Teaching Participant-Observation Research Methods: A Skills-Building Approach

Harold G. Levine*, Ronald Gallimore, Thomas S. Weisner*** and Jim L. Turner****

In spite of long-standing interest among social scientists in participant-observation field methods there is little published material on how to teach these methods. In this paper the authors discuss a course they have offered at UCLA for the past six years. The course features experiential-learning, simulation of fieldwork, and both student and teacher reflexivity. These teaching strategies are meant to facilitate student learning in five essential skill domains felt to be applicable to most types of participant-observation field research. A detailed description of course content and learning activities is included. TEACHING PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION METHODS, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, SIMULATION OF FIELDWORK, PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION SKILLS, COLLEGE COURSE FORMAT AND CONTENT

The term "participant observation" refers to naturalistic, qualitative research in which the investigator obtains information through relatively intense, prolonged interaction with those being studied and firsthand involvement in the relevant activities of their lives. The primary data are typically narrative descriptions (i.e., field notes) based on direct observation, informal conversational interviews, and personal experience, although quantitative and more formal, structured data can also be collected through participant observation.

As a general research strategy, participant observation has a long and distinguished history in anthropology (Degérando 1969; Malinowski 1961) and sociology (Bruyn 1966; Thomas and Znaniecki 1918–20). More recently, psychologists noted for their contributions to quantitative methods (e.g., Campbell 1973; Cronbach 1975) have begun to articulate the role which participant observation and other qualitative procedures might play in psychological research. There is also a growing use of participant observation in applied research, particularly in program development and evaluation

*Graduate School of Education
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

**Department of Psychiatry
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

***Departments of Psychiatry and Anthropology
University of California
Los Angeles, California 90024

(Tharp and Gallimore 1979) and in studying the social processes and dynamics of programmatic intervention (Tikunoff and Ward 1977).

Increasing interest in participant observation methods is further evidenced by the growing number of relevant textbooks (e.g., Bogdan 1972; Bogdan and Taylor 1975; Bruyn 1966; Schatzman and Strauss 1973), edited readings (Adams and Preiss 1960; Filstead 1970; McCall and Simmons 1969) and candid first-person accounts of the fieldwork experience (e.g., Freilich 1970; Golde 1970; Spindler 1970; Johnson 1975; Rabinow 1977; Wax 1971). Presumably, the major audience for these materials is students taking courses designed to prepare them to conduct such research themselves.

Although most instructors would agree with the general notion that fieldwork is a craft best learned through doing, there is considerably less agreement regarding any formal pedagogical implications of that assertion. An extreme opinion is illustrated by the apocryphal tale of a distinguished fieldworker who responds to all student queries on method by pointing to a stack of fieldnotes and saying, "Go thou, and do likewise." This "sink-or-swim" approach, although seemingly on the wane, still has a few hard-core adherents who maintain not only that classroom methods courses are irrelevant but that "trial-by-fire" offers major advantages in the selection and professional socialization of students.

A more common attitude is that the fieldwork experience has general educational value for social science students, and that it can be meaningfully integrated into the traditional curriculum (DuBois 1967). This approach is exemplified by Spradley and McCurdy (1972) who offer a rationale and general instructional guidelines for providing undergraduates with a supervised fieldwork experience through ethnographic study of "cultural scenes" in their own community. Along similar lines, Crane and Angrosino (1974) have developed a handbook of fieldwork projects for anthropology students; and various introductory research methods textbooks include fieldwork exercises (Runcie 1976; Sanders 1974).

While there would appear to be widespread interest in providing students with some type of classroom-based experiential instruction in participant observation, the question of how to best structure and implement such training has received little systematic attention. Other than Spradley and McCurdy (1972), we were able to locate only four published accounts describing actual experience in teaching such courses. Bennett (1960) describes a set of exercises and demonstrations he used to instruct students in the recording, organization, and interpretation of field notes; he also discusses some highly interesting individual differences in the way students record and interpret their observations. Myers (1969) sent a class of untrained, unsupervised undergraduates out to do fieldwork in the local community and discusses the advantages (i.e., unfettered creativity) and problems (i.e., "methodological and ethical violence") of his laissez-faire approach. Rossan and Levine (1974) provide a general overview of a field methods course required of undergraduate psychology majors at Brunel University in Great Britain, and note some of the exercises they use to teach research skills through student involvement in structural exercises. Finally, in his course at the University of Illinois Bruner (1979) assigned fieldwork projects which were

used to teach his students aspects of campus culture rather than fieldwork techniques *per se*.

