

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

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www.hci-class.org



“You Can Observe a Lot
Just by Watching”

—Yogi Berra



Tacit Knowledge: Deep Hanging Out

1. What do people do now?
2. What values and goals do people have?
3. How are these particular activities embedded in a larger ecology?
4. Similarities and differences across people
5. ...and other types of context, like time of day

Process v. Practice

Jack Whalen & the Call Center

Apprentice

- Set up a partnership with the people to be observed
- Be taught the steps in the process
- Observe all of the practices
- Validate what you are observing with those observed as you go along

Look for workarounds & hacks

“Errors” are a goldmine

WHEN USER HITS MACHINE

will be receiving
permission from
stu and parc

Walmart

To learn more...

- Institute of Design at Stanford, <http://dschool.stanford.edu>
- Kuniavsky, *Observing the User Experience*
- Beyer & Holtzblatt, *Contextual Design*