Interview protocol and questions

This interview is intended to understand student learning experience during their group work and individual reflective report for FFM. The interview is context based, i.e. their group learning experience and their self-reflection activities that were designed to explore the relationship of cooperative group learning and the development of critical thinking.

In view of this, the interview will be semi-structured in order to allow students every opportunity to talk freely about their learning experiences in the context. The questions focus on three main stages of their group learning experience, i.e. Pre, During and Post group learning. To segregate the questions into stages allows the researcher to:

1. To investigate any changes in students' view of group learning or individual learning or both.
2. To investigate any development of critical thinking in the learning processes and experiences

At the same time, follow up questions will be focusing on:

1. Students' epistemological beliefs
2. Students' learning experience – self and with others (cooperative group learning), particularly the group learning experience for FFM and what is reflected and written down on students' IRR.
3. The development of critical thinking

Prior to Interview

1. Participants will be advised to read their Reflective Workbook and Individual Reflective Report before attending the interview. This is to allow the participants to recall and refresh their memories about their learning experiences. Participants are assured that they will not be pressured to remember every detail of their experience and they are encouraged to talk and share as freely as possible.

2. I will review room arrangements to ensure good seating positions for comfortable talk. Place clock within line of vision.

3. Check recorder and conduct voice test.

During Interview

1. I will first thank the students for participating in the study and coming forth for the interview.

2. I will introduce myself and explain the following:

    a. The nature of the research study. Its aims and objectives.
    b. Gaining permission from participants during the interview using tape or video recordings.
    c. The right to withdrawal at any point of time.
    d. Confidentiality and anonymity practices will be adhered throughout the process.
    e. Data ownership. Inform interviewee that a transcript will be provided for clarification and amendment (only if appropriate)
    f. Contact details of the interviewer for any queries pre and post event.

3. I will inform the interviewee I might want to look at my list of questions from time to time.

4. I will start with 'This is an interview conducted with interviewee (use coding/pseudonym) at..... on ...' (**See Interview guide in the following pages**)

5. Tolerate pauses after interviewee has finished speaking... allow for further comments

6. Pause (follow up on what they said...?)

    - What do you mean by?
    - How did you feel about that?
    - Tell me more
    - **Or** link back to what was said earlier in the interview (compare/contrast)
    - Summary, so what you are saying is...

7. I make sure I keep questions short, ask them and stop (don't explain them... or elaborate)

End of Interview

1. Make a visible end to the interview and ask if there is anything else the interviewee would like to add.
2. Request permissions to follow up issues by telephone/face to face/e-mail
3. Thank the interviewee

Interview Guide: Questions and Prompts

1. Pre- Group learning

Q1: Tell me about the group assignment. How did you organise the whole group learning?

    A. How do you form the group? (Self selection or imposed)
    B. Tell me how did you all work together for the assignment?

Prompts

    i. Characteristics of group learning

Possible questions:
    a) How do you feel about the group as a whole?

Q2: Tell me how would you do it differently with the assignment? (note: This can be Post-group learning question)

    A. Do you enjoy working with others? Why?
    B. Tell me why you prefer to work by yourself?

Prompts

    i. Their epistemological belief
    ii. The value of interaction and discussion with others

Possible questions:
    a) What is your view about the importance of interacting and discussing with others in learning? How do you view your answers and others?
    b) How sure are you of your view with your group members? Also to your tutor (an expert)?

c) Can you accept the arguments from you group members? Why?
d) Do you believe there is a number of ways to solve a problem or reach a goal?

Q3: What do you think are the key factors for a group to learn effectively?

A. What are the roles of the group members?
B. How about your role as a group member?

Prompts
i. Elements of cooperative learning: Positive interdependence, Promotive interaction, Accountability, Group processing.

Possible questions:
a) What do you expect from your group members out of this learning experience?
b) What do you mean by learning? How do you know when you have learnt something?

Q4: What do you think about group learning?

A. For you, what are the benefits and limitations of group learning? Or What do you like/dislike about group learning?
B. How do you feel about this learning experience? Why

2. During Group Learning

Q1: Tell me about your group meetings and discussion for FFM?

A. How did you and your group members work for each element of the assignment?

Inquire as necessary about

i. How did students work together to finalise the Cash Flow statement?
ii. How did students discuss and work on the assumptions required and made for the case? – See Q3
iii. How did they come to a stage that finalising the whole assignment?

Q2: How was the discussion?

A. Was there an active involvement from members at each stage?

Prompts

      i. Role of learners – shared material, exchange information, source of Knowledge
     ii. Any member was avoiding conflict/ yield to others/ refuse to explain/ impose views/ without explanation.

Possible questions:
    a) Was there any particular behaviour you noticed in the group learning?
    b) Did you or your members do about it?

Q3: How did you come about the assumptions made for the case study?

A. Is there more than one point of view possible regarding the questions/solutions?
B. How did you come to an agreement to the final answer? How do you solve the case problem?

Prompts

A. The process of reaching agreement as a group for the final solution(s)
▪ Controversy theory
    a. Confrontation from others
    b. Start to doubt their answer
    c. Search for more info search
    d. New reconceptualise
    e. Integrate and Apply knowledge

B. Critical thinking representation verbs used – Gather info, identifying key issues, debate, evaluate, explain, reason etc.

Possible questions:
    a) If your views and ideas have been rejected by your group members, how do you feel? What would you do next?
    b) Can you explain to me what you do mean by debate/analyse.. etc?

Q4: Tell me your view on this group learning particularly in developing your critical thinking.

(You mentioned on your IRR/RW that you thought that group learning supported (inhibited) the development of critical thinking, can you further explain this?)

A. What has helped/ prevented the development of critical thinking in the assignment.
B. What is your view about the relationship between group learning and critical thinking?
C. Can you give me an example that you were applying critical thinking in the assignment?

3. Post- group learning

Q1: Taking stock of this learning experience, tell me what has stood out / impressed you most in your group learning and writing the IRR?

Q2: Can you sum up the whole learning experience for me again by relating with group learning and critical thinking?

Q3: Any other comments or questions?

A. Any view changes with regard to cooperative group learning and critical thinking?
B. How do you feel about the whole learning experience?
C. Do you think you can apply critical thinking that you have developed to other areas of study or even future workplace? Why?

Prompts

Any view changes in

a) Preferences of learning with self/ others
b) Epistemology
c) Development of critical thinking