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Supporting Partner



LifeKnowledge® Featured Articles

What is your last name?

[Click here](#) to read about how Todd Everhart explains how to help students respect themselves and prepare for a life of success.

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Featured Technical Lesson Plan

Interviewing for a Job

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Sponsor Remarks

Mike Eades of Merial reflects on the potential of LifeKnowledge. [Click here](#)

Comments & Success

[Contact us](#) with your comments, questions or LifeKnowledge success stories.

LifeKnowledge In Action

7 Keys to a Successful Interview

Randy Vlasin from Nebraska shares tips and techniques to a successful interview. Great to share with your students, [Check it out...](#)

LifeKnowledge Teaching Tips

Teaching Tips

As the school year winds down, make new school year resolutions. [Click here](#) to start your summer planning today!

LifeKnowledge News

LK at Work Readership Survey and LK University info, [Get the details!](#)

What is your last name?

By Todd Everhart, Agricultural Sciences Teacher, Merino, Colorado



The bell rings and you quickly grab the things you need to get ready for the next class in a mere five minutes. Between finalizing state degrees, National Chapter Award applications and multiple proficiency awards, you didn't take time to look at the day's announcements. Much to your surprise, there are only eight of 15 students present. "Where's Austin?" "Baseball," a student replies. "Where's Hayley?" "At a track meet." "Where's Andie?" "At the math and science competition." And the list goes on and on. I don't know about you, but in rural Colorado at this time of year, this is a daily routine. It is easy to get frustrated and just want to shut down.

Name: Todd Everhart

Occupation/location: Agricultural Sciences Teacher, Merino High School, Merino, Colorado.

*How long have you been in agricultural education?
13 years as a teacher.*

*Why did you want to become an agriculture educator?
I followed in my dad's footsteps. Had a love for agriculture and for working with young people so it was a natural fit.*

This takes me back a few years to a day when I was checking e-mails and one in particular caught my attention. National FFA was going to hold the first Delta Conference in Colorado Springs. The internal dialogue began. "I really don't need one more thing to do, do I?" "Oh, just read it. It does sound interesting." "Oh man, that is a long application." "But it is in Colorado and, oh, why not? I'll fill out the application." I did fill out the application and attend the conference. Boy, am I glad I did! At the conference, I realized that I had been learning some of what was covered at Delta my whole life and just never applied it to my own classroom.

I am the son of an ag teacher who honed his skills over the better part of 30 years. The things that he taught me growing up are ingrained into LifeKnowledge. When my brothers and I were not giving our full effort to a task, Dad would ask, "What is your last name?" We would look at each other and one of us would say "Everhart." Dad would say, "That's right. You are an Everhart and we don't settle for good enough." That might sound arrogant, but the point was that he expected the very best effort from us as well as himself. While I thought it sounded funny at the time, he was instilling a very important educational concept in me. Whether you want to call it "speaking to the best self" or the "self-fulfilling prophecy concept" or, in my dad's case, the "what's your last name effect," it serves a powerful purpose. It works! As author and financial consultant Dave Ramsey puts it, "The enemy of the best is not the worst, but the just fine."

LifeKnowledge has taught me about pedagogy and intonation and lots of other cool-sounding words; but for now, let's focus on the concept mentioned above. Whether we want to admit it or not, we all have expectations of our students based upon their looks, their parents, their clothing, whether we have had their siblings in class, what we heard in the workroom and a myriad of other factors. There is a great example of expectations on YouTube right now. The contestant walks onto the stage at Britain's "Got Talent" show and the judges ask her a few questions. It is obvious that they have their minds made up already. Then the lady starts to sing; the judges' eyes open wide and their jaws nearly hit the table. This happens or can happen in classrooms every day.

Let's look at an example. You are getting ready to introduce the creed contest. You toss copies of the creed on the table in front of your students and you tell them the date of the contest and that it is for a grade so they have to know it. What kind of reactions would you get? Compare that to speaking to the best self: "Good morning. I am glad you are here. We just finished up breeds of livestock and are ready to move on. I'm very impressed with how easily this class masters new and challenging concepts. In front of you is the FFA Creed. To help us get started, last year's chapter winner will recite the creed for us. Listen closely as John presents the creed. I have no doubt that everyone here can learn the creed and present it as well as John did."

I could continue, but just remember the next time you are short of time or energy or you just want to get by, ask yourself, "What is your last name?"

