

Capstone Evaluation

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Project Summary

My Capstone project was a diary study of veterinary students at the NC State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and their priorities and choices surrounding where to do academic work. Ten participants were selected after a College-wide recruitment process, with an eye towards ensuring a diverse set of perspectives along a number of axes, including race, ethnicity, gender, age, and undergraduate institution. Participants were asked to respond to daily prompts and to participate in weekly interviews. Participants were compensated with Grubhub credit, with increasing amounts each week of the study to increase retention. Collected data will be analyzed after the Capstone project using Dovetail software to perform a thematic analysis of the qualitative data.

Lessons Learned

My biggest concerns regarding this project were recruiting and retaining enough participants to make the study worthwhile. This was clearly not a problem, as there was a huge response to the relatively modest recruitment efforts (digital signs and a single email), and all participants kept up with the study throughout the period. It was also gratifying to be able to select participants with a wide range of backgrounds and identities, to ensure that we have a wide range of perspectives in the study.

The biggest challenge the project faced was in the compensation phase. The Grubhub account that was used belonged to the Libraries, and we had numerous issues with the saved credit card being deleted or orders not going through. Towards the end of the study, the contact person we had been working with in Libraries' administration was able to find a way to send credit directly to the participants, and that worked much better in the end.

My site supervisor suggested that I look at Dovetail software to do tagging of the data collected. She had seen the software and it seemed promising, but had never used it. It does indeed appear to be a very useful tool, and importing and tagging data are very easy, and the software will be used to perform the data analysis.

Exit Interview

In an exit interview with my two site supervisors, I provided them with a final project update, including discussion of the successful participation of all participants, the ease of data collection and the preferences of respondents for email and a webform for responding to the survey. We also discussed Dovetail software, and I provided a brief walkthrough of the tagging process using the collected data to demonstrate how easy it was and how well suited it was to a thematic qualitative data analysis.

We discussed the thematic analysis process still to come, and one suggestion that they provided was to consider making two tagging passes. A first pass using very loosely structured tags, and then a second pass after reviewing and refining the tags added in the first phase.

I asked about what their expectations were for reporting out the eventual analysis, and we talked about reporting directly to my current supervisor at the Veterinary Medicine Library, as I know she is very interested in the data. We also talked about giving a brief presentation to the Libraries' User Research Group, as well as a very brief summary that could be posted to the User Research page of the Libraries' website.

Finally, I asked them for some honest feedback on my performance and the study in general, and they reported that they were very pleased at how self-sufficient I was carrying out the study. They anticipated having to do a great deal of the work alongside me, but I was able to handle it almost completely on my own.

Self-Evaluation

Overall, I am very pleased with the way my Capstone project turned out. The implementation of the study went extremely well, and I believe the final analysis of the data will reveal interesting and useful information for the Libraries. My biggest regret is not being able to successfully complete the IRB application, but I think that was always going to be a challenge, given the timeframe and the complexity of a "multi-site" study. I had already known that user research and the User Experience department at the NC State University Libraries was

something that interested me as a possible future career path, and this project has only confirmed that.