

## Appendix S. Sample Segment of Coded Interview Transcript

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Participant: FH

Date: May 12, 2006

**LDB:** When there were no more formal classes to attend and you had to begin your research, how did you know what to do and how to do it?

**FH:** [The coursework helped somewhat. You might have an inkling of what a dissertation represents. But the sheer magnitude of it—it is mind-boggling really in terms of research. And nothing prepares you for that.] **FORM1** Knowing what I know now, I probably would not have gone into it at all in the first place! (laughs).

**LDB:** Going into the program, what were some of the things you thought were important to know to successfully conduct and write your dissertation?

**FH:** At the beginning, 20 years ago, I thought I knew what I needed to do. I mean, the field was a lot less technical. It seemed to me that it was a lot less structured. But even then, I wasn't really clear. [The truth is that I feel that people get engaged in dissertation work without being really absolutely clear as to what it would be taking in terms of research, in terms of the support we were going to get, in terms of the type of writing we were going to have to do, the time frame as to how long it was going to take.] **KSA1** [I was never able to have a direct enlightened conversation. I got all the brochures, and I was trying to plan things for myself. I had to research this myself. I checked with many schools.] **INFORM2**

**LDB:** How did you get the information you needed?

**FH:** [What was most helpful to me was the Internet. It makes information so accessible. Today that's a major advantage.] **INFORM2** [What helped me also was my single-mindedness. I relied on myself mostly. I just persevered and persevered.] **FAC4**

**LDB:** After you completed the course work, how did you know what you needed to do to conduct the research and complete the dissertation?

**FH:** I was working at the time. And I didn't see much of my advisor, didn't hear from them at all. And I was not really very proactive in looking them up or calling them. I have to admit that. That time was very difficult because I was working and traveling and then I had a child. I had no time for my studies at all, so I abandoned it [the doctorate]. By the time I started my dissertation, I was really exhausted. Without great focus of what I was going to be doing with my degree, I lost motivation and drive.

**LDB:** How did you go about finding out how to do what was needed?

**FH:** [Nobody was really clear. The really annoying thing from my perspective is that nobody is really there to give you strict guidelines. This is a very difficult process, a very lengthy one. And there are so many things that are so vague.] **IMPED1/IMPED2**

**LDB:** Being at the point you are now, in what ways have your perceptions of what is needed to complete a dissertation changed?

**FH:** [Let me just tell you one thing. Help is absolutely not forthcoming from advisors. There is very little counseling about the work that will be required, the commitment, and the expectations from every level. And mostly, I feel the worst part of it is how you are left to figure it all out for yourself. Most of the time, the feeling is one of loneliness. Hanging out in the wind—it was overwhelming.] **IMPED1**

**LDB:** What do you think are the important personal characteristics needed to carry out this kind of work?

**FH:** Personal characteristics, um, well, I think it's perseverance and patience, and basically a very independent spirit—someone who really pretty much knows what they want to do and doesn't feel disheartened by lack of support and caring.

**LDB:** How do these personal characteristics describe you?

**FH:** I'm someone who prides myself on really being able to dig out information, pursue it, and try to get some kind of sense what it would mean. [And I was very discouraged about how many phone calls I put in. . . and how many e-mails I sent to various heads of departments, and various instructors. . . . I couldn't believe how little support was forthcoming. That's the downside of the academic world. And I found that so discouraging.] **IMPED1/IMPED2**

**LDB:** If you were to advise a group of students entering a doctoral program on what they needed to do or know, what would you tell them?

**FH:** You need to build up a relationship with somebody over a number of years. And you need that person to follow through with you. I would say that you have to be prepared—I mean [I think we all have a lot of good ideas about what we want to write about. But I think you have to be aware that the process is a lot more structured than one might think.] **IMPED3**