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VeLoCiTy

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Intellectual Output Title	**Needs analysis of job interviewees in terms of training**
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to conduct a research on relevant topics related to the VeLoCiTy Project, as well as to serve as template for future researches to be conducted during the project.
The main research conducted in this file will be in relation to different theories and best practices related to interviewing in different European countries, together with case studies. The document will include as well a research on other projects similar to VeLoCiTy, involving distance learning.

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
NPC	Non-Player Character (aka Bot) is a computer controlled Avatar that can be programmed to have certain behaviour as part of a virtual world simulation or activity

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1. BACKGROUND

The VeLoCiTy Projects is a European Project financed by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ KO2.

Even since the beginning of the economic crisis, the amount of unemployed citizens grew in the EU, leading in many cases to a necessity of finding a job in a different country. There has been a rise on migration related to job searching, but in many cases the situation surrounding that move is very difficult for the migrant potential worker. According to the statistical 2013 publication from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): "Immigrants have been hard hit, and almost immediately, by the economic downturn in most OECD countries. This is mainly explained by their greater presence in sectors that have been strongly affected by the crisis (e.g. construction, manufacturing, retail trade and financial sectors) as well as by their greater likelihood of being in precarious or informal jobs. The ongoing economic downturn has seen unemployment rates increase, both for foreign- and native-born persons, in most OECD countries. However, immigrants in most European OECD countries were more affected by unemployment than the native population".

Bearing all this in mind, the goal of the VeLoCiTy project is to help those individuals seeking for a job by showing them the different types and theories of interviews among the European countries.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The goal of the VeLoCiTy project is to facilitate the search for a job to job seekers in another country by making them familiar with the diversity in the theories and practices of the interviews, partially as a result of the culture and ethnic differences among the European countries. The above goal will be achieved through an innovative 3D virtual world learning environment that will include scenarios simulating the most representative interview processes. The main target group is the individuals/interviewees that will benefit directly through the participation in the learning environment, overcoming potential problems such as distance and the space and/ or tutor availability.

3. CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

3.1. RESEARCH ON INTERVIEW THEORIES

Some of the main theories behind the creation of types of interviews are related to psychology. For this reason, in the following point we will research some of the most important psychological theories, learning how they can affect an interview.

3.1.1. PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

The psychoanalytic theory was created at the end of the XIX century by Sigmund Freud, and it is based on the statement that many of the actions done by a person have their reason on events they have lived in the past. Following this idea, none of the actions done either consciously or unconsciously by someone are by chance.

This theory was created with the intention of curing people suffering of mental illnesses; Freud believed that by making conscious the unconscious reasons of their actions, it would be possible to cure them.

Following this idea, Freud created what he called the “structure of personality”, composed by three elements: **id**, the most “animal” drives in a person, which he considered to be unconscious; the **ego**, whose main goal is to satisfy the demands of the id in a way that is safe and acceptable, and which operates in the conscious and unconscious mind; and **superego**, the moral and responsible part that makes the person acts acceptably. (McLeod, Sigmund Freud, 2013)

Following the diverse parts of the psychoanalysis theory, Freud created what is known as the talk cure, in which the patient would sit and talk about his life freely, telling everything appearing on his mind and without opposing to any thought. Freud thought this method would help to get an association of those feelings with the symptoms, knowing then what should be fixed. (Teoría y Técnica de la Entrevista, 2012)

This theory and practice is used in **interviews** nowadays, as a way for interviewers of evaluating certain points of the interviewee:

- Cognitive evaluation and reality test
- Intellectual functioning
- Nature and anxiety
- Control and drive
- System of defence mechanism
- Resistance
- Transferal reactions

- Identity and conduct in interpersonal relationships

3.1.2. TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

The transactional analysis was created by Eric Berne in the XX century, and it opposes to the psychoanalysis by stating that all humans are born in a perfect state, and our actions go limiting us. He considered that our own internal thoughts that we control and allow are the ones limiting us.

Based on this theory, Berne suggest the self-identification of the ideas about what it is happening; the spontaneity on interpersonal relationships; the capacity for interpersonal relationships and the ethical judgement. “Berne created the theory of transactional analysis as a way to explain human behaviour. Berne’s theory was based on the ideas of Freud but were distinctly different. Freudian psychotherapists focused on patient’s personalities. Berne believed that insight could be better discovered by analysing patients’ social transactions. Berne mapped interpersonal relationships to three ego-states of the individuals involved: the Parent, Adult, and Child state. He then investigated communications between individuals based on the current state of each. He called these interpersonal interactions transactions and used the label games to refer to certain patterns of transactions which popped up repeatedly in everyday life. (Disorders.org, n.d.)

The type of interview coming from this theory is an open, non-directed interview in which appears an exchange of expertise: the interviewer about the job, the interviewee about himself. (Teoría y Técnica de la Entrevista, 2012)

3.1.3. BEHAVIOURISM

According to this theory, psychology should be studied as any other natural science, following the experimental method, and it should be able to explain the conduct in any animal, not only humans; it should be able to predict and control the conduct.

Additionally, the behaviourism believes that, since it is not possible to see the soul or the unconscious explained by Freud, it should not be the object of scientific study as psychology is; according to this theory, psychology should only study the observable and measurable conduct.

Based on this theory we find an interview in which a problem is identified and several conducts are established for a possible modification. This type of interview has three main objectives:

- Identify the functional relationships between the problems of the interviewee

- Explain the causes of these problems
- Predict the answers of the interviewee towards future situations

3.1.4. HUMANISTIC THEORIES

The humanistic psychology is based on the theory that humans are born free and spend their lives searching for equilibrium. This equilibrium is not based in past actions as in the previous theories but in the perception of the world. Following this idea, this type of psychologists consider necessary to expand a high level of empathy in order to feel what the patient is feeling, as the way of helping solve a problem.
The main purpose of the interviewer in this theory is to facilitate the road for the interviewee, manifesting his interest on the topic and showing empathy. The interviewer needs to avoid judging or classifying the interviewee according to their personal thoughts, being impartial. (Teoría y Técnica de la Entrevista, 2012)

3.1.5. MOTIVATIONAL THEORIES

There is not a single, most important motivational theory, but several theoretical focuses: the focus of receiving a compensation (receiving something the person wants in return of doing something); because of the value assigned to an expectation; because of the singular thought of the person and not only due to punishments or rewards; related to the unconscious theory of Freud; focused on the culture and situation surrounding the person.
According to these theories, when a person completes a level of needs he feels motivated to accomplish the next level. In this type of interview, if the interviewee feels like he has successfully asked a question he will feel motivated for the next one, increasing the chances of an adequate response.

3.2. TYPES AND TECHNIQUES

In the following lines there will be an explanation of different interview theories conducted along the European Union, as well as some points on how the interviewee should react in each case to assure the best outcome possible out of the interview.

3.2.1. Behavioural Interview

Behavioural Job Interviews are founded on the idea that past behaviour is a reliable predictor of future behaviour; for this reason, they often start with statements such as “Tell me about a time,” “Describe a time” or “Provide me with an example”. With that information, the theory believes that from what it has been done in the past it can be known how the interviewee will act in the future. In a well-constructed behavioural interview, the questions asked will allow to isolate in detail the concrete competencies required for the job offered, and they will let the interviewee demonstrate those competences.

In a behavioural interview, the interviewee is judged on the quality of the examples they provide. Each competency is composed by a set of behaviours to be fulfilled by the interviewee when answering each question, in order to be consider the proper candidate for the job. Interviewers can ask the same question using different ways as a check of how the interviewees' skills are well developed and consistently used. The interviewee will be assessed highly if they demonstrate all the behaviours required in each competency. Recruiters like this method of assessing people because it's structured and clear and a good answer is obvious to all.

What should the interviewee do?

The main challenge for an interviewee in this type of job interview is to understand the question properly, as well as the intention behind it. Related to it, comes the second question as to how much detail should be given; it should be provided detail about how you have achieved something, but not so much detail that you will lose track of what you are talking about. When confused about how much detail to give to the interviewer, check in with the interview or check their body language.

If the interviewee cannot think of its best example, then think of the most recent. The skills that are used every day are often taken for granted, yet if we do these things every day, we may also underrate our competency. That is one of the good things about behavioural interviews, they allow the interviewee to showcase their competencies. The interviewee may have developed the skills in a role unrelated to the position for which they are applying, the most important thing is to answer the question, regardless of where the interviewee has gained the experience. **Invalid source specified.**

3.2.2. Case Interview

This type of interview is usually used in sectors such as management consulting and investment banking, where it is required that interviewees can demonstrate an analytical ability and problem-solving skills. It is a type of interview that allows the interviewer to get a better idea about the way in which the interviewee analyses, thinks and solves the problems that may appear in the future work. (Tran, n.d.)

