Applying Theory to Community Service: A Boyeristic Model

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APPLYING THEORY TO COMMUNITY SERVICE: 
A BOYERISTIC MODEL

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At no time in our history has the need been greater for connecting the work of the academy to the social and environmental challenges beyond the campus. ... It seems clear that while research is crucial, we need a renewed commitment to service, too.

- Ernest L. Boyer

Introduction

In 1994 fifty faculty members, representing various departments and colleges at Ball State University, met and, for several days, discussed Boyer's (1990), Scholarship Reconsidered. The result of these discussions was, A Different Dawn, a proposal seeking a reconsideration of the traditional lines of scholarly productivity. While a full implementation of Boyer's model has not yet appeared in governance documentation, particularly promotion and tenure documentation, at Ball State it has been embraced by the administration and by a large number of the faculty. Central to Boyer's model is the call for service to the community outside of the academy.

The purpose of this paper is to examine a service learning project inspired by the Boyer Model that allows students to apply learned techniques and theory to aid in the betterment of the local community. Specifically, upper level communication studies students who had performed well in a departmental course in interviewing were encouraged to enroll in a special topics course titled, The Provision of Job Acquisition Skills for Displaced Workers. Students then worked as trainers with clients referred by community social agencies. This paper will examine this project by first providing an overview of the Boyer Model, then by providing a description of the service learning project, and finally, by touching on the application of some specific theories/perspectives on the material developed for the project.

The Boyer Model

Four Types of Scholarship

The traditional perspective on scholarly productivity includes categories of teaching, research, and service. Most universities have adopted this traditional model and faculty members are awarded on the basis of publications, teaching evaluations, and this service (generally defined as committee work within the university). Boyer's model differs from this traditional model in a number of ways. Perhaps the best way to think of Boyer's model is not as a change of focus, but a change of breadth. While the Boyer model may appear to be a more demanding task for the professorate, it is really a more flexible task. The model allows individual faculty to focus on a variety of different areas to meet both of the needs of the faculty member and the needs of the community.

Community, perhaps, is one of the most exciting the aspects of the Boyer Model. This section of the paper examines the Boyer Model by highlighting its four main components and then examining the service component of the model in greater detail.
The Scholarship of Discovery (What is it?): Boyer’s discovery is very close to the traditional notion of research. Discovery, for example, includes contributing to the corpus of knowledge that defines our disciplines. Most traditional basic research, published in mainstream academic-specific journals, would fall into this category. Boyer argues that this activity is indeed very important for the continued existence of the academy. For example, Boyer states that United States scientists have received 56 percent of the Nobel Prizes in physics, 42 percent in chemistry, and 60 percent in medicine since 1945. Clearly, the scholarship of discovery, the pursuit of new knowledge, is a necessary and important undertaking by members of the academy.

The Scholarship of Integration (What does it mean?): Integration is the placement of the basic research, that is, the scholarship of discovery, within a larger intellectual framework. The most obvious example of the scholarship of integration is interdisciplinary study or dissemination of newly discovered knowledge. Boyer describes the scholarship of integration as the need for scholars to place new knowledge in the proper perspective. As with the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration is closely aligned with a traditional perspective on scholarly productivity. However, Boyer points out that the type of interdisciplinary and integrated study that was once on the peripheral of academic life must become more central to the role of the professorate.

The Scholarship of Application (How do we use it?): Application should not be confused with the notion of applied research. Rather, application asks, "How can knowledge be applied to existing problems?" The broad purpose of the scholarship of application is to utilize knowledge to the betterment of individuals and society as a whole. Indeed, Boyer argues that social problems themselves should define the agenda of the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of integration. It is application that emphasizes the notion of service. Not service from the traditional perspective of university or disciplinary citizenship, but service to the community beyond the walls of the academy. The scholarship of application will be further discussed.

The Scholarship of Teaching (How do we convey it?): Teaching is not only the transmitting of knowledge, but the transforming and extending of it as well. Boyer argues that the other three forms of scholarship are only meaningful if they are understood by others. This is the primary role of the teacher. The most eloquent description of the scholarship of teaching can only be provided in Boyer’s own words, "teaching is a dynamic endeavor involving all of the analogies, metaphors, and images that build bridges between the teacher’s understanding and the student’s learning" (p. 23). A fundamental role of the teacher is to keep the flame of scholarship alive. Only by instilling in students the ability to think critically and the desire to pursue knowledge will the body of human knowledge continue to grow.

