planning (Robinson, 2018). The wireframing process is comprehensive and begins the implementation of user experience guidelines in accordance
with the purpose of a website and target users’ needs and goals (Bank, 2014; Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.; Robinson, 2018; Shitkova et al., 2015; Vitols et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2016).

**Importance of Implementing User Experience (UX) Guidelines**

Once a designer, company, or brand determines their users’ specific needs, the design and planning process can begin. This should be focused around the users and their goals and needs (Hager et al., 1999; Soegaard, 2018). Designing with the user in mind is termed user experience (UX) design, and UX refers to how people feel when interacting with a website or another technological innovation (Soegaard, 2018). UX design is important because a user needs help to find what they are looking for on a website, and this can be accomplished through visibility (Norman, 1988; Soegaard, 2018). Visibility involves keeping necessary elements of a website easy to see so that users know where to interact on the website for what they need (Norman, 1988).

UX design is considered successful when it keeps users engaged with a website, meaning users are pleasantly interacting with content on the website (Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.). To determine how to foster positive engagement, research would need to be conducted to collect data on users’ needs and wants for the specific website being designed (Commonplaces Interactive, n.d.). Although, it is important to keep in mind that any feedback from users should be analyzed before committing to any design changes in order to confirm that the data are representative of the target users (Gardner, 2011). In addition to being engaging, good UX design helps users accomplish their tasks, and UX design is based on a variety of guidelines to increase the possible success of a website, completion of users’ tasks, and minimizing website errors (Dix et al., 2004).

The human brain is obtaining visual information from the environment multiple times per second; therefore, it is automatic for humans to notice when things are not working the way they
are supposed to, such as websites (Ware, 2008; Wickens et al., 2003; Wikstrom & Verganti, 2013). Not only do humans notice when websites malfunction but completing any task on a website involves human emotions as well (Brave & Nass, 2002). Emotional design in HCI mainly focuses on the emotions of frustration, pride, and satisfaction (Brave & Nass, 2002). This is one of the reasons why UX design is important because the design will affect the emotions of users, therefore, affecting how likely they are to use a website again (Soegaard, 2018).

Without UX design, users will become frustrated because they are not able to accomplish their tasks easily (Hager et al., 1999). In fact, 46 percent of users stop using a website because a website does not have a clear message as to what it does and 37 percent of users stop using a website because it has poor design and it is difficult to interact with the website (Soegaard, 2018). Also, the website design should focus on users’ needs because there are plenty of competing websites a user could go to if they are dissatisfied with one website, and the user is who mainly determines whether a website is successful or not (Soegaard, 2018).

In addition to the importance of implementing UX design, measuring the success of a website’s UX design is important as well (Palmer, 2002). Palmer (2002) explored elements of successful UX design on a website, including download delay, which is the speed of a website loading on a screen; navigation, which is the ability to move throughout a website; website content, which includes text, photos, and more on a website; interactivity, which is the ability to complete different functions on a website; and responsiveness to users’ actions, such as giving feedback when users complete an action.

Lastly, UX design is supported through guidelines, which help designers, brands, companies, web developers, and more keep various issues related to users in mind when they create websites (Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). These guidelines are not based on academic theory so much as they give designers a set of suggestions justified by previous examples that
prove the guidelines’ likelihood of being successful if implemented (Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). Regardless of the guidelines’ history of success and high rate of implementation, it does not mean all designers will use the various guidelines in designing their own websites (Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). UX has seven industry-determined factors that websites should implement, including that websites should be usable, useful, findable, credible, desirable, accessible, and valuable (Arhippainen & Tahti, 2003; Bernacki et al., 2016; Friedman & Bryen, 2008; Fu et al., 2017; Hamm, 2014; Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006; Palmer, 2002; Shitkova et al., 2015; Soegaard, 2018; Wang & Senecal, 2007).

In addition to implementing these factors, design of a website should not only be focused on typically-developed people, but for all individuals, including those with disabilities, those who are older, and those who are from different countries (Friedman & Bryen, 2008; Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006; Soegaard, 2018; Vitols et al., 2011). Accessibility involves ensuring a website can provide a pleasant experience for those of all abilities (Soegaard, 2018). While many companies believe accessibility is a relatively unimportant UX factor for websites to implement, because there is a misconception that only a small number of individuals would benefit from it, accessibility actually benefits everyone (Friedman & Bryen, 2008; Soegaard, 2018; Vitols et al., 2011). But, for those who do have disabilities, some of the design adjustments, or affordances, they may need on a website, include larger text size than 12 pt. font; content spaced further apart; use of pictures along with text; consistent navigation on every page; any content with color needs to be available without color; and more (Friedman & Bryen, 2008; Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). These affordances should be applied to any type of website, including academic, advocacy, and government websites (Friedman & Bryen, 2008; Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). While there is a list of various ways to improve accessibility, there is a lack of agreement on how to best achieve accessibility for people with cognitive disabilities (Friedman & Bryen, 2008).
This disagreement exists for the following reasons: there is not an agreed-upon definition of cognitive disabilities and there is a lack of efficacy studies on accessibility guidelines (Friedman & Bryen, 2008). Despite the lack of agreement, government websites in the United States require accessibility measures to be taken, unlike other websites, under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (Leavitt & Schneiderman, 2006). Through my creative component, I plan to implement these affordances to show how simple it is to create inclusive websites for all individuals.