In these interviews, interviewees are given a business scenario and asked to

manage the proposed situation; the scenarios used are mostly the ones that the interviewee would encounter while working for the company. It is possible that the interviewee receives some information related to the case study so he can start preparing, but it is not common.
Additionally, in case interviews it is also possible to be given IQ questions or brain teasers not fully related to the company as a measure of the intellectual skills of the candidate.

What should the interviewee do?

In order to successfully pass a case interview, there are some tips the interviewee can use. First of all, paraphrasing the question before answering it is a way to make sure you understand it correctly; taking notes is also a good idea if it is allowed, as it can be useful as a way of reaffirming your answers by using charts. The interviewee should not rush into answering either; it is better to logically think through the problem before arriving at an answer.
In case you have any doubts, do not hesitate to ask clarifying questions to gain information; case interviews are interactive. Additionally, explain how you arrive at a solution, as probably the interviewer wants to know how you did it better than the answer itself.
Another important point has to do with appearance; it is important to remain as professional as you would: sit up straight, speak clearly, and make eye contact with the interviewer. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.3. Competency Based Interview

In Competency Based Interviews interviewees are required to give specific examples of times in which they demonstrated a particular skill or attitude. Interviewees usually need to describe a problem or situation, how it was handled and the results coming out of the situation. With these types of questions interviewers are able to evaluate the interviewee’s mind set and ability to handle particular situation, as well as the level on a particular skill or attitude.
In Competency based interviews, all questions usually start with sentences such as “Tell me about a time when you faced a difficult situation”, in which the interviewee needs to respond with real examples that can prove he would be a good fit for the concrete position to which he is applying. (My World of Work, n.d.)

What should the interviewee do?

The first point to prepare for this type of interview is to make a list of all the skills the interviewee considers might be relevant to the job applied to, and any situation lived

that may show an ability regarding the skills on the list. With this preparation, it becomes easier to answer the question when it happens.
An important point to remember during the interview is to be concise; it is very easy to wander in this type of interview, so instead think of a specific example of a past situation and provide a clear, concise description. By focusing on one specific example, your answer will be succinct and on topic.
If the example includes a particularly difficult problem or situation, avoid to attack or blame on other person; the interview is about you concretely, so by doing this you set the focus on another person and the interviewer can even think you do not work well with others. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.4. Groups Interview

Inside of this type of interview we find two roads: group of interviewers or group of applicants.
In the first case, the interviewee faces several interviewers to respond to. This case allows to collect more than one opinion and to introduce the job seeker to the people he or she would be working with.
The second case is very common. In many interviews, companies decide to interview groups of job applicants because they are very efficient, as the time spent by the interviewer is reduced; but also because they allow to see the ability of working in teams of the applicants and how the candidates would fit in the company culture. This type of interview is also used for jobs involving high stress, fast-paced work, or customer interaction.

What should the interviewee do?

The first point to remember is to be confident, but respectful. The interviewee wants to stand out, but not negatively due to the treatment given to other applicants. Do not dominate completely the interview; speak when you have the opportunity but without cutting other people off. Additionally, it is essential to show to be a good listener, as it is an important part of teamwork. Listen not only to what the interviewers say but also the candidates, and use your body language to show you are listening. If you have an opportunity to lead, do so, but without walking over the rest of the candidates; in some cases leading can be just involving everybody; also be sure to give credit to the rest of the applicants.
Another important point is to be yourself; do not try to stand out and talk too much is you are shy; instead, prove that you are a good listener and answer to fewer question with actual purpose instead of talking for no reason.

A final point that can set you apart from the rest of interviewees is to send a thank you letter to every interviewer in the panel, mentioning something specific about your interview to help the employers remember you. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.5. Interview in a public place

In this type of interview, the interviewer sets up the encounter in a public location. This decision can have multiple motives: because the company does not have a local place of working; because they do not want the employees to know they are hiring…

What should the interviewee do?

First of all, make sure to know the concrete place and time of the meeting; when it is done in a public place, there are more possibilities of misunderstanding the concrete location (for example, if the interview is supposed to be made in a Starbucks, there can be two in the same street). Also, do not let the environment distract you from the interviewer. Be careful with the order you make; choose something that is simple to eat and never the most expensive item on the menu; and never lose your manners, always bear in mind what you are doing.

Another good tip of advice is to be even more focused on the follow-up interview that would be done in the company; as the documents have to be transported from one place to another, it is easier to lose them, so make sure that you follow-up with a thank you note and to check on the status of your candidacy. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.6. Phone Interview

In some cases, companies decide to make a phone interview as a first step, in order to make a preliminary decision on which applicants have potential and will be appointed for face-to-face interviews. Also, they may be used to decrease the expenses on interviewing out-of-town candidates.

An important point related to phone interviews is that the interviewee does not necessarily need to know when the call is going to be made; this means, you should always answer the phone professionally when an unknown number calls.

What should the interviewee do?

First of all, as said before, be ready for answering professionally any call, and make sure your voicemail has a proper voice message. Regarding the preparation, it is similar to a face-to-face interview; make a list of your strengths and weaknesses and

questions for the interviewer. Make sure to control any verbal ticks you may have, because when speaking on the phone they can be increased.
Also, be sure to know if the interviewer is calling you or if you should be the one calling the company; go to a quiet space to concentrate on the call, and answer to the phone yourself saying your name, so the interviewer will know it is the correct number.
Carry a notebook in case you need to write anything down; also, it will be useful in case you think of anything you want to say before the interviewer is done speaking; and never cut him or her. Do not hesitate to use some seconds to think, but without staying quiet for too long, and ask if you do not understand something.
Always thank the interviewer at the end of the call and send a thank you note that reiterates your interest in the job. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.7. Structured Job Interview

In a structured Job Interview companies try to impartially compare candidates. For this reason, all candidates are given the same questions at the same order, focused on the skills and abilities the company is looking for the job.
The employer also creates a standardized scale for evaluating candidates, and every interviewee is ranked on the same scale.
With this tactic employers avoid to make decisions not based on impartial choices, reducing any possibility of legal issues related to unfair hiring. As the questions are done focused on a specific skill, they allow as well to test the candidate more effectively with regards to these skills, and it also lets the interviewers assess hard-to-measure skills (oral communication, interpersonal skills…).

What should the interviewee do?

First of all, make sure to have clear how to link your skills and qualifications to the particular job. Look back at the job listing, and underline the job requirements, then make a list of the skills and abilities you have that can match them. Make sure you are prepared to explain how you have demonstrated those skills and abilities in the workplace.
Also, review some common interview questions, as well as common interview questions for the particular job. (Doyle, 2016)

3.2.8. Unstructured Interview

This case is the opposite to the previous one; an interview in which there is usually no schedule, that includes open ended questions which can be answered in any order… an interview that feels in many cases like a guided conversation. Usually, the interviewer will add questions to the ones he had prepared as the interview progresses, so they are unique. This type of interview is going to allow to see more of the person who is being interviewed, and it extracts qualitative data. (McLeod, Simply Pshycology, 2014)

What should the interviewee do?

In this type of interviews there is not a concrete preparation you can use, as in many cases not even the interviewer knows how it is going to end. However, it is always good to study the company you apply for, have prepared a quick explanation of your strong points and the reasons that make you want to apply for the company.

3.2.9. Video Job Interview

Video interviews are becoming increasingly common, because due to the globalisation of hiring employees may live in a distinct place to the one in which the company is located.

It allows to conduct first round interviews more quickly, save on transportation costs, and get the interview process started much faster using video conferencing than they can scheduling in-person interviews.

What should the interviewee do?

This can be a very intimidating for the job seeker, but for the employers is very comfortable because it allows to see a certain level of technology ability.

But if you plan your interview, it is not that different from a face-to-face interview. Remember to answer the question asked, but also use your responses to show past experiences that prove you can do the job you are applying for. Make sure you are dressed and in an ambiance that is correct and formal, as it is what they are going to see about you.

Regarding the type of questions, there are no special types for video interviews; they are usually the same as a face-to-face interview.

3.3. CASE STUDIES

3.3.1. 3M Company Invests $400 Million to Build a New Steel Plant (Management Consulting Case Interviews, n.d.)

Case Type: add capacity; investment.

Consulting Firm: Boston Consulting Group (BCG) second round summer internship job interview.
Industry Coverage: mining & metals production; conglomerate.

Case Interview Question #00637: Our client The 3M Company (NYSE: MMM), formerly known as the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company, is a United States multinational conglomerate corporation based in Maplewood, Minnesota, United States. With over 84,000 employees, they produce more than 55,000 products, including 3m companyadhesives, abrasives, laminates, passive fire protection, dental products, electronic materials, medical products, car care products, electronic circuits and optical films.