In summary, Boyer’s model consists of the four components of discovery, integration, application, and teaching. His model differs from a more traditional perspective on scholarship by emphasizing service beyond the walls of the academy and discipline. Interestingly, the model appears to omit, or at least de-emphasize, the importance of service to the academic community. Certainly such service, which frequently consists of committee work, is imperative for the self-preservation of an intellectually diverse faculty in a system of self-governance. [Note: Ball State’s adaptation of the model consists of a fifth component labeled “professional citizenship.”]
It is important to reiterate that Boyer's model should not be interpreted as the addition of more areas of required productivity for an already overworked faculty. Rather, the model supports a planned program of scholarship that allows for greater flexibility and breadth. That model, and particularly the scholarship of application, specifically charges the academy to be sensitive and responsive to existing and emerging problems and challenges within society. The following section of this paper examines that charge in greater detail.

**Scholars as Stewards of Society**

As indicated earlier, one of the most exciting aspects of the Boyer Model is the scholarship of application, a renewal of the charge that academicians utilize their discipline-specific knowledge to identify and meet the needs of society. Somewhere between the establishment of land grant colleges and state universities at the turn-of-the-century, and the current state of the American university system, the original charge that universities exist to meet the needs of the state appears to have diminished. Boyer quotes Derek Bok (1990), president of Harvard University, who states, "Armed with the security of tenure and time to study the world with care, professors would appear to have the unique opportunity to act as society's scouts to signal impending problems long before they are visible to others. Yet rarely have members of the academy succeeded in discovering the emerging issues and bringing them vividly to the attention of the public." Bok further states, "After a major social problem has been recognized, universities will usually continue to respond weakly unless outside support is available and the subjects involved command prestige in academic circles. These limitations have hampered efforts to address many of the most critical challenges to nation."

In an atmosphere of diminishing enrollments and fading funding, the administrators of the academy have turned to the prestige of publications and the pursuit of external grants. All too often, the publications are at the expense of effective teaching and an awareness of the needs outside of the academy. Too frequently funding is acquired in the interest of commercial endeavors and applications which may or may not result in the betterment of society. One is tempted, for example, to conclude that the abundance of research and theory that is used to explain the role and behavior of the job selection interviewer, in light of a lack of the same for the interviewee, is borne out of grants and consulting dollars that serve the interest of corporate America. While the academy should remain sensitive to the needs of the corporate sector, rarely is the interest of large corporations consistent with the overall needs of society. While corporate funding may allow the academy to engage in a wide variety of worthwhile activities, and while consulting fees may provide gratification and opportunities to an underpaid faculty, these activities fall short of the scholarship of application from the perspective of scholars as the stewards of society.

Good citizenship also falls short of meeting the charge of scholars as stewards of society. Surely good citizenship is the responsibility of all individuals who wish to maintain a free and just society. Boyer argues that activities such as serving on town councils, working with churches and youth groups, being involved with local schools and civic organizations are all worthwhile activities and
reflect well on any employer, in this case the university. However, the scholarship of application and the charge of scholars as stewards of society requires the systematic application of discipline-specific knowledge to alleviate a deficiency in the local, state, national, or international community. This systematic application of discipline-specific knowledge not only aids society, but is also heuristic in that it is likely to generate additional questions and data to fuel the scholarship of discovery.

The federal government announced massive cutbacks a decade ago and called on the “private sector” to fill the gap. Since that time much funding and many programs have dwindled to the point of extinction. Now, more than at any other time, the American university system, based on a German model of scholarship, augmented in the spirit of land-grant colleges, and funded with public dollars, must address and re-define its priorities. Overworked faculty must identify society’s needs and provide appropriate solutions, departments must struggle with the logistics of service learning or non-compensated consulting, and perhaps most importantly, administrators must acquire resources and establish service-oriented programs in an era when state legislators already perceive a 12 credit-hour semester as a light teaching load.

The Service Learning Project

The Department of Communication Studies at Ball State University offers a “special topics” course each semester. The courses are scheduled by the department Curriculum and Program Development Committee on the basis of submitted proposals. Inspired by Boyer’s model, increasing acceptance of the service learning concept, and a high level of unemployment in the community surrounding the university (there have been several plant closing, and the Ball Corporation has closed its Muncie headquarters), a proposal for the service learning project was submitted in the fall of 1998 (please see Appendix A). The course, which is being offered one time only, is being taught this semester. The course title is, The Provision of Job Acquisition Skills for Displaced Workers.