**Creative Component Deliverable**

Research has shown that before producing a website or piece of software it is helpful to plan it in a wireframe first (Roth et al., 2016; Wahid et al., 2011). This project acts as a plan for a job interview training simulation that will function on a website. Ultimately, my goal was to work on a project that generates a virtual reality training module but given the scope of a creative component deliverable I focused on a smaller, more manageable project focused on interactive online training that can function as a foundation for that larger future project.

The training simulation is presented via wireframes, and each frame features different parts of the job interview. A basic flowchart of the frames (see Figures 1 and 2) was created as well as detailed wireframes depicting each part of the flowchart (including draft content that would appear on the slides). I created wireframes showing the start page of the training, which would be on the user’s screen after the user has created an account, a rapport question, eight interview questions with their corresponding answer options and feedback frames, and a frame showing the user’s results after the training is completed.

If this plan were to be developed into an actual product in the future, users would go to a website to use this training. The first frame shown in the wireframe is of the website after the user has created an account and is about to begin the training (see Figure 3A). The next wireframe depicts the interviewer and the user greeting each other to establish rapport before
beginning the interview. The user is shown an interviewer, and the interviewer greets the user along with two different answer options for the user to greet the interviewer back (see Figure 3B).

Next, the interview part of the training begins. The interview portion of the wireframes begins with a frame in which the simulated interviewer asks a common preliminary interview question such as asking the user to tell the interviewer about one’s self (see Figure 3C). The user is presented with three answer options to the question in this frame. The answers range from options categorized as okay, good, and best. The reason for not having a bad answer option is that I want all options that participants read to be acceptable, positive responses to avoid unintentional teaching of poor habits or skills. Setting up the answer options this way will ensure users are always learning about a better answer to give to an interviewer. The proceeding frame depends upon which answer the user chooses. If the user chooses the best answer option, then the next wireframe provides feedback congratulating them and explaining why the answer was the best option for that question (see Figure 3D). If the user chooses the okay or good answer option, they are taken to feedback frames explaining how the answers could be improved (see Figures 3E and 3F). Next, they are given another chance to choose between the best answer option and the other answer option they did not choose (see Figures 3G and 3H). If the user chooses the best answer option this time, they are taken to the congratulations feedback frame (see Figure 3D). If the user again did not choose the best answer option, they are taken to a feedback frame explaining how the answer option could be improved as well as providing encouragement to continue the training, so they do not feel discouraged. The frames of the interview then progress like this throughout the rest of the interview part of the training simulation.

The wireframes end with a training results frame (see Figure 3I) showing how many of each okay, good, and best answer options the user chose as well as overall encouraging feedback
to continue instilling confidence in the user’s ability to answer interview questions. The feedback frames throughout the interview training are worded in an encouraging way since one of the goals of this training is to help people who use the training gain more confidence in participating in job interviews, so positive and constructive feedback is important.

The reason behind creating wireframes for a job interview training simulation targeted toward people living with developmental disabilities is to assist those who want to gain employment outside of sheltered workshops to better understand the best ways to answer common interview questions independently as well as improve their self-confidence in their ability to answer interview questions independently. It has been commonplace for individuals with disabilities to be hired at sheltered workshops due to a lack of work opportunities, which pay less than standard and involve employees having to complete repetitive tasks throughout the day with others who have a similar disability (Cimera & Cowan, 2009; Luecking & D’Agati, 2017). This leads to a lack of expectations for individuals with disabilities in the workforce and a lack of diversity in the people they work with (Luecking & D’Agati, 2017). In recent years, there have been developments in the idea that people with any disability have the ability to obtain a job as long as they are supported in the process (Luecking & D’Agati, 2017). The goal of this project is to act as a plan for a job support these individuals could use in their homes or in community living.

