

Lesson 5. Introducing Ethnography

HAND OUT

As an ethnographer, you are, of course, interested not only in the facts but also in what those facts mean and how they might help you to explain the culture you are studying. Therefore, you will need to create the kinds of research questions which would answer not only what is happening in front of your eyes but also why it is happening and what its significance is for the culture you are investigating. You also need to ask the kinds of questions that would help you discern patterns in the events or behaviors you observe, you make connections between people, incidents, and events.

—Pavel Zemliansky

How do people study culture? Ethnographers engage in research by conducting

- Primary research, which includes observing, interviewing, surveying, photographing, videotaping, and collecting cultural artifacts. Researchers then analyze these resources through a critical interpretive lens to make meaning from what they have seen, heard, and experienced.
- Secondary research, which includes searching for existing articles, books, websites, photos, videos, and other materials related to the researcher's topic, created by others.

Activity 1: Being Ethnographers

Ethnographers consider things from various perspectives, much like we might see in different photos. In teams, take pictures in our classroom that offer a perspective that you might not always see. For instance, you might lie under a table or stand on a desk. You can't stay in your seat for this . . . or can you? For example, here is a panoramic image from Zoya:



Zoya's Panoramic Photograph of Our Classroom

Activity 2: Sharing Your Findings

Post your images in our online class space. Compose a brief response about perspectives in our shared classroom space. See if you can be the most creative here!

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