All students enrolled in the course are either juniors or seniors. They had been previously enrolled in an interviewing course and were accepted in the special topics class by permission of the instructor. This was to guarantee a high level of academic ability and commitment because students will be working with clients. One or two students appear to have taken the course for an easy grade, but most students have embraced the service learning model. Several are committed not only to the current goals of the course, but have also expressed a desire to continue providing the service after the semester ends. Inspiring students to continue providing the service on a voluntary basis is a primary goal for the project.

The primary community partner for the project is the Delaware County Workforce Development Center (the state sponsored unemployment office). Students designed and presented an in-service workshop for the center to introduce the project. The in-service, which was very well received, provided an overview of the content of our training, the manner in which we perceive and treat our clients, and instruction on the completion and dissemination of the client referral form. We were assured that referrals would be made solely on the basis of clients’ needs, and not as a
condition for continued benefits or as any type of punitive measure. Our concept of an ideal client is an individual who has been displaced by a plant closing, has been steadily employed in the past, is highly motivated to find new employment, and needs help in the development of interviewing skills.

The original focus of the project, as the title implies, was to provide interviewing, job searching, and resume developing skills to our clients. Upon discussions with our community partners, it was determined that many of our clients require more fundamental general communication skills. Therefore, a series of general communication skill training modules were developed. In addition to interviewing skills, modules have been developed on language abstraction, assertiveness, communication climate, conflict management, listening, nonverbal communication, perceptions, relational communication, self-perceptions, semantic traps, and speaking with confidence. Additional modules will be developed on the basis of clients' needs.

There is an established set of procedures that is followed when working with a client. Once the referral is received by the course instructor, the client is assigned to a primary and associate trainer. The primary trainer is responsible for contacting the client, conducting an initial phone interview, and scheduling an initial one-hour training session (a copy of the referral form and initial contact form can be found in Appendix B). It is important to note that there are four important points that the trainer makes clear to the client during the initial contact. First, the client is informed that the training is being conducted by students. Second, the client is assured that the training is being offered as a free service. Third, the client is assured that the training will be held strictly confidential. And fourth, the client is informed that the training will be observed. For security reasons, all training is conducted by two trainers and observed by the instructor or graduate assistant with at least one other observer. If the client is opposed to the observation of the training, the client is politely refused the service.

Training takes place at the Communication Research and Training Institute which is a house located off the Ball State campus. The house is used for training for a number of reasons. First, the house is located outside the campus and therefore attracts clients who might not visit the campus because of a strained "town-gown" relationship. Second, the house provides easy parking for the clients. And third, the house contains a meeting room that allows the instructor and other student trainers to observe the training through a one-way mirror.

When the client arrives at the house, he or she is greeted by the two trainers and the instructor. The remaining members of the class and the graduate assistant remain quietly in the observation room so as not to make the client feel self-conscious. The client is informed, for the second time, that the training session is being observed and is asked if it would be OK to audio tape the training session. The audio tape is used for the purpose of a self-assessment by the primary trainer and to aid in the development of goals and strategies for any possible future training with the same client. In some cases, particularly when mock interviewing is taking place, the client is given the option of having the session video taped. The tape is then used by the trainer and client in assessing and improving skills.
When the client and trainers enter the training room, the client sits at a conference table with his or her back to the observation mirror. The primary trainer is responsible for the entire training session and is the primary interactant with the client. The primary roles of the associate trainer are that of participant observer and assistant. The associate might be asked to make informal assessments, formal assessments (scoring of instrumentation), or may be asked to leave the room to confer with the instructor. The role of the students in the observation room is to make notes on the training session indicating the strengths and weaknesses of a particular training session.

In most cases, a second training session is warranted and encouraged. Frequently the first training session results in a full assessment of possible communication deficiencies and an overview of one or more modules. The client is then given reading material and specific behaviorally-based skills to practice for the second session. If it is warranted, a third session is scheduled. However, only three training sessions will be provided by a training team. If there is a need for four or more sessions, new primary and associate trainers are assigned to the client. This is consistent with Ball State's Voluntary Student Services' guidelines which attempt to avoid the possibility of client attachment to the student trainers.

