

Lecture 8: Applying for a Job or to Graduate School

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Applications

- We have reviewed...
 - Graduate career possibilities in psychology
 - Undergraduate career possibilities in psychology
 - How to be successful as an undergraduate
- The next step is the nuts and bolts involved in applying for a job or graduate school.
 - We will focus on both in this weeks lectures.
 - There are some commonalities
 - Letters of recommendation
 - Applications (resumes vs. personal statements)

I. INTRODUCTION

B. Where to Apply?

- We will not discuss at length where to apply.
 - To which jobs or grad schools you should apply?
 - Such discussions requires that you sitting down with an academic or career advisor and discuss your where you might best fit.
 - For jobs, talk to the career center
 - Consider taking career or interest tests.
 - For Graduate school, there many factors to think about.
 - Generally, for most areas of psychology a critical issue is who you want to work!

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

A. Preparing to Apply

- Take some time and think about your skills.
 - Research skills
 - Organizing Projects, Writing reports, Finishing Projects, Working Autonomously.
 - Statistical Skills
 - T-tests, F-tests, Chi-Square Tests, Correlations, Regression, Probability.
 - Computer Skills
 - SPSS, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Groupwise, Internet,
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Communication skills, Conflict resolution, diversity skills

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

A. Preparing to Apply

- Before submitting anything, make sure that you are careful in preparing everything.
 - Your applications says a lot about you directly and indirectly
 - Your work habits
 - Your ability to follow rules
 - Your character
 - Your personal achievements
 - Your job performance
 - Your potential
 - Your honesty

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- From an employee's perspective a resume answers two questions
 - What the candidate can do for me
 - Answered in Career Objectives sections
 - Why should the candidate be considered for the job.
 - Answered in Work History and Work Experience sections.
- The resume functions to get you an interview.
 - 1 interview for each 200 resumes
 - Each resume is scanned for 10 -15 seconds.
- Resume must quickly make you noticeable.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Two sections of a resume
 - In first section make claims and assertions about your abilities, qualities, and achievements
 - In the second section present the evidence for your statements in the first sections.
- Subsections within each of these areas
 - Contact Information
 - Position Statement and Summary of Qualifications
 - Employment and Educational History
 - Military Service; Licenses and Certifications.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Do** consider a bulleted style to make your resume as reader-friendly as possible.
 - **Don't** get overwrought about the old "one-page resume rule."
 - It's good to keep your resume to one page, if possible, but if you have a lot of experience, two pages may be more appropriate. If your resume spills beyond one page, but you have less than a half a page of material for the second page, it may be best to condense to one page.
 - But **don't** go beyond two pages with your resume.
 - It will just not be read!