Since the purpose of this job interview training is to learn how to better answer job interview questions while also improving self-confidence, the name of this training website is “ConfidINT.” The name is a play on the word confident. It is a mash-up of the words confidence and interview. This name is supposed to be enticing to users, and it tells them the purpose of this training right away. After determining the name, I created the visuals that make up this creative component, beginning with a flowchart that maps out the entire interactive training program.
Flowchart

The first part of the deliverable I created was the flowchart legend and flowchart (see Figures 1 and 2) for the online job interview training website because that helped me visualize all the different wireframes I was going to have to design for the training. I researched different websites that were made for creating flowcharts, and I decided to use Lucid Chart, which is a website that functions similar to Google’s online apps, but it supplies a variety of typically-used flowchart shapes and a space to create the flowchart online.

When I began designing the flowchart, I knew I needed a shape to notate the various web pages of the training I had planned to include for this project (e.g., begin interview, rapport, interview questions, feedback frames, results), I needed a shape to notate when a decision, or answer, was supposed to be made for each interview question, I needed arrows to guide those looking at the flowchart through how to view it in what order, and I needed a shape to notate the start and end of the flowchart so those looking at the flowchart knew where to start looking at the flowchart. A terminator symbol was used to mark the start and end of the flowchart since that is what is most commonly used amongst all flowcharts (Lucid Chart, n.d.). The web pages of the training, which would be depicted through wireframes, were assigned a rectangle as the function of these rectangles is to prompt a user response (Lucid Chart, n.d.). Diamonds were used for the parts of the flowchart when answers were supposed to be given as the diamond indicates a decision to be made in response to a question (Lucid Chart, n.d.). Lastly, arrows are used throughout the flowchart to guide those looking at the flowchart through the process correctly.

Once I determined the shapes, I planned which answer options—A, B, or C—would be the best, good, and okay answers for each question. Next, I began dragging and dropping shapes with connecting arrows and assigning labels. To ensure the flowchart was as clean as possible, I
ensured there were set layouts for each type of answer option combination, and the shapes all lined up vertically and horizontally when in the same horizontal line.

Once the flowchart was finished, I began finalizing the interview questions to be used in the wireframes and various answer options that would be used in the training, in addition to additional questions and answers that make up a question/answer bank (see Table 1) that could be used if this training were to be fully realized in the future.

Questions, Answers, and Feedback

The bulk of this creative component focuses on the job interview questions and answer options throughout the training. There are nine questions—one rapport question and eight interview questions—which were chosen from a variety of sources focused on best preliminary job interview questions (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Lindsay & DePape, 2015; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). While this training only has eight interview questions, ideally, in the future, there would be an even more expansive question and answer bank so that users could take the training multiple times and always be asked a different set of questions to better prepare for job interviews.

With every interview question, I wrote three different answer options to choose from that elaborate a response to the question asked, ranging from the best response, a good response, or an okay response using past research and best practices in this area of study (reviewed above). There is also a rapport question when beginning the training, which is a chance for the user to practice greeting an interviewer. The rapport question has two answer options, which are either the user agreeing to begin the training or exiting the training and going back to the beginning training page if they are not ready to begin the training. This rapport question is important for two reasons: (1) it gives the user a chance to practice and get used to greeting an interview, and
(2) it gives the user a second chance to decide whether they are ready to begin the interview training or not.

Similar to the interview questions, there would be an expanded answer bank for each question so that users could practice giving a variety of answers for a variety of job positions. For the scope of this project, the users are interviewing for a greeter/customer host position throughout the training. The reason this position was chosen was because, personally, I knew clients in real life that wanted this position, and there were plenty of job postings online for these positions (e.g., Walmart, Buffalo Wild Wings, HyVee), which provided reliable context for the answer options created for the training. Ideally, if this training were to be created in the future, users could choose from a variety of positions that may relate to a job they are actually applying for in real life.

**Initial Design Feedback: Hiring Representatives**

In addition to using research to create questions and answer options, I spoke with two hiring representatives who were able to provide me with feedback based on what they have experienced and expected when interviewing job candidates at their companies. After deciding on the eight interview questions and their corresponding answer options (see Table 1), I met with these two individuals. The first person I spoke with was a male in the automotive industry in a leadership role, and the second person I spoke with was a male in the insurance industry who led the human resources department. I attempted to contact a female hiring representative but received no responses.

Both hiring representatives I spoke with gave similar feedback regarding what they expect in response to specific interview questions. The first question involves asking candidates to tell the hiring managers about themselves, and both expect the candidate to give a succinct answer that describes who they are in relation to their work, how that relates to the position they
are interviewing for, with a couple personal anecdotes included (e.g., I am married with two kids). In addition to what they expect the candidate to say in response to this first question, the hiring representatives also use this information as a way to start a conversation to ease a job candidate’s nerves at the beginning of the interview.

