

*Interviewing & Branding 101*

The Art & Science of Marketing Yourself for Employment Screenings

<https://paulfox.blog/>

**EDUCATORS RISING 2024 NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

June 29, 2024, 9:00 a.m.  
Liberty L/M Room in the Marriott Marquis

discovering your potential

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About "the Fox"

**Currently:**

- Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music (Viola) & Master of Fine Arts in Music Education from Carnegie-Mellon University
- Five decades involvement in the field of music education
- State Coordinator of PMEA Retired Members (9+ years)
- Past Chair and Current Member of PMEA State Council for Teacher Training, Recruitment, and Retention (8+ years)
- Founding Director of the South Hills Junior Orchestra (41+ years)
- Steering Committee/School District Representative of the quarterly *UPPER ST. CLAIR TODAY* magazine (30+ years)
- Staff Announcer/Admin. for the USCHS Marching Band (39+ years)
- Trustee/Arts Chair/Communications Director for the Community Foundation of Upper St. Clair (15+ years)

**Retired:**

- Performing Arts Curriculum Leader (7 years) & music teacher for the Upper St. Clair Schools (33 years) & Edgewood School District (2 years)
- Director/Producer of 29 Fall Plays, 30 Spring Musicals, & 5 Holiday Musicals
- USCSD publications writer, editor, photographer (25+ years)
- Secretary/Treasurer for PMEA District One (20 years)

Presented more than 20 workshops on how to interview for a job.

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**Interactive #1: Warmup = "The Clapping Game" (Embracing Change)**

Reflections

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Targets

Practice Makes Perfect...

The Show

The Rehearsal

**Pieces of the Puzzle**

STANDARDS: Defining & Modeling Professional

MARKETING: Branding, Networking, and Selling Yourself

SKILLS: Interviewing, Storytelling, and Organizing

ASSESSMENT: Observing, Reflecting, Diagnosing, & Improving

You

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Always start out with the "WHY"

- **Who** inspired you to consider becoming a teacher?
- **Why** do you want to go into this profession?
- **How** might you define a "model" or "master" teacher?
- **What** is the purpose of Pre/K-12 education in the schools, and where do you fit in?

Why - Your Purpose: What is your vision? What do you believe?

How - Your Process: How do you envision others to realize your Why?

What - Your Process: What do you see? The result of your Why, How?

<https://simonsinek.com/>

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Who Inspired You?

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## Who Inspired You?

- Close your eyes. Imagine the face of your favorite teacher, one you idolized.
- If you had to name just one or two, what were his/her most outstanding qualities?
- What comes first in your mind?  
**Volunteers?**
- **Now, share these with the person sitting next to you.**



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## Interactive #2: Who inspired you? WHY?

Reflections

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## Who Inspired You?

- Close your eyes. Imagine the face of your favorite teacher, one you idolized.
- If you had to name just one or two, what were his/her most outstanding qualities?
- Any of these words come up?  
Caring – Charismatic – Creative – Dedicated – Dynamic – Exciting – Funny – Motivating – Problem-Solving – Sensitive – Tireless – Visionary



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## Qualities of a “Professional”

- Succeeds in and continues to embrace “higher education”
- Updates self with “constant education” and retooling
- Seeks change and finding better ways of doing something
- Like lawyers/doctors, “practices” the job; uses different techniques for different situations
- Accepts criticism (always trying to self-improve)
- Proposes new things “for the good of the order”
- Seemingly can work unlimited hours (24 hours a day, 7 days per week)
- Is salaried (does not think in terms of hourly compensation, nor expects pay for everything)

**profession**  
(Webster's New World Dictionary)  
a vocation or occupation requiring advanced education and training, and involving intellectual skills



Can you define the term “profession?”



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## Qualities of a Professional

- Is responsible for self and many others
- Allows others to reap benefits and receive credit for something he/she does
- Has obligations for communications, attending meetings, & fulfilling deadlines
- Values accountability, teamwork, compromise, group goals, vision, support, creativity, perseverance, honesty/integrity, fairness, and timeliness/promptness
- Accepts and models a very high standard of behavior, etiquette, appearance, language, and ethics.



