

Ethnography

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Interviews

- What was a surprise?
- What wasn't?
- Any funny stories?

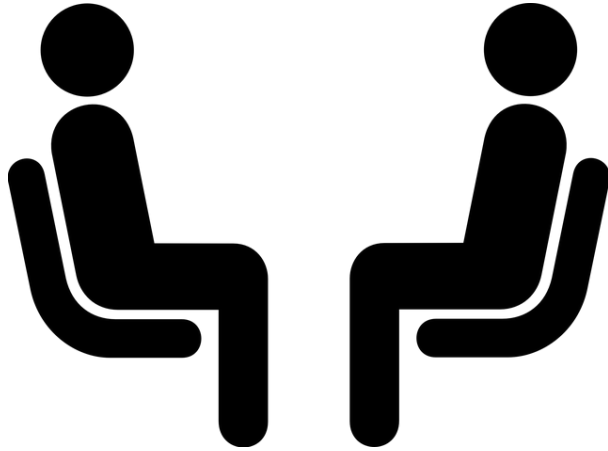


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Qualitative researchers are professional strangers

- Communicating – by asking questions, expressing understandings, forming relationships, and so on.
- *in vivo* –in the living of them.
- Participant Observer
- Taking notes, understanding actors



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What is ethnography?

- Ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviors, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations, and communities. Its roots can be traced back to anthropological studies of small, rural (and often remote) societies that were undertaken in the early 1900s.
- Informal or conversational interviews, which allow them to discuss, probe emerging issues, or ask questions about unusual events in a naturalistic manner.
- Data are examined to identify and to categorize themes and key issues that "emerge" from the data.
- Ethnographic research offers several advantages as participant observation enables ethnographers to "immerse" themselves in a setting, thereby generating a rich understanding of social action and its subtleties in different contexts.

Ethnography in library literature

- Typically an embedded researcher combines direct observation of the environment with interviews of key individuals to develop a culture-based understanding of the group under study!
- In libraries, it is usual one of the librarians, so motives may influence data collection, questions asked, and the results!
- A compressed ethnography works most effectively when the researcher has an established relationship with the study environment and population on which to rely for cultural cues.
- *Ethnographish* observations term used in one of the readings because of the shorter-term, narrow context, easily replicable library research compared to more immersive anthropologist work.

Other Matters

- Self: identify and differentiate
 - race/ethnicity, gender, social class/socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, (dis)abilities, and religion/religious beliefs
- Group (in-group; out-group): own terms, customs
- Community: apart or part



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Summary of a Community short paper and presentation:

- Introduce the community you chose. This might be a domain, discipline, organization, profession, or other group.
- Provide an annotated list of the group's prominent communication outlets (i.e., journals), organizations, associations, conferences, trainings, vendors, related industries.
- Describe the common and frequent information needs of scientists in this community.
- Design an evaluation for how you could study this community further.
- Prepare a summary presentation to inform other liaisons (5 min).
- To give full attention to this assignment, please produce at least 1,000 words of content.

One evaluation approach: Value Proposition

- Value proposition is an approach to articulate how specific customer segments will benefit from a unique combination of products and services.
 - “Why would customers choose us?”
- An effective value propositions can be summarized in a single sentence that includes.
 1. Choosing an appropriate customer segment
 2. Understanding the needs of the customer segment
 3. Describing your organization’s current (or future) products and services
 4. Articulating the benefits of your products and services for the customer
 5. Validating your statements with the customer segment

Value proposition steps

- Stage One: Choosing a Customer Segment (e.g., market)
 - Early-career Faculty
 - Senior (retiring) Faculty
 - Faculty with Teaching Focus
 - Faculty with Research Focus
 - Faculty within a specific discipline or department
- Stage Two: Understanding Your Customer
 - Jobs and Tasks (what must happen?)
 - Pains and Obstacles (what makes things hard?)
 - Gains and Desired Outcomes (what do you want?)

Value proposition steps (cont'd)

- Stage Three: Describing Products and Services
 - Research (for and with)
 - Documenting impact (for tenure and promotion)
 - Institutional repository
 - Course/curriculum design help
 - Can the Library's products or services produce savings (time, money, effort)?
 - How to?
- Stage Four: Articulating Benefits
 - Our [choose a product or services] help(s) [name your customer segment] who want to [itemize the task they want to do] by _____ and _____.
- Stage Five: Validating Value Propositions