The second question for this training asks about the job candidate’s interest in the position they are interviewing for. The second hiring representative noted he typically does not ask this question because he usually headhunts for specific job candidates, but the first hiring representative likes asking this question to see if someone is looking to learn and grow-on-the-job rather than purely concerned with making money. Both representatives did note that this is an opportunity for the candidate to tie their interests into the company to show they have done their research, and it also gives a sense of whether they are looking to stay employed long-term with the company or if it is only a steppingstone.

One of the most important questions each representative asks is why the job candidate is leaving their current position. This is a question they ask every time because red flags typically occur here. The second representative noted it is important for interviewees to not speak negatively about their current employer and to focus more on new opportunities they want to experience in the new position.

A question that is asked but is not necessarily a deal breaker in terms of hiring a job candidate or not is about a candidate’s goals for the future. Both representatives ask this to know what a candidate is thinking about in terms of how long they envision themselves at the company if they were to be hired. For example, if they were hiring for a leadership position, they would want a candidate to foresee themselves at the company for a longer amount of time compared to other positions. The second representative said that it is important to balance ambition with already wanting the next job and expecting a promotion too soon.
The second half of the interview questions we all discussed were behavioral questions, which require candidates to provide an example of how they had behaved or had strategized in a specific work situation from the past (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Hartwell et al., 2019; Taylor & Small, 2002). A question both representatives always ask job candidates is to provide an example of how they have handled a difficult work situation or obstacle before. Both explained that they ask this question because it gives them insight as to how a person acts day-to-day and whether their way of dealing with an obstacle fits into the company culture. The second representative also mentioned that it is important to identify an obstacle that is not too negative and to remember that a benefit of dealing with the obstacle is that it was a learning opportunity.

Similar to the obstacle question, both representatives said it is important to ask how well a job candidate interacts with others in the workplace. While this is important to know if the candidate would be working on a team, it is also important to ask even if the candidate would be working more individually because it is helpful to know if they are comfortable working by themselves.

Lastly, we discussed questions about strengths and weaknesses. Both representatives explained they ask these two questions in different ways. For example, the first representative asks candidates what a co-worker would consider the candidate’s greatest strength to better get a straight answer. The second representative typically asks what the candidate does really well in their current role to help take a candidate’s guard down. Both representatives ask about a candidate’s weaknesses to look for any red flags and to see if candidates are currently improving upon a weakness they have identified recently.

After getting the feedback on the questions I had planned for the interview training, the second representative provided me with a couple other common interview questions he typically asks job candidates. The first is about compensation. He mentions that it is important for job
candidates to go into a job interview knowing their worth and are prepared to give an answer regarding their salary. The second is about why people move around companies every couple years, if this is applicable. He wants to know motivations behind these moves and whether there is a good reason for it or whether there are some red flags about the candidate.

Once I received all of the feedback from these two hiring representatives, I began adjusting the answer options so that they reflected the different attributes the representatives had mentioned for each question. I was also able to write out all of the feedback statements that would correspond to each type of answer within each question. Each feedback statement is slightly different. The feedback statements provided after choosing the best answer option give a few of the reasons why the answer was the best based on research and the hiring representatives feedback along with a statement congratulating them for choosing the best answer option (“18 Most Common Interview Questions”, n.d.; Caspian One, 2018; Lindsay & DePape, 2015; Rupani, 2013; University of Central Missouri, n.d.). The feedback statements provided after choosing the good answer option give reasons why the answer was the best in some ways and how it could have been improved along with a statement encouraging them to keep trying to find the best answer option. The feedback statements provided after choosing the okay answer option give a few reasons on how the answer could have been better along with a statement encouraging them to not give up and reminding them that this training will only help them improve their skills.

Once I finished finalizing the interview questions, answer options, and feedback statements, I began designing the wireframes of the different sections of the interview training beginning with determining the color pallet and the layouts of the different sections.

Wireframes
The second part of the deliverable I created for this creative component was a series of wireframes (see Figure 3). To create these wireframes, I used Adobe XD, a program that is used for wireframing, mocking up, and prototyping different interactive technologies. To begin, I designed the begin interview wireframe because I knew the basic necessities that web page would need, including a website name, navigation menu, directions to begin the training, and a button to start the training. Once I had those features designed, I began testing a variety of typefaces and color palettes. I ultimately decided on Elephant for the primary typeface and Avenir Next Condensed for the secondary typeface. For the color palette (see Figure 4), I chose a set of colors that had high contrast but were also more inviting to look at than having simply black and white. Contrast level is an important measure to keep in mind when designing websites because it determines whether people of all visual abilities would be able to see the difference between colors of background, foreground, and text. The minimum contrast level should be 4.5:1 with the enhanced contrast level requirement being 7:1 (World Wide Web Consortium, 2018). I was able to measure the contrast levels through an Adobe plug-in called Spark, which provides a variety of accessibility tests.