The 3M Company has operations in more than 60 countries globally, with major investments in South America, India and China. One of these investments is a mining operation in Brazil. At this mining operation, our client 3M produces only one kind of steel, an alloy made by combining iron and other elements such as carbon. Steel is considered to be an international commodity product and has hundreds of applications. In Brazil, there are only two other producers of this particular kind of steel.

The CEO of 3M has hired BCG to help identify new opportunities for this business as well as understand the market dynamics. He wants to know whether he should divest the mining business or invest in an additional facility. This afternoon, the BCG team is going to meet with the CEO to discuss our initial hypotheses. We have been provided the following information to assist us:

Additional Information: (to be given to candidate upfront)

Local Players	Plant capacity (tons)	Cost/ton	Local sales	Export sales
Client 3M (A)	600,000	$450	600,000	-
Competitor B	4,500,000	$420	2,800,000	1,200,000
Competitor C	3,200,000	$420	2,000,000	700,000

The world-wide production (supply) of this particular steel product is estimated to be 100,000,000 tons per year. Furthermore, it is known that demand for this steel product is greater than current supply. As a commodity, the international price (export price) is $450/ton and the local price is $600/ton.
An efficient plant should have a 1,000,000 ton capacity (but, not all plants are operating efficiently). However, from this information the interviewee should be able to assume that competitors B and C are operating more than one plant each.
Market grows with GDP.
There is a strong demand for this steel product internationally.
The competitors are probably located away from the coast, adding transportation costs.
Recommended Approach:

This is a typical BCG style case. BCG often uses real life cases, presents available data upfront in a table during the case interview, and drives the interview to be a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, be sure to engage the interviewer as you approach the case.

The interviewer was expecting the interviewee to first provide a structure/framework, which would look at the big picture and then start hypothesizing. A strong candidate would:

- Discuss market dynamics (local and international and supply/demand).
- Discuss the expected competitive response to any action, e.g., a price war.
- Summarize all findings in a presentation format.

Possible Solution:

Interviewer: So, how would you go about this case?

Candidate: (Summarize the case and work on a framework) In this case it is important to look at the competition (specifically, understand the different cost structure of the 3 producers A, B, C), estimate the market demand and discuss the international trade environment. We should also discuss the specifics of a metal commercialization.

Interviewer: OK. Where should we start?

Candidate: Clearly, our client is running on full capacity, but its competitors appear to have some idle capacity. Furthermore, I note from the data provided that the competitors' cost structures allow them to sell in the international market while our client does not currently export any of the products. Our client would experience zero margin if it was to export since the international price is given at $450 which is equal to our client's cost of production. Nevertheless, the local price is considerably higher than the international price, so the producers would rather sell as much as possible in the local market. Given this information, I would hypothesize that there is not enough demand in the local market.

Competitors would prefer to sell in the local market ($600/ton) instead of export ($450/ton)

Competitors are running with idle capacity, but we know that demand exceeds current supply

Interviewer: That is correct. But what about the international market?

Candidate: This is a good point. You did mention that there is a strong demand for this steel product worldwide. Now we have to find out why the competitors are not selling their full capacity. We can think of many possible reasons, such as geographical distance, transaction costs, transportation costs, export taxes, etc.

Interviewer: They all make sense, but as we see competitors are able to export some metal, right?

Candidate: Competitors might have operations abroad so it makes easier to export to their international facilities. Or they might produce part of their capacity close to harbours. Considering that the international price is much lower than the local one, I would expect some barriers for international trade.

Interviewer: That is correct, Brazil does have some taxes for foreign products and producers struggle with transaction costs. Let's look at the cost structure. Why do you think there is a difference in costs?

Candidate: I could consider geographic location, technology, economies of scale, supply chain synergies, etc.

Interviewer: You mentioned some important elements. Our client has only one location and the competitors have multiple plants, each in the countryside. Our client was the first player in this market, having built its facilities 10 years earlier than its competitors. The industry has realized that a plant must have a minimum of 1,000,000 ton capacity in order to be efficient.

Candidate: But our client is still making a lot of money, right?

Interviewer: Yes, enough to convince the CEO to invest in a new production facility. This would be a $400 million investment in year 0 for a capacity of 1,000,000 tons with a cost of $420/ton. How would you evaluate this investment if this new production would be traded in the international market? Would you recommend this investment?

Candidate: Basically the margin will be $30/ton ($450 – $420) * 1,000,000 equal to $30 million per year. By using a 10% discount rate this investment will generate only $30 million / 10% = $300 million in total. The $400 million investment would not be worth it.

Interviewer: That is true. So, are you going to advise the CEO of 3M not to make the investment?

Candidate: I would advise him against it unless he is willing to engage in a price war.

Interviewer: OK. What would be the minimum price he could go to turn this investment profitable?

Candidate: We should be cautious because a lower price would impact the current profitability.

The current margin is ($600 – $450) * 600,000 = $90 million.
For instance, if we drop the price to $513/ton, we would be losing ($600 – $513) *

600,000 = $52.2 million from the current 600,000 ton production, but generating ($513 – $420) * 1,000,000 = $ 93 million from the new production, or a net gain of $93 million – $52.2 million = $40.8 million.
With the 10% discount the minimum profit required from the new plant would be $400 million * 10% = $40 million. Therefore, the minimum price would be $513/ton.

Interviewer: But if you drop the price to $513/ton, what would the competitors' reaction be? Would they also increase production? Remember, they have idle capacity and you don't.

Candidate: That is correct, but the competitor has a lot more to lose with a price reduction. In our client's case we found out that it would lose money as the margin of the current production drops. However, the client only sells 600,000 tons right now while the competitors sell 4,800,000 tons combined. They would probably reduce their production to avoid a higher price reduction.

Interviewer: Really? So you are recommending our client to invest $800 million in a 2,000,000 tons capacity plant?

Candidate: I haven't done the math but I guess this would be too risky. I would recommend our client to invest the $400 million and see how the market reacts.

Interviewer: That is a fair recommendation; after all they will be playing a game with no real expected result. Great, can you summarize your findings for the client?

The candidate should now summarize the findings from this discussion for the client, highlighting the approach and key recommendations.

3.3.2. China Southern Airlines to Fly New Guangzhou-Perth Route (Management Consulting Case Interviews, n.d.)

Case Type: new product; math problem.
Consulting Firm: Bain & Company first round summer internship job interview.
Industry Coverage: airlines.

Case Interview Question #00627: Our client China Southern Airlines Company Limited is an airline headquartered in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, People's Republic of China. It is the world's sixth largest airline measured by passengers carried, and Asia's largest airline in terms of both fleet size and china south airlinespassengers carried. China Southern Airlines is one of China's "Big Three" airlines, alongside Air China and China Eastern Airlines. From its main hubs at Guangzhou Baiyun International Airport and Beijing Capital International Airport, the airline flies to 121 destinations.

The client already operates two daily flights from Guangzhou, China to Sydney, Australia, offering connections to Perth, Sydney. The CEO of China Southern Airlines has hired your consulting firm Bain to evaluate a new direct flight between Guangzhou and Perth. Should they create this new route from Guangzhou to Perth?

Additional Information: (to be given to candidate if requested)

1. Market

At this point there is no other airline flying from Guangzhou to Perth, and there is only one competitor Qantas Airways flying from Guangzhou to Sydney. Sydney to Perth is a domestic route with one competitor.
The market grows with GDP.
15% of passengers from Guangzhou to Sydney (or return) have Perth as the original or final destination
China Southern Airlines' current load factor in Guangzhou to Sydney flight is 80%
Ticket price to fly from Guangzhou to Sydney or Guangzhou to Perth is $600 one way

2. Flight distance guangzhou sydney perth flight

Guangzhou – Sydney = 4,800 miles
Guangzhou – Perth = 3,800 miles
Sydney – Perth = 2,350 miles

3. Aircraft type

Airbus 319 (120 seats) has a maximum fly range of 4,000 miles
Airbus 320 (165 seats) has a maximum fly range of 6,000 miles
Airbus 330 (240 seats) has a maximum fly range of 7,000 miles

4. Costs

Airbus 319 (120 seats) has a fixed cost of $41,000
Airbus 320 (165 seats) has a fixed cost of $62,000
Possible Answer:

Interviewer: So, how would you go about analyzing this case?

Candidate: (Summarize the case and work on a framework) This case requires us to estimate the potential market size of route Guangzhou-Perth, the growth opportunity, the competition as well as our client's resources. Also, any legal or governmental issue should be discussed.

Interviewer: OK. How would you estimate the market size (demand) for the Guangzhou-Perth route? What do you need to know? I have been working with this client for a long time and might have the needed information.

