Ghania Zgheib

Interview Memo

EDRS 812- Fall 2012

So far, I have conducted the pilot interview which I am planning to use in my study and one other interview. The second interview went better than the pilot interview because I felt more comfortable with the topic and the questions, interviewing a faculty member, and time management skills. However, I did not feel comfortable asking follow up questions that were not planned ahead of time either because I was worried about time or because I don’t have the skills to do so.

In the pilot interview, I interviewed an actual participant in my study. First, I felt privileged by the opportunity I was given to interview a faculty member who is using social media, and hence this impacted my time management skills because I felt it was inappropriate to interrupt her while she was talking. In the second interview, I felt more comfortable in the interviewer-interviewee discussion and I was able to manage my time better. Besides, it was the second time that I ask the same interview questions which made me at ease while asking the questions. Furthermore, I took my critical friends’ advice into consideration by asking the faculty member to provide me with a list of activities that students have to conduct through social media instead of asking her to talk about them. Based on this list, I asked for more clarification concerning the activity that students select the most. This worked really well because I used the time that we were supposed to spend on question 4 more productively.

As I was conducting the second interview and as I was transcribing it, I noticed that I need to work on my follow up questions. The reason I have not been using a lot of follow up questions is because I wanted to stick to the 60 minute interview time because I know that faculty members are so busy to talk to me longer than that especially when they specify in the email that they are available for one hour. Furthermore, I try to wait till the end to figure out whether everything was answered in my leading questions. I try not to digress. Here are some follow up questions that I asked in my second interview which I believe should have been more direct than a statement in the form of a question. I think they should be more like the second question below.

* That’s true and then so this becomes more like a requirement of the course rather than something … optional?
* Okay, but for this semester you’re already using Twitter and Wikis and YouTube?

Which ones are mandatory and which ones are optional?

* Okay. So you mentioned brainstorming as an activity that your students carry on in Wiki?

After conducting the first two interviews, some themes that are not directly related to my research have started to emerge while there were some surprises in what I am trying to learn through the interviews. Of the themes that have emerged and are not directly related to my study is the students’ resistance to use social media learning activities as a coursework requirement. Another theme that emerged is the professors’ inability to perceive the impact of social media learning activities on their students’ learning and their thinking that social media skills are necessary for the workplace after students graduate. These interviews have answered part of my research question which is related to the type of learning activities that are assigned through social media, however, I they have not yet answered whether faculty perceive social media as learning tools that enhance their students’ learning. Faculty have reported that the nature of the current courses which they teach using social media provide a better environment for their students’ learning but no one was definite about the value it brings to their students’ learning because they have not used measurable means to convey that.

In sum, I think that the semi-structured nature of my interview guided the faculty members to open up about their use of social media in a way that it inspired me to think about different themes related to faculty’s use of social media and how they are actually using it.