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This week’s topic that ‘Mastering the Technical Interview’ was useful to me. I am an international student who English is not my first language. As in the senior year, I need to prepare for an internship or full time job after graduation. I am always afraid of speaking English so I avoid to prepare my resume and interview. Also, I do not have any information what I need to prepare for an interview and what I do. That is why this week’s seminar was important for me. As expected, I got lots of information from the seminar what to do before Interview, during the Interview, and after Interview.

Different companies and different people are looking for different things. Engineers get more grace in the soft skills department. At first, the resume is important for starting to work. The resume should be concise. One page is plenty for most college student. There should be someone who can proofread my resume as professional. Of course experience trumps GPA highlight for college student for intern.

After the company approved my resume, I need to prepare for the phone screen. The phone screen typically involves some basic cs terms(inheritance, linked list, polymorphism, semaphore, depth-first/breadth of first search, Algorithmic complexity, Big O), may involve a coding question using an online tool. I need to have my phone and computer ready at least 5 minutes before I expect the call. I need to avoid the time out of convenience. I make an effort to minimize any potential distractions. During the coding question, it helps to talk out loud. It is better to try to google the answer to a question.

The on site Interview typically consists of several 1 hour interviews, involving management, HR, QA, R&D, and others. Before the Interview, I should not stay up late trying to cram. I also need to dress appropriately, no alcohol, and no lunch. I will be best to have a couple questions prepared such as “What is your development environment like?”, “Shows you are interested in the company and not just job.”, and “What does the keyword static do when applied to a global variable in C?”. That allows you to show interest in the company’s technology. Need to ask clarifying questions like “Do you have a preference on how to handle null points?”. Do not use a doubly linked list when a simple counter will do the trick and technology that I just read about the last week.

If I have multiple interviews with different companies, schedult my top choice last. Earlier interviews are good preparation. Many interview might help with salary negotiations.

Typical interview outline Get to know candidate 5 minutes, Terminology 5 min, Coding question 20-30 min, Design question 10-20 min, and Q&A 5-10 min. The coding question will be about to find the most frequent integer in an array, find the first non-repeated character in a string. Check if a linked list has cycles. Given a sample function, rewrite the recursion.

After interview, interviewers gather together for a wrap up within a day or two to discuss the candidate. The hiring manager collects feedback and then everyone votes in turn. Every company has a little different for determination whether you get an offer.