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## Who Are You? Developing a “Brand...”

- Describe yourself in three words, the ones that matter most.
- **Write them down... and share.**
- Are any of these duplicates of the traits of your model teacher?
- Keep in the back of your mind which of these you suppose a prospective employer would be looking for?



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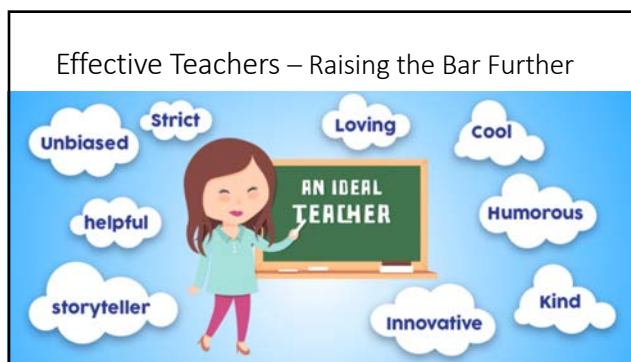
### Effective Teachers – Raising the Bar Further

<b>Score HIGH on...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Student engagement</li> <li>• Monitoring learning</li> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Pacing</li> <li>• Promoting self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Spontaneity</li> <li>• Structuring</li> </ul>	<b>Score LOW on...</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abruptness</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Counting hours ("clock punching")</li> <li>• Defiance</li> <li>• Illogical statements</li> <li>• Mood swings</li> <li>• Oneness (treating group as "one")</li> <li>• Recognition-seeking</li> </ul>
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Source: "The California BTES – Overview of the Ethnographic Study" by David Berliner and William Tikunoff

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### What Does It Mean? "The Total Educator"

- Embraces the concept and needs of "The Whole Child."
- Accepts that all courses and disciplines are equal importance.
- Does not focus on specialties.
- Avoids being labeled in a specific subject area or grade level.
- Utilizes college resources to "broaden his/her training" and lessen his/her insecurities.
- Focuses on his/her worse areas – and gets to work on them now! (Uncomfortable about speaking in public, writing curriculum, planning lessons, managing discipline, etc.?)
- Develops resources – people & programs – to GROW, get a job, and keep it!

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### Next Steps! Developing a "Brand..."

- Complete a full self-assessment.

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### Self-Assessment

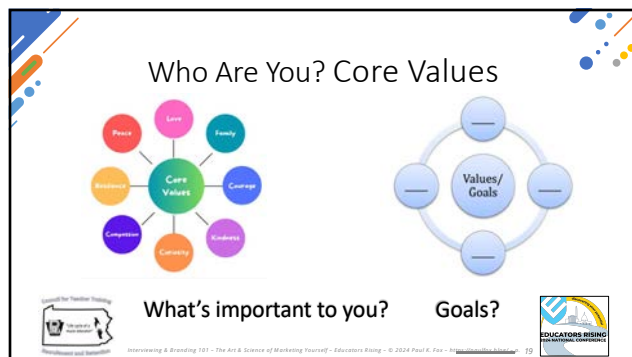
Make a private list of your strengths, weaknesses, and qualities you do and do not wish to convey to a prospective employer.

1. Education
2. Student Teaching, Observations, and Other Field Experiences
3. Community Service
4. Personal Accomplishments
5. Skills
6. Hobbies

This compilation of your positive attributes and achievements will become "the core" of a detailed résumé and portfolio

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### Next Steps! Developing a "Brand..."

- Complete a full self-assessment.
- Hone your habits of life-long learning, career development & professionalism.

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### Next Steps! Developing a "Brand..."

**1**

**Engage**

Join, associate, enroll, volunteer, seek new experiences, "make a difference!"

**2**

**Network**

Circulate, connect, attend, reach-out, introduce your "charming self!"

