Exploring Learning in Mock Interviews

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who participate in the comprehensive mock interview program offered by University Career Services will [or will be able to]...
1) Use the STAR Method to describe relevant experiences in a way that reflects knowledge of the job/internship position description and employer.
2) Identify appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills/techniques for an interview (e.g. eye contact, use of filler words, hand gestures, and verbal pace).
3) Demonstrate professional behavior(s) including preparedness, professional attire, and respectful presentation.
4) Develop confidence in relationship to their interviewing skills.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Qualitative and quantitative data was collected at three points during the comprehensive mock interview process:

- **Pre-test:** A five question, on-line survey assessing each student's experience and knowledge of interviewing; interviewing confidence; and their learning goals.

- **Rubric:** A document used to evaluate student mock interview competencies.

- **Post-test:** A seven question, paper and pencil survey assessing the impact of UCS-provided reading materials on student interviewing knowledge; post-session interviewing confidence; and post-mock interview learning objectives.

TEACHING STRATEGY

- **Reading Materials:** Documents provided to students prior to mock interview on topics including, behavioral interviewing and technique, interview strategy, and types of interviews.

- **Rubric:** Used at the end of the mock interview to facilitate discussion and evaluation on seven interviewing competencies specifically, first impressions, interview skills/techniques, personal attributes, attitude, self-promotion, question responses, and interview preparedness.

- **Mock Interview:** UCS advisors were asked to pose five prepared questions to students during the mock interview. Advisors had the freedom to include additional questions which consisted of behavioral and industry-specific questions.

- **Video & Feedback:** Each mock interview was videotaped to provide evidence of student performance.

FINDINGS

Following the mock interview, **53%** of participants correctly identified three key **verbal and non-verbal communication** techniques from a list of 6 techniques.

**100%** of participants correctly identified the **STAR Method** on the post-test.

77% of participants correctly identified three **professional behaviors** from a list of 6 behaviors including appropriate dress, arriving on time, and a positive attitude.

FINDINGS

87% of participants reported reading the materials provided prior to the mock interview.

Model 1: Performance
Did readers perform better in the mock interview?
As measured by a simple average of the rubric scores on each component, controlling for prior knowledge.