Our own field methods course, developed over the past six years, makes use of both structured in-class exercises (and discussions) and actual field experiences. Exercises and fieldwork parallel each other, and provide an opportunity for instructors to closely supervise students' practice of skills which they are then required to use in the field. Both classroom and "real" field setting experiences are meant to introduce the students to a variety of basic skills in research design, data collection, and data analysis. Through a feedback process we also attempt to teach students to become self-reliant field workers and reflective observers of their decision-making process. While the specifics of how we have tried to do this have changed over the years, our consistent aim has been to mix the personal involvement of participation with the scientific skills of observation. It is the most current version of this instructional effort that we discuss here.

Overview of Course Format and Content

The course[1] we teach is for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, and is explicitly intended to be cross-disciplinary. Two of the instructors are trained as psychologists (Gallimore and Turner) and two are anthropologists (Weisner and Levine). While the majority of the students who enroll in the course are from one of these two fields, students also enroll from the departments of sociology, economics, education, management, psychiatry, nursing, public health, and urban planning, as well as various physical sciences and fine arts.

The course lasts for one quarter (10 weeks) and meets twice a week (20 sessions altogether) for two hours per session. At the first class meeting we provide a brief introduction to the course, including some practical ways in which it differs from most of the other courses which students have taken at UCLA. We explain, for example, that they will work extremely hard for the first eight weeks and then very little at the end (thereby reversing the normal study habits of students); that there are no examinations or major "term" papers; and that they will hand in shorter papers every seven to ten days based on fieldwork projects. Feedback from the instructors is immediate (material submitted in one class will be returned the next), and detailed (a feedback and grading sheet is prepared for each assignment). Grades are also based on in-class exercises and overall class participation. The students are not allowed to remain passive; we emphasize that keeping ideas and experiences secret (in order to gain a personal grading advantage) will not be rewarded. We also point out that our prime concern is for *them* to make the necessary decisions about the conduct of their fieldwork. As a result, we will not provide them with ready answers to difficult fieldwork problems or convenient rules of thumb on how to proceed. In fact, we emphasize that there are no such short-cuts.

From the first day we ask students to begin thinking about an actual field observation site within the greater Los Angeles area where they will do participant-observation and carry out specific exercises. Criteria for selection of the research site include the following: 1) Is it interesting to them? 2) Is it

unusual (culturally or structurally, or unique in their life experiences)? 3) Will it be there for the entire quarter, and will they be able to visit it repeatedly? and 4) Will they be able to observe and record data in a variety of ways? The students must have selected and visited their sites, written brief proposals describing the settings and outlining their research goals, and received instructor approval by the end of the third week of class.

The students are required to do seven out-of-class assignments. These are briefly described below:

1. *"Sudden shock" exercise:* During the first hour of class time at the second class meeting, students are sent out into the surrounding community and told to take notes on what they see. This is meant to be confusing; but it is also intended to suddenly immerse students in a field situation, to acquaint them with some of the problems integral to fieldwork, and to introduce them to the need for making typical decisions regarding their conduct in the field. The exercise is discussed in the second half of the class meeting. The notes taken during the exercise are collected, but no formal written report is required as with subsequent exercises.

2. *Narrative-writing*: Students select some aspect of their subjects' behavior and record it using two distinct styles—holistic and "radical empiricist."

3. *Role management:* Students are required to describe real and/or anticipated role-management issues at their chosen field sites, such as level(s) of "participation" required or desired, entry problems, and problems of rapport with informants and/or gate-keepers.