**3**

**Confer**

Grow, collaborate, build your knowledge base, find a mentor, stay current!

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### Interactive #4: Change of Partners = Stepping outside your comfort zone (again)

Reflections

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### Next Steps! Developing a "Brand..."

- Complete a full self-assessment.
- Hone your habits of life-long learning, career development & professionalism.
- Create a **marketing plan**: résumé, website, (e-)portfolio, business card.

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### Paper & e-Portfolios

<https://paulfox.blog/2015/11/15/planning-the-perfect-professional-portfolio/>

Bring a comprehensive dossier to the interview, leave a smaller version (duo tang folio) and/or flash drives with the screeners, & refer everyone to your professional website


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## The “Perfect” Portfolio?

- References
- Student teaching evaluations or any reports on interactions with kids
- Documentation of school recognitions, community activities, athletics, etc.
- Updated copy of résumé
- Personal philosophy of education
- Classroom management techniques
- Copy of transcripts
- Certificates/award letters/scholarships
- Informal congratulatory notes on teaching or coaching students

Start this today → “Me”



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## The “Liquid” Résumé

Customize a “walking document” for every job screening appointment

- Keep it **short and simple** (1-2 pages only)
- Focus on your **experiences in education**
- The format, style, and overall design should be clean and foster **clarity/readability**
- This is no place to broadcast a **limited vision** or reduced/specialized skills/goals!

<https://paulfox.blog/2016/01/12/music-teacher-resumes-revisited/>




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## Personal Website

- Warehouse your portfolio and all of your artifacts
- Research free offerings: web.com, weebly.com, wix.com, wordpress.com
- Incorporate your gmail
- Help from a buddy?

<https://paulfox.blog/2018/01/14/the-professional-website/>



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## Personal Website

DAVID DOCKAN  
MUSIC EDUCATOR

<http://www.daviddockan.com/>  
Password = Music

- Warehouse your portfolio and all of your artifacts
- Research free offerings: web.com, weebly.com, wix.com, wordpress.com
- Incorporate your gmail
- Help from a buddy?

<https://paulfox.blog/2018/01/14/the-professional-website/>




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## Business Card

Your **personal brand** on a piece of cardboard

- Look professional & project a **positive image**
- Resist a **cluttered** layout
- Avoid **clip art**
- Consider the printing of a **QR code** with direct access to your website
- Don't try to save money and order **“cheap”**



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## Next Steps! Developing a “Brand...”

- Complete a full self-assessment.
- Hone your habits of life-long learning, career development & professionalism.
- Create a marketing plan: résumé, website, (e-)portfolio, business card.
- Learn the essential skill of **storytelling**.
- Practice the **art of interviewing**.



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## What are they looking for?

- **Instructional**
  - Educational Philosophy
  - Knowledge/Experience
  - Classroom Management
  - Technology
  - Oral Expression
  - Written Communications
- **Professional**
  - Leadership
  - Teamwork
  - Judgment
  - Problem Solving
  - Planning & Organizing
  - Innovation
- **Personal**
  - Initiative
  - Dependability
  - Adaptability
  - Self-Insight and Development
  - Energy/Enthusiasm
  - Appearance

### Criteria for Hiring Educators



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Upper St. Clair School District  
Professional Applicant Rating Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interview Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Certification(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Rating (Circle One)  
1 Unsatisfactory 2 Satisfactory 3 Good 4 Excellent

	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent	Remarks
<b>Instructional:</b>					
A. Educational Philosophy					
B. Knowledge/Experience					
C. Classroom Management					
D. Technology					
E. Oral Expression					
F. Written Communications					
<b>Professional:</b>					
G. Leadership					
H. Teamwork					
I. Judgment					
J. Problem Solving/Decision Making					
K. Planning and Organizing					
L. Innovation					
<b>Personal:</b>					
M. Initiative					
N. Dependability					
O. Adaptability					
P. Self-Insight and Development					
Q. Energy and Enthusiasm					
R. Appearance					

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Rater: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Strategic Storytelling 101



- Number one skill to land a job: "SHOW, don't TELL!"
- Share personal examples of positive interactions with children, colleagues, & education programs.
- Relate meaningful *true* anecdotes of your teaching & problem-solving.



