

CCC Observation Project - Anthropology 583
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Overview

Students will spend about 10 hours total on-site at the SDSU Campus Childcare Center (CCC). Eight hours will be spent engaged in four 2-hour 'observation periods' for your project. The rest of the time will be spent on logistics, including the CCC tour.

You must take and pass a TB (PPD) test (free) at the student center (as per CCC requirements).

What to do

Each student was assigned to a "family" or team from the start of the course. Observation projects will be undertaken 'family style', as team efforts.

First, *agree on a 2-hour time-block* for observations. All members must do observations during the same time-block, but the day of observations can vary (Monday through Friday). It is crucial that all members are on the same time-block schedule, so some family restructuring may be undertaken at this point to ensure this consistency.

Your group will select a topical focus *after* the first set of observations has been completed. This is so that you will be familiar with the range of what is possible to observe during the hours that your group agrees upon and in the room that the CCC has assigned you to. After a topical focus is selected, you will complete three subsequent observations (details overleaf).

Group Deliverables

- Topic Due: March 1
- Themes Due: March 15
- Questions Due: April 5
- Poster Due: April 26

Individual Deliverables

- Notes set 1 Due: March 1
- Memo 1 Due: March 15
- Memo 2 Due: April 5
- Notes set 4 Due: April 17
- Project Reports Due: April 26

OBSERVATIONS

1) Set One

- a) First (individual) observation
 - i) Engage in 2 hours of *unstructured* observation (and note-taking)
 - ii) Make a copy of your notes to submit on the day of the first analysis session¹
- b) First group analysis session (in class March 1)
 - i) Compare notes
 - ii) Decide on a particular topic area for further investigation
 - iii) Submit (a) your group's decision (topic) for approval; (b) individual field notes

2) Set Two

- a) Second observation (with a partner)
 - i) Engage in 2 hours of *unstructured* observation (and note-taking)
- b) Partners meet within 24 hours of observation to compare notes
 - i) individually, write a one-page memo detailing disagreements
 - ii) Make a copy of your memo to submit
- c) Second group analysis session (in class March 15)
 - i) Compare notes and reflect on divergent observations; Troubleshoot
 - ii) Identify a handful of themes, trends to follow up on
 - iii) Submit (a) list of themes (make a copy to guide your next set of observations); (b) memos

3) Set Three

- a) Third observation (in which you learn how to do something of interest)
 - i) Engage in 2 hours of *semi-structured* observation (and note-taking); the structure here will be your request to some children to show you (in minute detail, inasmuch as this is possible) how to do whatever it is you are interested in (e.g., "Please show me what to do at circle time" or "How do you play ____?" or "What do we do at clean-up time?")
 - ii) individually, write a one-page memo detailing how to _____.
 - iii) Make a copy of your memo to submit
- b) Third group analysis session (in class April 5)
 - i) Compare notes; Identify any new themes, trends; Refine original themes, trends; Troubleshoot
 - ii) Invent some data-related questions that could be asked of children in a 'subject review' (you may include these in your paper)
 - iii) Submit (a) question list, (b) memos

4) Set Four

- a) Fourth observation
 - i) Engage in 2 hours of semi-structured observation (and note-taking)
 - ii) Copy notes
- b) Fourth group analysis session (in class April 17)
 - i) Compare notes; Identify themes, trends that emerged as major; troubleshoot
 - ii) Share ideas regarding project reports
 - iii) Make plans for poster
 - iv) Submit individual field notes

¹ To keep copy costs down, you may submit your notes *after* you use them for any in-class discussion.

POSTER (Due April 26): Directions will be discussed in class. See also the poster-making information on our Blackboard website.

