

Interview Assignment: Summary and Self evaluation

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Abstract

This interview assignment had us preform an in-depth, qualitative interview with a fellow student at Capilano University. This interview had to be conducted on a stranger, needed to last about fifteen minutes and then our findings documented and reviewed. This summary not only discusses my data but also my execution of the interview is self evaluated.

Discussion

In a small group of peers from our class, we decided we wanted to know more about what other students' views on course availability was. We came up with a rough interview guide together which I then later tweaked at home. I decided to change our guide as I planned to interview a student at the bus stop and I thought it might run a little long, so I removed some redundant questions. I thought this would allow for more discussion on the questions that remained.

Pre-Interview

On reviewing my questions before conducting my interview I was concerned about how to make my questions direct, short, yet “conversational rather than technical” so that my participants did not feel “interrogated” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 112). I found that collaboration enhanced understanding of different types of questions. While our group constructed the guide, we were able to deliberate if our questions were acceptable or if we had made the mistake of making them “leading”, “loaded” or “double barreled” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 112).

The main Capilano University bus stop was my location for locating a student for my interview. I chose this location because of its near proximity to my own daily routine and it suggested I would be able to find a fellow student who would have some free time to answer my questions. Once I had located a student I briefly stated what my agenda was and when they agreed to being interviewed I had them sign a consent form of my own creation based off van den Hoonaard (2015, p.67) and an example supplied to the class (Ashley, 2018). I asked if I would be able to record the interview for correct reference and they allowed me to use my phone to record the duration of our conversation. I also assured my interviewee that for the entirety of my assignment their identity will be anonymous.

Conducting the Interview

While conducting my interview I was very careful to be an active interviewer not only paying “attention - to what participant [said],” but making sure I also noticed their diction and “behaviour in relation to [myself]” (van den Hoonaard, 2015). On a side note, I used observation as well in my process of choosing who to interview. Finding someone who had a relaxed open posture, was not deeply engaged in another activity and who was alone; as I only needed one interviewee.

During our conversation I decided to “rearrange questions to suit [my] particular interview” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 109) as some topics were brought up during an answer

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that I had prepared further questions about. For instance: while I was asking about what courses they were taking my interviewee disclosed they were a “first year knocking off Cap Core courses” (Anonymous, personal communication, October 16, 2018). Thus, I felt I should ask “what are your thoughts on Cap Core?” (personal communication, October 16, 2018). I was glad that I had the foresight to add possible “follow up questions, or probes” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 110) into my interview guide. This is something that I will make sure to do more of in future interviews, perhaps spending some time preparing a list of possible probes to pull from. Although I can not “anticipate what things a participant may find important or meaningful” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 110) preparing will help when I have a time constraint on a future interview, as I did with this one.

While listening to my interviewee I made a select few notes while I listened but decided to rely on my phone recording. Understanding that this is risky in case the data got erased I still choose to practise on actively engaging in the conversation. As this was an exercise of investigating how to research I could always try again if my data failed to be recorded and it would be indeed a lesson learned and experience in how to remedy such a problem.

Post Interview

I opted to transcribe the entire interview as it was short, simple, and I had very few notes taken during the conversation. As suggested by Van den Hoonaard I did plan the thwart any technical problems by creating a “backup copy of [my] interview transcript” (p.115) as well and the digital copy of my recorded interview. Making this into a habit, even if it is just a simple exercise like this will ensure I become a skilled researcher.

Reflection

In reflection I believe I conducted a successful interview with a two small errors. First, I probably could have left the questions that I removed from our collective interview guide; just in case my prediction of the length of the interview was wrong. Next time I interview I will also have a couple back up questions prepared for possible probes. Second, I feel as though I need to improve on my “reciprocity between the interviewer and the participant” (van den Hoonaard, 2015, p. 113). Although I tried to actively engage in the conversation the only dialogue between us was me asking questions and then the answers. I failed to supply my own thoughts on the subject matter as van den Hoonaard suggested (p.113). I suspect time constraints of me choosing a bus stop were a factor in my inability to do this. Taking this into consideration I believe I succeeded in a successful interview.

References

- Anonymous. (2018, October 16). Questions on course availability. (D. Simpson, Interviewer)
- Ashley, S. (2018, October 12). *LBST 200-01 Fall 2018*. Retrieved from Capilano University Moodle:
<https://moodle.capilanou.ca/course/view.php?id=27200>
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