

Practicing Job Interviewing Skills Using Virtual Reality Technology

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Abstract

This presentation demonstrated the prototype computer software program Virtual Interview Exercises for Workplace Success (VIEWS), which provides the opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing job seekers to practice employment interviewing skills. This software incorporates SigningAvatar™ technology which uses 3-D animated characters who sign in varying degrees of American Sign Language. The software presents an accessible virtual interview scenario with interacting characters and the opportunity to respond to typically asked interview questions. If the user selects a certain number of the best responses to the interview questions, the employer will offer the interviewee the job. This software not only provides the opportunity to independently practice interviewing skills, but it may also boost the confidence of the user.

The employment interview is often the final step in the selection process when employers decide which job candidate is the most qualified. Doing well in an interview means not only being able to communicate expertise in the given area, but it also means being able to respond to loaded questions. These questions are used to reveal whether the prospective employee will be able to socially integrate into the culture of the employment setting. For hearing individuals, successfully answering culturally loaded questions takes some study and practice. While the same is true for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, finding opportunities to study and practice interviewing skills can often be a challenge.

Virtual Interview Exercises for Workplace Success (VIEWS) is a prototype computer software program that provides the opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing job seekers to practice employment interview-

ing skills. This software incorporates SigningAvatar™ technology, which uses 3-D animated characters who sign in variants of American Sign Language (ASL). The software presents a virtual interview scenario with three interacting characters: the employer, the interpreter, and a deaf interviewee. The employer character asks the user typical interview questions. The employer speaks the question in English while the interface displays captions. Consecutively, the interpreter signs the question in ASL. The user is presented the option to repeat the signed interpretation. The user is then given several possible responses to the question in written English, which can also be previewed in ASL signed by the interviewee character. Once the user has selected his/her response, the interpreter interprets the response for the employer, who will then give an evaluative response and another question.

If the user selects a certain number of the best responses to the interview questions, the employer will offer the interviewee the job. This software not only provides the opportunity to independently practice interviewing skills, but it may also boost the confidence of the user, which is essential for successfully participating in an employment interview.

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