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Give us the 411

In 2006, the LifeKnowledge Center discovered, through an evaluation study by the Strategic Research and Marketing group, that 40 percent of agriculture educators were using LifeKnowledge. Now, that a few years have flown by we would like your help re-evaluating how LifeKnowledge is being used in the classroom and throughout FFA and SAE activities. We want your ideas, suggestions, thoughts and opinions on the types of resources and materials that should be developed to help you help students actualize the FFA Mission.

The online questionnaire is being administered by Strategic Marketing & Research, Inc. to maintain the confidentiality of all information entered.

In appreciation of your participation, your name will be entered into a drawing for one of ten \$100 gift certificates to FFA Unlimited. To fill out this questionnaire, click [here](#).

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Featured Technical Lesson: Job Application

With the economy in a rut, and each applicant striving to perform one step above the rest during an interview, take the time this spring to teach your students about the "dos" and "don'ts" of interviewing for a job. Allow your students time to practice and master that first impression. Check out how Levi Reese of North Dakota incorporates sound methodology and e-Moments into this lesson focusing on career success.

Click [here](#) for Lesson Plan

Name: Levi Reese

Occupation/location: Agriculture Education Instructor/ Lakota High School.

How long have you been in agricultural education? Past 4 years, all at Lakota.

College: Colorado State University, Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education, 1996 Colorado State University, Master of Agriculture, 2003

Family: Wife – Jennifer, sons Tate, 7, and Chance, 5

Since you started teaching, what is one way you have improved yourself? Attending the Delta Conference.

Favorite e-Moment? Why? I like lots of them; however, the Picasso Moment is one of my favorites because I am a visual learner and it brings words to life for me and my students.

Favorite teaching memory? Too many to name, but a recent one was to watch a student enter my program as a quiet, shy freshman and to keep encouraging him to the point where he is serving as Colorado State FFA President.



Why did you want to become an agriculture educator? When I look back on it I really don't remember why I picked aged as a major. I think it partially had to do with an Ag Teacher that I had really made a impact on me and also I wanted to find a job that would also let farm with my dad. Since that time things have changed and I am not home farming but I love what I do and would never change the discussion that I made.

College: Dickinson State University, North Dakota State University

Family: Parents and a sister

Favorite e-Moment? Why? Hole in one moment, I think this would have to be my most favorite as I use it all of the time without even thinking of it. It could be maybe when I am teaching students to weld or when I am getting them to use parli pro.

Favorite teaching memory: This would have to be the time when I had a group of 9th grade students that were all afraid of going out into the shop and learning how weld and use the oxy act system. We had gone through all of basics and safety of using everything. The first day came to go out into the shop and none of them wanted to go they were

trying everything to get out of it, but in the end they ended up going and all enjoyed it. They thought it was fun and interesting.

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7 Keys to a Successful Interview

Randy Vlasin, a past team member of the LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education, recently served as the Executive Director of FutureForce Nebraska where he focused on developing a well educated, highly skilled workforce for Nebraska. Vlasin currently works as the Executive Director of the Chase County Hospital Foundation in Imperial, Nebraska, while continuing to operate a consulting business centered on behavior style analysis, team building and communication. But, his roots reside in agricultural education where he served the profession for 24 years.

LK-Q: What are the keys to communication in a job interview situation?

RV-A: Often we think communication in an interview is about what you say, tone of voice and eye contact. While these are certainly important, the fact is how you look, speak, dress, hygiene, your expressions, in short everything about you communicates something in an interview. My first piece of advice is to research the job for which you are applying. Review the job description – does it sound like something that would match your natural talents and strengths? This is very important. It is tough to look good in an interview if you are applying for something that you have no talent for, I don't care how good your gift of gab is. This doesn't mean you have to be a highly skilled expert, you just have to be honest with yourself and ask "Can I see myself accomplishing and enjoying this work?"