Prior Knowledge → Read Materials — p=.878 → Mock Interview Performance (Rubric Scores)
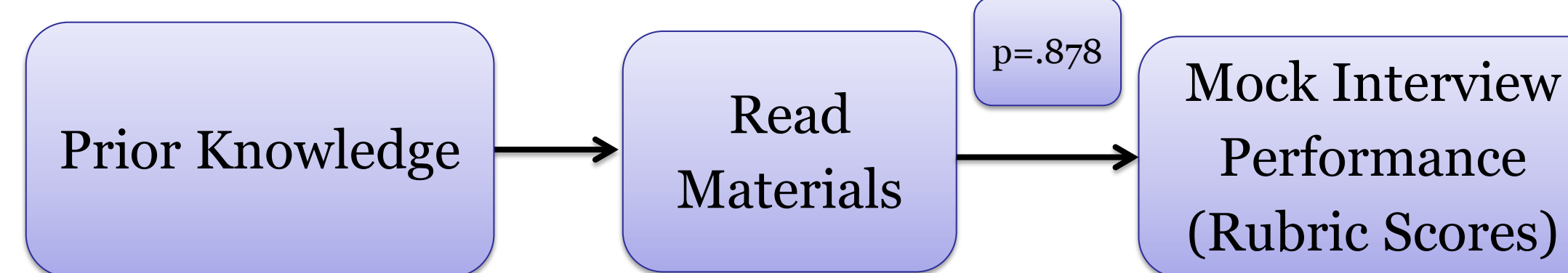
Regardless of prior knowledge, there is little evidence that readers performed better during the mock interview.
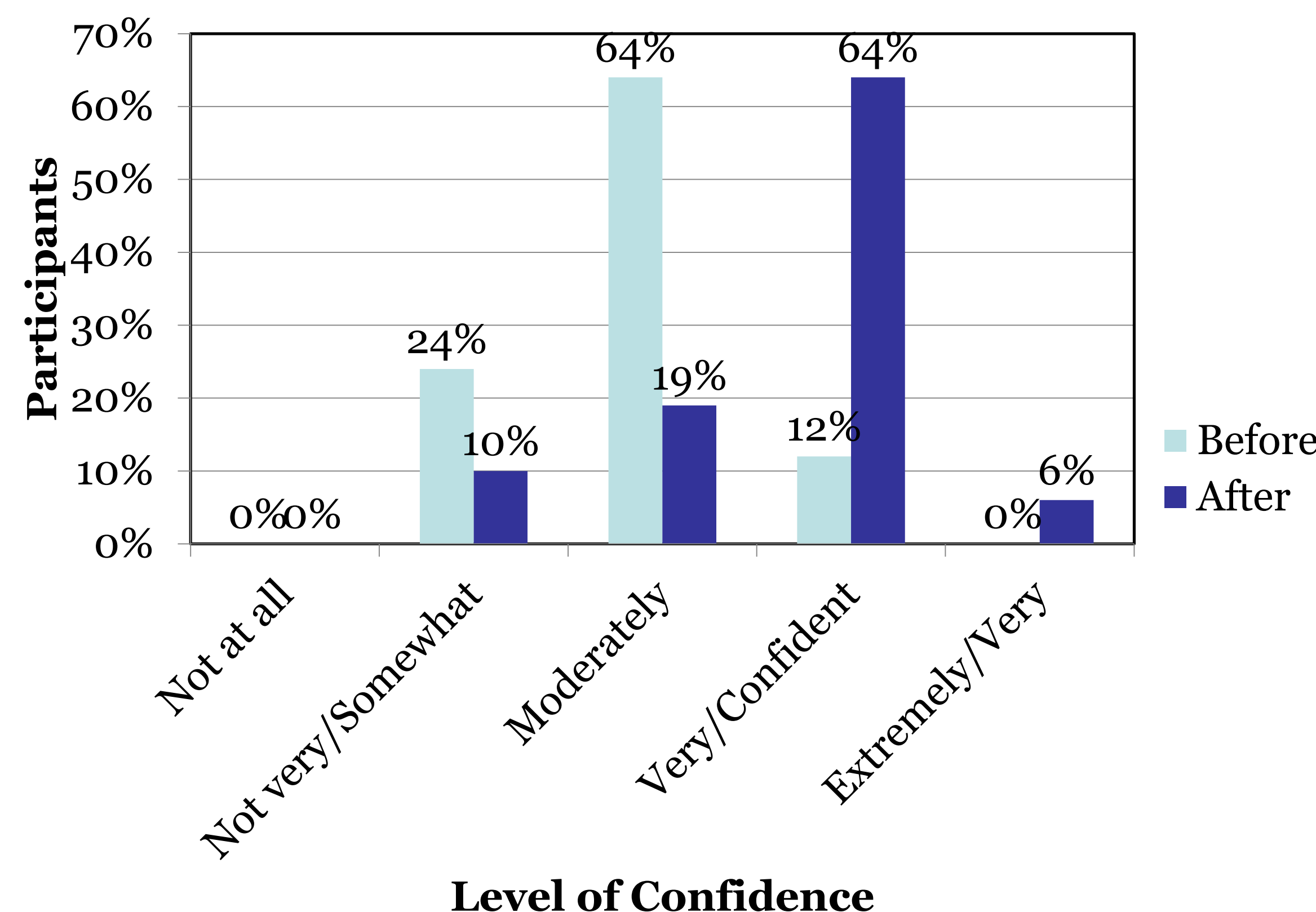
Model 2: Confidence
Did readers see a larger confidence increase between pre and post-mock interview?
As measured by a simple average of the confidence scores on both the pre-test and post-test, controlling for prior knowledge and performance.

