



Step 2: Ethical Considerations

Reflective Exercise For Students: "Stepping Into the Field – Who Am I Here?"

Purpose:

To help students critically reflect on how their identity, background, and assumptions may shape their interactions and observations during fieldwork in public spaces.

Instructions for students:

1. Individual Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Write brief responses to the following prompts in your notebook or reflection journal:

- What aspects of my identity (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, education, social background) might affect how others perceive me in the field?
- What privileges or power do I carry—even unintentionally—when I enter a public space as a student researcher?
- How might these factors influence how people respond to me, or how I interpret what I see?

2. Perspective Shift (5–10 minutes)

Think of a specific type of person you might observe or interact with during fieldwork (e.g. a local shopkeeper, youth, elderly person, person experiencing homelessness).

Reflect on the following:

- How might **he/ she** perceive me?
- What might he/she assume about my intentions?
- How can I communicate in a way that is **respectful, clear, and non-intrusive**?

3. Group Discussion (15–20 minutes)

In small groups (3–4 students), discuss:

- Were there any surprises or discomforts in your self-reflection?
- How can we remain mindful of our position without becoming passive or overly cautious?
- What strategies can we use to foster **trust, respect, and ethical presence** in the field?



Facilitator's tips:

(1) You may follow up the discussion with **short role-play scenarios or real case examples** that show the complexities of positionality in action.

And/ Or

(2) After the discussion, ask students to write down **one concrete action or attitude adjustment** they will take with them into the field (e.g., “I will always introduce myself clearly before asking questions” or “I will pay attention to how my body language might be perceived”).

You can collect these anonymously and revisit them in a post-fieldwork reflection to help students assess their ethical growth over time.