A few basics:

1. Greet people with a firm handshake (not crushing, just firm) and a warm smile.
2. Make sure you are well groomed (avoid looking like you just got out of bed), dress appropriately (does the work require dress clothes, outdoor work clothes, etc.) What ever the case, make sure the clothes are clean and pressed. Rarely is there an interview where t-shirts, shorts or faded jeans and flip-flops are appropriate. You may not think of your dress as communication skills but the way you appear in an interview communicates volumes without you saying a word. This can be either positive or negative.
3. Body piercing. Depending on the employer interviewing you, you may want to think about this issue. Earrings are acceptable in many instances but piercing of the nose, lips, eyebrows, chin, etc. are not seen as professional in many settings. Most employers will not tell you this outright because they fear discrimination laws. Just understand, it can create an image that is not acceptable in the minds of some employers and cause you to be passed over for the job. You can argue this is not fair, but it is often reality.
4. During the interview, be yourself. If you are trying to be something your not, it will come out on the job and it may come out in the interview which will make you look phony.
5. When asked a question by an employer, it's okay to take a moment and think about your response before answering. That is evidence that you are willing to be thorough in your thoughts before simply blurting something out. That is important in the business world. If you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, be honest and say you don't know but would be willing to learn, find out, get back with more info, etc.
6. Be a good listener in the interview. Keep your eyes on the person asking the question and stay focused on what they are saying. This helps you to better understand questions you may be asked plus it shows you care enough about the job to give it your full attention.
7. Be prepared to back up what you say you can do with past examples of work and references. This is sometimes difficult when just starting out, especially high school students. That is why it is so important to get involved in school activities. Many students forget that school is their job and while on that job, you have a chance to build a resume with teachers, coaches, advisors your work with. They can be a valuable resource when applying for that job.

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Teaching Tips from Academy of Art University

Teaching Tips | [Week 15: New Year's Resolutions, Fall 2008](#)

Congratulations on finishing a successful year! How can we take these "New Year's" resolutions from the Academy of Art University and make them our own. Let us make a commitment to working this summer to start the new school year with renewed vigor and lust for teaching.

Which of the areas below will you commit to improve during the next school year?

Planning lessons and courses

Plan with the goal to match all types of learning styles, and plan strategies to reach all types of students.

Managing time

Optimize your time in and out of the classroom.

Providing clear and organized instruction

Make lectures and demos as interactive and effective as possible.

Grading and feedback

Clarify grades and build rubrics. Explore ways to increase the effectiveness of critiques.

Receiving feedback

What are students doing at any given moment in class that demonstrates learning? Make use of learning snapshots.

Fostering motivation

Employ a plethora of engaging techniques.

Connecting with students

Schedule individual check-ins during activities and other strategies to foster rapport.

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Sponsor Remarks

Mike Eades of Merial, LK Supporting Partner, reflects on the potential of LifeKnowledge.

LK- Q: Where would you like to see LifeKnowledge Center for Agricultural Education focus its energy in the next two years?

Merial- A: The potential for the LifeKnowledge program is so great that it is limited only by its ability to reach more students and to make more teachers aware of the curriculum that is already developed.

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What's New?

LK At Work Readership Survey

Help improve your resources by filling out this year's readership survey. Fill out the survey to have a chance to win a LifeKnowledge Prize Pack valued at more than \$250. Tell us what you think about our e-newsletter, find the survey [here](#).

Buy 1---Get 3 FREE!

Individual LifeKnowledge lessons for sale.

Now through August 31st buy one LifeKnowledge Lesson and get three free! We have recently launched the ability to buy each LK lesson individually. Take advantage of this great debuting offer, by getting four lessons for the price of one!

Steps to savings:

1. Login to the Team Ag Ed Learning Center at <http://aged.learn.com/LKLessons>.
2. Enter the coupon code: KPE5UP74
3. Watch the savings come to life!
4. This offer expires 8/31/09

LifeKnowledge University

The LifeKnowledge Center plans to host live webinars throughout the summer months. Open to all who want to learn check out our wide variety of professional development opportunities. Certificates of Participation are available upon request.

Click [here](#) to sign up to attend the live webinar. Hurry – space is limited. Once you register, you will receive login information for the webinar via the e-mail address you provide. If you have questions, please e-mail them to lkonline@ffa.org.

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You can also sign up for other great FFA e-Publications.

Interviewing for a Job

By Levi Reese

Lakota, North Dakota

Unit Topic:	Personal Management and Career Planning
Lesson Topic:	Interviewing for a Job
Class:	Agricultural Technology
Standard:	4. Personal Management and Career Planning Interviewing for a job
LK Precept:	M. Communication: M2. Demonstrate professional job seeking skills.
Objectives:	Students have basic knowledge in demonstrating how the interview process is important in obtaining a job in an agriculture field. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine the importance of first impressions• Identify key components of first impressions• Demonstrate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Proper handshaking○ Proper introductions○ Proper posture• Determine proper attire• What to do during the interview.
Materials:	Teachers PowerPoint Students PowerPoint NDFFA Employment Interview Score Sheets Interview Questions

- **Interest Approach**

*Have some dress up in a weird out of the ordinary outfit pretending to be a doctor.
(example smells, bibs, hat)*

Today we are going to have a guest speaker; Dr. _____ from _____ is here to talk to you about interviewing for a Job. So put your hand together form Dr._____.