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Do** consider a resume design that doesn't look like everyone else's.
 - Many jobseekers use Microsoft Word resume templates and wizards. There's nothing wrong with them, per se, but your resume won't look distinctive if you use one; it will look like the resume of everyone else who used a Word template. These templates and wizards can also be a bit inflexible to work with.
 - **Don't** use justified text blocks.
 - They put odd spaces between words to fit to line.
 - Instead, make your type flush left.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** ever lie on your resume.
 - **Do** include as much contact information as possible. Add any information that would enable an employer to reach you during business hours.
 - **Do** give your resume as sharp a focus as possible. Given that employers screen resumes for very short periods of time, you need a way to show the employer at a glance what you want to do and what you're good at. Remember you are not trying to get the job, you are trying to get interviewed.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Do** use an Objective Statement
 - The objective statement can be very simple and straightforward; it can be simply the title of the position you're applying for, which can be adjusted for every job you apply for. Or you can embellish the Objective statement a bit with language telling how you'll benefit the employer. You could have several versions of your resume that are exactly the same *except* for the objective. A specific objective is always better than a vague or general one.
 - **Do** consider a section as *Qualifications* or *Profile*.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** discount the possibility of a functional format for your resume.
 - This format can be strategic for career changers, students and others who lack experience, those with gaps in their employment, as well as those re-entering the workforce.
 - A functional resume is organized around functional skills clusters. After listing three to four skills clusters and showing how you've demonstrated those skills, you provide a bare-bones work history at the bottom.
 - **Don't** use personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a resume.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Do** list your job information in order of importance to the reader.
 - In listing your jobs, what's generally most important is your title/position. So list in this preferred order: Title/position, name of employer, city/state of employer, dates of employment.
 - **Don't** leave out the locations of your past jobs (city and state). This information is expected, but many jobseekers unwittingly omit it.
 - **Do** list your jobs in reverse chronological order.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** mix noun and verb phrases when describing your jobs.
 - Preferably, use concrete action verbs consistently.
 - **Do** avoid the verb, "Work" because it's a weak verb.
 - Be more specific, *Collaborated* is often a good substitute.
 - **Do** think in terms of accomplishments when preparing your resume.
 - Accomplishments are so much more meaningful to prospective employers than run-of-the-mill litanies of job responsibilities.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** use expressions like "Duties included," "Responsibilities included," or "Responsible for."
 - That's job-description language, not accomplishments-oriented resume language that sells.
 - **Do** emphasize transferable skills, especially if you don't have much experience or are changing careers.
 - **Do** quantify whenever possible.
 - Use numbers to tell employers how many people you supervised, by what percentage you increased sales, how many products you represented, etc.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** list too much experience on your resume.
 - The rule of thumb for someone with many years of experience is to list about 15 years worth of jobs.
 - Age discrimination, unfortunately, is a reality, and even more likely, employers may think you're too expensive if you list too much experience on your resume.
 - **Don't** emphasize skills and job activities you don't want to do in the future, even if they are strengths.
 - In fact, you may not even want to mention these activities.
 - Why describe how great your clerical skills are if you don't want to do clerical work in the future?

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Do** remember that education also follows the principle about presenting information in the order of importance to the reader;
 - Preferred order for listing your education is:
 - Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of _____) in (name of major), university name, city/state of university, graduation year
 - Followed by peripheral information, such as minor and GPA.
 - If you haven't graduated yet, list your grad year anyway. Simply by virtue of the fact that the date's in the future, the employer will know you don't have the degree yet.
 - **Don't** list high school!

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** include on your resume your height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, sex, ethnicity/race, health, social security number (except on an international resume), reasons for leaving previous job(s), names of former supervisors, specific street addresses or phone numbers of former employers, picture of yourself, salary information, the title "Resume," or any information that could be perceived as controversial, such as religion, church affiliations, or political affiliations.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** include hobbies or other irrelevant information on a resume.
 - In most cases, they are seen as superfluous and trivial. An argument can be made that hobbies are interview conversation starters or that they make you seem well-rounded, but they are generally seen as fluff or filler.
 - **Do**, however, list sports if you're a student or grad.
 - Many employers specifically seek out athletes because of their drive and competitiveness, as well as teamwork and leadership skills. Collegiate athletes should even consider listing their sports background in the Experience section.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

B. Resume

- Resume Dos and Don'ts
 - **Don't** list references right on your resume.
 - References belong in a later stage of the job search. Keep references on a separate sheet and provide them only when they are specifically requested.
 - **Do** realize that the phrase "References available upon request" is optional.
 - If you couldn't, you would have no business looking for a job. If you are trying to conserve space, leave it off.
 - **Do** proofread carefully.
 - Misspellings and typos are deadly on a resume.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

C. Recommendations

- Who do you ask for recommendation letters?
 - Choose people who...
 - worked closely with you
 - have known you at least *fairly well*
 - have some expertise
 - are senior and well known (department chair)
 - have a positive opinion of you and your abilities.
 - You must ask personally for a letter and ask for a *strong* letter of reference.
 - Give letter writers a month to write the letters, and then a reminder a week before its due.