The service learning project has, thus far, been rewarding to the instructor and the majority of students involved. It requires a great deal of effort on the part of all and poses particular challenges. Perhaps one of the most rewarding, yet challenging, aspects of the project is the ongoing learning that takes place throughout the semester. With each new client there are new difficulties identified and possible new modules to be developed. There are also a number of unanticipated concerns that develop. For example, although we should have, we failed to anticipate that our clients may lack commitment, motivation, and reliability. While it would be great if each client were the ideal client and could schedule training during our normal class time, that obviously is not the case. Many clients are of a lower SES and are committed neither to the acquisition of communication skills nor finding a job. Students have expressed the frustration of re-arranging their schedules to meet the client at a time that is convenient to the client, only to have the client not show up. However, these frustrations and challenges are useful contributions to the students' growth experience.

This section of the paper provided an overview of the service learning project. Although it is unlikely that the course will be offered again, it is hopeful that students will continue to offer the service on a voluntary basis and that the developed materials and procedures will facilitate the inclusion of new students. Service learning, it is believed, is a contagious and rewarding activity. The following section of this paper briefly examines the application of course material to the service learning activity.

**Application of Theory**

Few things are more rewarding than the look on a student's face when it all comes together. Upper level communication studies students are generally exposed to a wide variety of concepts, constructs, and theoretical perspectives. Educators use a variety of techniques to demonstrate, reinforce, and facilitate the application of these often abstract concepts. Yet, unless the student
has the opportunity to engage in critical thinking and to call on the appropriate constructs within
the appropriate context to meet specific goals, we run the risk of our students being little more
than passive cognitive receptors. This section of the paper examines the service learning project
in light of concepts, perspectives, and assessments (instruments) that students applied in meeting
specific goals.

Hakel (1989, p. 285) stated a decade ago that there is as yet no serviceable theory to guide
research on interviewing. That appears to continue to be the case. While there are a number of
models that address various facets of interviewing, these models are very limited both in scope
and application. In addition, most of the models that do exist, focus on the job selection
interviewer, rather than the interviewee. For example, social judgement theory (Sherif, 1967),
 attribution theory (Kelley, 1972), and decision-style (Webster, 1982) have been used to
demonstrate problems with the validity of the interview as an employee selection technique.
Many other perspectives exist, and it is intuitively obvious that many well known theoretical
 assumptions (for example, implicit personality theory) would play a role in the employee selection
process.

Given the lack of any substantial theoretical perspective to guide the understanding of the
interview process from the perspective of the interviewee, the class employed well-known
communication concepts in the development of training modules for the client. For example, the
writing of Stewart and Cash (1988) and Barone and Switzer (1995) were used as the fundamental
basis of a training modules consisting of an overview of the interviewing process. In addition,
modules that focus on more general communication skills were developed utilizing concepts from
Korzybski’s (1972) semantic traps, Gibb’s (1961) communication climate, the ladder of
abstraction, and assertive communication behavior.

Students also utilized a number of assessments when working with clients. A variety of
instruments were used that are well grounded in theory and empirical validation. For example,
students use Rubin and Martin’s (1994) Interpersonal Communication Competence Scale that
contains 30 items measuring 10 different dimensions of competence. Students decide whether to
use the full scale, the 10-item short scale, or any of the three-item measures of self-disclosure,
empathy, social relaxation, assertiveness, interaction management, altercentrism, expressiveness,
supportiveness, immediacy, and environmental control. Based on a client’s response to the items,
the student might then do further assessment (for example, utilize the Rathus Assertiveness
Schedule [Rathus, 1973]) or introduce a specific training module such as one on communication
climate. Other assessments are made utilizing Burgoon’s (1976) Unwillingness to Communicate
Scale, Rahim’s (1983) Organizational Conflict Inventory-II, and Snyder’s (1974) Self-Monitoring
Scale.

**Conclusion**

As indicated earlier, it is very rewarding for a teacher to see the look on a student’s face when “it
all comes together.” Although we frequently witness our students’ epiphanies in day-to-day
interactions, a service learning project, as with an internship or any other application-based
learning, allows us to revel in our students' ability to apply what they have learned. However, a service learning project goes beyond an internship or other application based learning on the basis of what motivates the student to participate. Students participate in internships in order to network, develop skills for their resumes, or work in the "real world." Students engage in service learning for some of those same reasons, but also, for the most part, because they are motivated to perform the service from an altruistic perspective. Students engaged in service learning tend to be intrinsically motivated. Unlike an internship, students understand that they are needed and realize the positive consequences of their behaviors when providing service to others. In sum, service learning not only allows students to apply the material they have learned in classes, but also provides the student with unique opportunities for growth and leadership development -- leadership that will remain with the student throughout life.

