Part 1:

Interview Protocol – 1st Interview

Background – Three participants, who are interns of TS, will work with TeamSpot (hereafter refers to TS) to come up with a plan to promote TS. A priori, it seems like all participants, especially our interviewee, are novice to the system. Thus, it will also be somewhat of a learning experience for them. The session will last from one to two hours. We will interview as soon as possible after the session.

Research Question – “What is the learning experience of using TS?”

Logistics:

1. Confidentiality
2. Audio Recording
3. 2nd Interview
4. Research Question

Warm – Up:

1. How do you think it (the hour before that the participants will participate in using TS) went?
2. Would you do it again? Why?

Probing Q:

3. Have you done something similar before? When? Describe.
4. Was the tool easy to use? Why?

If answers above refer to “learning experience”

a. Can you please explain more about what you mean by learning experience?

Structured Q:

5. Can you give me 2 words to describe the “learning experience?” - Explain.

If answer above is not about learning experience

a. Can you give me 1 more word, some related to “learning experience?”
If answer in 6 is one positive and one negative

b. Which do you think is stronger? The positive or the negative? Why?

If answer in 6 is both positive or both negative

c. Why do you think it is so positive or negative?

6. Who took the lead/teacher role in the session before this? How do you feel about that?

Hypothetical:

7. If you were in charge of the session before this, would you do something differently?

If answer above does not address the site or the method

a. Would you do it in a different site? Using a different teaching method?

Structured Q:

8. How different is it learning about technology as opposed to theory/traditional classes?

9. Do you think it needed a different method?

10. Specific to TS, any specific needs that need to be addressed in learning TS?

11. Can you describe to us another technology learning experience? How is that experience different than today’s experience?

12. Toward the end of the session, you rolled back your chair to talk. Why did you do that?

13. Which section in the session is most about learning? The times that you are playing around with the tool? The times that you are discussing with fellow participants?

Culminating Q:

14. Anything else you want to add about “learning experiences” and learning about some piece of technology?

15. How is this interview experience? Any strengths or weaknesses?
Interview Protocol – 2nd Interview

Background – This will be the second interview. The first interview took place on the same day two weeks ago, around the same time. The purpose of this second interview is to get a sense of “delayed” feelings about the learning experience, and to gauge if these feelings changed over the course of the two weeks.

Research Question – “What is the learning experience of using TS?”

Logistics:

1. Confidentiality
2. Audio Recording + Notes
3. Research Question

Warm – Up:

1. How are classes going? Busy?
2. Are your classes mostly using computers? To what capacity?

Probing Q:

3. Think back to two weeks ago, can you describe to us in a few sentences what happened in the collaboration session?
4. Have you used TS or learned more about TS since then? Explain.

Structured Q:

5. How do you feel about the experience two weeks ago? (1 being not helpful and 5 being very helpful) Positive/negative? How so?
6. Can you give us two words to describe the experience?
7. How much do you remember from the experience – about how to use TS and how you might use TS for a collaborative project?
8. Do you think that you forgot some of the knowledge gained since then?

If the answer above is no

a. What helped you keep the knowledge fresh in your memory?
Hypothetical:

9. If you are in charge of training sessions for a group of graduate students on how to use TS for their class collaboration project, what would you do? Anything is okay, even “do nothing.”

Structured Q:

10. Rate your knowledge on TS? (1 being very little and 5 being an expert) Are you willing to learning the TS further by you own? If so, how many more time do you need to get to the expert level and if no, why?

Culminating Q:

11. Would you use TS for a future project, given your current understanding on TS? Are you willing to use TS and recommend it to your classmates?

12. Please describe the strength and the weakness of the TS according to your own learning experience. How do you think they differ with the purpose of the developers of the TS?

13. From your own needs and experience, what are some recommendations that you might give to the developers to improve the TS, gearing for a better learning experience?

14. Anything else you want to add about “learning experiences” and learning about some piece of technology?

Notes from both interviews

Attached (handwriting)
Part 2:

Interview Transcript of the Second Interview

00:14:50

David: So what you’re proposing is different from how you learn teamSpot? Can you come to why, why.

DK: What time the proposal is different from?

David: From your experience two weeks ago, when that was your first time exposure to TS.

DK: Yah

David: So, can explain why you chose different path?

DK: Actually I read the documentation on the website, and the documentation was not very clear. So I went to use it. We had three people there, every people tried the documentation. My other two members were somewhat familiar with TeamSpot, so they already knew a lot of features. Not many go to the website to learn about the documentation. So people are just easy to watch it and learn it for five minutes instead of reading for half hour.