"Stories are up to 22 times more effective than facts alone."  
"We are wired to remember stories much more than data, facts, and figures."

<https://leanin.org/education/harnessing-the-power-of-stories/>

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## Strategic Storytelling 101



- Identify key impressions you want to convey.
- Pick interview stories that will "sell" the right message.
- Map out the plot of each story – even past struggles or "Plan B's."
- Practice your stories, out loud and in front of others.



<https://hbcstorytelling.com/blog/how-to-effectively-use-storytelling-in-interviews/>

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## Storytelling Prep

"Paint a Picture" about Your Traits, Abilities, and Past Deeds



<https://hbcstorytelling.com/blog/how-to-effectively-use-storytelling-in-interviews/>  
<https://youtu.be/B3FDFTb2V0A>

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## Tips for Taking Better Interviews

### Positive First Impressions

- Promote a positive & cheerful attitude
- Share a warm greeting & firm handshake
- Build rapport & demonstrate an attitude of openness & sensitivity to the interviewer's style
- Show a feeling of mutual responsibility for creating a comfortable atmosphere & establishing common ground
- "Be yourself" and model relaxed speech, posture, and body language

### Other

- Back up statements with examples
- Avoid "tough topics," "oversharing," and negative talk about last employer

### Positive Nonverbal Cues

- Respond to interviewer with an occasional affirmative nodding of the head
- Sit erect in chair with hands, feet, & arms unfolded leaning forward slightly
- Offer good eye contact & smile appropriately
- Angle your position so as not to sit directly across from the interviewer – better beside him/her (avoid barriers)
- Look interested & listen to the interviewer
- If you don't know the answer, be honest. Inexperience is not a crime!
- Say what you mean – if you get the job, you may be "stuck" with your promises



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## The 12 Biggies – Interview Questions

- Tell us something about your strengths, challenges, and goals for the future.
- Who had the greatest influence on you becoming a teacher and why?
- What are the most important qualities of an outstanding music educator?
- Describe your classroom management procedures? How do you discipline your students?
- Describe a successful lesson plan developed by you and how did you assess the learning?
- How will you accommodate students with special needs or varied interests in your classes?
- How would you motivate and empower students and "grow" interest in your subject area(s)?
- Why is it important for students to be actively engaged in self-directing their own education?
- What qualities do you possess that would make you an effective leader... team member?
- Give some examples of materials you would use to promote diversity, inclusion, and acceptance.
- Discuss your process for developing the fundamentals in your subject area(s).
- Discuss your approach for "monitoring and adjusting" or adapting a particular lesson.



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## Practice Rubric– Mock Evaluation

Quality	Trails	Good!	Best!	Quality	Trails	Good!	Best!
<b>Attitude</b>	a. Calm appearance, steady nerves b. Enthusiasm, positive and helpful mood c. Self-confidence/poise but no arrogance d. Sincerity e. Respect f. Attributes of a team player (collaboration)			<b>"On Topic"</b>	p. Focus, relevance, avoidance of "bird walking" q. Careful listening/response to the interviewer r. Avoidance of unsubstantiated claims		
<b>Speech</b>	g. Attributes of a leader and innovator h. Vocal tone and volume i. Diction and clarity j. Speed k. Expressivity l. Pacing			<b>Body</b>	s. Posture t. Eye contact u. Facial expressions, smiling v. Avoidance of fidgeting/touching face/hair or other body parts		
<b>Language</b>	m. Use of professional terminology and vocabulary n. Avoidance of "weak" words ("like," "sort of") o. Avoidance of verbal clutter ("uhh" or "umh")			<b>Preparation</b>	w. Knowledge of context x. Organization (distribution of resources/questions) y. Avoidance/revelation of strengths/challenges z. Research of district & questioning interviewee		



