Academic Rigor: *Notice of Vacancy*

**Purpose:** To help students understand the importance of soft skills in the classroom and workplace.

**Directions:**

1. (To students) *I would like for you to pretend that we have received a grant that will allow you to hire someone to work for you for one year. What kind of employee would make your life easier? Maybe a personal assistant, housekeeper, cleaning person, gardener, chef, tutor, driver?*
2. *On a piece of paper, let’s comprise a Notice of Vacancy that will describe the job you are hiring for. Develop a job title and write it on the piece of paper listing you as the supervisor, then include a brief summary of the job and title it “Job Description.”*
3. *Next, list five required qualities or skills that your employee must have. These things are mandatory, and you would not hire someone who did not possess these qualities or skills.*
4. *Then list five desirable qualities or skills. These are the things you would love for your employee to be good at, but they are not required.*
5. *Finally, list five “No need to apply if…” qualities. These are the deal breakers, the things that would keep you from hiring someone.*
6. *Now we are going to compile your qualities on the board. Please start calling out to me your required qualities and skills, and I will write them on the board.*
7. [After they have exhausted the first list.] *Now call out your desirable qualities and skills, and I will compile those.*
8. *Do you understand the difference between soft skills and hard skills? Hard skills are the skills specific to one type of job, and soft skills are the skills that will benefit you in any job you have. A nurse, for instance, must have hard skills such as drawing blood, taking blood pressure, and administering medicine. A nurse also needs soft skills such as good communication abilities, friendliness, punctuality, problem-solving skills, and honesty. Let’s go through our lists and circle the items that are soft skills.* [There may be some gray areas, but talk it through and make a decision for each.]
9. *Now let’s count the soft skills and the hard skills that you said you wanted in your employees.* [Without fail, more soft skills than hard skills are listed on the board. Most students want the same qualities in their employees (hard-working, ethical, possessing a sense-of-humor, able to be taught, positive, etc.)]
10. *So often in college, students focus only on hard skills.* *Hopefully this activity will remind you that your hard skills might help you get a job, but your soft skills will help you keep it.*
11. [Continue the discussion focusing on the importance of developing soft skills now and the importance of putting those skills in to practice in their current courses.]

*On Course Facilitator’s Manual* by Skip Downing, 8th edition.