II. APPLYING FOR A JOB

C. Recommendations

- Provide the letter writers with all the necessary materials
 - Address, stamped and addressed envelopes, resumes, personal statements, transcripts, and any other documents you are sending in support of your application.
 - Some applications include specific forms for letter of recommendation writers.
 - Organize all the forms in one folder.
 - Include a cover sheet with a list of the schools or jobs for which you are requesting letters.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

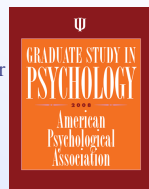
A. Introduction

- Most of the activities in preparing and applying for a job applies to preparing and applying to graduate school.
- There are two major exceptions
 - GRE and other tests of achievement
 - Personal statement and related self-presentation issues.
- The three most important criteria for grad school acceptance
 - GRE scores, GPA, and Letter of Recommendation!

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL

A. GRE Tests

- The GRE (Graduate Record Exam)
 - It is a test of quantitative reasoning, verbal reasoning, and critical thinking and analytical writing skills.
 - It is a very important screening device for many graduate and professional schools.
 - It is generally an exclusionary criteria
 - Graduate schools will not look at you if your scores are below their cutoff.
 - Cutoff information is often available from the college or APA Graduate School book



III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL A. GRE Tests

- GRE generates multiple scores:
 - **Verbal Reasoning**
 - The skills measured include the test taker's ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it analyze relationships among component parts of sentences recognize relationships between words and concepts
 - **Quantitative Reasoning**
 - The skills measured include the test taker's ability to understand basic concepts of arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and data analysis reason quantitatively solve problems in a quantitative setting.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL A. GRE Tests

- GRE generates multiple scores:
 - **Analytical Writing** — The skills measured include the test taker's ability to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively examine claims and accompanying evidence support ideas with relevant reasons and examples sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion control the elements of standard written English.
 - The General Test can be taken by computer and includes all three sections: Verbal Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning and Analytical Writing

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL A. GRE Tests

- Can you study for it???
- NO: Not if you are going to minimally engaged or training is short.
 - Some published reports demonstrated minimal effects of short coaching or familiarization sessions (Messick, 1981; Powers, 1985)
- YES: IF you are committed to a long term training either alone or through a program.
 - Other researchers have found that intensive, structured and sustained training for the GRE test is successful in boosting scores about 100 points (Miller, Goodyear-Orwat, & Malott, 1996).

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL A. GRE Tests

- Training for the GRE General Test.
 - On your own:
 - There are very good training books.
 - Private training programs
 - Private companies offered extensive GRE preparation courses, with guaranteed results. However, they are very expensive, with Kaplan charging \$1200.00.
 - Public training programs
 - University of Utah has a 6-week program running once a week, costing \$545.00
 - Weber State University has a similar program, for which students can get a scholarship.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL B. Personal Statement

- The personal statement
 - Provides you with the opportunity to provide context and background to your application.
 - It also serves as a writing sample.
 - Generally, the personal statement will have some sections which will be the same for all applications and some which will vary.
 - Your story of what made you interested in psychology and transformed you from student to apprentice
 - Your fit with the school to which you are applying, including the faculty with whom you would like to work.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL B. Personal Statement

- The personal statement
 - I personally believe that the personal statement should be tailored to your own story.
 - I tell student to tell the story of how and why graduate school is the next best activity for you to do next.
 - Why has everything you have done lead you to your graduate school application
 - Personal statement is not just a listing of achievements, but a narrative of your transformation in the discipline.
 - What events MEAN to you is more important than just a listing of what you ACCOMPLISHED.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL C. The CV

- The Curriculum Vita
 - The CV is like a resume, but would include much more information about specifically your academic achievements.
 - Provide information about Education
 - Degree major and minor
 - Professional Experience
 - Academic-related job experience
 - Other experience
 - Volunteer and other jobs.

III. APPLYING FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL C. The CV

- The Curriculum Vita
 - Publications and Presentations
 - Place any professional presentations (RMPA, WSU Undergraduate Research, UCUR
 - Research Activities
 - Undergraduate research activities which can be part of a course.
 - Awards and Activities
 - Dean's list, Phi Kappa Phi, Psi Chi, Psi Cho.
 - Professional Affiliations & Licensure
 - Student affiliation of APA, APS, RMPA etc.