Huiping: So basically you are saying from your first experience on TeamSpot, you are learning how to use TeamSpot from your teammates instead from the instructional website.

DK: Reading documentation was good because it gave me background about what TeamSpot is. So if you go to TeamSpot with some background, then it is easy to understand. That’s why we are going to show the video, we give students some background. Then we ask them to TeamSpot location to see the live demo.

Huiping: So the video just replaces the function of the online instruction.

DK: Yes

Huiping: Ok, I get you.

David: hmm, it is interesting that, hmm, in your proposal it’s [...] seeing people to use TeamSpot for some projects in your experiences you are working on certain project.

DK: Yes
David: do you think it will be helpful for you if you have seen what TS has been used in live project before doing your thing two weeks ago.

DK: Yes, it could have been helpful. If I see others, if I see the live demo, then it could have been helpful.

David: will you change, would that change the way that you interact with TS with your [xxx] participants two weeks ago if you had seen the live demo?

DK: Yes, I think, that wouldn’t have been some changes. That’s easy to learn when yourself interact with the system. So if there are 20 features, I see team working on the TeamSpot, they might not use all the 20 features. They use only 10 features. So by exploring the system myself, I am going to learn all the features.

Huiping: so if (pause), if you are assigned a group project, given now you are understanding TeamSpot, will you recommend your teammate to use TeamSpot.

DK: yes, of course. TeamSpace TeamSpot is very good for team group project, if you want to share documents. If are going to only use whiteboard, then [...] 

David: so how will you rate your knowledge on TS now? 1 being very little and 5 being an expert)

DK: let’s say, from usage point of view it is 3 and technical point of view it is only 1, because I don’t need to know technical aspects

David: technical [...]

DK: what is internal mechanism, what software to use, how client send files and all those kinds of things, they do not know how to work with Mac

Wuping: 3 of what?

DK: 5

David: are you willing to learn more about TS to get your usage knowledge up

DK: definitely, if teamSpot is working fine, I will go there next week to learn more

Huiping: how long it will take you to learn TeamSpace up to the level you are satisfied?

DK: It doesn’t take too long. Actually, there are different features. If you use all the features you know about all the features.

Huiping: so how many hours take total to learn TeamSpace to a satisfied level?
DK: I think if you use it for one hour then you are an expert. Use one hour to just explore all the features, leave it.

Wuping: one hour?

DK: so I think one hour should be enough.

Huiping: so from your own experience you think, how, for example, like last time you guys were working together to use TeamSpace for two hours. You think you are very [...] 

DK: No, we are actually working with TeamSpot. That’s why I spent two hours. To show the documents for others, to make changes. But, if you don’t do any work, just [...] the system, explore all the features, then use one hour you can learn all the features.

Wuping: So it means you are first-time users to use TeamSpot to do some real (DK: Yah) jobs. Not only just to learn TeamSpot (DK: Yah), try to use TeamSpot (DK: try to use TeamSpot) for real jobs (Dk: Yes). But, you are first-time users (DK: Yah), so you spent some time to learn.

DK: Yah, we tried to do something so how it works, how something it doesn’t work

David: So we come to the end of interview. Please describe the strength and the weakness of the TS according to your own learning experience. How do you think they differ or similar with the purpose of the developers of the TS?

DK: The strength, you can just drag the document from laptop to the main screen where everybody can see the document. Three people, hmm, maybe four [...] . Three people can move their cursors to the same screen. Then three cursors on the screen, anyone can change, make the change to the document. Then Just one step, you can copy the document back to all the three laptops.

Wuping: You mean three cursors simultaneously on the screen.

DK: There are three cursors.

Wuping: Ok

DK: But only one person, actually all three can edit, make change to the document. But when all three try to move the cursor, then it’s really, it all kill the screen. Nobody can make it and can do anything. So it requires, hmm, some (Wuping: social protocol), social protocol. So that only person at one time to make change to the document. If everybody moves the cursor, then nothing happens. There should be an understanding that in a team only a member at one time to move the cursor.

David: then weaknesses?
DP: hmm, one weakness, hmm, is the annotation feature. You can make change and mark change to a document. So if it’s word document, and the cursor changes into a painter. So you can draw a circle and make a mark to a change to the document. But if you want to go the second page of the word document, you get to scroll down. To scroll down, you again need to make the cursor change from the painter to the normal pointer. And when you make change the cursor from the painter to the normal pointer, then you lose the annotation. So you make change to the first page and then scroll down to the second page, you lost the annotation to the first page.

Wuping: Ok, so the drawings are not savable, cannot be saved.

DP: No, no.

Huiping: Can you, like, save whatever you have on the first page and then start again?

