

Introduction

A SWOT analysis is a reflective tool used to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to a specific skill or situation. This SWOT analysis focuses on the student's presentation skills demonstrated during a mock panel interview for a Band 5 Adult Nurse role. Presentation skills are essential within nursing as nurses must communicate clearly with patients, families and multidisciplinary teams to ensure safe and effective care (NMC, 2018). In an interview setting, strong presentation skills allow candidates to confidently demonstrate their knowledge, professionalism and suitability for the role (NHS Employers, 2022). Effective presentation also enhances credibility, showing the panel that the applicant can represent the nursing profession appropriately. This analysis evaluates how effectively the student presented themselves during the mock interview and identifies key areas for development. By reflecting on this experience, the student can better prepare for future real NHS interviews and improve long-term employability within adult nursing. Reflection of this kind supports the transition from student to professional, helping the individual improve communication skills that are essential in clinical practice and career progression.

Strengths

A key strength demonstrated in the mock interview was the student's good level of preparation. The student attended interview preparation sessions, reviewed learning materials on Moodle and researched the Band 5 Adult Nurse role. This preparation supported confident responses to questions about role responsibilities and patient care. According to NHS Employers (2022), preparation is essential for interview success as it allows applicants to answer clearly and professionally. Good preparation also shows motivation and commitment, which employers expect from newly qualified nurses.

The student also demonstrated effective verbal communication, speaking clearly and maintaining appropriate eye contact with the interview panel. These behaviours are essential for professional presentation and help to create a positive first impression (O'Toole, 2016). Clear speech and calm tone also reflect confidence and professionalism, both of which are valued in nursing interviews. These behaviours contribute to rapport-building, which is also an important skill in nurse–patient communication.

Another strength was the student's ability to link answers to real practice. During questioning, examples from placement experience were used to demonstrate teamwork, patient care and communication. This reflects good use of reflective

practice, which helps nurses show learning from experience (Moon, 2013). Employers value candidates who can apply learning to real clinical situations. The ability to recall practice examples also shows self-awareness and readiness to develop further as a newly qualified nurse.

The student also showed a good understanding of the NMC Code (2018), referring to professionalism, patient dignity and safety when answering ethical questions. This demonstrates awareness of professional standards expected of adult nurses. Showing knowledge of the Code in an interview demonstrates reliability and insight, which are essential behaviours within clinical settings.

Strong motivation and positive attitude were also clear. The student engaged well with the panel, listened carefully to questions and remained respectful throughout. According to the NHS (2019), attitude and professionalism are just as important as clinical knowledge when recruiting nurses. A positive attitude helps interviewers to see the candidate as someone who will work well under pressure, interact effectively with colleagues and provide safe, compassionate care.

Overall, these strengths show that the student has a solid foundation in presentation skills for nursing interviews, supported by preparation, clear communication, professionalism and reflective ability. These areas provide a strong base for progressing into real NHS recruitment processes.

Weaknesses

Despite these strengths, the student experienced interview anxiety, which affected confidence at the start of the mock interview. Early answers were shorter and less detailed due to nerves. Russell and Shaw (2009) explain that anxiety can reduce performance and affect verbal fluency in interview situations. This weakness is significant as anxious communication may give the impression of uncertainty, even when the candidate has suitable knowledge.

Another weakness was the student's limited use of professional nursing terminology in some answers. While responses were clear, they were not always expressed using accurate clinical language expected at Band 5 level. Hyland (2018) highlights that professional language is essential for credibility and confidence in healthcare communication. Without this, answers may sound less developed, which may prevent the panel from seeing the student as ready for a registered role.

The student also showed difficulty structuring longer answers, occasionally moving off topic. Effective interview answers should follow a clear structure, such as the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result), to ensure clarity and relevance (NHS Employers, 2022). This weakness reduced the overall impact of some responses. A

lack of structure may also cause interviewers to miss important details relating to the student's abilities.

Time pressure within the 10-minute interview also affected performance. Some answers were rushed, which limited depth and reflection. Sweller (2011) explains that time pressure increases cognitive load and reduces performance quality. In real interviews, this could be a barrier, as NHS interviewers expect evidence-based, clear and well-developed answers.