Prior Knowledge / Mock Interview Performance (Rubric Scores) → Read Materials — p=.003 → Confidence
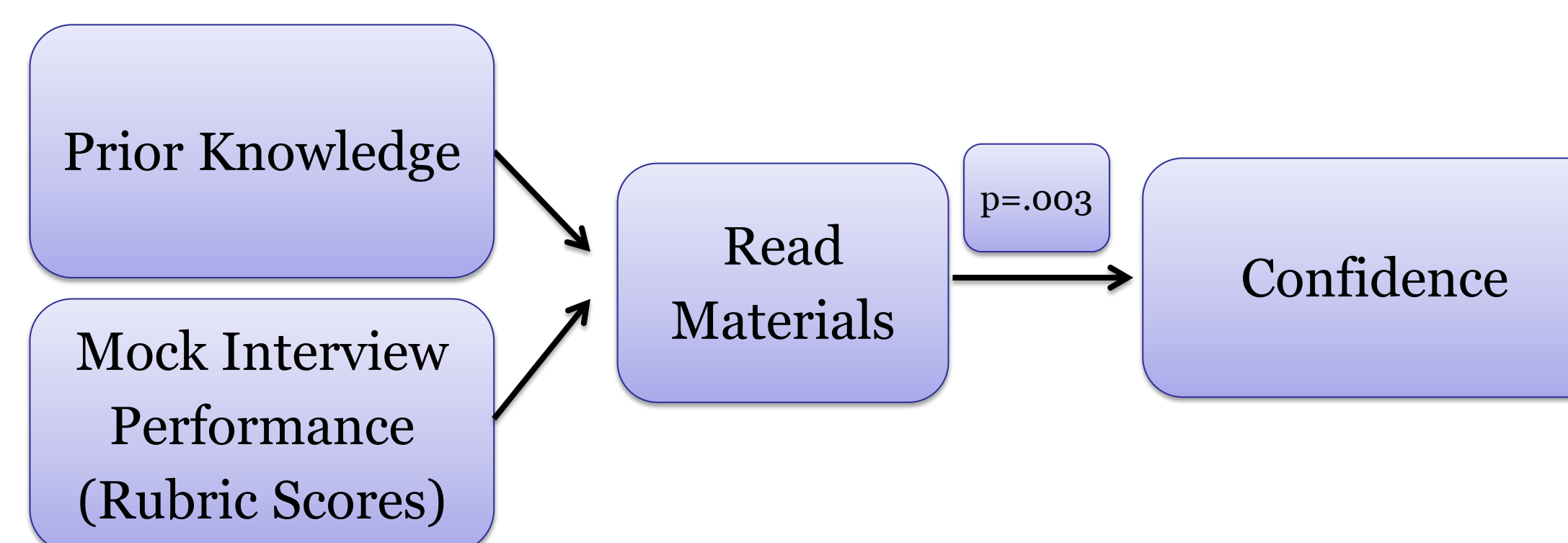
Regardless of prior knowledge and performance during the mock interview, there is statistically significant evidence that readers reported a higher confidence increase after the mock interview. On average, those who read had a change in confidence that was **.9** points higher than those who did not read.

Before & After: Confidence in Interviewing Skills
Before the mock interview, **64%** of participants reported feeling *"moderately confident"*; after the mock interview, **64%** of participants reported feeling "confident" or "very confident".

Bar chart: Participants vs Level of Confidence (Before / After)
- Not at all: 0% / 0%
- Not very/Somewhat: 24% / 10%
- Moderately: 64% / 19%
- Very/Confident: 12% / 64%
- Extremely/Very: 0% / 6%

