



LOCUS - Labs of Contextualized Social Work

Training session II

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1. Social research

- ❑ **Social research** is a systematic process aimed at generating knowledge related to social reality and human behavior in the present, past, and future.
- ❑ The **object of study** in social research is the knowledge and explanation of human behavior and the relationships that exist within a society. It must be clearly defined and delimited, as it constitutes the central element of the research process.
- ❑ It is important to **differentiate** the object of study (the phenomenon to be investigated) from the research objectives, which are the goals that the researcher aims to achieve through the investigation.

1. Social research

❑ Methodological decisions based on the object of study and research objectives:

- **Approach:** Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed
- **Scope:** Exploratory, Descriptive, Correlational, and Explanatory
- **Design:** Experimental and Non-experimental (Longitudinal and Cross-sectional)
- **Selection of Variables** (Conceptual Definition and Operational Definition)
- **Selection of the Sample**
- **Data Collection Techniques**
- **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

What is observation?

Observation is a data collection technique that follows specific norms and procedures. The person observing must have the skills and abilities to carry out the process effectively and with quality.

What is the objective of observation?

The goal of observation is to capture, as objectively as possible, what happens in the real world, whether to describe, analyze, or explain it from a scientific perspective.

- Objectivity vs. Subjectivity? We are socially situated subjects.
- Biases → Observer bias.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

How do we observe?

- We observe with all of our senses, not just with sight.
- Observation involves intention and focused attention:
 - Observation, unlike other ways of perceiving, is always intentional.
 - Focused attention: I decide what I want to observe.

In the words of Bonilla y Rodríguez (1997):

“Observing, with a sense of scientific inquiry, involves intentionally focusing attention on certain segments of the reality being studied, aiming to capture its constitutive elements and how they interact with each other, in order to inductively reconstruct the dynamics of the situation” (p.118).

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

Types of Observation

- Unstructured (non-systematic) Observation: Observation is done without considering categories or indicators to guide the process. There is no temporal control, and free, global records of events are made.
- Structured (systematic) Observation: Observation is supported by specific instruments like an "observation guide" or "field diary." Predefined categories are used to obtain controlled, classified, and systematic information.

Additionally, observation can be:

Participant or **Non-participant**, depending on whether the researcher interacts with the group being observed.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

What's our objective?

Understand the reality of certain social phenomena

How?

Based on the understanding of the meanings attributed by social actors

Why?

Behaviour



intersubjective social meaning
example: silence

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

"To understand, describe, analyze, explain a specific phenomenon, practice, or social dynamic."

How?



IDENTIFICATION



INTEGRATION IN REALITY

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

“Technique in which the researcher immerses themselves in a specific social group...

- directly (not delegated): "The Argonauts of the Western Pacific" by Malinowski.
- for a specific period of time.
- observation in their natural environment ($\neq$ artificial observation).
- interacting directly with the people participating in that reality.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

INVOLVEMENT & IDENTIFICATION // POSITIVIST APPROACH



¿accuracy?

- Observer Bias: The tendency to interpret the behaviors of others based on the observer's own social meanings.
- The dilemma of balancing PARTICIPATION and DISTANCE.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

During Participant Observation, what does the researcher do?

- Observes with all the senses
- Asks questions
- Documents and gathers information (LOOKING THE SAME ≠ SEEING THE SAME)
- "We can only see what we have learned to see." ➡ **Blind spot**
- Records observations and experiences ➡ **Field Journal**

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.1 OBSERVATION

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Natural observation of events	There may be a lack of mastery over the categories or indicators to observe
Obtains significant elements from a specific perspective by considering categories and indicators	Erroneous judgments can be made by not properly linking categories or indicators with reality
Access to hidden places	There are variables that are difficult to observe, which can cause confusion
Rich description in detail	There is a risk of biasing the observation
Improvised situations	There is a risk of biasing the observation
Encourages the creation of new research questions	The results of the observation cannot be generalized (context)

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.2 SURVEY

- ❑ Quantitative technique, whose main instrument is the **questionnaire**.
- ❑ Once we have selected the appropriate design and the suitable sample according to the approach, the next step is data collection.
- ❑ Data collection in the quantitative approach involves three linked activities:
 - Select the instrument that meets two essential requirements: validity (measures what it is intended to measure) and reliability (its application to the same subject or object produces consistent results)
 - Apply the instrument
 - Analyze the information statistically

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.2 SURVEY

☐ questionnaire:

- It consists of a set of questions regarding one or more study variables. It is a highly structured interview.
- There are validated and non-validated instruments.
- Items: clear, precise, neutral.
- Types of questions: open and closed.
- Levels of measurement of variables:
 - **Nominal** (there are categories, but no hierarchical order: male-female)
 - **Ordinal** (there are categories, but with order or hierarchy: professions)
 - **Interval** (in addition to hierarchy, there are equal intervals between measurements: Likert scale)
 - **Ratio** (there is a value of 0 as a category: years of seniority in a company, hours of training...)

