

Samuel Bradshaw

Mr. Edward Pate

English IV

15 May 2008

Interview Project

I conducted an interview with Mr. Pierce Taylor, a Latin teacher at Gulf Breeze High School. My goal is to become a high school foreign language teacher. After having interviewed Mr. Taylor, I find that his career is pretty much what I expected it would be – and I will probably continue in that direction as I seek higher education. Being a teacher has interested me for a couple of years now – it would be interesting to help students, and make a difference in their lives. Planning lessons and curriculum would be interesting. Specifically, as a foreign language teacher, I would teach one of my main interests – foreign languages (probably French or Spanish). The job does involve work: Mr. Taylor spends nine hours each day at school – 6:30 in the morning to 3:30 in the afternoon. About five hours of that is spent teaching students directly in the classroom environment. The rest of the time, as well as time outside the school, is spent planning and grading papers.

The qualifications for the job include college-level training and a degree in the subject you want to teach, and passing a teacher certification examination in that subject. However, according to Mr. Taylor, once you qualify to be a teacher of one subject, you could teach any subject if you pass its test. Mr. Taylor has a degree in History and a degree in Latin. To be a Latin teacher, he had to have twenty-four credit-hours in college-level Latin. In addition, he had to get his teaching credentials. In general, Mr. Taylor suggests that a prospective teacher major in

the subject he or she wants to teach, then get the teaching credentials “as an extra side thing.”

Mr. Taylor looked at my résumé but didn’t have any specific suggestions.

Communication in the workplace is important: communication both with the staff and with the students. Mr. Taylor uses email a lot to communicate with faculty and staff at the school. Email, he says, is public record – anyone in the system can request to see it – so if certain communications are of a sensitive or personal nature, writing a letter or using the phone, or talking in person, is best. A high school is very structured, and when managing several hundred students, good communication is essential. Teachers and staff need to communicate about announcements, students, and meetings. Student-teacher communication is even more important. It is the duty of a teacher to communicate knowledge to students. Teachers must be effective communicators if their students are to understand and progress in the subject that is taught. They must communicate not only with the class as a whole, but also with individual students who have problems or questions. In short, good communication skills – listening and speaking – in person, through email, on the phone, and in groups are exceedingly important. Such skills come through practice and persistence.

Mr. Taylor says that writing, at least formal writing, is not a huge part of his job. All of the writing he does is in communication with other staff and with students – that includes email, worksheets, assignments, and instructions. It is important, when communicating, to get what you want to say across. For Mr. Taylor, writing essays and papers, and long documents, is rare. In his view, a good piece of writing is “precise, clear, and as succinct as possible.” It annoys him to see writing that is “rambling endlessly just to fill the page.” To learn to communicate well, Mr. Taylor suggests reading a lot of good literature to see how other people express themselves. As a teacher, you need to be able to see and explain things from different points of view.

My interview with Mr. Taylor was interesting. I learned how one becomes a teacher, and the qualifications that must be reached. I didn't realize, and was a little surprised, that a certified teacher could teach anything at the pass of a test. I also received a greater insight into the kind of communication skills teachers have to have. They use a lot of different types of communication – email, writing, phone, and talking, and they have to be able to communicate with their students. I am excited to continue my education towards my career goal.

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Job Objective: Foreign language teacher at a high school.

Skills

French language (fluent); Spanish and Latin languages (learning).
Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint; Photoshop CS3; HyperText Markup Language.

Accomplishments

2008 Eagle Scout (highest rank in Boy Scouts of America)
June 2007 National Young Leaders Conference, Washington, DC
2007-08 National Honor Society
2007-08 French Honor Society
Fall 2006 Dean's List, Pensacola Junior College

Education

2008 Graduate
GPA: 3.6/4.0
Gulf Breeze High School
Gulf Breeze, Florida
College-preparatory curriculum with emphasis in foreign languages;
Advanced Placement English, French, and Calculus.

References

Al Costlow 3723 Tiger Point Boulevard, Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 207-6802
Patricia Larsen 5373 Galberry Lane, Gulf Breeze, FL 32563 (850) 916-3524
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Two “Soft Skills”

I consider myself to have a strong work ethic. When I begin a project, I try to finish it. For example, I recently concluded a service project for Boy Scouts that I spent more than a month planning and organizing. It took a lot of self-motivation and work, contacting people and documenting things, talking to people I didn't know and diligently filling out paperwork. The project is now completed. I realize that in any job, a serious effort and concentration on the job is required – and a strong work ethic is imperative.

In addition, I find that I have been able to prioritize my projects and pursuits such that I am able to get the most important things done. That is to say, I feel that I have good time management abilities. In a typical school week I have four or five tests and quizzes, some in advanced subjects, two projects to work on, and daily homework. In addition, I have a scripture study class on school days at 6 AM, church youth activities, and service activities throughout the week. With persistent effort, productivity, and prayer, I am able to juggle all my pursuits, fit them in, and do relatively well on them.