

At this point, my George Mason HSRB approval for this project is pending the school district approval. Last Friday, the head of monitoring and evaluation in our school district told me that my application was on his desk somewhere in a stack of papers that was at least 10 inches high. He sternly advised patience. Because of this, I have been unable to begin actual interviews for my project. I have completed one interview with two participants as a pilot, to test the interview questions and I have started tentative analysis. The most important thing I learned during that interview was that 27 items are too many for a one hour interview. Participant body language confirmed that it was far too lengthy. In fact, it was obvious after asking less than half of the questions that I needed to conclude the main part of the interview and ask for feedback. The worst part of the experience was finding that most of the questions that were asked were only preliminary, and the important questions were rushed because of the lack of time. I now know it is vital to carefully consider each item and include only the most important.

One suggestion given was to allow participants to see the questions ahead of time so that they can give more thoughtful responses. Perhaps the questions can be included in the request for interview or sent with confirmation of time and place to meet.

1. **Process.** *Describe and reflect on the way you are analyzing the data you have collected. What are you actually doing, concretely, to make sense of your data? If someone were watching you do this analysis, what would they see you doing? Include all of the types of analytic strategies discussed in class that you've actually used, including memos, coding and thematic*

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analysis, connecting or narrative analysis, and displays (matrices and networks). How are you using these strategies to answer your research questions? Short exhibits, such as a list of the most important coding categories you've used, examples of analytic memos you've written, or a concept map of links between categories, can be attached as appendices to illustrate and clarify your analysis strategies.

As Glesne (2006) described, organizing all the information gathered is very important and data analysis. In order to better understand how my interview related to answers I am seeking, I gathered field notes with the interview questions and digital recordings. I typed a transcript of the recordings in a column next to the field notes which were typed in a column to the right of the actual interview questions. The goal was to find how all were related. Some of the initial categories were:

- Teaching situation,
- Experiences,
- Strategies and materials,
- Problems,
- Considerations, and
- Suggestions.

Experiences

Within those categories, I hope to find ways teachers have found to successfully use assistive technology with students. How did the first two participants use technology?

- Research



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- Word processing
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Technical Training Videos
- Resumes & job applications

Some of the **problems** are that

- Students don't know how to use grammar and spell check effectively
- Students "surf" for answers to copy without thinking about and/or
analyzing information
- Logistics-
 - Students remembering Log on and passwords
 - Time for computer to boot up
 - Access to the computer labs- Enough time to start and finish a
project- discouraged from signing up for long blocks of time
- Students don't take time to revise and edit
- Concern- students are not using the writing process

Considerations- Benefits

- Student motivation
- Perhaps could use software for prewriting
- Students at the high school level have work and writing habits in place

Strategies & Materials

Writing Routine

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- One or two times weekly
- Sign up for the computer lab

Successful Projects

- Personal Narratives
- Job Applications
- Use the Smart board for mini lessons

Integration of computers

- Show examples
- Review
- Interactive games
- Warm-up activities

Assistive technology

- Students need technology to get through requirements of course
- Laptop for notes
 - Hand writing issues
 - Reading issues-audio books
- Communication

What is **necessary** to effectively use assistive technology

- Assistants to make sure
 - Technology is working
 - Students have access to the device

One surprise was that this eleventh grade general education language arts teacher was not concerned that students were using style checking grammar

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check she said that mistakes were still made. Because I did not get very much information on the most relevant questions and because I only spoke with one fact language arts teacher is difficult to find a pattern that Glesne (2006) mentions.

As I get further along in the process of qualitative research, I am concerned with the intense need for constant and consistent memo writing, reflections, and analysis that Maxwell (2005) prescribes. Hindsight reminds of thoughts that should have been memos to capture the exact essence. While I recognize the need and benefits of doing so, it is quite difficult to fit it in with multiple classes, a fulltime job, not to mention family duties. The enormous amount of information included in qualitative research is mind boggling!

2. **Results.** *Briefly present the most important tentative conclusions you have come to so far about your participants, topic, and setting, giving examples of the most important supporting data. What have you learned about your topic/participants/setting so far? Be specific about how your analysis methods have enabled you to generate these conclusions. How do these conclusions address your research questions? How have these questions changed over the course of your project? What additional data collection or analysis do you feel that you need to do to develop these conclusions more fully?*

Because the HSRB application is still in process, I started with a language arts teacher but chose one in a different grade level to assess the questions asked. In the interview, the statement mentioning that students at the high school level have a greater degree of established skills and habits, reinforced the thought that middle school teachers will be a good level to address my questions. My initial plan was to elicit volunteers from survey participants. Perhaps language

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arts peer coaches at the middle school level would be better able to describe ways to integrate assistive technology into a classroom setting. Insights from special education teachers who have successfully used technology with students would also be valuable.

Revised Research Questions

Even if positive effects of the use of assistive technology are indicated:

1. How have participants seen assistive technology being used by students with Learning Disabilities?
2. What were the results of allowing students access to assistive technology?
3. What challenges, both perceived and real, limit the integration of assistive technology in classrooms?
4. What strategies have been used to integrate assistive technology in classrooms?

Bibliography

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