4. *Coding, classifying and indexing:* Field notes collected at the research site are formatted and a tentative data indexing system must be developed and applied.

5. *Interviewing:* Students must use one of four possible interview styles with one or more informants at the field site.

6. *Participant-observation research report:* This is the final field project of the quarter and is designed to make use of the skills already learned and data already collected. The student selects a particular topic or research hypothesis for more focused observation, collects additional data as needed using appropriate skills, and writes a report on this. While the other assignments are of relatively short duration (usually 7 to 10 days between start-up and completion) this report takes approximately 3 weeks.

7. *Class diary:* Diary entries are made after each class session and each field site visit. These are to help the students understand and assess their roles as fieldworkers and document their emotional involvement with and reactivity to their "subjects" and field setting. They also assist in an end-of-quarter review of the course.

Written reports include both the fieldnotes from the visit and short (2–4 page) write-ups. Thus the materials turned in are *the data* collected in its (intended) form; the feedback we provide typically focuses on the quality of that data. The short write-ups require that students explain the decisions they had to make with regard to the fieldwork itself, describe and provide a rationale for the field procedures (often in terms of overall research goals), analyze the problems faced, and suggest possible alternate solutions.

We do not arm students with their assignments and send them "cold" into

the field. We use class time to familiarize the students with the particular skills which we have featured in an out-of-class assignment. This familiarization may occur through a lecture, but more often we attempt either to model the skills involved or to simulate field situations in which these skills would be required. As an example of modeling, one of the instructors presented the data storage and retrieval system he used while doing fieldwork in New Guinea and discussed the advantages and limitations of his approach. To simulate direct classroom observation, we were able to present videotapes of teacher-child classroom behavior. Pairs of students were required to develop a behavior coding scheme for instances of "praise" behavior by observing the tape over and over during class. Each pair of students then had to code a segment of the tape and check for observational reliability.

Five Essential Participant Observation Skills

The aim of the field assignments is to foster learning of general skill domains necessary in participant observation research. We have tried to specify particular skills within each domain as precisely as possible. Class time and field assignments are organized to provide experiences appropriate to each skill. Our current list of general skill domains, with brief descriptions of each, is given below:

1. *Role Management and Ethics:* In our experience most students have never thought about their research role in an actual field setting nor conceptualized role management as a crucial part of the fieldwork process. We emphasize that part of their job in the field is necessarily learning something about their own interactional skills, and consciously applying this knowledge among unfamiliar people in novel settings. The fact that these are constant, on-going problems that continue throughout fieldwork also is often overlooked.

Students tend to be surprised that their own feelings and rapport-building difficulties in the field are given explicit attention during class-time and that they are encouraged to talk about them. In a sense the class acts as a support group for this externalization and self-revealing process. We present the Statements of Ethics of the American Psychological Association, American Anthropological Association, Society for Research in Child Development, etc., and make clear the general framework of professional standards within which students should make their own judgments. The students are also surprised, and often frustrated, when convenient solutions to their ethical or role management problems are neither forthcoming nor even possible. We try to teach that decisions in fieldwork, including these interactional and ethical ones, can ultimately be made only by themselves, or in consultation with colleagues, and that both self-confidence and consultation with other professionals are necessary if one is to be a successful fieldworker.

2. *Observing:* There is little information on whether there are general observational skills which are trainable. Turner's (1973) extensive survey of the literature revealed that observation training materials and references are either very old, classified (the CIA may have worked on the problem), unpublished, or limited to specific observational procedures. There are manuals for training raters and what might be called observational tech-

nicians; but there is little information available on preparing young scientists to be disciplined, analytic, idea-generating observers.

Turner's (1973) research points to the ability to "see more to see" as a crucial strategy of "good" observers. Such people can look at the same stimulus (movie, slide, actual behavior, etc.), and generate more questions which can be answered by observation than can less talented observers. Whether the ability to "see more to see" is a trainable skill has not been examined. But it is clear from Turner's work that those he identified as good observers employ strategies of observation, self-discipline, "psyching" or "priming" techniques, flexible mnemonics, question-generating skills, and other tactics that can be taught. In our course we illustrate many of these techniques through a variety of in-class and out-of-class projects (see Table 1).

