

File 20090625.0016: More notes from REN course:

- Professor Paul Luff, KCL
- Expert in ethnography
- Ethnography is an apprenticeship, not something you can learn.
- Ethnography is a real-time method. Not really applicable to historical records. However, you can apply the techniques of historians to such. **Latour** did some of this when analysing design records produced by two groups trying to design a French transport system. The two groups had different conceptions of the target. One group succeeded; one failed.
- Story about keen PhD student who wanted to study mental hospitals.
- In ethnography, *nothing* is assumed to be irrelevant at the start.
- There are two thousand yards in a nautical mile.
- The three-minute rule: number of yards traveled in three minutes = your speed in knots.
- Example: paper medical records in UK.
- Tip: iterate rapidly over *many* very *short* ethnographic studies. Don't spend a year collecting data! Do a short pilot study. Then analyse the results. Then do another short ethnographic study, and contemplate the results from that.
- Tip: depth first, not breadth-first.
- Tip: if you ask people, they often want to talk about what they do.
- Tip: Latour studied two French transport systems (Paris & Lyon).
- Tip: When talking to people, be naïve. Don't suggest solutions.
- Tip: go to their training exercises. Learn what novices learn.
- Tip: people will share data with you so long as you won't share the data with their colleagues. They often don't care about whether you share it with a bunch of academics.
- Tip: field notes: focus on areas of significance to participants. *Write up field notes immediately after the interaction.*
- Difference from grounded theory approach: in G.T. you observe and then categorise. Trying to set things observed into classes. Ethnomethodology, in contrast, looks at what people actually do, how they work. Taking seriously what people actually do and the way they really work.
- Conversation analysis: related to ethnomethodology. In conv. anal., don't record what people say they do—record what they actually do.
- Video recording is underutilised in sociology. Been used in anthropology since 1898, but in sociology is still new and unfamiliar.
- The Bakerloo line is one of the oldest Tube lines. Very deep, unlike the cut&cover District or Circle lines. It is the 'real' Tube. Some very old technology and procedures date from Victorian times.
- David Strudwick says that USB sticks exhibit weird behaviour when exposed to neodymium magnets, but only when the memory sticks are powered.

'Ah kin sound lak uh Texan if'n yew wont.'

References