Without a doubt, there are number of issues surrounding the Boyer model in general and specifically service learning. Some might argue that faculty, as well as students, must be intrinsically motivated in order to appropriately provide service to community. While Boyer's model calls for the recognition and reward of faculty for performing the scholarship of application, many individuals feel that faculty who provide service to the community must do so in spite of university reward systems and not be motivated simply by financial gain. Another issue that must be addressed is the role of the academy in meeting the needs of society. Many argue that state funded universities are obligated to meet the needs of society while private universities are simply given that option. These and other issues yet to be identified need to be addressed and discussed by the professorate at all levels of the academy.

However, the ongoing dialogue that will address these issues should not hamper our immediate efforts to identify and alleviate problems in our communities. The opportunity to engage in service, and to provide our students with examples and a pathway to leadership abound. Indeed, it is a moral imperative that the academy focus beyond funding and enrollments to establish long range goals by applying our vast and powerful expanse of intellectual abilities to the benefit of society as a whole. And we particularly, as communication scholars, must remain mindful that communication, from the Latin "communicare" (to make common) is the basis of community.
References

*A different dawn: Scholarship reconsidered for Ball State University.* (1994). Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs. Muncie, IN: Ball State University.


Appendix A - Topics Course Proposal

SPCH 333: The Provision of Job Acquisition Skills for Displaced Workers
Topics Course Proposal for Spring, 1999

RATIONALE

A strong rationale for the course is borne out of its three lines of support; the department’s commitment to the development of the Communication Research and Training Institute (CRTI), the college’s consideration of the Boyer Model, and the university’s commitment to service learning. Such commitment is evident by the support this proposal has received at different levels for the ICC grant that has been recently submitted (a completed copy is enclosed for your convenience and reference).

Beyond such a boldly apparent rationale for the course offering is the benefit to the students, department, and community. Students will benefit by the course in a number of ways beyond those outlined in the objectives below. For example, this course provides a perfect opportunity for our majors and minors to interact and network with community leaders. The department will benefit by realizing the first step in the development of its CRTI and the utilization of “the house.” Indeed, the college has already committed to paying for brochures that will announce the class’ service within the framework of the CRTI. These brochures will be disseminated by our two primary community partners, the United Way Agencies of Delaware County and the Delaware County Workforce Development Center. It is through these two entities that the community will benefit by the job acquisition training provided by our students.

Perhaps the strongest rationale for the course emanates from its underlying purpose as described in the ICC grant application. That is the intent that students involved in the course will emerge as leaders within the department and among the proposed department student organization. With leadership coming from the students, and my intent to closely integrate SPCH333 with the organization, it is intended that the service that is begun via this course offering will be a self-perpetuating part of the department’s student organization.

OBJECTIVES

There are a number of student-centered objectives in the undertaking of this project. They might best be broken into two categories; academic objectives and personal growth objectives. The overall academic objective is to provide our majors with an in-depth study of the job application interviewing process. Students enrolled in SPCH 325 are exposed to the job interview process, but only two chapters in the current text (Barone & Switzer, 1995) apply to this specific context. Students consistently express the desire to explore the job application process for two main reasons. First, most students are preparing for the job search, and second, many of our majors will be entering the human resources field. Additional specific academic objectives include applying theory to the interviewing context, developing professional communication skills (both oral and written), increasing critical thinking skills (“thinking on your feet in real situations”), and developing training skills.
The overall personal growth objective involves exposing students to learning outside of the classroom, specifically, service learning. Under the rubric of service learning are a number of specific objectives, both self- and other-centered. Self-centered personal growth objectives include potential career experience (a type of internship or trial allowing students to determine if this is the type of career they find satisfying), exposures to a variety of career types via the clients, and the discovery of available career-related resources. Of course, the principal other-directed growth area is that of community service - the act of providing one’s skills in order to aid others in the community (it is the instructor’s belief that such behavior is habit forming). Additional personal growth objectives revolve around exposing the student to people of educational, economic, and racial diversity - a process that will aid students in realizing that there are multiple world views.

PREREQUISITES

Speech 325 and a commitment to the service learning model.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Abstracts: On the first night of class students will be assigned a number of journals (different journals for different students) to canvas. Students will then bring to class the complete table of contents from their specific journals and abstracts for articles that they think are most relevant to our task. All materials will be placed on the course Web site as reference material for all students.