3. *Recording:* Reviews of the literature on fieldwork techniques reveals surprisingly little material on what Edgerton (1978) calls "the care and feeding of field notes." Student learning in this area revolves around the formatting and coding of field notes. We define formatting as the actual form(s) which field notes will take, including any cross-referencing system which may be developed within any one form or between two or more. Students soon begin to learn the advantage of multiple perspectives on an event and how this may be achieved by having a narrative account of the event entered into the field-note file, a capsule account of this and other events of the day related through the use of a daily calendar or log, and their personal reactions to and understanding of the event by way of a diary. Coding refers to the creation of an indexing scheme to permit data filing and eventual retrieval. Students learn to do this with their own material.

In general we find that students are overwhelmed by the amount of time necessary to write up, organize, and code field notes, and constantly need to be reassured that a two- or three-to-one ratio for write-up time to actual field work time is not unusual. The discipline involved in keeping up-to-date field notes and the threat to reliability and detail of waiting too long between observation and write-up quickly become apparent.

4. *Interviewing:* Social scientists recognize a variety of interview types. We have found it useful to conceptualize many of these within a single framework by considering the degree to which there are formal constraints either on the question asked or on the answers given. Thus, in the most typical kind of field "interviewing," which we call "jawboning," the ethnographer sits around chatting with informants. No formal constraints are made either on the questions or on the answers, although either the investigator or the informant may be guided by "hidden agendas." At the other end of the continuum, an ethnographer administers a questionnaire with multiple-choice answers provided as the only ones possible. Both question and answer are constrained within narrow, explicit limits. Several other intermediate styles can be recognized and students are given examples of each.

The emphasis in this section of the course is not merely on demonstrating or even giving students practice in a variety of interview options, but rather on having them recognize that all are valid ways of finding out information, that the specific types chosen depend upon overall research strategies and opportunities, and that the kinds of data each produces have different advantages and drawbacks.

5. *Data Reduction and Analysis:* Clearly, data collection and observational skills are useless if students have no sense of what social science, as a final written product, "looks" like; and we have tried to help students understand within a very broad conceptual frame the uses to which qualitative data can be put—as description, for hypothesis-testing, theory generation, development of new paradigms, and so forth. Beyond this we try to help students see patterns in their data and to suggest ways of achieving insight. As instructors we speak in deliberately self-conscious ways about our own creative dilemmas and break-throughs. We have found that students' progress in these skills is heavily dependent on their own intellectual development. We are still working on ways to stimulate students to apply the theories and substantive content of their other classes to conceptualization and analysis of their own observations.

Our pedagogical intent is to create a cumulative, skills-building approach to the learning of participant observation methods. As a result, we have been particularly concerned with the order of skill presentation, and have experimented extensively with this. Our most recent version is presented in Table 1, which includes an itemized list of the specific skills within each general domain and the actual "on-the-ground" classroom content and format for each skill. Fieldwork demands an integration of fundamental skills in constantly changing ways. Thus, one cannot interview without first establishing a workable, appropriate role with an informant; the role adopted will, in part at least, be a function of the data sought; to record one must know how to observe, etc. Consequently, the sequence in which the foundational skills are taught can only approximate the order in which the skills would be required in the field, and single skills can rarely be introduced to the exclusion of others. In practice we occasionally defer or substitute assignments for individual students or make major changes affecting the entire class, depending on differences in classes from year to year. We rely on close monitoring of student progress and needs, through individual consultations, classroom feedback, and frequent review of field notes to suggest the nature and direction of any changes.

Instructional Process

The class format, with its emphasis on discussion, feedback sessions, modeling, and simulation, stems from four general teaching strategies which we have adopted and which we feel represent an alternative to dependence on the standard lecture-and-readings format in most methods courses. These strategies include experiential learning, simulation of field work, student reflexivity, and instructor reflexivity.