Once all of the colors and typefaces were implemented in the begin interview wireframe, I began designing the layout for the rapport and interview questions wireframes. It took a few layout variations to figure out how to provide enough white space as well as enough space for larger text so that individuals of all abilities could read all of the text without fatigue. The minimum size of text needs to be 18 pixels (px), and the smallest text size on these wireframes are 28 px (World Wide Web Consortium, 2018).

After determining the best layout for the rapport and interview questions portion of the wireframes, I began filling in the questions and answer options that I had already written. Also, I began designing and writing the feedback wireframes that users would see after choosing an
answer option. Similar to the other wireframes, the feedback wireframes were created with plenty of white space and large text size so that it is easier to read for people of all abilities.

**Continued Design Feedback: Direct Support Professionals**

Once I had all of the wireframes designed through interview question four, I reached out to two former direct support professionals (DSP) that have had multiple years of experience working with individuals living with developmental disabilities to give me feedback on the wireframes’ visuals and content so I had others’ opinions on whether the training would be readable and usable among the population we had experience working with. One of the DSPs suggested I adjust some of the written content on the feedback frames with language that individuals with disabilities may understand better. For example, she suggested I change the term “succinct” to “brief”. Both DSPs confirmed that the design was not overwhelming and was visually appealing, that it was inclusive due to the written text in addition to the option to have text read aloud, the answer options are all feasible, the feedback is encouraging and strengths-based helping this population grow in confidence, and that overall this training is unique and would be beneficial to this population.

After receiving their feedback, I designed the remainder of the interview questions wireframes and results wireframe. Similar to the other wireframes, the results wireframe was designed with plenty of white space and large text, so it was easy to read. Following the wireframes, I used Adobe XD to prototype them so that it is possible to click through as if it were an actual online job interview training (see Figure 3).

The flow of the training would begin with clicking the “Start” button (see Figure 3A) then viewing the video in which the interviewer introduces themselves (see Figure 3B) and asks the user if they are ready to begin the interview. The user then has the option to begin the training or go back to the home screen if they are not ready to begin the training. If they choose
the answer that they are ready to begin the training, then they will then begin viewing the video of the interviewer asking the first interview question (see Figure 3C). The user then has the three answer options available to choose from in order to best answer the question. If the user chooses the best answer, they will view the feedback frame explaining why the answer is the best (see Figure 3D). If the user chooses the good or okay answer options, then they will view feedback frames explaining how the answer could be improved and encouragement to continue the training (see Figures 3E and 3F). Users will get another chance to answer the question again if they did not choose the best answer option (see Figures 3G and 3H). The training continues with interview questions, and once all questions are answered, users are shown a results screen (see Figure 3I) in which there are tallies of how many times the best answer options, good answer options, and okay answer options were chosen.

**Future of this Training**

In the future, this training would ideally be developed into a fully functioning online job interview training. This training would then be able to have multiple levels of difficulty, function through virtual reality technology, have multiple job options, and have learning modules.

For this creative component, the level of difficulty would be considered one of the easiest because there are no bad answer options, no time limit, and limited distractions. For more difficult levels in the future, there could be a timer included that could limit the amount of time a user had to answer a question so that they could learn to answer promptly as taking too long to answer an interview question can impact an individual’s likelihood of getting hired (Brosy et al., 2016). A more difficult level could include bad answer options as well that include information that should not be spoken or shared with an interviewer. Also, instead of having answer options available, there could be a level of difficulty in which users speak their answers and the training would be able to provide a score based on the answers given in addition to a transcript so users
could study the answers they gave during training. This option could also provide the
opportunity for individuals to learn how to monitor the volume and tone of voice, so they can get
a better understanding of how they sound to others. To further make a level more difficult,
distraction levels could be changed, meaning there may be more background conversation or
visual distractors. If the version I created for this project would be considered too difficult for
individuals, then there could be a version of the training that is script-based and breaks down the
interview process further. For example, individuals could be given a script of what an
interviewer would ask and the best way for the individuals to respond. Additionally, on the
computer, they could watch the video of the interviewer asking the question, and whenever there
is an important detail users should keep in mind for interviews, the video could pause and
explain what is going on in more detail.

