Cat Rossi

Interview Commentary

Professor Perry

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Commentary:

I interviewed a first grade teacher at Eisenhower Elementary School in Gettysburg, PA. The interview took place in her first floor classroom seated around a round table. Unfortunately, this interview was very difficult to plan because both of our schedules were working opposite from each other. The only convenient time was 7:45 am on Tuesday (I had in gone the previous day too but she had an unexpected family problem to deal with). Since the interview was early, I figured we would have plenty of time to get a good 30 minute interview. However, her phone rang a few times and she also needed to grab the kids coming in, which is why the interview is on the shorter end. I know the interview was required to be a half an hour but it ended very abruptly as the children were coming in, I believe the interview falls at 29 minutes. Towards the end minutes of the interview the children were coming inside off their buses, which accounts for the childlike chatter in the background as well as why the interview was cut short.

Despite the length and interruptions, I do feel it was a very informative interview. She answered my questions with great depth and provided me with information from both of the districts that she worked in (Eisenhower and New York). As for my interviewing style, after listening to the tape I was embarrassed as to how often I said “um” and well as how long the pauses in between each question was while I was composing my thoughts. I also stumbled on my words frequently when asking the questions. The interview guide that we prepared proved to be very useful in formulating questions, except I did constantly find myself straying from the exact order and terminology. This was because I was trying to make the connections connect with what she was saying and also devise new questions if the opportunity presented itself.

As for any inaccuracies in the data, there were a few points in the interview where the informant had forgotten the exact name of a test or a law that was passed. However after the interview, I checked the accuracy of what she had thought they were on the internet and the information she provided me with was correct. One of my major mistakes during the interview was asking about a topic in which I had no real basis of an answer on. For example, I asked her if she had heard of any plans for the New Bilingual Charter School. She did not know any information regarding the topic and turned to me to provide her with some insight. It left for a void in the interview because I personally didn’t know anything about the new school either. She filled in the gap well by providing me with her own opinion on charter schools from her personal experience of charter schools in New York. Other inaccuracies or mistakes that I know I made are when I fumbled on my words when asking a question. For example on one of the questions, I was not clear enough in what I asked and she did not understand the question. One thing I need to work on is better phrasing of questions.

Overall, I was very pleased with how the interview turned out. I had great conversations with her prior to the actual interview which also gave me great information regarding the subject. In fact, many of the questions I asked were not on my interview guide and were improvised from previous conversations I held with her. Unfortunately, I did not have my tape recorder during these conversations which would have been useful in adding on the extra time. I hope the fact that the interview is not exactly a half an hour disregards the information that she provided for me.