The student also showed a reliance on reassurance from tutors prior to the interview, which suggests developing independence is still needed. Zimmerman (2002) states that confidence grows when learners self-regulate and take ownership of preparation. Developing independence is important for nursing, where decision-making and accountability are essential.

Finally, minor hesitation when discussing current leadership or NHS challenges showed that further research into wider healthcare issues is needed. This is a weakness as modern interviews increasingly assess awareness of healthcare pressures (The King's Fund, 2021). A limited understanding may suggest the student is not fully prepared for the wider responsibilities of a Band 5 role.

Opportunities

One major opportunity is the use of interview feedback from tutors and peers. Black and Wiliam (2009) confirm that feedback is one of the strongest drivers of improvement when it is acted upon. The student can use this feedback to improve answer structure, confidence and professional language. Acting on feedback also develops resilience and self-awareness, which are essential qualities in nursing.

Another opportunity is attending university interview skills workshops. Wingate (2015) explains that targeted academic skills support improves confidence and communication control. These workshops can also help reduce anxiety through repeated practice. Structured practice allows the student to rehearse key responses and refine their delivery.

Peer mock interviews and role-play practice provide further opportunity. Boud, Cohen and Sampson (2014) state that peer learning improves confidence and helps students receive low-pressure feedback. Practising with peers can also help students build confidence in presenting themselves to others. This is important in nursing, where communication is central to daily practice.

Access to online NHS interview preparation resources is another key opportunity. NHS Employers (2022) provide structured advice on answering competency-based

questions using clear frameworks. These frameworks can help improve clarity, structure and content of responses.

The student can also strengthen presentation skills by increasing knowledge of current nursing issues, such as staffing shortages, patient safety and integrated care. The King's Fund (2021) confirms that healthcare employers expect awareness of these pressures. Staying updated on healthcare issues can help the student answer questions more confidently and show genuine interest in the profession.

Future real NHS placement experiences also provide further opportunity to strengthen interview examples and professional confidence. Experience increases competence and reduces anxiety over time (Benner, 2001). These opportunities help the student become more prepared for real interviews after graduation.

Together, these opportunities provide strong pathways for improving interview presentation skills and employability. Developing these areas will also support the transition into a Band 5 nursing role.

Threats

A major threat to performance is ongoing interview anxiety. If not managed, this may continue to affect future interviews (Russell and Shaw, 2009). Anxiety can cause the student to underperform despite good preparation and knowledge. It may also reduce confidence over time if not addressed.

High academic workload across multiple modules is another threat. Broadbent and Poon (2015) state that time pressure reduces quality of preparation and increases stress. Poor time management could prevent the student from preparing properly for interviews.

External responsibilities, such as part-time work or caring roles, can limit study and preparation time, reducing readiness for interviews (Evans and Johnson, 2000). This can affect the student's ability to rehearse responses and build confidence.

A lack of quiet rehearsal space may also limit effective verbal practice. Environmental distractions negatively affect memory and confidence. Many students do not have access to appropriate space for practising interview skills, which may limit their progress.

Previous negative academic experiences can lower self-belief, which directly affects interview performance (Zimmerman, 2002). Poor self-belief can cause the student to speak more quietly or doubt their own ability to answer confidently.

Finally, if the student is studying in a second language, this presents an additional communication challenge, particularly under time pressure (Andrade, 2006). This may affect fluency, vocabulary choice or clarity of expression.

If these threats are not managed, they may continue to affect confidence and performance in future NHS interviews.

Conclusion

This SWOT analysis shows that the student demonstrates strong preparation, professionalism, reflective practice and clear communication within the mock interview for the Band 5 Adult Nurse role. However, anxiety, professional terminology, answer structure and wider NHS knowledge remain areas for improvement. The opportunities identified, including feedback, workshops, peer practice and online NHS resources, provide clear routes for development. The threats highlight the importance of managing workload, confidence and external pressures. Completing this SWOT analysis has supported deeper self-awareness and goal setting, which are essential skills for both academic success and professional nursing practice. The ability to evaluate performance through structured reflection is valuable for lifelong learning, ensuring the student continues to grow and adapt throughout their career in health and social care.

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