



Week 14 Observations

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EDUC 532

Agenda



- Why Observations?
- Dimensions of Fieldwork
- Activity: Conducting an observational study

Learning Objectives

- Understand the benefits of observation as a research technique.
- Understand the data gathering process in observational fieldwork.
- Distinguish between the five key dimensions of observational fieldwork.
- Design and conduct study using observations as a method of data collection



Why observations?

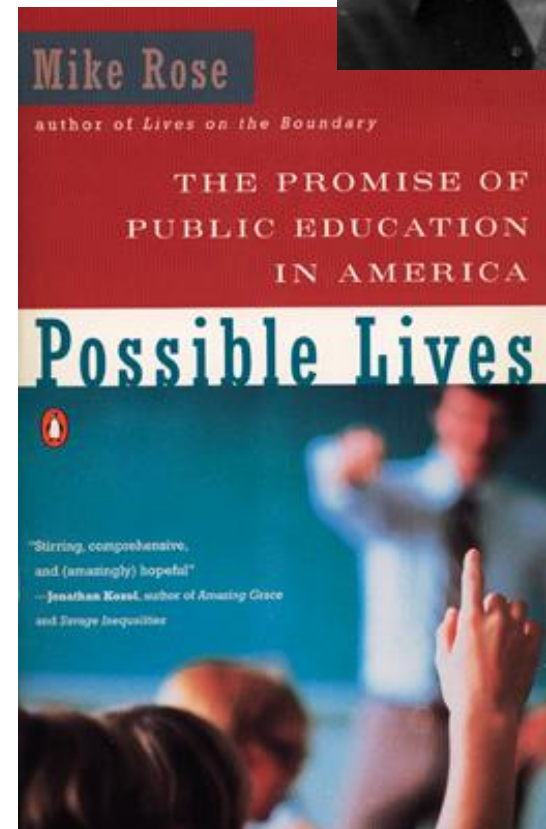


What did Rose observe?

Identify evidence of Rose describing each of the following: (Patton, 1987, p. 82)

- Setting
- Human, social environment
- Activities and behaviors
- Language of participants
- Nonverbal communication

How were observations useful to meeting his purpose?



Why Observations?

- Enables us to see actual practices as they unfold (often in natural settings)
- Participants may not be aware of/willing to report their behavior/practices
- Confront talk with actual action



Dimensions of Fieldwork

Participant-Observer Continuum

Participant _____ Observer



Role Portrayal Purpose Disclosure

Covert _____ Overt

False explanations _____ Full disclosure



Duration

Single
observation



Long-term



Activity: Set up for Observations

- Topic:
- Problem:
- Purpose:
- Research Question:
- Theory of Change: what counts as data?
- Context/Participants:
- Part 1: Structured Observation Protocol
- Part 2: Open Observation

Observations

First, decide: who, where, and when... then:

- **Part A)** Come up with a structured protocol to measure your construct. Create a checklist of behaviors that indicate what your construct looks like and advise a plan to observe how often these behaviors happen. *Clearly state the goal of this observation.*
- **Part B)** Come up with a less structured protocol to observe your topic. *Clearly state the goal of this observation.*

Fieldnotes Discussion



- How are your field notes protocols different and similar?
- What did you find?
- What did you learn about taking observational fieldnotes?

Issues to Consider

- Entry/Access
- Relationship and Rapport
- Foreshadowing analysis
- Ethics
- Positionality



A note about Documents...





Pause for Questions