PROJECT REPORT (Due April 26)

Individually, you will prepare and submit a report regarding your project. The paper's length (body only) will be 6 pages or 1500 words—unless you are a graduate student, in which case 9 pages are expected (in this case, recalibrate the recommendations below accordingly). *Remember to keep a copy of the submitted paper for your records.*

Through your project report, you will recount what you have learned about the topic your group selected as well as about the observational process. Your paper will contain the following information:

- *Introduction and Justification:* a brief (1/2 to 2/3 of a page, or 125-150 words²) section introducing your topic or question and explaining why it is important in relation to the anthropology of childhood
- *Methods:* in which you explain how you approached the investigation of your question (about 1 page or 250 words).
- *Findings* or results section, in which major themes and trends are identified and subject review results are presented (about 2 pages)
- *Discussion* of what these findings may 'mean' (about 1.5 pages)
- *Limitations*, in which you criticize your methods, assess shortcomings of the findings, suggest ideas for subject review of the findings (100-150 words)
- *Conclusion*, summarizing your main points and suggesting their relevance for the anthropology of childhood in general as well as to your particular question (about 100 words).

Format

Papers will be typed and double-spaced. (The word limit does not include the bibliography, which will be attached at the essay's end.) Pages will be numbered, character size will be normal (11 or 12), and margins will be about one inch.

Your title page counts as page 0. On separate lines on the upper left-hand corner of the title page, type your name, your paper's title, the due date (submission date), the course title, and the instructor's name. Choose a simple and straightforward title that reflects the content of your essay. Put page numbers on every page after the title page (beginning with 1).

Staple papers securely in the top left corner. *Do not* use binders, covers, or paper clips; these make it very difficult for me to maintain a tidy pile of papers.

In the body of the paper, use subheadings as necessary to help make the flow of your argument or presentation clear to the reader. Use in-text citations for any references—and use them liberally (although a literature review is not expected, you

² These and the other word counts reflect what might be typical; they are not concrete requirements.

may wish to cite published sources where doing so helps move your argument forward or is necessary as justification (e.g., for certain methods)).

Use paragraphs. Use as little jargon as possible. Check your spelling and grammar. Alphabetize references cited in your bibliography. (The AAA style guide is available at: http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm).

Evaluation

I will refer to this guide, and especially the bulleted list above, in evaluating your work. I will use the following document too. Inspect these materials carefully to ensure that you have completed the assignment in full.

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From a list by Lewis Hyde, edited by Sue Lonoff, with thanks to Richard Marius's writing handbook.

The Unsatisfactory Paper. The D or F paper either has no thesis or else it has one that is strikingly vague, broad, or uninteresting. There is little indication that the writer understands the material being presented [or that s/he has completed the assignment under discussion]. The paragraphs do not hold together; ideas do not develop from sentence to sentence. This paper usually repeats the same thoughts again and again, perhaps in slightly different language but often in the same words. The D or F paper is filled with mechanical faults, errors in grammar, and errors in spelling.

The C Paper. The C paper has a thesis, but it is vague and broad, or else it is uninteresting or obvious. It does not advance an argument that anyone might care to debate.... The thesis in the C paper often hangs on some personal opinion.... Personal opinion is often the engine that drives an argument, but opinion by itself is never sufficient. It must be defended.... The C paper rarely uses evidence well; sometimes it does not use evidence at all. Even if it has a clear and interesting thesis, a paper with insufficient supporting evidence is a C paper.... The C paper often has mechanical faults, errors in grammar and spelling, but please note: a paper without such flaws may still be a C paper.

The B Paper. The reader of a B paper knows exactly what the author wants to say. It is well organized, it presents a worthwhile and interesting idea, and the idea is supported by sound evidence presented in a neat and orderly way. Some of the sentences may not be elegant, but they are clear, and in them thought follows naturally on thought. The paragraphs may be unwieldy now and then, but they are organized around one main idea. The reader does not have to read a paragraph two or three times to get the thought that the writer is trying to convey. The B paper is always mechanically correct. The spelling is good, and the punctuation is accurate. Above all, the paper makes sense throughout. It has a thesis that is limited and worth arguing. It does not contain unexpected digressions, and it ends by keeping the promise to argue and inform that the writer makes in the beginning.

The A Paper. The A paper has all the good qualities of the B paper, but in addition it is lively, well paced, interesting, even exciting. The paper has style. Everything in it seems to fit the thesis exactly. It may have a proofreading error or two, or even a misspelled word, but the reader feels that these errors are the consequence of the normal accidents all good writers encounter. Reading the paper, we can feel a mind at work. We are convinced that the writer cares for his or her ideas, and about the language that carries them. The sure mark of an A paper is that you will find yourself telling someone else about it.