This project currently also exists on a website that can be accessed through a computer,
tablet, laptop, etc. In the future, this training could be used with virtual reality technology for a
more immersive interview experience.

In addition to levels of difficulty and virtual reality, the training could have multiple job
options in the future. This project provides answer options for the role of greeter/customer host,
but ideally there would be multiple jobs with corresponding answer options so that a user could
choose a job to practice interviewing for that is more closely aligned with the job they want to
have in real life. This would allow users to study answers that they could possibly give in a real-
life interview.

Lastly, the future of this training could include learning modules that a user completes in
addition to the mock interview. These learning modules would be helpful in teaching users how
to create a resume, how to fill out a practice job application, and how to properly dress for an
interview, in addition to other topics. These would more thoroughly prepare users for job interviews as it provides a more holistic job interview education.

What I Learned

I came up with this creative component because I wanted to provide a group of individuals a tool that they would be able to use independently to better prepare themselves to earn a job anywhere they wanted while also having the self-confidence to do that. I felt confident in creating this project because I had worked with individuals with a range of developmental disabilities for three years, and I had been studying graphic design and web design for five years as well as been a graphic designer for three years.

Throughout this project, the majority of what I learned has to do with how important it is to keep web accessibility in mind when designing because what I may be able to read, understand, or see, another individual who has different visual abilities may not be able to. For example, there were many colors I had chosen that I thought looked visually pleasing, but when I checked the contrast levels, they did not pass. Similarly, there were typefaces I wanted to use in all caps for aesthetic purposes, but after reading through web accessibility guidelines, I learned that all caps should be avoided when possible because screen readers can have a difficult time discerning words from one another (World Wide Web Consortium, 2018). This would be a problem because individuals who wanted to use the training but also used a screen reader would not be able to use this training as easily as others.

While web accessibility guidelines are important when designing websites for individuals of varying abilities, there are not a legal set of guidelines that every website is enforced to follow (Friedman & Bryen, 2008). Now having been through the process of designing an online training that is inclusive to high-functioning individuals, I realize how easy it would be for all websites to be inclusive if they wanted to be. It would be important for a full list of guidelines to be
approved, similar to what is provided on the World Wide Web Consortium website, in order for
the internet as a whole to be usable for individuals with developmental disabilities into the
future.
Appendix

Figure 1

Flowchart Legend and Shapes

- RapAns: Rapport Answer
- Q#: Interviewer Question #
- Q#Ans: Interviewee Answer to Question #
- A#: Answer Option #
- FB: Correct Feedback
- FBinc#: Incorrect Feedback to Answer #

- Starting point and ending point of flowchart
- Direct viewers through flowchart
- Wireframes of webpages users would see
- Action/decision point for users
Figure 2

Flowchart
Note. View full flowchart at https://www.lucidchart.com/documents/view/c3a9be28-43b7-4352-a585-f7792de2d152
Figure 3

*ConfidINT Wireframes*

**Figure 3A**

To begin your job interview training, click start

Start
Figure 3B

After listening to the question, select the best answer to give in response.

Interviewer:
Welcome to our company. I hope your day has been well. Are you ready to begin the job interview?

Hello, my day has been well. I hope your day has been well too, and yes, I'm ready to begin the interview.

Hello, my day has been well, but I'm not ready to begin the interview.

Figure 3C

Currently, I'm working for a workshop where I complete different tasks for companies like 3-M. Through the job I have now, I have found that I enjoy talking to others, making them smile, and working as part of a team to make sure a task is completed. That is why I'm interested in this position because I would get to greet people throughout the day, and I think I would enjoy being part of your team.

I work for a workshop with other people similar to me, and we complete a variety of tasks. I like talking to them and working with them. I wanted to work for your company so I can talk to people as they come into your store and tell them to have a good day as they leave. I think from my past work experience I would be a great addition to your team.

I grew up here and graduated from high school a few years ago. After graduating high school, I moved into my own place and applied for the job I have now where I complete tasks, talk with co-workers, and I really want a new job now. I want a job where I get to talk to people throughout the day, and that's what your job opening is for. At my current job, I enjoy talking with everyone I work with, which makes me think I'd enjoy having this job.
Figure 3D

You got it!

This is the best answer because you **briefly** mention **where you currently work**, **what strong skills you have**, **how those skills relate to the new position you want**, and **why you're interested in the position**. When you go to your real job interview be sure to keep these details in mind. Click "Next" to answer the next question.

Next

Figure 3E

Good guess!

While this is a good answer, it should be more **specific**. This answer would be the best option if it included **specific strong skills**, **specific reasons why past job experiences would qualify you for the new position**, and a more **specific reason why you want this position**. Don't give up though! You can keep improving your interview skills through this training! Click "Try Again" below to answer this question again.