FINDINGS

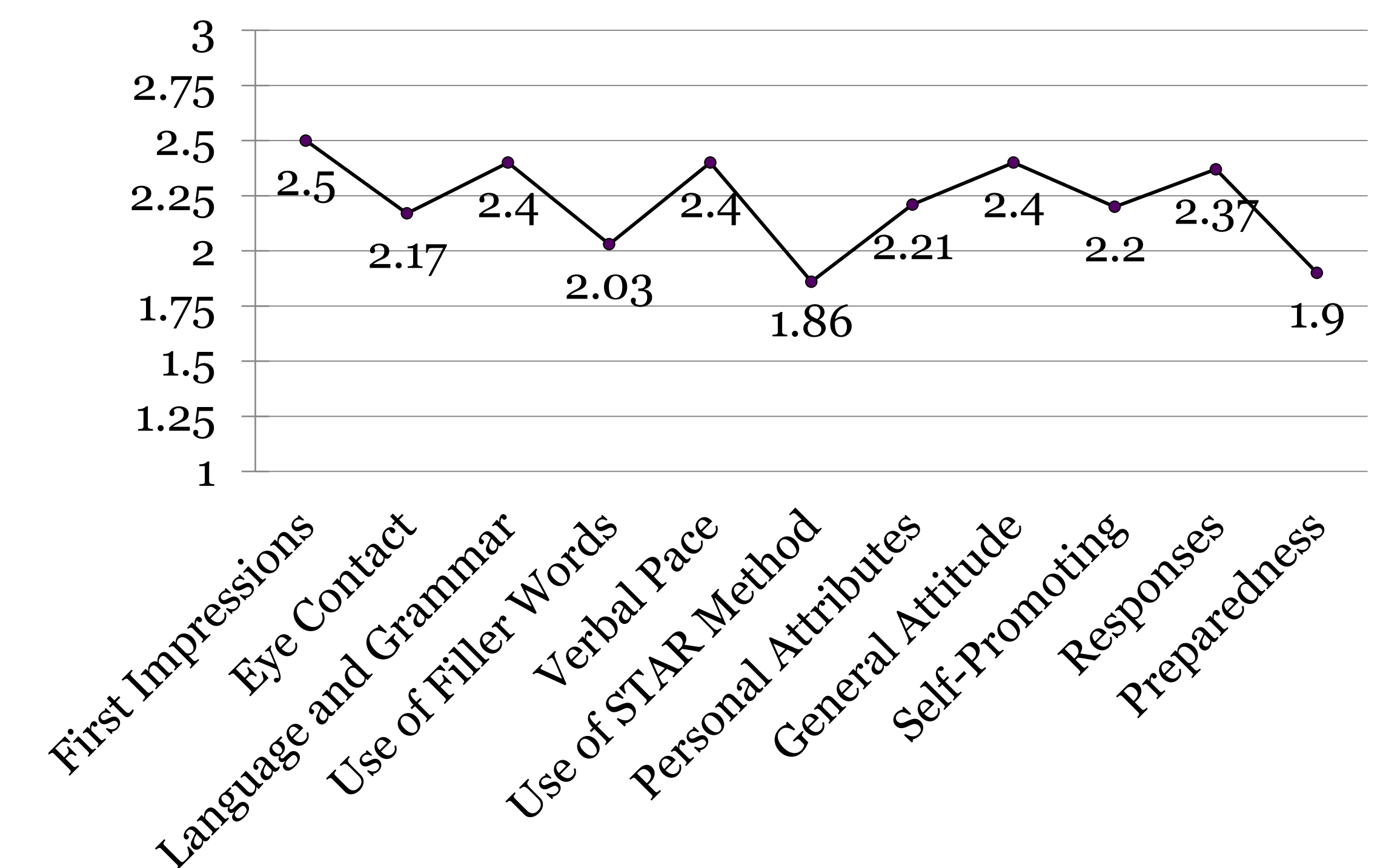### Before & After: Participant Gains in Confidence
The average increase per participant was **0.7742**, the median increase was 1.0, and the mode was 1.0. Most students reported a gain of 1 point in confidence after the interview.

Change in Confidence	Number of Participants
Loss of 1	1
No Gain	9
Gain of 1	17
Gain of 2	4

Rubric Scores
The mean scores on each competency as assessed by the career advisors during each participant's mock interview:
1= "Needs Improvement"; **2**= "Average"; **3**= "Excellent"

Line chart values:
- First Impressions: 2.5
- Eye Contact: 2.17
- Language and Grammar: 2.4
- Use of Filler Words: 2.03
- Verbal Pace: 2.4
- Use of STAR Method: 1.86
- Personal Attributes: 2.21
- General Attitude: 2.4
- Self-Promoting: 2.2
- Responses: 2.37
- Preparedness: 1.9

STUDENT FEEDBACK

"I learned a lot about **how to formulate my responses in a way that best demonstrates my skill, experiences, and accomplishments.** I learned how I appear in an interview, and how to strengthen this."

"I [learned] I need to **work more on maintaining eye contact, providing specific examples, explaining results of actions...** and **generally appearing confident.**"

"I have learned about how to **polish my answers into a more concrete and concise manner,** the way to answer questions that directly address where the interviewer wants to hear."

"[I learned] How to **answer questions using STAR** and to really focus on myself in each question...How to come in with questions in mind to ask the interviewer."

"I learned to **pay attention to my body language**, and to **eliminate filler words like, "um."**

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Training:** Train advisors on mock interview rubric to ensure consistency of responses

- **Assessment:** Create consistent and more challenging questions for pre- and post-tests

- **Rubric:** Categorize rubric to better measure behaviors observed during mock interview