

TOOL TEMPLATE: OBSERVATION OF CONTEXT

Source: Spradley, J. P. (1980)

How to carry out ethnographic observation

Complexity: Medium

Time required: Each observation is likely to require at least one researcher and a minimum of two hours of time

Material required: Field note template/ notebook and pen

What is it for?

A tool to help understand context and to show what people do. It is about getting a perspective or opinion on what is happening, what's going on, who you'd like to spend more time with.

How to use it?

This is a guide for an individual researcher or a group of researchers to use within their chosen setting (e.g. a town, organisation or group). It is likely to take more than one observation to get a complete picture and observations may change as more is learned about the group/ place being observed.

ETHNOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION TEMPLATE

Title of project:

Date of observation:

Name of observe:

Beginning time of observation:

End time of observation:

Project phase (if divided into phases):

ACTORS

Observation of people involved. If possible capture names and relevant details

ACTIVITIES

The various activities of the actors

OBJECTS

Physical elements: Furniture etc.

SPACE

Layout of the physical setting, room, outdoor spaces, etc.
Other observations such as location, time of year, temperature etc.

ACTS

Specific individual actions

EVENTS

Particular occasions, e.g. meetings

TIME

The sequence of events

GOALS

What actors are attempting to accomplish

FEELINGS

Emotions in particular contexts