Candidate: Although we could estimate the size of the market, it might be more reasonable to look at the current information the client company has about the indirect route. I would believe many passengers already fly from Perth to Guangzhou by connecting flights in Sydney, right?

Interviewer: Correct.

Candidate: So I would like to find out the number of flights per day, the number of passengers per flight and the percent of these passengers that actually have Perth as the origin or destination.

Interviewer: Very well thought. It is a smart decision to start more conservative. Our client China Southern Airlines currently flies twice a day from Guangzhou to Sydney and back. It currently operates Airbus 320 in this route, with 80% load factor. 15% of the passengers have Perth as the origin or destination. I can also tell you some aircraft limitations:

Airbus 319 (120 seats) has a maximum fly range of 4,000 miles
Airbus 320 (165 seats) has a maximum fly range of 6,000 miles
Airbus 330 (240 seats) has a maximum fly range of 7,000 miles

Candidate: This gives us 165 * 80% = 132 passengers per flight or 132 * 2 = 264 passengers per day (one way), of which 15% or 40 have Perth as the origin (and final destination). We should have in mind that if the client offers the new Guangzhou-Perth direct flight, it will reduce the load factor of the Guangzhou-Sydney route from 80% to 68%.

Aside from our own cannibalization, I would expect that by offering this new route our client China Southern Airlines will be able to take customers from its competitors, right? Actually, does the client have any competition on its current routes?

Interviewer: There is only one competitor flying from Guangzhou to Sydney, but this competitor has a code-share agreement with a domestic airline that flies from Sydney to Perth. From Guangzhou to Sydney the competitor flies an A330 (240 seats) daily with the same 80% load factor. Also, 15% of its passengers have Perth as the origin or final destination.

Candidate: This gives us an additional 240 * 80% * 15% = 30 passengers/day. Before we conclude that our client will be able to steal these customers from the competition, let’s analyse the pricing points. Do you have any information of prices?

Interviewer: Both our client and the competitor charge $600 per one way from Guangzhou to Sydney or Guangzhou to Perth.

Candidate: It is interesting to see that the passenger pays the same fare to fly from Guangzhou to Sydney (4,800 miles) and from Guangzhou to Perth (4,800 + 2,350 = 7,150 miles). So basically we have the same price and potentially a faster trip. Unless we find any competitive advantage other than travel time, we could assume our client is able to steal all the Guangzhou-Perth customers from the competitor.

I would also imagine that by entering into this route our client would have first-mover advantage and the competitor would not enter this route if they didn't think that it could steal share from our client.

Interviewer: This makes sense. Basically you have estimated a conservative demand. What else would you analyze?

Candidate: We know the potential demand; although there is an expected growth in the industry let's see whether this route would be currently profitable. What do we know about the cost structure?

Interviewer: The total fixed cost of operating A319 and A320 are $41,000 per flight and $62,000 per flight respectively. There are some variable costs, but they are marginal.

Candidate: Basically for route Guangzhou-Sydney the client must use an A320, but A319 is an option for route Guangzhou-Perth. Let's analyze the daily revenue, cost, and profit for each route:

Revenues from Guangzhou to Sydney: (165 * 80% * 85%) * $600 = $67,320
Cost for Guangzhou to Sydney: $62,000 (A320)
Profit: $67,320 – $62,000 = $5,320
Profit margin: $5,320 / $67,320 ~= 8%

Revenues from Guangzhou to Perth: (40 + 30) * $600 = $42,000
Cost for Guangzhou to Perth: $41,000 (A319)
Profit: $42,000 – $41,000 = $1,000
Profit margin" $1,000 / $42,000 ~= 2.4%

I am assuming the client could use the A320 for the main Guangzhou to Sydney route and A319 for the new Guangzhou to Perth route. As we can see, the former route will remain profitable (8%) and the new route will give a 2.4% margin.

Interviewer: So, what is your conclusion?

Candidate: Taking into consideration that a 2.4% margin is not a very bad number for the airline industry and that our assumption does not take into consideration an additional demand generated by the new faster route from Guangzhou to Perth, the client should at least launch a trial of this new route. The former route, from Guangzhou to Sydney, will remain profitable.

Interviewer: Very good. Thank you.

Note:

This is a typical Bain style case. The interviewee should feel free to bring in their understanding of the airline industry as they see fit. This was a real case that the interviewer (a manager at Bain & Company) had worked on during his time at Bain. The interviewee should take some time to structure his/her thoughts before discussing the case.

The interviewer was expecting the interviewee to structure a framework, which would look at the big picture that any MBAs should have in mind about the airline industry. A strong candidate would have to arrive into final numbers as well as in a final conclusion.

Some important elements are:

- First player in the market
- Cannibalization and complementary business
- Discuss trade-offs

3.3.3. Moldovan Coffin Maker to Exit Coffin Manufacturing Business (Management Consulting Case Interviews, n.d.)

Case Type: new product, new technology; pricing & valuation.
Consulting Firm: McKinsey & Company first round full time job interview.
Industry Coverage: manufacturing.

Case Interview Question #00689: Our client Moldovan Coffins is a high-end coffin maker in the country of Moldova. Moldova, officially the Republic of Moldova, is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe located between Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east, and south. Moldova declared itself an independent handcrafted coffinstate with the same boundaries as the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1991 as part of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The total population of the country amounted to 4 million (2004 Moldovan census).

The owner of Moldovan Coffins business has seen substantial change in his market in recent years and is contemplating the future of his business. Up until now, he has been in the business of building high-quality, handcrafted coffins largely by hand with a skilled labor force. Recently, however, he has become aware of a new technology that would allow him to build machine-made coffins with much less labor. Should he invest in this new technology? And should he even remain in the coffin-making business in the first place? Why or why not?

Possible Solution:

Note that this case requires the interviewer to drive key points in the discussion. Allow the candidate to formulate a plan and then prompt him/her to consider each of the topics listed below.

Question #1: What strategic alternatives should the owner of the coffin business consider?

Possible Answer:

If the candidate doesn't get all of this, help them along since we need to lay this foundation for the rest of the case – We need to decide firstly whether to stay in the coffin business at all and if so, whether he uses the new technology:

Option 1: Sell the business to a third party
Option 2: Sell the assets of the company and shut it down
Option 3: Keep operating as is
Option 4: Keep operating and invest in the new technology

Question #2: How would you figure out the current value of the coffin business? Provide the following additional information if the candidate asks for it clearly and directly.

Market Size – If the candidate asks for the size of the market, first make him/her brainstorm about different ways to determine market size. A good candidate should come up with at least 4 different ways, such as:

Calculate from the market's total population, population growth, and birth rate.
Review of death records for a period of time.
Take sample of the number of obituaries in paper serving given population base.
Calculate from total population, average life expectancy.

Question #3: Now make the candidate calculate the market size, giving them the following data:

Population of Moldova: 4 million
Population Growth: 0%
Average Life Expectancy: 75 years
Age Distribution: assume a flat age distribution, i.e. same number of people at every age.
Burial Customs: 75% of deaths are buried in coffins.
Possible Answer:

(4 million) x (1/75) * (75%) = 40,000 coffins purchased per year.

Note that the candidate needs to quickly realize that every year, 1/75th of the total population will turn 76 and therefore (on average) will die.

Question #4: Now make the candidate calculate the value of Moldovan Coffins' business, giving them the following data:

Price – Coffins are priced at $5,000 for a hand-made high-end coffin.

Costs – Material accounts for 10% of the direct cost, while labor accounts for the other 90%. COGS is $4,800 per coffin. Fixed costs for the business are $700,000 per year. Assume all assets are fully depreciated and ignore taxes.

Competition – The client Moldovan Coffins has a 10% market share and a relative market share of about 1 (if asked, you may explain that relative market share is the ratio of the company's market share to that of its nearest competitor.)

Market Trends, Regulation, etc. – If asked about any exogenous factors, simply tell the candidate to assume that the market is expected to continue as it currently is.

Possible Answer:

The candidate needs to calculate the value of the business now. This is a pure mathematical exercise.

Margin per coffin = $5,000 – $4,800 = $200
Contribution Margin = $200 per coffin x 40,000 coffins x 10% market share = $800,000
Profit = Contribution Margin – Fixed Costs = $ 800,000 – $700,000 = $100,000
Assuming a discount rate of 10% (candidate can assume anything reasonable here as long as they are consistent later), a perpetuity with cash flows of $100,000 per year has a present value of $100,000 / 0.1 = $1 Million. So the current business is worth $1M whether they keep it or sell it.

Question #5: So now what is the value of the company if it were shut down and the assets were sold? Additional Information to give if asked:

Assets – Since the firm has been building coffins by hand, the fixed assets are essentially only the land and improvements. These are owned outright by the company.

