

Thesis: Part 4

Instructions

After collecting your data, you have to complete your field notes or transcribe your interviews depending on the methodology you chose. Only after this can you analyze your data. These steps bring you closer to answering your research question.

If your chosen methodology involves interviews, please click [here](#) to access the guidelines and grading rubric.

If your chosen methodology involves observations, please click [here](#) to access the guidelines and grading rubric.

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Observation Transcription Rules

See Chapter 6 in Berg and Lune for an example of how to write an observation narrative. The instructions below give you the rules you should follow in this course.

General page format

- Use a font size of 12.
- Use single line spacing.
- Set the margins at 1" on each side, bottom, and top of the page.

Heading

Each transcription will start with a heading indicating the date, duration (start and end time of the observation period), location (type of room, town), and transcription date. If the transcription runs over several days, write down the first and last dates. If you do not know the information, leave the fields blank, but include them in the heading. Below is a template:

Date:

Duration: (indicate start and end time)

Place: [office, living room, etc.], [city name]

Transcription Date: MM/DD/YY when you started transcribing this interview; MM/DD/YY when you finished

This heading is inserted as regular text in the same section as the body of the interview. Do not use heading styles. The heading may be separated from the body of the interview by a horizontal line.

Observation notes

There are four types of notes to include in your transcript:

1. Field notes

Everything you observed directly in the field, including what you jotted down and what you remember. Field notes take the form of a narrative, and may include conversations if you recall them. They may also include maps, diagrams, or charts that describe setting, participants, or events. They can be particularly useful to track the position of various people relative with each other in the space you observe. You can then attach numbers, letters, or code names to these participants, if they are strangers to you, and refer to them this way in your notes. Your field notes are an expansion of your jotted notes. There is no such thing as too much detail when you write field notes.

2. Personal notes

Your own interpretation or reaction to what you see, connections you make to your personal experience or beliefs, any emotions you feel about what you wrote. Personal notes can be an opportunity to vent if you observed things that you feel strongly about. Sorting through your personal reactions this way can help you be a better observer when you return to the setting. When you submit your final transcripts for a grade, use your own discretion as to how much of these personal notes you leave for your instructor to see—just make sure to leave some in.

3. Methodological notes

Comments you make about how you conducted your research, things you want to change because you think you didn't do them right, or things you want to keep doing because they worked. This can be about questions you asked, things you forgot to write down and need to note in future observations, locations and times that worked well (or didn't) to conduct observations, ideas to deal with an unexpected situation, etc.

4. Theoretical notes

Speculations about how to explain what you observed, links to the literature. Your thinking may evolve as you complete your observations, but these theoretical notes should help you build your final analysis. You won't have many of those at first, but you should have more as you gather more data.

Your field notes should be interspersed with the other types of notes, following this format:

- Start a new paragraph every time you change the type of notes • Indicate the type of note you are starting this way: [JP1]

FN: Field note

PN: Personal note

MN: Methodological note

TN: Theoretical note

- Indent the paragraphs so that the type (FN, PN, etc.) stands out on the left. This helps keep your notes organized.

- You may divide your field notes themselves into paragraphs.

Processing

After you are done transcribing, in a separate section, include your overall assessment of the observation session: how you think it went, what you thought of your performance, things that were comfortable/uncomfortable, ideas for things to observe in the future, do's and don'ts. Separate this section from the transcription using a horizontal line, and give it the title "Processing."

OBSERVATION TRANSCRIPT RUBRIC

Elements	Not Evident	Poor	Good	Excellent	Score
	0	1	2	3	

Format

Uses 12-pt font, single line spacing.

All margins - 1 inch

Heading

Date, time, location, interviewer's name, transcription date

Processing

Overall assessments, possible changes

Transcript

Thorough transcript,
easily read, free of
substantial errors

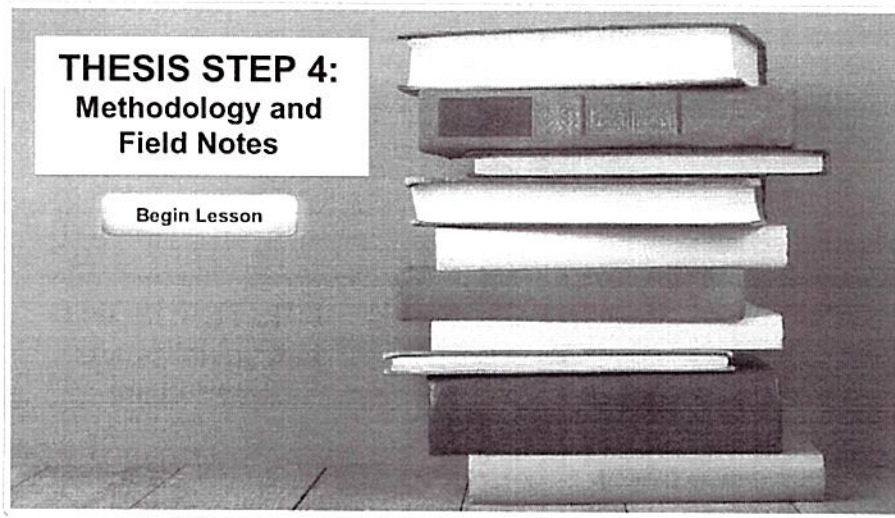
Observation Notes

FN, PN, MN, TN

TOTAL



Thesis Step 4



Activity Details

You have viewed this topic



Thesis Step 4

Back

OK, the last time we saw Simone, her Lit Review was being finalized. Now that she has that out of the way, it's time for her to conduct her study. Which method is best given her study?

Observations

Interviews



Activity Details

You have viewed this topic