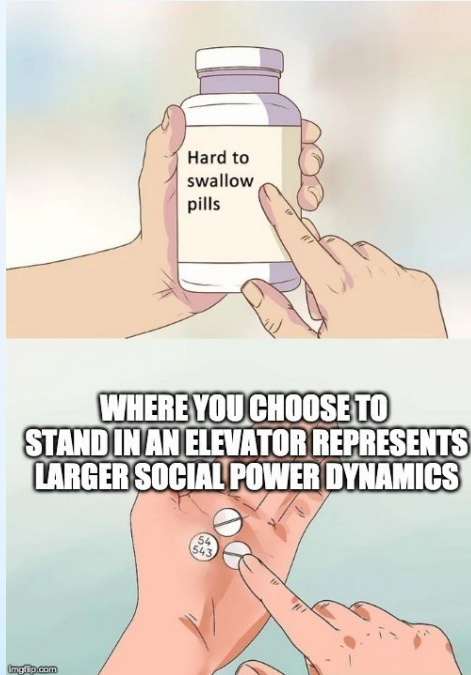


Observation

April 30, 2019

Meme Reactions



Today's Objectives:

1. Describe the role of observation as a data collection technique in qualitative research
2. Write a descriptive summary of an observation
3. Discuss how informed consent manifests for in-depth interviews and observations

Observation

- Seems simple but requires attention and multi-tasking.
 - Watching, listening, questioning
 - Recording people's behaviors, expressions, and interactions
 - Noting the social setting, location and context
 - **“Silent norms”**

Contributes to the thick description: Ethnography and grounded theory



What do you see?

- Body language?
- Onlookers?

Research question:

- Women as objects in the public space.
- Public celebration as a liminal space.

APPROACHES TO OBSERVATION

Participant Observation

Researchers...

- Spend a great deal of time in a study context
- Develop close relationships with people they have not met before
- Take detailed field notes
- Possibly incur personal risk



Reflexivity

- Can we be unbiased? How about self-aware.
- How do I enter the community and introduce myself to community members?
- What are possible questions that the group/community may ask me?
- What will they think of me and how will they react to my presence?
- What were my personal impressions of them when I started the observation?
- What are my personal impressions of them after the observation?



What to Describe

Setting

- Where are you?
- Physical layout
- Items present (e.g., furniture)
- Distribution of items in space

People

- Number of people
- What they are like -- similarities and differences?
- Possible roles you observe
- Interaction patterns
- Body language

Behaviors and Actions

- What is happening and who is doing what
- Sequence of events/cycles of action
- Triggers for actions
- General context

Think about all five senses.



Creswell's suggested format

Figure 7.5 Sample Observational Protocol

Length of Activity: 90 Minutes

<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>
General: What are the experiences of graduate students as they learn qualitative research in the classroom?	
See classroom layout and comments about physical setting at the bottom of this page.	<i>Overhead with flaps: I wonder if the back of the room was able to read it.</i>
Approximately 5:17 p.m., Dr. Creswell enters the filled room, introduces Dr. Wolcott. Class members seem relieved.	<i>Overhead projector not plugged in at the beginning of the class: I wonder if this was a distraction (when it took extra time to plug it in).</i>
Dr. Creswell gives brief background of guest, concentrating on his international experiences; features a comment about the educational ethnography "The Man in the Principal's Office."	<i>Lateness of the arrival of Drs. Creswell and Wolcott: Students seemed a bit anxious. Maybe it had to do with the change in starting time to 5 p.m. (some may have had 6:30 classes or appointments to get to).</i>

Figure 7.5 (Continued)

<i>Descriptive Notes</i>	<i>Reflective Notes</i>
Dr. Wolcott begins by telling the class he now writes out educational ethnography and highlights this primary occupation by mentioning two books: <i>Transferring Qualitative Data</i> and <i>The Art of Fieldwork</i> .	<i>Drs. Creswell and Wolcott seem to have a good rapport between them, judging from many short exchanges that they had.</i>
While Dr. Wolcott begins his presentation by apologizing for his weary voice (due to talking all day, apparently), Dr. Creswell leaves the classroom to retrieve the guest's overhead transparencies.	
Seemed to be three parts to this activity: (1) the speaker's challenge to the class of detecting pure ethnographical methodologies, (2) the speaker's presentation of the "tree" that portrays various strategies and substrategies for qualitative research in education, and (3) the relaxed "elder statesman" fielding class questions, primarily about students' potential research projects and prior studies Dr. Wolcott had written.	
The first question was "How do you look at qualitative research?" followed by "How does ethnography fit in?"	

SKETCH OF CLASSROOM

Warren / Geisel Observation

- What rules can we learn about?
- How do students navigate space?



- Round 1: No Notes (~10 minutes)
- Round 2: Notes (~10 minutes)

Notice the difference

Informed Consent

- Basic idea?
- In an IDI
 - Understandable language
 - **Incentive or situation is not coercive**
 - California standards: Consent must be affirmative and ongoing.
- In an observation
 - Trickier
 - Location: Public? Private? Semi-public or semi-private?
 - Reasonable expectation of privacy?
 - Permission?
 - Can your observation cause harm? (Tea Room Trade)

Next Time

- 5/2: Article critique
- In-Depth Interview Assignment Due Tonight