1. *Experiential learning:* Our experience, both as methods instructors and as students being prepared for fieldwork in graduate school, has been that talking about field research does not work well. The alternative seems obvious. As much as possible a proper field methods course would engage students in the actual process of doing fieldwork.

As it is used here, *experiential learning* is a convenient label for the kind of teaching that depends on student experiences more than instructor lectures.

Rather than first discussing concepts such as role management or reactivity, we have tried to arrange for students to face actual dilemmas in the field for which such concepts may later help provide understanding. One student, for example, undertook fieldwork in a free medical clinic. Initially he was warmly accepted, only later to be subjected to strong, personal attacks by clinic staff. In time, the student-observer, and the class, understood this episode in terms of role-management; specifically, the student observer (who was a medical school-bound senior) was perceived as an "evaluator" whose report might influence clinic funding. At this point discussions of role-management issues in the literature became more meaningful, and the potential impact on the conduct of research more evident.

Related and interlocking practices designed to implement experiential learning are listed in column four of Table 1. The experiences of students (in and out of class) provide a basis for relatively high levels of personal knowledge and class participation. This allows the instructors to guide students toward understanding their experiences first, and only then labelling them by the use of concepts, such as "reactivity," that are available in the literature and which are introduced by the instructor or through assigned readings. By allowing students ample time to discuss and digest each other's experiences during class time, peer teaching and modeling are achieved: in our experience, open discussion of peer and personal experience has had significantly greater impact than instructor lecture and commentary. We could rationalize this finding in terms of social learning theory (Bandura 1977).

2. *Simulation of fieldwork:* Though our students undertake actual field projects, their relatively short time in the field (once or twice a week for seven to nine weeks) and the vagaries of particular research sites mean that, left to their own devices, students are not likely to encounter a full range of fieldwork-related problems. As a result, we use more specific out-of-class exercises to place students into situations in which they will have to confront "typical" fieldwork problems. Thus, when we require our students to perform an interview our intention is not only to give them the experience of conducting an interview, but also to have them deal with intractable, suspicious, and/or deceptive informants. At the very least, the exercise forces the student to make conscious his/her decisions about who will make a good informant, and why.

In order to further prepare students for experiences they will have in their field site, or to provide them with experiences which they will only have at a later date when they do more intensive fieldwork, we also simulate fieldwork in other ways. First, we have in-class exercises which are meant to "replicate" aspects of actual field conditions and tasks. For example, we surprise the class with a largely unedited movie telling them only that it is of a New Guinea initiation ceremony. We ask the class to imagine that they have just arrived in New Guinea, have accidentally heard of this ceremony and have a duty to science to go and "get what they can" (as this may be the last time it will be performed in its "unacculturated" state). They must make order out of the chaos of the movie by quickly imposing some observational strategy and adopting shorthand and mnemonic techniques for quickly converting complex observations into written notes. At the preceding class meeting we

have also warned the students to be prepared for a simulated field trip under adverse conditions such as darkness. The more clever students bring flashlights. Others discover the consequences of their lack of planning.

Second, we simulate the rigors of fieldwork with the rigors of the class. For example, by setting numerous, frequent deadlines (approximately a paper or set of fieldnotes every seven to ten days) we try to expose students to the harrowing demands of the fieldworker, feverishly collecting and writing fieldnotes on a daily basis. We thus try to simulate the discipline of fieldwork, and we explicitly bring this analogy to the attention of the suffering students. Similarly the in-class surprises we plan, such as the New Guinea initiation movie and additional devices such as "pop quizzes" about the names and number of fellow students in the room, the number of floors in the building where the class is held, etc., are meant to simulate the unexpected nature of fieldwork events and the importance of constant attention to one's "job" as a participant-observer.

3. *Student reflexivity:* After teaching the course for several years we began to appreciate that the decision-making and self-evaluation skills which the students learned in class were of crucial importance in fieldwork as well. For many novice fieldworkers the initial research experience comes after many years of schooling during which they have relied on faculty for direct guidance. In our fieldwork course we send out students into settings and provide them with somewhat ambiguous instructions. As expected, they return confused, full of questions and indecision, and demand to know what is expected or required. Any college instructor can easily imagine the barrage of questions about expectations, grades, and so forth. At first we considered this a problem and tried to be more explicit; but in time we came to view it as a teaching advantage. The students were experiencing the problems and demands of participant-observation, and were becoming observers of their own learning process.