When the candidate asks for the value of the land, have them brainstorm ways that they might determine this. They should come up with at least 3 good ways, such as:

Look for comparable real estate and determine recent selling price.
Find comparable commercial real estate and determine the rent per square foot, then discount the cash flows generated by renting the property.
Determine rate of appreciation for property in the area and then apply to book value of current land and improvements.
Give the candidate the following information and have them calculate the value of the property:

Book Value of Land: $20,000
Book Value of Improvements: $80,000
Years Owned: 48

Average Real Estate Appreciation: 6% / year
Possible Answer:

Using the “rule of 72″, a 6% growth rate will double the investment every 72/6 = 12 years. Since the property was held for 48 years, the current value will be $100K * (2 x 2 x 2 x 2) = $1.6M.

Since the assets ($1.6M) are higher than the value of the discounted cash flows ($1M), then it would make more sense to liquidate the business and sell the assets.

Question #6: What would the value of the company be if the owner invests in the new technology? Provide the following information if asked:

Investment – Investing in the new technology will cost the firm $1M.

Cost Savings – Material costs remain the same, but labor costs are reduced by 50%.

Proprietary Nature of Technology – The new coffin-making technology is being offered for sale by a machine tool company, who holds the patent. They are not offering exclusivity to any customers (i.e. they will sell to Moldovan Coffin’s competitors if possible).

Competitive Threat – It is not known whether the competitors have acquired or are planning to acquire this new coffin-making technology.

Customer Preferences – While the machine-made coffins are not “hand made”, the quality perceived by the customer is the same or better. It is believed that the customer will be indifferent between the quality and appearance of a hand-made and a machine-made coffin.

Brand Impact – The candidate may argue that a machine-made coffin might negatively impact Moldovan Coffin’s brand. If so, ask them how they would test this (e.g. consumer research), but tell them to assume that it would have negligible impact.

Possible Answer:

Since Moldovan Coffins has no proprietary control over the technology, it is likely that competitors will also acquire it, resulting in an overall lowering of the industry cost structure. If this is the case, price will also fall as competition cuts price in an attempt to gain share. If we assume that gross margins remain the same, since the industry competitive structure has not changed we can calculate the new margin contribution as follows:

Gross Margin = $200 / $5,000 = 4%
Labor Cost = (4800 x 90%) x 50% = $2,160
Material Cost = 4800 x 10% = $480

COGS = $2,160 + $480 = $2,640
Price = $2,640 / (1 – 4%) = $2,718
Contribution Margin = $2,718 – $2,640 = $78 per coffin
Profit/Loss = $78 * 4,000 – $700,000 = -$388,000
So the introduction of the new technology to the market might be expected to reduce industry profits, making this business completely unprofitable.

Candidates could argue other scenarios, by assuming that the industry would be able to maintain higher margins than we have assumed here, so the answer may be different. They should recognize, however, that the introduction of this non-proprietary technology will significantly reduce industry pricing in the absence of some other form of price support (such as branding, collusion between players, etc.)

Conclusion

A star candidate will see that his/her time is nearly up and will present a recommendation for the client without prompting. If the interview is within 3 minutes of the end, ask: “The owner just called and said he has an offer to buy his business. He needs to know whether he should take it right now.”

Possible Answer:

Given the credible threat of the industry becoming unprofitable due to the introduction of this new technology, the owner should look to sell the company as soon as possible. Taking into account the assets of the firm and the present value of the expected cash flows of the business itself, he should attempt to liquidate the business and to sell the assets for around $1.6M.

If the owner is unable to sell the business now, he can continue to operate the business as a cash cow, but should not invest in the business above what is necessary to keep it operating at its present level. He should expect the business to become less profitable as the industry moves to mechanization, and should eventually look to sell the assets of the company and close the firm.

Comments:

This case was given by McKinsey in one of their first-round interviews and is a typical “command and control” style McKinsey case. In this style of case, the interviewer allows the candidate to drive the case initially to explore possible routes to a solution. However, once the candidate has laid out a plan, the interviewer takes control and asks the candidate to solve a few specific problems before coming to the final conclusion.

When giving this case, allow for some initial planning and brainstorming by the candidate, but then firmly take control of each of the “modules” described in the case. Try to move the candidate along through each of them, since in the actual interview only those candidates that complete all of the sections will be considered to have done well. This case tests mental horsepower and the ability to move to conclusions quickly.

3.4. TIPS FOR FACING INTERVIEWS

3.4.1. 10 BEST JOB INTERVIEW TIPS FOR JOBSEEKERS (Hansen, n.d.)

1. **Conduct Research on the Employer, Hiring Manager, and Job Opportunity:**

You should understand the employer, the requirements of the job, and the background of the person (or people) interviewing you. The more research you conduct, the more you'll understand the employer, and the better you'll be able to answer interview questions. Scour the organization's website and other published materials, search engines, research tools, and ask questions about the company in your network of contacts.

2. **Review Common Interview Questions and Prepare Your Responses:**

First, ask the hiring manager as to the type of interview to expect. Your goal is to try to determine what you'll be asked and to compose detailed yet concise responses that focus on specific examples and accomplishments. A good tool for remembering your responses is to put them into a story form that you can tell in the interview. No need to memorize responses (in fact, it's best not to), but do develop talking points.

3. **Dress for Success:**

Plan out a wardrobe that fits the organization and its culture, striving for the most professional appearance you can accomplish. Remember that it's always better to be overdressed than under. Try not to smoke or eat right before the interview.

4. **Arrive on Time, Relaxed and Prepared for the Interview:**

Short of a disaster, strive to arrive about 15 minutes before your scheduled interview to complete additional paperwork and allow yourself time to get settled. Arriving a bit early is also a chance to observe the dynamics of the workplace.

The day before the interview, pack up extra copies of your resume or CV and reference list. If you have a portfolio or samples of your work, bring those along too. Finally, remember to pack several pens and a pad of paper to jot notes.

5. **Make Good First Impressions:**

A cardinal rule of interviewing is to be polite and offer warm greetings to everyone you meet — from the parking attendant to the receptionist to the hiring manager. Employers often are curious how job applicants treat staff members — and your job offer could easily be derailed if you're rude or arrogant to any of the staff. When it's time for the interview, keep in mind that first impressions — the impression interviewers get in the first few seconds of meeting you — can make or break an interview. Remember that having a positive attitude and expressing enthusiasm for the job and employer are vital in the initial stages of the interview; studies show that hiring managers make critical decisions about job applicants in the first 20 minutes of the interview.

6. **Be Authentic, Upbeat, Focused, Confident, Candid, and Concise:**

Once the interview starts, the key to success is the quality and delivery of your responses. Your goal should always be authenticity, responding truthfully to interview questions. At the same time, your goal is to get to the next step, so you'll want to provide focused responses that showcase your skills, experience, and fit — with the job and the employer. Provide solid examples of solutions and accomplishments — but keep your responses short and to the point. Always attempt to keep your interview responses short and to the point. Finally, no matter how much an interviewer might bait you, never badmouth a previous employer, boss, or co-worker. The interview is about you — and making your case that you are the ideal candidate for the job.

7. **Remember the Importance of Body Language:**

While the content of your interview responses is paramount, poor body language can be a distraction at best — or a reason not to hire you at worst. Effective forms of body language include smiling, eye contact, solid posture, active listening, and nodding. Detrimental forms of body language include slouching, looking off in the distance, playing with a pen, fidgeting in a chair, brushing back your hair, touching your face, chewing gum, or mumbling.

8. **Ask Insightful Questions:**

Studies continually show that employers make a judgment about an applicant's interest in the job by whether or not the interviewee asks questions. Thus, even if the hiring manager was thorough in his or her discussions about the job opening and what is expected, you must ask a few questions. This shows that you have done your research and that you are curious. The smart jobseeker prepares questions to ask days before the interview, adding any additional queries that might arise from the interview.

9. Sell Yourself and then Close the Deal:

The most qualified applicant is not always the one who is hired; the winning candidate is often the jobseeker who does the best job responding to interview questions and showcasing his or her fit with the job, department, and organization. Some liken the job interview to a sales call. You are the salesperson — and the product you are selling to the employer is your ability to fill the organization's needs, solve its problems, propel its success.

Finally, as the interview winds down, ask about the next steps in the process and the timetable in which the employer expects to use to make a decision about the position.

10. Thank Interviewer(s) in Person, by Email, or Postal Mail:

Common courtesy and politeness go far in interviewing; thus, the importance of thanking each person who interviews you should come as no surprise. Start the process while at the interview, thanking each person who interviewed you before you leave. Writing thank-you emails and notes shortly after the interview will not get you the job offer, but doing so will certainly give you an edge over any of the other finalists who didn't bother to send thank-you notes."