Dr. _____ will say:

- **Thanks for having me here today I have spent many years in this field and have come up with ten steps to an excellent interview. They are; determine the importance of first impressions, Identify key components of first impressions, Demonstrate: proper handshaking, proper introductions, proper posture, and determine proper attire, Learn about the Potential employer, interview preparation, possible questions from the interviewer, questions to ask the interviewer, and**

what to do during the interview. (*Act like you are missing something*) **I have seemed to have left the handout in the car. If you would excuse me I will be right back.**

When the Dr. returns he will just be in regular clothes.

- Question to ask the students
 - What popped into your head when you saw the doctor?
 - *Anticipated Responses*
 - *Who is this guy?*
 - *He is weird.*
 - *Why is he here?*
 - Did your impression of him change when he came back into the room? Why?
 - *Yes he does not look like a bum of the street.*
 - Why are first impressions important?
 - *First impressions put a picture of what the person is like.*
 - Think about the time when you may have come off a little odd was it because of the first impression?
 - Would anyone like to share?

Teaching Procedure

Crayon e-Moment

Every time we go over a key point have them highlight it.

- Let's see how you can make a great first impression, take out a sheet a paper and pencil.
 - **What makes a good first impression?**(Wave Hand like HI)
 - Proper handshake
 - Proper introduction
 - Good posture
 - Neat appearance:
 - attire
 - grooming
 - personal hygiene
 - How long does it take to make an impression?
 - 15-30 seconds
 - Why are first impressions so important?
 - They set the mind set about a person.
 - **Handshake (Hand Shake)**
 - How do you give a proper handshake?
 - Firm
 - 3-5 sec
 - Turn to your neighbor and practice a handshake.
 - How should you introduce yourself?
 - First name....1...2....3....last name
 - Turn to your neighbor and practice introducing yourself?
 - Now introduce your self in a weird way.
 - Did it feel different? What was your first thought?
- Great stand up! Now sit down if at an interview.

- Proper Posture
 - Sit up
 - Sit on edge of seat
 - Place feet underneath you
 - Lean slightly forward
 - What make the posture at an interview so important?
 - So you look engaged.
 - Why do you want to be engaged?
 - To show that you really want this job.
- Professional Dress for Women
 - A business suit-blue, gray, black
 - Keep skirt length appropriate: hemline no shorter than the bottom of the knee
 - Wear quality fabrics
 - Shoes that match
 - Solid colors
 - One ring per hand
 - One set of earrings
- Professional Dress for Men
 - Conservative color for suit, ex. Blue, gray, black
 - A white collared shirt with a conservative tie, no wild patterns (cartoon characters)
 - Socks need to match suit
 - Professional Dress for Men
 - Don't wear athletic socks
 - Shoes need to be shined
 - Don't wear accessories (a watch is fine)
 - Avoid wearing a suit that you can tell is from an expensive designer
- Tips for Men and Women
 - Hair should be trimmed, neatly arranged, and clean
 - Fingernails should be neat, clean, and trimmed
 - Avoid using colognes, scented powders, and perfumes
 - Keep pockets empty of tinkling coins
 - No gum, candy, or cigarettes
 - Women: Don't wear too much makeup
 - Keep hair pulled back and out of face
 - Be conservative: earrings, piercing,
- Why is clothing so important?
 - Gives you the first impression?
 - Other tips!
 - A good rule of thumb is....Dress one step up from what a person in the business would wear everyday Hole in One E moment