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1. Going unprepared	10. Making it all about you	19. Not being prepared to answer salary questions
2. Arriving late	11. Sharing personal details	20. Selling yourself too much
3. Arriving early	12. Being too personal with the interviewer	21. Failing to sell yourself
4. Appearing unpolished	13. Using your phone	22. Neglecting the "biggest weakness" question
5. Displaying low energy	14. Badmouthing past employers	23. Failing to recover from a mistake
6. Displaying too much energy	15. Talking in circles	24. Not having any questions of your own
7. Not getting the tone right	16. Talking too much	25. Not asking about next steps
8. No paying attention	17. Messing up body language	26. Forgetting to follow-up
9. Not rehearsing in advance	18. Bringing up salary & benefits first	27. Following up too aggressively

### Interview Mistakes

**Required Reading:** Career Blog  
<https://www.paulfox.blog/career-boo-boos-interview-mistakes/>

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## Avoid These... Interview Boo-Boos!

- Repeated verbal pauses, or exclamations of "Umm" or "Ahhh" or "Like..."
- Unsubstantiated or unsupported statements
- Use of "weak words" that suggest a lack of conviction ("kind of" or "sort of" or "I feel like")
- Failure to look directly at the interviewer(s)
- Verbal clutter (too many long run-on statements)
- Fidgeting (tapping your foot, spinning a pen between your fingers, wiggling in your seat, etc.)
- Fast talking or dropping the ends of your words
- Answers that are too casual, personal, or informal, or "flip" conversation.
- "Bird walking," changing of the subject, irrelevant or unclear responses to a question
- Touching of your hair, clothes, nose, mouth, or anywhere else on your body
- Responses that go overboard and/or volunteer too much
- Forceful, dominating, one-sided, opinionated views or arrogant attitudes
- Nonverbal cues that reflect nerves, insecurity or lack of confidence (slouching or poor posture, looking down, failure to smile, clenching or keeping hands in lap)
- Hollow, insincere, or disingenuous conversation



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### Final Review – Developing “The Plan”

- **Standards:** Define your personal mission, goals, and philosophy for teaching, modeling the highest ideals of professionalism, and becoming the “total educator.”
- **Marketing:** Design and distribute “state-of-the-art” résumé, e-portfolio, website, & business card.
- **Skills:** Compile a list of anecdotes and true stories of you overcoming challenges, solving problems, and demonstrating “best practices” of professionalism and self-improvement.
- **Assessment:** Practice, record, and evaluate yourself answering job interview questions.

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### The Ultimate Interview Primer

Download

Interview

CLINIC

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### CODA: Fox's Final Thoughts

1. Understand “What’s New”  
Acronyms & Terminology
  - **DEIBA** (diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, acceptance)
  - **CRSE** (culturally-relevant and sustaining education)
  - **SEL** (social & emotional learning)
  - **MCEE** (you should know these from today’s workshop)
2. Get to Know Your Workplace
  - **School Staff** (secretaries, principal, supervisor, custodians, colleagues, etc.)
  - **Expectations** (job assignment, duties, communications, curriculum, board policies)
  - **Technology** (all kinds of “new” programs, everything from Canvas and Focus to the district website)
3. Find & Cultivate Mentors  
(teachers in your building/district, advisors or other graduates from your college education program and/or professional associations, or even local retired educators)

Terms puzzle at <https://paulfox.blog/2015/07/19/the-alphabet-soup-of-educational-acronyms/>  
Interactions with administrators: <https://paulfox.blog/2019/03/15/the-care-and-feeding-of-your-principal/>

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### CODA: Fox's Final Thoughts

<https://paulfox.blog/>

What was the most meaningful thing you learned today?

Terms puzzle at <https://paulfox.blog/2015/07/19/the-alphabet-soup-of-educational-acronyms/>  
Interactions with administrators: <https://paulfox.blog/2019/03/15/the-care-and-feeding-of-your-principal/>

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