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3 FIELD JOURNAL

LOCUS wants to train future social workers to better uncover the life experiences behind the available neighborhood indicators and contribute to the expansion of social work organizations, community building practices, and collaboration networks.

To achieve this, **ethnographic research** will primarily be used:

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research that requires breathing the same air as the people or groups we want to study (Ferrandiz, 2020).

The **tools** needed for this purpose are: a mobile phone (with a camera and video and audio recorder), a centralized repository where all materials are stored (digital), and a field journal.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3 FIELD JOURNAL

The **field journal** will be used as a support tool to collect data on the neighborhoods themselves, the experiences and needs of their residents, etc., whether they are major events or small details of everyday life.

Writing the journal is about reflecting on what you have seen, heard, or felt (Stevens and Cooper, 2009).

Writing a field journal goes beyond the conventions of typical university tasks because, through the freedom it offers, it allows for a more creative approach, without restrictions or barriers to the development of your ideas.

The journal is a container or a vessel for sifting, observing, questioning, and categorizing everything you are coming to know and understand; in other words, it is a place to **PROCESS**.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3.FIELD JOURNAL

THE FIELD JOURNAL WILL BE YOUR FIRST PROFESSIONAL BOOK

HOW TO START? "step by step" (Lamott 1994)

The data and observations about the world and the people around you, the ideas and thoughts they suggest, adding elements of creative expression: fragments of sounds, words, images, poems, drawings, collages, painting, color, songs, movies, photos, videos, etc.

Don't forget the parallel work in the virtual field, which offers forms of online participant observation that also require an organized procedure for recording digital data.

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3. FIELD JOURNAL

The intention of this journal is for you to develop critical thinking skills and reflective awareness that will allow you to make critical connections between everything you are coming to know, not only within this project but also about yourself and the world around you.

In this way, the field journal connects the experiences of your inner world and the external world you will come to know with the proposed research techniques.



2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3. FIELD JOURNAL

Some questions to think about after the activity and reflect on in the field journal:

- What have you learned from the activity?
- To what extent does this experience influence the formation of your identity as a professional?
- Do you think these experiences are useful for accessing the life-world experiences of the neighborhood residents?
- In what way and how much has this practice improved your preparation to work in the urban reality?
- How did you feel in the urban space?
- What questions have arisen for you during the practice?

2. Data Collection Techniques

2.3. FIELD JOURNAL

SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOU ORGANIZE YOUR JOURNAL

CONTEXTUALIZING OBSERVATION

What? When? Where? Who? How?

DESCRIPTION OF THE OBSERVED

What (detailed) caught your attention, what has stayed in your "observer's memory": objects, spaces, relationships, connections, tensions, conflicts, harmony, contradictions, striking features, the exceptional, the ordinary, etc.

HYPOTHESIZING

How do we explain, how do we understand what has been recorded, what causal, circular, reflective, tentative, and initial hypotheses do we construct about what was observed, about what was recorded?

CRITICAL-EMOTIVE REFLECTION

Link what has been recorded with the impact on each of us, from both a critical and emotive perspective: How does what I see, what I record, affect me? What moves me? What effect does it have on me? How does this affect my observation, my recording, my attitude, my behavior? How does it influence my future activities?, etc.

3. PRODUCTS

FIELD JOURNAL (DIGITAL)



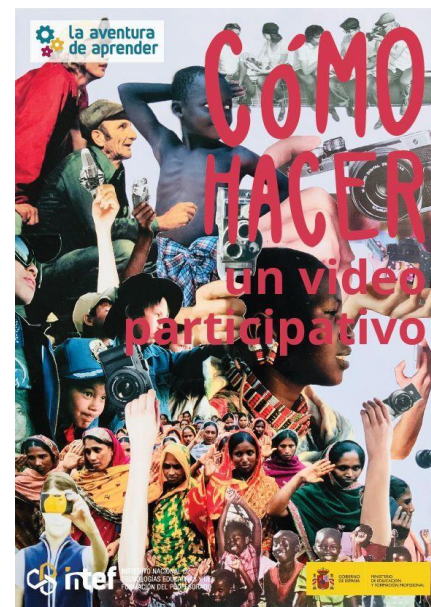
PHOTOVOICE



LIFE HISTORY (neighborhood)



PARTICIPATORY VIDEO



INFOGRAPHIC - POSTER