3.4.2. 15 TIPS ON HOW TO NAIL A FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW (Kaiser, 2012)

PREPARATION PHASE:

- The day before your interview, spend some time re-evaluating all the roles you've held and the respective activities you have performed. It is natural to have lost some activities from our memory banks as we move up the ladder.
- You must be absolutely sure why you plan to quit your present job and intend to join a new organization. You must have a strong reason because a sturdy response is crucial to this question.
- Your resume must be printed on a single side of a crisp, white sheet of paper. If you have multiple pages, staple them together. Do not rely on only preparing a single copy of your resume. Get at least three copies at a minimum. You might face a panel of interviewers, and there is always a possibility of your resume copy getting crumpled during travel and handling.
- Wear light-coloured professional attire that is freshly pressed. The idea is not to have colours that are hard on the interviewer's eyes. If you can wear a suit, do it.

EXECUTION PHASE

- Be at the interview facility on time. Don't arrive too early (as it might indicate how unoccupied you are) but being late is definitely out of the question.
- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake. Make sure you don't break his bones, but give him a feeling that you are in control. While you do this, keep a smile on your face.
- During the conversation with the interviewer, I would recommend that you follow a NLP technique called "modelling" to build a rapport with the interviewer. It follows four simple activities: mirroring, matching, pacing and leading. As per this technique, you would follow the nuances of the interviewer in speed and style of speech, and physical mannerisms. The rapport you can build by following this technique will affect you positively because you lead the discussion rather than the interviewer.
- A definite question that the interviewer will ask will involve you going through your resume or asking you for an introduction. Start from your current job and go back. Don't go too far if you have tons of experience. Make sure the trail ends at your highest qualification in academics. Don't bring up personal information unless asked.
- During the entire conversation, remember to highlight your strong areas and don't rack up your weaknesses. Speak highly (but truthfully) of your achievements, even if you are repeating yourself. Do not bring up your weaknesses unless asked.
- I have never been a big fan of small talk while I interview people. Interviewers are generally pressed for time, and their objective is to identify the viable candidates from the weak ones. Small talk does not go towards this objective. Don't get on the wrong side of the interview by asking irrelevant questions and definitely do not compliment for the heck of it. If there is something you genuinely appreciate, like the office décor, compliment wholeheartedly, but not for the sake of it.
- Listen to every word the interviewer has to say. It is paramount that you do this; your answer must be in line with what interviewers ask of you. I have seen some candidates waiting for me to finish so they can start blurting out their opinion or their side of the story. This annoys me, and the feeling is common among all interviewers. On this note, I like to add that you do not interrupt when he/she is speaking. Keep quiet until the interviewer expects you to talk.
- Maintain a positive attitude throughout the conversation. For example, when the interviewer asks for the reason that you are quitting your present job, do not say something like “There are too many office politics” or “the compensation is not good enough for my talent.” Keep it on the positive side by saying something like, “I have read plenty about your company and would cherish the challenging opportunities that lie ahead.”
- Stay in control by asking questions on the role you are going to perform, the ladder how it leads up to the CEO, and the growth path. You must show the interviewer that you are interested to know more about the work you are going to perform in the near future.

CLOSURE PHASE

- Never be the one to bring up compensation and benefits during an interview. Let it come from the man/woman representing the company you intend to join. Although finances are crucial, we interviewers do not want it to be the focus of your attention as a potential employee of our organization, because it may look like your faithfulness would be attributed to money rather than the role you are offered. When the interviewers bring it up, speak up!
- At the end of the interview you must be inquisitive enough to ask about the next steps following the interview. You can ask something like, “So, can I expect that HR will get in touch with me for subsequent actions?” By saying this, you are being positive that your interview has gone in the right direction and you are looking forward to what lies ahead.

3.4.3. INTERVIEW PREPARATION BY BAIN & COMPANY (COMPANY, 2016)

CASE INTERVIEW

The most important things to consider during your interview are...

- Make it a business discussion, not an interview. Approach your interview as a thoughtful and insightful conversation that demonstrates your business judgment.
- Drive to the answer. Focus on the question you are trying to answer.
- Be pragmatic. Consider your recommendation and its implementation. Is it realistic? What are the risks and how can they be overcome? Anticipate concerns your recommendation may raise.
- Demonstrate your communication and people skills. Project your confidence, energy and interest, and demonstrate how you might interact with future clients and colleagues.
- Listen. Avoid writing everything down. Focus on understanding the problem and begin forming your own hypotheses. If you get stuck, pay attention to the clues—your interviewer is trying to coach you.
- Don't force-fit frameworks. Frameworks incorporate concepts you should know. Show your interviewer you can apply these to the specifics of the business issue and industry.
- Tell the interviewer what you are thinking. Rather than simply ask a bunch of questions, explain your thought process as you ask. This way your interviewer will know you have a plan.
- Expect math. Be prepared to both set up the analytics and do the math.
- Practice makes perfect, but you already knew that!
- Relax. Be yourself and enjoy the case discussion!

WRITTEN CASE INTERVIEW

The most important things to consider during your interview are…

- Trust your instincts. There is no one "right" answer. The goal is to present a persuasive recommendation and participate in a rich discussion about how to achieve results for your client.
- Prioritize. Prep time goes quickly so put aside case slides that seem less important.
- Be concise. Have your key messages outlined in your summary. Save the details for your discussion.
- Do the math. Figure out what analytics are necessary for your recommendation and piece together the required data from the slides.
- Be pragmatic. Craft a recommendation that can actually be implemented by the client.
- Consider both sides. Strengthen the rationale behind your recommendation by working through the strongest arguments against it.

EXPERIENCE INTERVIEWS

Some of the questions you may have to answer are:

- Why are you interested in Bain?
- What experience are you most proud of?
- What experience do you wish you could do over and how would you do it differently?
- What is a difficult decision you’ve made in the last year?
- What is an example of when you showed initiative and leadership?
- What aspects of your internship did you especially enjoy?
- What aspects of your internship did you like less?
- What do you most like to do in your free time?
- What attributes would you bring to a case team?
- Describe a role where you changed the direction of a team. How did you do it?

3.4.4. INTERVIEW TIPS THAT LEAD TO JOB OFFERS (Monster, n.d.)

“Take some advice to help you perform to the best of your potential at an interview. These interview tips will help even the most inexperienced interviewees to shine:

1. **Common questions**. Consider the most likely questions that you are going to be asked before you even get to the interview. This way you are ready and won't get stuck for something to say. The most frequent interview questions can all be prepared for.
2. **Research.** Knowing a thing or two about your potential employer will assist you in the interview. It will help you to tailor your responses and to show you are keen. Spend some time reading the corporate website at least.
3. **Consider appearances**. In most businesses looking smart is a given so you should think about what to wear carefully. True, some places take a more relaxed attitude to attire, but you cannot go wrong with conventional office wear to create a professional first impression.

4. **Focus**. On the day of an interview, allow plenty of time to get there without rushing or being stressed by delays. Take everything you might need such as notebooks, pens and a copy of your CV. Remember to look your interviewer directly in the eye, focussing on what they are saying.
5. **Smile**. A smile can be a powerful tool at a first meeting. Even if you feel nervy, make sure you smile because it will make you come across as friendly and relaxed.
6. **Ask something**. Never say you have nothing to ask at the interview. It makes you seem disinterested so always have a few questions to ask your interviewer planned in advance.
7. **Make notes**. Even if you are taking everything in, making a note creates the impression that you are paying full attention. This is one of the best interview techniques for people who want to come across as conscientious.
8. **End positively**. When the interview is approaching an end try to conclude on a positive note. This could be as simple as saying something like, “I look forward to hearing from you.”

Even if you get put off mid-way through an interview by a difficult question, try to regain your composure and move on. All is not lost if something goes wrong. Remember that it may have tripped up other interviewees too.”

3.5. SIMILAR PROJECTS ON DISTANCE LEARNING

3.5.1. CULTOOL PROJECT (CULTOOL, n.d.)

"Intercultural competences have become transversal key competences for the management of Human Resources in 21st Century organizations".

CULTOOL is a comprehensive e-learning platform working as an online training, mentoring, monitoring and assessing system in relation to acquiring intercultural competences while maximizing work-integrated learning experiences. It is a project conducted by 7 European Partners.
Its main ambition is to transfer tools that can support the mobility in Vocational Training and Higher Education, especially in relation to the **participation of SMEs and placements in organizations**. CULTOOL has a virtual classroom to develop the intercultural competences of Vocational Training or University students and graduates who are participating in mobility programs or professional practices, as well as to help in improving the efficiency in their ongoing professional skills, fostering their employability.