Try Again
Figure 3F

You were close!

While this answer is okay, it would be better if it were more **brief** and mentioned **where you currently work**, **what strong skills you have**, **how those skills relate to the new job you want**, and **why you are interested in the position**. Keep trying, and your job interview skills will continue to improve as you use this training! Click "Try Again" below to answer this question again.

Try Again

---

Figure 3G

**ConfidINT**

Currently, I'm working for a workshop where I complete different tasks for companies like 3M. Through the job I have now, I have found that I enjoy talking to others, making them smile, and working as part of a team to make sure a task is completed. That is why I'm interested in this position because I would get to greet people throughout the day, and I think I would enjoy being part of your team.

I work for a workshop with other people similar to me, and we complete a variety of tasks. I like talking to them and working with them. I wanted to work for your company so I can talk to people as they come into your store and tell them to have a good day as they leave. I think from my past work experience I would be a great addition to your team.

I grew up here and graduated from high school a few years ago. After graduating high school, I moved into my own place and applied for the job. I have now where I complete tasks, talk with co-workers, and I really want a new job now. I want a job where I get to talk to people throughout the day, and that's what your job opening is for. At my current job, I enjoy talking with everyone I work with, which makes me think I'd enjoy having this job.
Figure 3H

Figure 3I

Note. View all wireframes at https://xd.adobe.com/view/b0a32ad5-fd23-4940-7ce5-7ed6502bf6da-c692/?fullscreen
Figure 4

ConfidINT Branding

**Elephant Regular**

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Use for website title, headings, navigation menus, and buttons.

**Avenir Next Condensed Regular**

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Use for answer options and feedback frames.

**Avenir Next Condensed Bold**

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

Use to emphasize feedback copy.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can you tell me a little about yourself?</th>
<th>Best Answer</th>
<th>Good Answer</th>
<th>Okay Answer</th>
<th>Additional Answer(s) (when applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Currently, I'm working for a workshop where I complete different tasks for companies like 3-M. Through the job I have now, I have found that I enjoy talking to others, making them smile, and working as part of a team to make sure a task is completed. That is why I'm interested in this position because I would get to greet people throughout the day, and I think I would enjoy being part of your team.</td>
<td>I work for a workshop with other people similar to me, and we complete a variety of tasks. I like talking to them and working with them. I wanted to work for your company so I can talk to people as they come into your store and tell them to have a good day as they leave. I think from my past work experience I would be a great addition to your team.</td>
<td>I grew up here and graduated from high school a few years ago. After graduating high school, I moved into my own place and applied for the job I have now where I complete tasks, talk with co-workers, and I really want a new job now. I want a job where I get to talk to people throughout the day, and that’s what your job opening is for. At my current job, I enjoy talking with everyone I work with, which makes me think I'd enjoy having this job.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Why are you interested in this position? | I enjoy taking the time to greet the people I work with every day and asking them about their day. When applying for this position I saw that you were looking for an employee that would be enthusiastic and genuine toward guests as they walk through your door, and I know that I would do that well. As a greeter, I would be sure to try and welcome every customer with a smile to make their shopping experience enjoyable right away. | I applied for this job because I like talking to people and saw that you want someone who likes talking to people as they come into your store. I think I would be good at greeting people, and it sounds like it would be a lot of fun compared to what I do now. I want to get into the line of work that involves more customer service, and your job description mentioned providing customers with energy and a genuine greeting, which I know I could do. | I was applying for different jobs and saw that you were hiring for a greater position. I thought that position would be more fun than the job I have now because I enjoy having conversations with others. The job I have now involves completing the same tasks over and over, but I don't enjoy doing that as much as I do talking with people. |