Training Manual: All students will be responsible for the development of a training manual that will emphasize the application of theory to the practical task of job acquisition. Students will have the option to pursue a traditional professional quality print manual or an Internet Web-based manual. These manuals will be culminated into the resource packets that we will give to our clients.

In-Service Proposal: Working in teams of four, students will provide an in-depth proposal for an in-service training for the Delaware County Workforce Development Center. Student evaluation will be based on the proposal submitted to the instructor. Anonymous copies of the proposal will be reviewed by department faculty to determine which team will actually conduct the in-service (under the supervision of the instructor) for the Workforce Development Center.

Test: There will be an objectively scored test that will assess the students’ knowledge of the readings.

Two Training Observations: There will be two waves of training. Each student will be observed and evaluated at two training sessions in which he or she is conducting the training.

Journals: Students will participate in at least four training sessions and unobtrusively observe at least two other training sessions. For each training session there will be two students meeting with the client, the student who is conducting the training and an additional student who is conducting a participant observation. The students will be responsible for keeping a journal in which they will critically analyze the training session for six situations; two when the student is
conducting the training, two when the student is the participant observer, and two when the student is the unobtrusive observer. (Note: Students may volunteer and conduct additional training sessions if there is a demand by the number of clients and if the student has been successful in the two graded training sessions. Additional voluntary training sessions should be, but are not required to be, in the journal.)

READINGS

Books


Journal Articles


In addition, there will be Web site reading assignments as available.

**SCHEDULE**

Week One: Overview of the course processes and policies, assignment of abstract, overview of the readings, review of SPCH 325 material, discussion of theory.

Week Two: Continued discussion of theory, initial report on the abstracts, assignment of manuals, discussion of critical thinking, question and answers with guest (______________ from the Delaware County Workforce Development Center).

Week Three: Discussion of selected readings, final report on the abstracts, assignment of in-service proposals, questions and answers with guest (Charlene Sample, professional recruiter for the Morley Group).

Week Four: Discussion of selected readings, initial reports on manuals, assignment of journals, discussion of "special need" clients, mock training sessions.

Week Five (Meet at CRTI): Final reports on manuals (compilation of manuals into client materials), continued discussion of "special need" clients, realistic mock training session (conferate as clients).

Week Six - Week Nine: Round one of actual training sessions at the CRTI.

Week Ten: Discussion and critical analysis of round one training, suggestions on improvement, feedback from community partners, announcement of winning team for in-service workshop.

Week Eleven - Week Thirteen: Round two of actual training sessions at the CRTI.

Week Fourteen: Theory and research revisited - have we aptly applied what we know?

Week Fifteen: Sharing of journals - what have we learned, how have we grown?

Week Sixteen: Reception including department student organization, community partners, and community leaders - where does the service project go from here?
Appendix B - Referral and Contact Forms

Communication Research and Training Institute
This form should be completed by the staff mentor who is making the referral.
(Please provide as much information as possible).

Client's Name: ___________________________ Birthdate: ___/___/____

Phone Number(s) (where client can be contacted): ___________________________

Education: _____________________________________________________________

Special (or soft) skills: ____________________________________________________

Special needs: __________________________________________________________

Past job history: _________________________________________________________

Please provide any additional information that may facilitate our aiding the client:
                                        _________________________________________________________
                                        _________________________________________________________
                                        _________________________________________________________

Information contained on this form is confidential

Please fax this form to
Lyle Flint at 285-2736 or mail it to: Lyle Flint
Communication Studies
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Hello (refer to the client by Ms. or Mr. unless otherwise requested) my name is _____ and I am calling from the Communication Research and Training Institute. We are delighted that you have chosen to take advantage of our communication and interview training sessions and I'm looking forward to meeting and working with you. I want to emphasize that we are a group of senior communication students who are offering this training absolutely free. Also, please be assured that your training with us will be held strictly confidential. The training session will be observed by our instructor and fellow trainers. I have a couple of questions that will help us be better prepared for your first training session.

1. How long have you been looking for employment? ________________
   What difficulties have you encountered during your job search?
   ________________
   ________________

2. In terms of potential employment, what do you think your major strengths and weaknesses are?
   Strengths: ________________
   Weaknesses: ________________

3. What is your biggest fear regarding a job interview or just talking with a potential employer? (encourage the client to disclose several chief fears)
   ________________
   ________________
   ________________

4. What do you hope to gain from your communication training sessions with us?
   ________________
   ________________