CULTOOL’s virtual classroom is available in English, Spanish, Bulgarian, Czech, German, Dutch and Portuguese.
Official webpage of the project: http://www.cultoolproject.com/es

3.5.2. EUROPEAN CULTURAL LEADERSHIP

The aim of European Cultural Leadership is to develop an educational program that provides an increase in capacity, skills and knowledge for leaders in the European cultural field. Using three dimensions of cultural leadership – operational, contextual and processual – as a frame or starting point we will prioritise a number of strategic areas and use this as a basis for developing the course in cultural leadership

Official webpage of the project: https://europeanculturalleadership.org

3.5.3 BGAME: INNOVATIVE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT GAMES AS A TEACHING METHODOLOGY FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS EDUCATION

“bGame: Innovative Strategic Management Games as a teaching methodology for entrepreneurship and business education” is an European initiative funded by the European Commission (Erasmus+) that aims at creating a strategic management virtual game for SMEs to further improve the strategic management skills of SME employees and managers and extend the learning opportunities of individual adult learners in entrepreneurial contexts.

This Virtual Game will give the player the possibility to choose between 8 different company scenarios (e.g. canned soup factory or clothes producing company) and open new offices in other locations (can be national – different cities – or international). Of course the final objective of the game is to increase profits or to have the biggest market share, depending on the type of company, but ultimately the goal is to be the best!
This Virtual Game, or bGame as we call it, will be completed with a set of learning resources that will provide further information to the player on the topics that are approached in the game. For the game to run, players have to make decisions on a wide variety of topics, such as foreign market selection, marketing and advertisement, human resources management, finances, etc., and these learning resources will focus exactly on these topics. This way, the player is learning within the game environment.

Official webpage of the project: http://bgame-project.eu/

3.5.4 SIMULAULA

SimAULA setup a virtual practicum in the form of a three-dimensional, online world adapted in the context of teaching-learning in school. Both active teachers and teachers-to be will interact with avatars, develop lesson plans, and teach in the virtual classrooms. In order to provide interesting and effective learning activities, this project will focus on the pedagogical side based on the knowledge of teachers and pedagogic and psychology experts to define the behaviour model of the virtual students and create simulations and situations that are both pedagogically and educational sound.

SimAULA take advantage of serious games technology to make the learning scenario engaging and interesting for the student. Via simulations, teachers will practice their teaching and classroom management skills within a fun and safe educational game environment. SimAULA output will be a training platform that will empower universities and schools with a very innovative simulation system that will enable them to enhance the teaching abilities of their students though result-driven classroom practices.

Official webpage of the project: http://www.simaulaproject.eu/

3.5.5 TARDIS

TARDIS is a project that was funded by FP7. The goal of the project was to build a serious game that provides coaching on job interviews in the form of simulations. The target groups were young people in Europe not in employment, education or training (aged between 15 and 24), as well as employment/inclusion organisations that support social training and coaching in job interviews [22].

The serious game enabled youngsters to practice essential social skills and to increase their self-confidence during various interview situations; skills that are required to seek and secure employment and which has been reported that they are lacking [22]. By interacting with virtual agents that act as recruiters, youngsters are able to improve their performance in job interviews.

The partners reasoning for preferring a serious game with job interview simulations was that it provided the possibility for modulation according to the individual needs of a user by considering repeatable experiences [22]. Users could therefore modulate the emotional display of the virtual agents and simulate a diverse range of possible interview situations. Furthermore, it was also a more motivating way of helping youngster overcome barriers that they experience in real-life situations (e.g. stress from interacting in unfamiliar environments with people that are unknown) [22].

An important contribution of the TARDIS project was the actual AI model for a virtual agent, which acts as a recruiter [22]. The agent is socio-emotionally realistic, exhibiting different emotions, attitudes and moods. Using voice and facial expression recognition and taking into account its own mental state and that of the user, the agent can control the selection of its responses, ensuring that the most suitable response is used within a specific situation.

Official webpage of the project: http://www.tardis-project.eu/

3.5.6 GoVenture: Job Interview Simulation

GoVenture is a technology and design company that focuses on the development of educational games and simulations, and business software. Its educational games and simulations provide learning experiences that are experiential, social and gamified.

One of the products that GoVenture offers is the Job Interview simulation. It enables learners to practice the job interview process through a fun simulation. The goal in the simulation is for the learner to ace the interview and as a result secure the job. The simulation includes preparation activities such as job research, dressing and transportation. During the job interview, learners listen to interview questions, select the most appropriate answers, view the thoughts of the interviewer and monitor their scores during game time.

The simulation currently offers 20 different job interviews. The job interviews are for the following professions: cook, veterinary worker, sales and marketing, auto detailer, cashier, stockroom clerk, landscaping labourer, pizza delivery person, mover, waiter/waitress, retail sales associate, website designer, construction labourer, kitchen assistant, customer service, coffee shop worker, amusement park attendant, painter, farm worker and roofer.

Leaners that match the target group of the simulation include G7-12 pupils, college students and adults. Regarding the depth of the simulation in terms of the job interview process, it covers introduction and moderate levels of the topic. It is not considered a detailed job interview simulation. The simulation is available in the English language only and it can be experienced either online or it can be purchased as a CD.

Official webpage of the GoVenture interview simulation: http://goventure.net/products/interview-simulation.html

4 LEARNING ACTIVITES SPECIFICATIONS, PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AND CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Pedagogy is the discipline that deals with the theory and practice of education. It thus concerns the study of how best to teach. For any serious learning activity, instructors should research and decide what pedagogical approaches fit best, taking into consideration the special attributes of the targeted instructional material and the environment characteristics. For this project, we will delve into a set of pedagogical approaches, identify both the best and bad practices and conclude with using the most suitable ones, capable of transferring the knowledge with an efficient manner.

4.1. Learning by told (old fashioned approach)

This is the traditional and most commonly used technique, usually presented in the form of lectures and often found in schools/universities. This way of teaching is economical for the lecturer but rarely useful for the learner. It can be viewed by a lot of students and you only need one lecturer. This kind of lessons are usually not accompanied with hands-on experience and often the learners think that the lectures are dull. When the traditional lecture is recorded, it can be put on a digital environment so the students can view it online. However, people who view these on-line lectures think that the lectures in this format are not very useful [15]. There is no interaction with the instructor, so little learning takes place. Although it isn't effective for the learning outcomes, it has the possibility to replay the lectures.

4.2. Discovery Learning

The basis of discovery learning, as suggested by Bruner [16], is that students are more likely to remember concepts if they discover them on their own as opposed to those that are taught directly.
Pure discovery learning entails investigations or procedures to be conducted by the learner with the aim of discovering new content. During these investigations and procedures, learners receive minimum, if any, assistance. "For example, a science teacher might provide students with a brief demonstration of how perceptions of colour change depending on the intensity of the light source and then ask them to design their own experiment to further examine this relationship" [21].

4.3. Inquiry-based learning

In traditional forms of instruction learners were required to memorize information from instructional materials. Inquiry-based learning was later introduced as a response to the traditional forms of instruction. It is primarily considered a pedagogical method and its introduction coincided with the discovery learning movement of the 1960s. In terms of a philosophy for inquiry it adheres to the constructivist philosophy. This philosophy requires information to be generated first. Following its generation, meaning is then made from the information by considering personal or societal experience [17]. Additional learning processes that learners are able to engage with during the inquiry-learning technique include:

- Formulising their own questions
- Collecting evidence that will support the answering of the question(s)
- Providing explanations for the evidence that was collected
- Making connections between the explanation and the acquired knowledge as a result of the investigative process
- Supporting the explanation by creating an argument and justification

Banchi and Bell [18] outlined the four levels of Inquiry-based learning:

Level 1: Confirmation Inquiry
A particular science theme or topic has been taught by the teacher. Questions and a procedure are then created by the teacher. The procedure guides students in completing an activity for which the results are already known. This method is especially useful in reinforcing taught concepts and for students to confirm and deepen their understandings. Furthermore, it teaches students about following procedures, and about collecting and recoding data.

Level 2: Structured Inquiry
An initial question and an outline of the procedure to be followed is provided by the teacher to the students. Students are required to provide explanations based on their findings from the data they collected and analysed.

Level 3: Guided Inquiry
Only a research question is provided by the teacher to the students. To test the question, students are required to design and follow their own procedures. At the end they must communicate their findings and results.

Level 4: Open/True Inquiry
Students will create their own research question(s), determine (design) the procedure to be followed and share their findings and results. Students therefore drive their own investigative questions. This is a similar inquiry to that seen in science fair contexts.

It is advised for the teachers to begin the inquiry instruction at the lower levels and gradually increase the level of difficulty until the student is able to handle the “true inquiry” level.

