



# EXPLORATION 8

## ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION

CODE 123: RESEARCH & SYSTEMS THINKING

### Due Date(s):

**Details:** Submit a copy to Blackboard and upload at least one “artifact” as evidence of your goals.

**Time commitment:** 60 minutes (on-site) during week 11 “no class” session.

### Overview

So far, you have used quantitative methods (surveys) to ask people what they think, and interview methods to ask why they think it. Now, you will use observational methods (ethnography) to see what people actually *do*.

The goal of this exploration is to move beyond guessing what people do and actually watching them in action. You are looking for the unspoken rules of how a place works.

### Instructions

#### Phase 1: The Game Plan (Do this before you go)

##### Due:

Answer these three questions before you go to your location:

1. **What is your main question?** (Example: How do students use the library to nap?)
2. **Where is the best spot to see this?** Pick a specific location at SIUE (Example: the quieter zones in the library)
  - o Site chosen: \_\_\_\_\_
3. **What exactly are you looking for?** List 3 specific physical actions.
  - o Example: are they wearing headphones? Are they leaning back or hunched over? Are they using their backpack as a pillow?

#### Phase 2: The Observation (“Fly on the Wall” Method)

- **Time:** 60 minutes
- **Rule:** Do **not** talk to anyone. Just watch.
- **Task A: Map the Room.** Draw a quick sketch of the area.

- Mark where the doors, chairs, and power outlets are.
- Show where people are sitting vs. where the empty space is.
- **Task B: Fact-Only Notes.** Write down what you **see**, **not** what you **think**.
  - **Don't write:** “The student is bored” (that is a guess)
  - **Do write:** “The student yawned three times and looked at the clock.” (That is a fact.)
- **Task C: Use Your Senses.**
  - Is it loud or quiet? Does it smell like coffee or old paper? Is it freezing or hot?

### Phase 3: The 10-Minute Huddle

Do this on \_\_\_\_\_ class period

Immediately after the hour is up, talk to your group:

- Did you all see the same thing?
- Did someone else notice a detail you missed? (e.g., I didn't see that person leave their laptop unattended!)

### Phase 4: What did you learn? (250 words)

**Due:**

Write a short summary covering these three points:

- **Expectation vs. reality:** Did people act the way you expected they would?
- **The Room's Influence:** How does the furniture or the layout of the room force people to act in a certain way? (Example: Because there are no outlets, people do not stay longer than X minutes)
- **The experience:** Was it weird or hard to sit and watch people without talking to them? Why?

### Submission Requirements

- **Field notes:** upload a photo of field notes to ePortfolio including your sketch of the space (it's okay if it looks messy!)
- **Reflection:** 250-word reflection uploaded to Blackboard

### Grading Rubric

Criteria	A Proficient Exploration Will...	A Developing Exploration Will...	An Exploration Still in Need of Work...
<b>Phase 1: Setup</b>	Clearly state research question; justify site selection; identify and detail the specific behaviors group plans to study.	State research question; provide vague site choice; present undefined behaviors group plans to study.	Does not include or answer setup questions.
<b>Phase 2: Observation &amp; Description</b>	Establish detailed protocol; include map of site space; provide thorough field notes on behaviors and characteristics of actors; include sensory elements; upload notes to Blackboard.	Establish unspecific protocol; vaguely create map and/or describe site space; provides broad assumption-based field note descriptions of actors; does not include sensory elements; upload notes to Blackboard.	Does not include map of site space; does not provide detailed behavioral notes and/or limited descriptions; does not upload field notes to Blackboard.
<b>Phase 3 &amp; 4: Debrief &amp; Reflection</b>	Upload detailed reflection to Blackboard; compare observations to survey results; describe the “system “at play; reflect deeply on researcher’s positionality; meet 250-word count requirement.	Upload basic reflection on the experience to Blackboard; does not make a connection to survey data or system description; fall below 250-word count requirement.	Does not complete or upload reflection to Blackboard.