<p>| Why do you want to leave your current position? | I am looking for an opportunity to improve my communication skills with people in a customer service position, which is not possible at my current job. I’m excited that this job would give me more of an opportunity to improve these skills through being genuine and friendly to customers on a daily basis. | While I've enjoyed my current job, I am looking for new opportunities that your job position offers. You want someone who enjoys speaking to customers and is knowledgeable about the company. | My current job is okay, but I want to find a position that is more fun and allows me to do tasks I enjoy. I think this job would be a better fit for me because I have more fun talking to people every day compared to doing the tasks I do at my current job. I believe I would be a great addition at your company. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are your goals for the future?</th>
<th>While I'm good at speaking with people I know, one of my goals is to continue improving my communication skills with others I don't know, which I believe I could do with this job through having conversations with customers. I also want to continue improving my skills in customer service and helping customers problem-solve. While improving these skills, I hope to move into a future position that more directly interacts with customers, like a cashier position.</th>
<th>I enjoy the job I have now, but one of my goals is to get better at talking to people I don't know since I am already good at talking to my friends and co-workers at my current job. If I were to get this position I'd get to work on having more conversations with people, which would help improve my customer service skills. In the future, I aim to become a cashier so that I can interact with customers more directly wherever I'm working.</th>
<th>A goal of mine is to have more conversations with people I don't know and to eventually have enough customer service skills to be a cashier. While I think I can develop these skills at your company, I'm hoping to transition into another company I have admired for a long time that will allow me to continue moving up the job ladder.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How have you handled an obstacle or difficult situation at work before?</td>
<td>At my current job, we once were short on staff and we had a lot of tasks that needed to be completed for a company by the end of the day. I chose to stay overtime even though it wasn't required in order to help my team to finish these tasks. After a couple hours of overtime, we were able to finish all the necessary tasks, and they were delivered to the company on time.</td>
<td>I once stayed overtime to help complete tasks for a company so that the tasks would be delivered on time. I was part of the team responsible for the tasks so I felt I should stay with the rest of them and finish the tasks even though I didn't have to.</td>
<td>At my current job, I had to stay overtime once to finish up tasks for a company. This was an obstacle because I wanted to go home when my shift ended, but I knew it was important to stay and finish the tasks so they could be delivered on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you work well with others?</td>
<td>Many of the tasks I work on are a team effort, which has helped me develop skills to be patient with others. For example, on a recent task, one of my teammates was taking longer to fill up bottles with solution, which meant it took longer for me to screw the lids on the bottles. Instead of getting frustrated with my co-worker, I chose to be patient and make conversation with them so we could enjoy the time it took to complete the tasks.</td>
<td>I think I'm patient with others because I don't try to rush my co-workers to work faster when they are completing tasks that are slower. Even though they may slow the rest of the team down, we are able to have a good time working together because I choose not to get upset with them or tell them to work faster. I'm also good at having fun conversations with my co-workers so we can have fun while we're working. For example, whenever one of my co-workers and I are working on the same task together, I always try to talk to them so we are having a good time at work.</td>
<td>I think I work well with others. I never fight with anyone, and we always get our work done together. For example, one of my teammates fills up bottles with solution while I screw the lids on the bottles once they are filled. While my co-workers sometimes work slower than I do, I try to be patient with them so we have a good time working together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think is your greatest strength?</td>
<td>I have a good work ethic. When I have a list of tasks to complete each day, I make sure they are completed even if it means needing to stay overtime once in a while. Another one of my strengths is keeping a positive attitude. If we ever have a busy day, I encourage everyone to continue working hard.</td>
<td>I have a good work ethic, and I am positive. I always get my tasks done every day and have earned a raise for it before. My supervisors like my positive attitude as well because I'm always trying to keep my co-workers happy even when we have a lot of work to do. While my work ethic and positivity are strengths, I have been trying to work on keeping my work area organized throughout the day so I can get more work done.</td>
<td>I'm not sure what my greatest strength is, but I know I always get the job done. I stay late if I need to and don't complain. I'm also positive toward all of my co-workers, especially when we have really busy days. I want to try and keep everyone in good spirits despite the lack of a break.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your weaknesses?</td>
<td>I have trouble staying organized. While it hasn't ever kept me from completing my tasks, I've noticed how my messy workstation could make it hard to work well. Over time, I've learned to take a few minutes throughout the workday to organize my work area, and it's helped me finish work quicker.</td>
<td>The only weakness I think I have is being unorganized, but I'm working on taking some time every day to clean my workstation so I can continue to get all my work done in a good amount of time. Other than that, I have no weaknesses that interfere with my work.</td>
<td>I don't think I have any weaknesses that interfere with my work too much. My workstation can be messy quite a bit, but I need to work on taking some time to clean it every day so that I can work efficiently. I always get my work done though even if I do have a messy workstation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any questions for me? (Question Bank)</td>
<td>Yes, I have a couple questions. My first question is do you have any concerns about my skills or experience related to this job position? My other question is how would you describe the company culture?</td>
<td>Yes, I do have a question. What does a typical work day look like for this position?</td>
<td>Yes, I do have a question. What are the typical benefits for this position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your salary expectations? (Question Bank) <em>needs regularly updated</em></td>
<td>After doing some research online and assessing my skills, I was hoping to be paid around $11 per hour to start.</td>
<td>I have taken time to think about what I believe I'm worth, and I would like to be paid at least $13 per hour.</td>
<td>I expect to be paid at least $15 per hour.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
References


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58


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