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Mr. Speice

Independent Study and Mentorship 3B

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Interview Assessment #6

Name of Professional: Christa McIntyre

Profession/Title: Associate Professor

Business/Company Name: University of Texas at Dallas

Date of Interview: November 30, 2017

On Thursday, November 30, I met with Dr. McIntyre at her office at UTD. I was really looking forward to meeting with Dr. McIntyre because she was the first person I interviewed with that currently works in my desired profession. By conducting this interview, I was able to learn about both the research and teaching aspects of the occupation of a professor.

Upon arriving at the University of Texas at Dallas, Dr. McIntyre was very welcoming and friendly. Dr. McIntyre was kind enough to show me her lab, as well as some of the brain scans that have been conducted and the machinery that is used to perform those brain scans. Dr. McIntyre currently researches the effects of stress and adrenaline on memory in rats and humans. At the university, she works a lot with lab rats. It was really neat to see some of the brain scans from the rats during the experiments.

After touring the lab, Dr. McIntyre showed me to her office where I then conducted the interview. Dr. McIntyre told me about her daily responsibilities as both an associate professor and a researcher. Her daily routine varies, but typically includes teaching classes, meeting with students, attending faculty meetings, writing research papers, reviewing grants, and conducting research in her lab. This all sounds appealing to me for a career regardless of the topic of research, because the job revolves around one specific topic that caters to your interests. This means that even if I decide to choose a different branch of research, being a professor would be a good fit for an occupation. Perhaps the most appealing job requirement that Dr. McIntyre listed was traveling in order to present her research. My childhood traveling experiences have only fueled my love of travel, so being able to travel for presentations sounds like a dream job.

During the interview, I also inquired about the qualities one should have in order to be successful as a researcher. Dr. McIntyre told me that grit, persistence, discipline, and self-motivation were all necessary traits. Grit and persistence are important for the process of applying for grants. It is easy to get discouraged after a grant is rejected, but it is important to keep trying until you succeed. Additionally, research projects may also take many years to complete, so persistence is key when working on such projects to ensure that one will not give up halfway through the project. Discipline and self-motivation are useful in order to maintain productivity when not under the observation of peers or a supervisor. One must be willing and driven to continue to work and do the right thing no matter the circumstances. Personally, I think that I am a strong candidate for this occupation because I believe that I fit this description. I do not like to give up before completing an assignment or fulfilling a promise, and I have strong morals and a sense of ethics.

I also had the opportunity to hear about Dr. McIntyre's work at the University of Texas at Dallas. Dr. McIntyre conducts research about the connection between stress and memory. She and fellow scientists are working with lab rats to see how adrenaline from stress and strong emotions can enhance memory. She has discovered that adrenaline cannot directly enter the brain due to the blood-brain barrier. Instead, it enters the brain through the vagus nerve. In the near future, scientists are looking to use adrenaline and the vagus nerve to help treat trauma and PTSD patients by enhancing positive, new learning that is being done in therapy. Hearing the passion in Dr. McIntyre's voice while she was describing her work was truly inspiring. The research topic is absolutely fascinating and I was enthralled at the explanation. This made me super excited about a future in research and I one day hope to work in a university as a professor and researcher. Dr. McIntyre's passion for her job made me realize that the extra years of education are definitely worth the wait.

Overall, this interview went really well and I feel passionate and more excited than ever about my topic. I am so grateful for this opportunity that I was given to interview with Dr. McIntyre. In my opinion, this was the best interview I had. I learned a lot from her and she had tons of wonderful advice. In the future, I would like to look into memory and read some of Dr. McIntyre's articles in order to gain a better understanding of the topic and research that I was captivated by. I hope for many opportunities in the future to meet with and interact with Dr. McIntyre.