



Student Group Interview Structure

(8_gpint.doc)



INTRODUCTION

Using the following semi-structured interview schedule the idea is to adapt the questions to the specific context, rather than “go through” the schedule in a linear way.

The interviewer tries to guide the interview as a conversation, and acts as a chairperson:

1. Providing the stimulus for discussion (the broad headings)
2. Ensuring as far as possible that all students in the group are represented (by asking “Does everyone think that? Did you find that as well etc?”) when one student has responded.

The headings/sections are designed to be areas/broad topics/issues in which you wish to engage students in conversation, and it may well be that students “dot about” and cover issues. The actual questions can also be adapted, and are designed to give you ideas about the sorts of things to ask/to talk about. It will be necessary to keep a record of any adaptations to questions that are made.

Whenever possible, make use of a tape recorder, preferably with a group microphone, for recording the student interview sessions.

Sometimes a critical incident, either positive or negative, may be observed during the student observation sessions e.g. students using the software collaboratively in reciprocal peer learning, or students may experience frustration/confusion in using the software etc. If this is the case, it is useful to discuss that actual incident under actual headings e.g. “I noticed that a lot of people were...Can you tell me a bit more about that...”

It is important to adapt the language used to that which would be used by the students themselves e.g. don’t talk about formative and summative assessment, use something like “work that counts” and “work that doesn’t count”.

It might also be necessary to probe further what the students are actually saying during the interview.

STUDENT INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Introduction

- It will be necessary to outline the project, which aims to find out which packages best help engineering students to learn, and in what ways, so that a database can be built up which helps academics to select the most useful/appropriate packages in future.
- Then it will be necessary to explain that you are an independent evaluator, interested in getting insight into everyone's perspectives, and that students' views of the package are vitally important in helping academics to choose suitable materials. As such, it will be necessary to be honest and candid, assuring participating students that their feedback will be made available to the lecturers concerned, but only in the form of key themes. There will not be any identification of individual students.
- A request to audio-tape the interview will need to be made, together with the explanation that it will help to have a record of the interview for the purposes of data analysis. Once again, it will be necessary to emphasize that the lecturers concerned will not have any access to the tapes.
- Make a note of the names, institution and the course etc.

Overview

Generally speaking, how useful did you find the package, in terms of helping you to learn about x *[insert tutor's learning outcomes]*

What were the good/ most useful things about the CAL package? *[probes: e.g. What did it enable you to do? Tell me more about why that was good/useful etc?]*

What were the least useful things about the CAL package?

Technical and practical context

Please can you talk me through how you used the package?

Did you have any problems with it, technically?*[running it/crashing etc?]*

Was it easy to use? *[Easy to navigate? – probe responses and check strength of response in the group]*

Generally speaking, how experienced do you feel in using computers?

Where did you use it? *[was that OK?, issues of access, prior experience etc.]*

How much did you actually use it?

Teaching and learning issues

Can you explain to me what the package is intended to teach you/ help you to learn/ learn about? *[why do you think that the lecturer has introduced this as a way of learning, what does he/she hope that you will get out of using it?]*

How far has it accomplished what you've just outlined above? *[feedback a summary of what they've just said in order to check the validity] [Was the level appropriate? Did it go over your head/ was it too simple/cover stuff that you already knew? Did it help you to understand? Were there useful examples? Did it help you to understand the theory? How useful did you find it? How could it be improved?]*

Did the package ask you to interact with it, or other people? *[how useful did you think that that was? Did it help you to learn? In what ways? Can you tell me a bit more about that?]*

Can you give me an example of something that it helped you to learn well/effectively? Can you give me an example of ways in which it wasn't useful/ was unhelpful?]

Comparison of this way of learning, via CAL, compared with other ways of learning the topic

Can you explain to me how the package fits in with the rest of the teaching and learning on this unit? *[I'm wondering if, for example, you normally get a lot of lectures, seminars, tutorials etc. on your course?]*

What sort of learning goes on in the teaching methods that you mentioned?

Does this way of learning, with CAL, differ from the ways in which you've just described?

Why do you think that the lecturer decided to use it? What did they hope that you would get out of it?

In general, how useful would you say that this package has been in helping you to learn about x?

What would you have missed if it hadn't been used?

Assessment issues (if relevant)

Does the package include any tests/quizzes etc?

Do they "count" in the sense that they give you marks that contribute to the unit mark/final grade?

[If so] how do you feel about them? [Are they fair? What sort of learning do they test?/ What sort of person will do well in them?]

[If not] How useful were they? Did you do them? [Why? Why not? What did you get out of doing them? Did doing the quizzes help you to learn/gain sufficient feedback?]

Did the package offer you feedback on how well you were doing? *[How useful was that? In what ways was it useful?]*

Closure

If other lecturers were thinking of using this package to help to teach x, what advice would you give them?

What advice would you offer to students who were being asked to use this in the future?

Is there anything else that you would like to add that we haven't already covered?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME