A successful job campaign in any field today, including education, requires hard work and planning. Above all else, a positive and persistent attitude is necessary.

Preparing for an interview is an essential step. Prior to the job campaign, it is necessary for you to analyze yourself. It is important to assess your strengths and weaknesses, to know your specific certifications, and to decide what you want to do, where you want to go, and what alternatives you might want to consider.

The next step is to take advantage of the resources and people who can assist you in finding the right job. In addition to the Career Services staff, talk to OU faculty, friends, school administrators, and teachers. Most will be quite willing to give you assistance and answer any questions.

It is important for you to collect recommendation letters and transcripts that schools request during the application process. In addition, portfolios may be requested. A note of caution: Prepare your portfolio, applications, and supportive data with care. Sloppy, poorly prepared documents reflect upon you as a person and could possibly mean the difference in whether or not you are hired.

You must be resourceful and use ingenuity. This includes using the job listings on the Career Services on-line job board and making direct contact with school administrators. Your aim should be to have as many interviews as possible.

In preparing for interviews, research the school system as much as possible. The internet is a great place to begin your search. Ask yourself such questions as:

- What is the reputation of the system?
- What is the assessed evaluation of each system?
- What has been the history of the community backing the system financially and in other ways?
- What is the organizational structure of the school?
- What is the pupil-teacher ratio?
- What are the services provided to support the teacher?

If you do your homework prior to the interview, you will have a distinct advantage over other candidates.

In an interview, school administrators are basically attempting to find out four things:

- How you will work with the students in the school.
- How you will work with other faculty members.
- How you will work with the administration.
- How you will work as a member of that particular community.

The qualities school administrators seek most in candidates are motivation and enthusiasm to teach, preparation in general and subject area, personality, ability to work with people, self-confidence, and maturity. The interview itself can be a rewarding and stimulating experience. Be prepared:

- With a biographic sketch. Often interviewers begin with statements such as “Tell me about yourself.”
- To discuss your intern teaching experience. Strengths and weaknesses evidenced in intern teaching should be realistically appraised.
- With a philosophy of education—a brief statement of your ideas on goals and purposes of a teacher.

- To discuss your professional views of such subjects as grading, discipline, lesson planning, and individualized instruction.
- To answer hypothetical situation or behavioral questions.
- To discuss texts, programs, and curriculum studies in your field of specialization.

Sample Interview Questions

1. What issues in education are of greatest concern to you? Why?
2. Describe the role of the teacher in the learning process.
3. How would you individualize instruction in your classroom?
4. What special abilities do you have that would benefit your students?
5. What prompted you to go into the field of education?
6. Do you grade on ability or effort? Why?
7. If you found that the slower learners in the class could not read the grade-level book, what would you do?
8. Tell me about your intern/student teaching experience.
9. What did you find most challenging about your student teaching/internship experience?
10. Are you interested in working with students in some extracurricular activity? If not, why?
11. How do you use lesson plans?
12. Why should our school district hire you?
13. What is your greatest strength in teaching?
14. What do you know about our school district?
15. What are the qualities of some of the best teachers with whom you studied? Do you share any of their qualities?
16. How do you run your classroom in terms of technique of teaching and discipline?
17. How would you handle a student who continually “acted up” in class?
18. How would you use aides and parent volunteers?
19. How do you define education?
20. Why should we hire you rather than any other candidate?

Questions to Ask the Interviewer

1. What are you most proud of about your school?
2. What would your faculty, students, and parents say are the strengths of your school?
3. What were your school’s goals for last year?
4. What priorities would you have for me as a new faculty member?
5. Do you offer a mentoring program?
6. How does the school district support professional development?
7. What extracurricular activity opportunities might be available?
8. Have you cut staff in the last three years?
9. How would you incorporate technology into the classroom?
10. What would be the next step in the process, will you contact me or should I contact you?

Points to Consider for Your Job Search:

- Overall district reputation and quality
- Location, salary and benefits
- Teaching colleagues
- Administrative policy, budget and curriculum development
- Parental interest/involvement
- System challenges
Dear Mr. Prince:

I am interested in applying for the elementary teaching position that is available in your school. I look forward to meeting you to learn more about your school and your vision for the future.

In addition to completing an undergraduate degree this year, I served as a tutor in an after-school center, and devoted evenings every weekend volunteering for a crisis hotline. During student teaching, I applied my degree to meet the needs of all students. I formed cooperative learning groups, organized individualized projects, created learning centers, and implemented learning style research in every lesson. Alternative assessment methods, such as portfolios, rubrics, and performance assessments, enabled me to evaluate children individually and comprehensively. In my tutoring positions, I met regularly with teachers and parents to ensure that I was preparing students for the curriculum in their classroom.

In a staff development workshop I attended called Problem-Based Learning, I learned to pose open-ended questions that children could research over the internet. In addition, I have studied and continued to monitor the plethora of educational software and websites that address the diverse abilities and interests of children.

I found the most rewarding part of teaching derives from the nurturing relationships I forged with every child and the sense of confidence they felt as they experienced success and growth in my classroom.

I look forward to meeting you to learn more about your school and to discuss how my skills and experiences can meet the needs of your students.

Sincerely,

Susan Smith

Susan A. Smith

1234 West Brooks, #3
Norman, Oklahoma 73069

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

Elementary Educator: Prefer grades 1-5. Willing to teach other grade levels; interested in implementing hands-on approaches, critical thinking strategies, cooperative learning activities, and individualized learning which makes learning meaningful and helps students develop ownership in their learning.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, University of Oklahoma, May 2007

Completed nine hours of graduate work, Major GPA 3.62, Overall GPA 3.44

Oklahoma Entry-year Teaching License in Elementary Education with Social Studies Endorsement.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Eisenhower Elementary School, Norman, Oklahoma  Spring Semester 2007

Intern Teacher—Second Grade: Created and implemented lessons in all content areas. Adapted instruction for mainstreaming students with disabilities. Designed and taught literature and mathematics units incorporating cooperative learning and hands-on experience.

Newcastle Elementary School, Newcastle, Oklahoma  Spring Semester 2007

Field Experience III—Fourth Grade: Created and implemented lessons in each of the content areas and a two-week integrated unit on Friendship to a class in a rural setting.

Kennedy Elementary School, Norman, Oklahoma  Spring Semester 2006

Field Experience II—First Grade: Observed and assisted with small group activities and with individual students.

East Side Elementary School, Midwest City, Oklahoma Fall Semester 2005

Field Experience I—Third Grade: Observed and assisted with small group activities and with individual students.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Eisenhower Elementary School CAP Tutoring, Norman, Oklahoma

Assisted students with unfinished homework and class assignments. Tutored students in reading, math, and social studies.

Jackson Elementary School, Norman, Oklahoma

Assisted with administering reading assessments including miscue analysis to assess students’ abilities to read fluently.

SCHOLASTIC HONORS

Kappa Delta Pi Education Honor Society, Golden Key Honor Society, President’s Honor Roll, College of Education Dean’s Honor Roll, College of Education Undergraduate Scholarship

ACTIVITIES

Secretary, OU Chapter of Student Oklahoma Education Association (SOEA), OU Educational Technology Club, OU Cousins (pairs international students with American students to promote and enhance cultural exchange)

Online Resume: http://ou.confidentialresume.com/Educationresume

Date

Susan A. Smith

1234 West Brooks, #3
Norman, Oklahoma 73069