4.4. Learning by doing

The knowledge acquired from an individual following this approach should result directly from one’s own actions and not from watching others or listening to lectures regarding a specific subject. Learning by doing can be a part of inquiry-based learning but it strictly defines that any knowledge material acquired must be strongly connected with practical experiences.
As derived from [19], brain scans showed that students who took a hands-on approach to learning had activation in sensory and motor-related parts of the brain when they later thought about concepts such as angular momentum and torque. Activation of these brain areas was associated with better quiz performance by college physics students who participated in the research. Sian Beilock mentions that “When we’re thinking about math or physics, getting students to actually physically experience some of the concepts they’re learning about changes how they process the information, which could lead to better performance on a test.” This of course applies not only in natural science field, but also for every possible piece of

information that we may need to absorb.

4.5. Learning through discussion and debate

When designed properly and used thoughtfully, discussion tasks can be an effective learning tool that promote creativity, as well as generate meaningful interaction and understanding for the learner. The instructor role is to plan the seed, the starting point of the conversation and allow the learners to gain knowledge by interacting with each other. Students should be able to meaningfully justify their points and politely argue when a statement is not valid according to their own understanding. The teacher's role is to supervise the course of the discussion - the amount of supervision may vary - and re-track the conversation if it goes out of scope (which is not always a bad thing).
In order to further explore this pedagogical approach, below there are four major strategies that could be followed:

Guided discussion talk
The goal of guided or directed discussion tasks is to give learners a chance to develop critical thinking as well as experience in posing and responding to questions. The teacher poses a discussion question to the whole class. Each learner contributes an original answer in response to the discussion question. Learners offer responses or questions to each other's contributions as a means of broadening the discussion's scope. The instructor should avoid providing answers even when a statement is invalid, but instead allow the learners to gradually extract a "common truth".

Inquiry-based discussion
The beginning stages are similar to those in the guided discussion task, but in an inquiry-based discussion task, learners are further required to bring in information and issues from outside the textbook or classroom for discussion.

Exploratory discussion task
This task assists learners by honing their analytical skills to arrive at alternative explanations in a variety of real-world scenarios. Here, learners are compelled to first examine their personal opinions, suppositions or assumptions and then visualize alternatives to these assumptions.

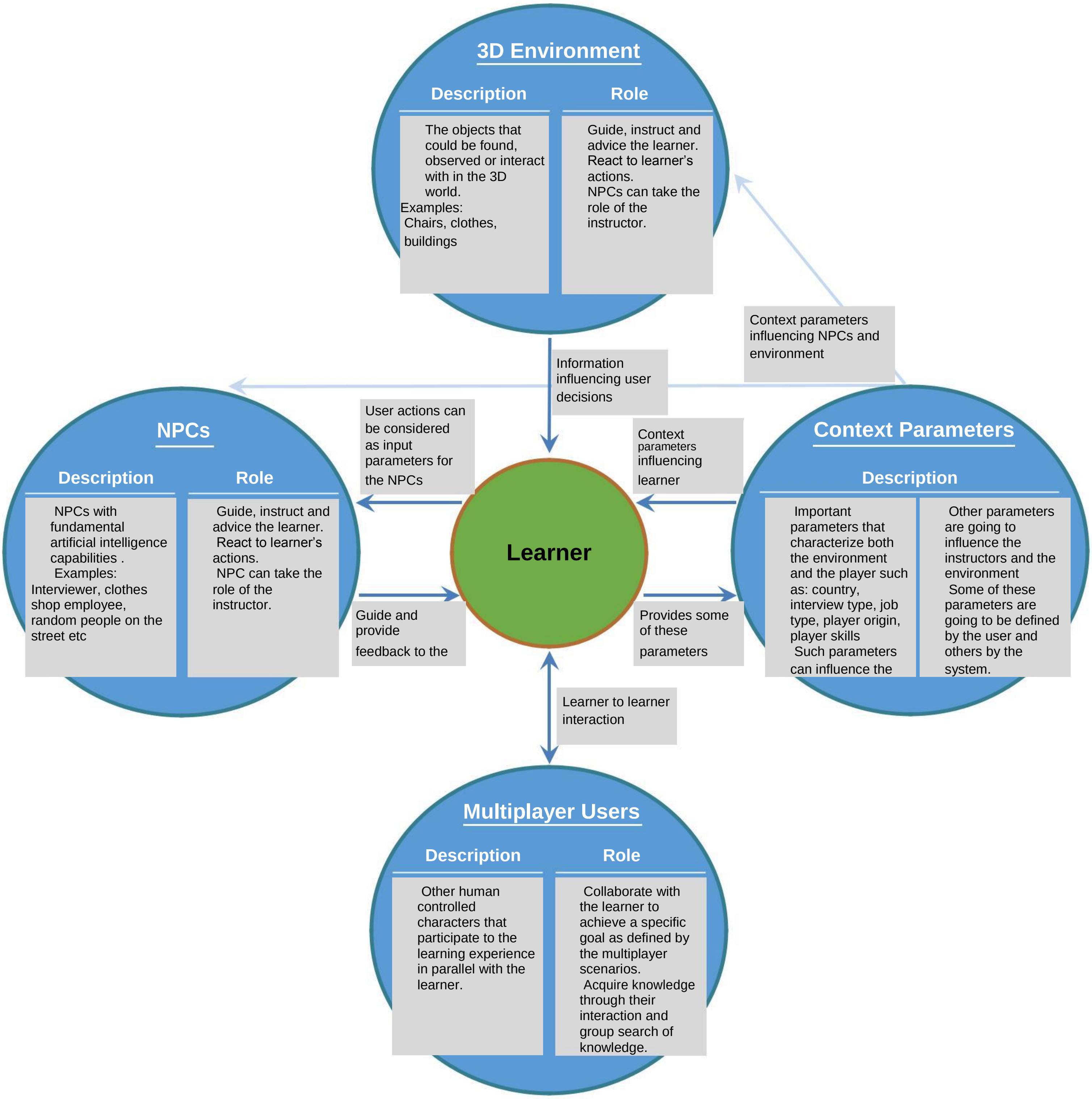
5. Pedagogical approaches in a 3D world context

Taking into consideration the above and relating them to the VeLoCiTy project and the 3D Virtual Environment, useful suggestions can be extracted that could help us in the building procedure of the learning scenarios:

- Where possible, it would be advised to avoid presenting to the learner big textural descriptions. This knowledge will probably be easily forgotten by the user and could be characterized as a dull and boring procedure. Let's keep in mind that a 3D environment's strong advantage is that one can acquire information in a more fun and interactive way than just "being told".

- Allow the user to explore. Not all the answers should be a giveaway. Instead, the correct approach can be indicated to the user in an indirect manner, allowing and motivating thus the interaction of the user with the environment. This will help the learner to memorize more efficiently the education material.
- One point that can be derived from the pedagogical approaches is that a more “practical methodology” should be applied. Since this term can be considered fuzzy in the context of a 3D world, we have the opportunity to employ our own ideas on how to give a more “practical feeling” to the platform. For example, for every user action feedback can be provided to the user not in the form of a text notification, but through a specific event within the 3D world.
- Allow the learner to interact with other users in the world as well. There is a need to design specific scenarios that require limited interaction with NPC (Non-Player Character or Bot) and more user-to-user interaction.
- Consider making a scenario that supports groups and promotes collaboration inside a group. If possible, guide the users in a discussion/interaction/debate of which the outcome will be evaluated by the system and the results will be presented in a creative way.

5.1. Conceptual learning model



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

After analysing different types of theories behind interviewing and some of the most common types to come across, it is possible to reach several conclusions.

On the one hand, it is seen how different psychological theories can be used in this area, and how they set a base for the later decision of creating/using one type of interview over another, depending on what they interviewer is looking to obtain from the interview. Each of the psychological theories allows to obtain different information of the interviewee.

On the other hand, after studying the different types of interviews that can be used, it can be concluded that depending on the type of job position that needs to be fulfilled, it will be needed a different type of interview, with questions that in many cases, even if asking the same, will be looking for completely different information. For this reason, the interviewee will need to prepare thoroughly in order to know how to react against any of the possibilities.

Additionally, after looking for different projects that could be similar or show anything that can be of use to this project, it has been possible to find some examples; however, the list is not extensive.

Finally, the analysis to different pedagogical approaches has shown an evolution allowing to find different studies that, again, could be used depending on the needs and situation. When applying pedagogical approaches within a 3D world context, several considerations were mentioned for an improved learning and user experience: avoidance of big textual descriptions, allowance for user exploration, application of a more “practical methodology”, support for more user-to-user interaction and promotion of collaboration activities within a scenario.

As final point, it is recommended to bear highly in mind the situation before deciding to use a concrete type of any of the theories, practices and actions explained in this document.

7. EXTERNAL SOURCES

7.1. ADDITIONAL SOURCES

EURES, available at https://ec.europa.eu/eures/public/es/homepage

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