- Hole in One e-Moment: Learners have the opportunity to practice the interview in their mind before the heightened challenge of public performance. As well as, enhances learners' visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic and intrapersonal intelligences.
 - That is great let's put procedure into practice. First turn to a neighbor, introduce yourself. Excellent now turn to your other neighbor and give them a handshake. SUPER. Let's put it all together turn to your neighbor and introduce yourself.
- Great now get your notes out.
 - It's Time
 - Use good manners and appropriate gestures.
 - Pay attention to the interviewer.
 - Ask appropriate question about the job.
 - Have necessary personal reference information with you.
 - **Body Language (Wave arms)**
 - Don't be a slouch!!
 - Keep your head up!!!
 - Make eye contact. (40-60% of the time)
 - Smile. (don't over smile)
 - What do you think I mean by over smiling?
 - Hands
 - Don't jingle with change, play with ring or fiddle with tie.
 - Have hand clasped in front of you.
 - Voice
 - Keep pitch low.
 - Don't start by apologizing
 - Do's
 - Act Natural
 - Be Prompt
 - Carry out promises
 - Allow Employer to express ideas.
 - Follow Procedures
 - Be Clear and Precise
 - **Listen Effectively to Interviewer (Hands to Ear)**
 - Don'ts
 - **Be Late (Point to Watch)**
 - Present an Extreme Appearance
 - Come unprepared
 - Oversell yourself
 - Become Impatient
 - Try to be funny
 - Put emphasis on salary
 - Criticize yourself
 - Talk too much and control interview

- Closure of Interview
 - Stand
 - **Thank them for their time. (Thumbs UP)**
 - Shake hands, look them in the eyes and smile
 - Ask for a business card (from them or the secretary).
 - Ask them when they will make their decision.
 - Tell them you will call at that time to hear their plans
 - Send a thank you note to anyone you may have met.

- **Link**
 - Take a deep breath now release, listen to the story of Jon. Think about the things we just learned and see if Jon could have done things differently.
 - Jon has just finished college and is going to job interview of his dreams. Jon just received his master's degree in Agriculture Communications; and he is applying at John Deere to be their Assistant Communication Rep. Jon gets a good night sleep the night before the interview. Jon goes into the interview feeling well prepared. He shows up just in time 2 minutes before he had to be there. While in the interview Jon sit with his feet crossed sitting back and relaxing? When Jon finished the interview he felt he answered there questions the best he could. Two days after his interview Jon received a call from Jane Doe the Director of Communications at John Deere. Jane told Jon that they have hired another applicant for the position. Jon starts to wonder where he went wrong. Jon did everything to the T, his Resume, Cover letter, and job application looked super. Jon wonders what he could have done differently.
 - Reflect back on the story of Jon. With your neighbor answer the following questions. What is one thing Jon could have done differently? What did Jon do a good job at?
 - *See if they get he did not prepare beforehand.*

- **Summary/Review**
 - Go over the 7 steps to a successful interview with the students.
 - Stand up stick out your arms and touch your toes are you ready to go?
 - Review 7 steps to a successful interview
 - Arrive on time (**Point to watch**)
 - Introduce yourself in a courteous manner (**Wave Hand**)
 - Have a firm handshake. (**Show handshake**)
 - Listen. (**Hand to Ear**)
 - Use body language to show interest. (**Wave arms**)
 - Smile, nod, and give nonverbal feedback to the interviewer. (**Smile**)
 - Thank the interviewer. (**Thumbs up**)

- Review several times to make sure they know the information.

Eyewitness News Moment

- Take a sheet of paper and pencil out.
- Think of five questions to ask a professional to have a great interview. Write them down on the paper
- *Ask some of the students to share their answers to make sure they are on the right track.*
- When I say UFFDA get into groups of two, one person will be the Reporter from WDAZ and reporting on interviewing for a job. You will be interviewing DR. (Last Name) from the University of North Dakota. The Interviewer is to find out what you need to have to have a great interview. This is to be done in 5 minutes; at that point when I say (Salem Sue) you will switch roles. The Reporter will be the Dr. and the Dr. will be the Reporter Get out your microphones!!!! UFFDA

- **Independent Activity/Follow up Lesson**

- *Students are to keep working on resume, they are then to pick a job that they are interest in, fill out a job application, and write up a cover letter. Mock interviews will then be held in class. (SEE ASSESSMENT)*

- **References**

- http://ag.arizona.edu/desert_roses/index.htm
- <http://www.geocities.com/optimalbiz/interv.html>
- <http://www.glenroseffa.org/>
- <http://www.berst.org/heaktlth.asp>

Assessment:

During Mock Interview students will be graded on application of knowledge in class presentations, cover letter, resume, and application. Mock interview will be done by someone in the business community. (USE NDFFA Job Interview Score Sheet)