Using the STAR Method for Interviews | Beyond OSU: Experiences

Assignment Overview:
The STAR method is a strategy for answering behavior-based questions to evaluate your skills gained in past experiences. In this assignment, students will practice this technique to be prepared for a range of potential interview questions.

Learning Outcomes: 1. Evaluate the principles of the STAR method for existing experiences.
2. Construct concise stories that highlight career skills.

Beyond OSU: This assignment falls under the **Beyond OSU II (Engage) learning outcome:**
Apply career development concepts to relevant artifacts from engagement in a career related experience or activity.

NACE Competencies: **Skills developed completing this assignment:** Professionalism, Communication, Critical Thinking

Professionalism   Communication   Critical Thinking   Teamwork   Technology   Leadership   Equity & Inclusion   Career & Self-Development
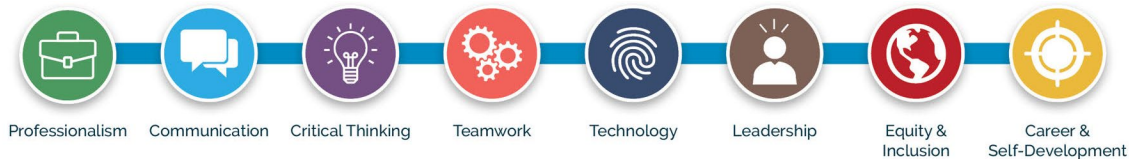
Student Instructions:

Step 1:   **Find a sample job or internship opening:** Students find a position of interest in their job field. Look on Handshake and other online job boards (Indeed, Glassdoor, LinkedIn) to locate potential matches.

Step 2:   **Write 5 sample questions:** Based on the job description, in the QUESTION column below, write 5 sample questions you think the employer might ask. *Option* you can also paste the job description into a generative AI model like ChatGPT and ask it to create some interview questions for you! This is at the discretion of instructor to implement.   **Sample AI script: Based on this job description (copy and paste), write potential interview questions.**

View sample interview questions From the Career Development Center

Step 3:   **Fill out the grid:** On page 2 use the STAR method to draft answers to your interview questions. (This method relies on tangible examples to illustrate your skills, problem solving and experience. It helps interviewers better understand who you are and what you can offer through storytelling.)

Situation | **State the situation or context**
Describe the setting in which your example takes place. What was the situation? What were you doing? Who were you working with? What were you working on? **Answer***: "During my role as an intern at company X, I was responsible for managing all of the details for events, and I supervised a group of five for hosting events."*

Task | **Identify the task or issue at hand**
Explain the 'problem' and what you needed to address. What was the goal you were striving for or the problem you were trying to solve? **Answer:** *"After reviewing past reports, I found that event attendance had dropped by 20% over the past few years. I wanted to make sure that we brought attendance back up."*

Action | **Explain the action you took**
Talk through the specific steps you took to address the task at hand. Demonstrate and mention skills you used. What did you do to resolve the problem or reach your goal? **Answer:** *"First, I collected feedback from past attendees and vendors by sending out a survey. I used this to design a new approach that would be more effective in promoting the event."*

Result | **Discuss the results of your effort**
Explain how your actions contributed to the overall result. How did the story end? What did you learn from the experience? Include concrete, quantifiable data to provide specific details in your response. **Answer:** *"The company was able to use the new plan to host a new event. By using my strategies, we raised attendance by 30% in the first year. I learned that it is important to continually adapt strategies to increase participation."*

Student Worksheet:

Enter your questions from step 2	**S**ITUATION Describe the situation, context and background.	**T**ASK Describe what was required of you.	**A**CTION Describe what you did and how you did it.	**R**ESULT Describe the positive outcome of your actions.
QUESTION 1				
QUESTION 2				
QUESTION 3				
QUESTION 4				
QUESTION 5				

Step 4: **Peer Practice interviews**: Using your worksheet above, meet with one peer and conduct one-on-one interviews to practice interviewing using the STAR method. On the second worksheet below, write in all five of your peer's questions from their worksheet but nor their answers. As your partner answers their questions in the interview format, assess the STAR process and how effective it comes across from your end and take good notes. Evaluate not only how well they worked through the STAR method, but how well their answers related to the question asked.

Reviewer Worksheet (for peer interview):

Peer you reviewed:

Copy interviewees' STAR questions from their worksheet in this column.	**S**ITUATION What did you think about the way in which your partner set this up?	**T**ASK How did interviewee describe the task at hand for this question?	**A**CTION In which ways did the action support the interview question?	**R**ESULT How did the results hit for you and in which ways was it an effective story?
QUESTION 1				
QUESTION 2				
QUESTION 3				
QUESTION 4				
QUESTION 5				

Step 5: **Reflective Assessment:** : In a minimum of 300 words, reflect below on what you learned from hearing someone else work through interview questions using the STAR method. In what ways were STAR answers effective for you as the listener? What would you go back and change in your answers after hearing your peer go through the process? How did STAR help you better formulate and prepare answers?

Notes for Instructors:

Please adjust this assignment as needed to fit your schedule, point system and course outcomes. While these are designed intentionally at this length, we know that career development is not a one-size-fits-all process. Be mindful of your audience and their specific career needs regarding interviewing. For the peer review (steps 4 and 5), work in small groups if one-on-one is not possible. For Ecampus, students could share their questions and answers via a discussion board where time and logistics may not allow a synchronous exchange. Alternately, students could record a Zoom video, voice note, or video interview for a peer to review and provide feedback. This option could be highly beneficial for students - as many interviews occur via Zoom.

The use of generative A.I. might be a part of some people's pedagogy but not others. Please feel free to remove mentions of A.I. from the assignment to better meet your course policies.

Suggestions for this assignment:

Length: This assignment contains the goal of five questions but can be tailored by the instructor. Instructors should facilitate the mock STAR interview segment to test the STAR method in an interactive and experiential setting (see above notes). This experiential engagement aspect of the assignment is critical to the outcomes and should be tailored to your class as needed. Coach students through any industry expectations and supply feedback and ideas for successful interviewing techniques.

Assessment & Submission: Please assess this assignment in line with other work in your course, and direct students in how you would like them submitted (printed and turned in during class, electronically filled out and submitted via Canvas, etc.). Depending on the format of your mock STAR interviews, assessment can be tailored based on the amount of time and effort required. In terms of scaffolding, the Transferrable Skills and Crafting Resume Bullets assignments (among others) could be could pre-work for the STAR Interview Method.

Additional Resources: Please consider using the robust online resources the **Career Development Center** offers you and your students. For more information on using the Career Development Center's tools, events and workshops in your classroom, please visit our website.

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