



Third Assignment: Observation without notes

Observation without taking notes (write up notes afterwards!)

Carry out a second round of observations: either (1) “passive” observations as in the first assignment; (2) “participant observation” in a setting in which you are familiar (as long as you are not compromising confidentiality and privacy of others); or (3) “shadowing” someone in their routine practices for 45-1 hour (this requires permission from the person you want to follow—this is a way of “seeing the world through someone’s eyes”; by quietly following someone as he/she carries out the work as normally done).

You may choose to return to the site for your passive observations (See: Assignment One) or choose a new site. This time, observe without taking notes for at least 45 minutes (for an hour if you can; for absolute minimum of 30 minutes). In other words, you will write field notes from memory rather than from detailed notes taken while observing as in the first assignment. Think about how observing without taking notes affects what you see. If you return to the same site, think about continuities and changes in what you see when re-visiting the place and interactions there.

Include reflections on your experience as an observer and researcher. What difficulties did you encounter? What do you see as advantages and limits of such observations? How, when and where might you make use of passive or participant observations? How would you carry out such observations differently?

As for your first observations, write up your field notes, aiming for 2-4 page, Times New Roman, 1 inch margins, 12 point font.