DP: Yah, Yah, you can do it. You can save the first page and then again the second page. But it’s very time-consuming and it is not the purpose of TeamSpot.

David: So you have said there were real benefits for collaboration in terms of TS and take into account some of the weaknesses such as annotation (DK: Yah). Hmm, now taking into account of the learning curve to use it, will you change your statement? Will you think differently?

DK: No, this annotation, the weakness of this annotation feature, I learned when I explored the TeamSpot. So when people spend one hour maybe two hours to explore the different features, then maybe more encounter with more weaknesses and strengths.

00:25:20
Prose Summary

The interview transcript is transcribed roughly from 15\textsuperscript{th} to 25\textsuperscript{th} minute in the second interview. What we tried to find out for the whole mini research is the learning experience on when users are using TeamSpot for the first time? TeamSpot is a collaborative learning space, including both software and hardware. It is located at 1\textsuperscript{st} floor of Meyer Library.

On Feb 10\textsuperscript{th}, three participants had used TeamSpot for more than 1.5 hours to collaborate on a plan to promote the usage and popularity of TeamSpot on campus. Although, two of participants already had some knowledge about TeamSpot, it was their first time to use it. Right after they ended their session, we interviewed one participant who did not have any prior knowledge about TeamSpot. The first interview lasts thirty minutes, and is primarily dealing with how the participant feels about the experience on learning how to use TeamSpot. Additionally, we want to ask for clarifications on our observations.

The second interview was conducted on Feb 24\textsuperscript{th}. It also lasts thirty minutes, and is primarily dealing with if there are perceptual changes in terms of learning experience within the last two weeks. The 10 minutes I transcribed are dealing with the interviewee’s explanation of why there is a gap of two weeks between interviews in terms of how to learn to use TeamSpot, as well as his self-perceived knowledge about TeamSpot: to what degree he knows about TeamSpot, the strengths of TeamSpot, and the weakness of TeamSpot.
Part 3

The Reflective Memo

Basically, I think we met two challenges in the two interviews. These two challenges, in my opinion, are actually two most important issues to any qualitative research.

One is how we can make sure that what we want to ask can really reflect what we are looking for. The research questions formulate what we want to understand. The interview questions are what we ask people in order to gain that understanding (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). In the first interview, we were really not confident about whether we reached the goal of asking the right questions (Fetterman 1992). We did not have strong rationales why we should use this question instead of that one. We mainly based our selection on intuition and judgments. Sometimes, judgments might be wrong. To ask right questions, the investigator should have a deep understanding of the related domain, in our case, learning experience. Obviously in such short time, it is hard for us to acquire such a deep understanding. That’s why we were not confident about the questions we asked. One lesson I learned from it is that researchers should do research in a field that they are familiar with. In the second interview, we were more confident than the first interview because of a deeper understanding of learning experience, but still not very confident. I am just wondering if there is a general criterion for investigators to check if they are asking the right questions in interviews.
Another challenge is how we can direct or elicit the interviewee to provide relevant information for what we wanted to find out. Our research question is to find out what is the learning experience when learning how to use TeamSpot. The participants actually tried to use TeamSpot to do real jobs. There are two different kinds of experiences which can be led by using TeamSpot. First, since they were first-time user, the process of using the tool to do something automatically involved the learning of how to use the tool – **learning experience on how to use TeamSpot**. Second, they were using TeamSpot to collaborate on a plan to promote the usage and popularity of TeamSpot – **experience on how the tool help them finish the job**. The participant may have perceived the process only as using the tool, not learning the tool. When we were asking questions in the interviews, we should have made this distinction clear. The following is an example in which we neglected this distinction:

“David: So, did you think that this technology tool actually helps you in the learning experience?

DK: Yes it does.

David: In what ways?

DK: Ah, not much in terms of learning, but its in terms of collaboration and ah, saving of effort. And ah, it’s not very cumbersome like, uh, three or four people working on the same document, they have to look at the laptop, so it is very inconvenient.”
What we are looking for here is whether the features of the tool helped him learn how to use the tool, not how the features help him finish his real job. But our question phrasing is not clear, the interviewee misunderstood. So, one thing we learned is to avoid vague questions (Glesne & Peshkin 1992). There are more vague questions in the first interview than in the second interview. It may indicate that we were not very clear or confident about what we were looking for during the beginning stage of research, then we got a clearer and clearer picture and therefore more confident about what we tried to find out.

To sum up, I believe the two issues discussed above – what to ask and how to ask – are most challenging and important aspects of qualitative research. If we had had more time to prepare the interviews, we would have been more confident.

Reference:
