

# Field research in a workplace setting essay sample



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BUSTER**

An ethnography, also referred to as field research, is a qualitative research method in which the researcher can directly observe what goes on at the research site as well as participate, including asking questions. It is a useful method for studying small groups, such as work groups, in their natural setting. Ethnography is the term used by cultural anthropologists for conducting field research. Sociologists tend to use the term field research or participant observation. Ethno means “ people” and graphy means “ to describe something.” Ethnography is describing people and/or their culture from their perspectives. In other words, ethnography describes the meaning of the situation from the point of view of the participants. How do the participants under study make sense of the world in which they are participating?

Ethnographers and field researchers are interested in explicit knowledge, which is a description of what happens, say, at a company holiday party. They are also interested in tacit knowledge, which includes the unspoken or taken-for-granted norms that govern a company holiday party, of which participants are usually unaware. In other words, field research takes place in a natural setting where the researcher attempts to understand the social meanings and different perspectives of the people whom the researcher is studying.

### Guidelines

Suggested steps for carrying out an ethnographic project are as follows:

Prepare yourself by reading the relevant scholarly literature. Discover what other researchers have to say about the topic you are researching. Decide

what field research role you will play. Will you be a complete observer? That is, will you gain access to the department and watch what goes on? Will you participate as a worker in the department while you observe what is going on? Will you be both an observer and a participant, watching and interviewing department employees? Review the research ethics of conducting field research. Information is available in the textbook and you are encouraged to seek out research ethics for this purpose, as well, via Web research. Enter the research area and establish relations with the people you will be studying. Watch, listen, and collect data.

Begin to analyze the data, generate a description of what the department is doing, and develop working hypotheses. Continue your field research, conducting focused interviews with relevant individuals. Disengage and leave the department.

Complete your analysis and write your report.

Additional Guidelines for the final paper:

Papers must be between 6 to 8 pages in length (this would be roughly 1 page per area included in the report), 10 point font, double-spaced. Include a cover page, table of contents, introduction, body of the report, summary or conclusion, and works cited. Even though this is not a scientific-type writing assignment, and is mostly creative in nature, references are still very important. At least five authoritative, outside references are required (anonymous authors or web pages are not acceptable). These should be listed on the last page titled “ Works Cited.” Appropriate citations are required.

All DeVry University policies are in effect including the plagiarism policy.

Papers are due during Week 7 of this course.

Any questions about this paper may be discussed in the weekly Q & A

Discussion topic. This paper is worth 125 total points and will be graded on quality of research topic, quality of paper information, use of citations, grammar, and sentence structure.

### Milestones

Week 1: Review the course project. Post any questions to the weekly Q & A discussion topic.

Week 2: A proposal for your course project is due this week in the Week 2 Course Project Dropbox. This proposal should include the following:

A description of the organization you have chosen and your relationship to it. This can be a workplace or an organization where you volunteer. (1-2 paragraphs) A discussion of your goals for conducting a cultural analysis of the organization you have chosen and the potential value of such an analysis. (1-2 paragraphs) An explanation of your strategy for conducting research. There are two kinds of research you will be doing: (1) examining secondary sources, such as scholarly books and articles, for relevant background information on organizational culture and communication, and (2) conducting your own ethnographic research, which can include observation, interviews, and qualitative surveys.

For now, discuss your plan for researching secondary sources and which method or methods you plan to use for your ethnography (observation,

interviews, and/or qualitative surveys, discussed in chapters 6 and 7 and “An Introduction to Step Three” in your text. (1-2 paragraphs) Please ensure your paper is in APA format, which requires double spacing and a title page. Include a working title for your project. Week 5: A progress report for your course project paper is due this week to the Week 5 Course Project Dropbox. This progress report should incorporate the following guidelines:

Include an APA-formatted title page with your working title. Include a reference page with at least five scholarly sources, cited in APA format. Scholarly sources include your textbook and books and articles obtained through the DeVry library. Credible articles from news, government (. gov), or academic (. edu) websites can also be used; acceptable examples include NPR, The Washington Post, The New York Times, and Business Week. In your report, discuss your progress on the project thus far, explaining what research you have conducted, the methods you have used, what remains to be done, and how you plan to organize and analyze your data. Also, discuss which concepts from the course material you plan to use in your analysis. Your report should be 2-3 pages, double-spaced, in APA format. Week 7: Your final course project paper is due this week. See the “ Guidelines” section above and “ Best Practices” section below for a full list of items to include in your paper. Submit this to the Week 5 Course Project Dropbox.

Submit your assignments to the Dropbox located on the silver tab at the top of this page. For instructions on how to use the Dropbox, read these Step-by-Step Instructions or watch this Dropbox Tutorial.

See Syllabus/" Due Dates for Assignments & Exams" for due date information.