We have tried to further expedite student reflexivity with the following teaching strategy. While continuing to send the students out with relatively ambiguous instructions, we follow each experience with extensive discussions in class; and we provide immediate, detailed feedback on their written reports or fieldnotes. In class discussions we typically have them turn their questions back onto themselves by asking, "What do you think?" or "What about others in the class?" and thereby try to foster discussions among class members. Our goal, aside from giving some advice and much encouragement, is to constantly remind them that their questions are precisely the ones that occur in actual field settings where there will be no "expert" available for consultation. We also try to make them understand that one way to successful fieldwork is self-reliance, and that their answers to their questions will have consequences for the shape and product of their research. The process of debating the plausible alternative responses to the questions in class, and the gradual introduction of formal concepts from the literature, help the students to understand that their frustrations, indecision, and uncertainties are an inevitable part of fieldwork.

We also encourage reflexivity in two other ways. We ask the students to evaluate their own progress, and we use a modified mastery grading system in

which fieldwork assignments may be redone for a higher grade. Since this grading strategy encourages students to profit from mistakes and make use of instructor comments, it hopefully encourages a similar self-evaluative and corrective attitude toward fieldwork in general.

4. *Instructor reflexivity:* During the early years of our course many of the fieldwork skills described here, their relative importance, and their proper sequences were neither properly explored nor clearly defined. Some of the tasks in which these skills were embedded did not "work" well. The changes in both course content and process which have been made come about largely through a strategy of instructor reflexivity. Originally this was unintentional, but we have come to recognize the ingredients which make it possible. In this team-taught course all four instructors attend nearly every class meeting. We freely discuss our differing viewpoints during the class and openly evaluate the session, with the students sometimes debating points at length. After each class the four instructors hold a debriefing session critiqueing each other's performance, the class meeting, the quality of student performance, etc. According to students who have observed the process, our approach to the class and to teaching has modeled and fostered a style of inquiry which, with its emphasis on self-awareness and constructive criticism, is of more general use in research.

Our attitude is that college-level instruction is a researchable phenomenon, one that can be improved by attention to the details of each class session, student performance, detached self-evaluation, observation of teaching practices by others, and commitment to process as well as outcome evaluation. How essential this aspect is to the rest of the process is unclear. Some students feel that it is, while others probably never notice it. In our judgment it maintains our motivation and constantly forces us to scrutinize all class-related activities and decisions.

Concluding Observations

We believe that this experientially-based "methods" course represents a viable alternative to the more traditional course offerings in this subject. We do not, however, feel confident in saying that what we have discussed here is a final form or that it represents some magical formula for such a course. Indeed, part of our excitement in teaching the course, and one of the main advantages in having four instructors, is the continual need for experimentation. Someone is always dissatisfied. While our implicit confidence in the underlying teaching strategies of the course remains constant, the actualization of these strategies in classroom practice is open for revision and review.

We must also caution that the transfer of our teaching strategy to other situations may present a variety of difficulties. Instructor reflexivity, for example, may be difficult to implement with only one instructor. Also, the students who take our course are somewhat unusual. Over the years, word-of-mouth and increasing specification of course requirements and expectations have attracted students with superior grade point averages and higher than normal motivation. Frequently, too, these are students who are already

Table 1. Instructional Domains, Observational Skills, and Class Format for a University Course on Participant-Observation

Week	Day	Major Domain of Instruction	Specific Skills Being Taught	Class Format and Content
1	1	Introduction	Becoming a participant-observer in the class; self-reliance and the value of direct experience; flexibility as an observer.	Lecture on course content, purpose and direction; in-class exercises such as learning one another's names; FIELD PROJECT: CLASS DIARY assigned.
1	2	Introduction	Becoming an observer	FIELD PROJECT: "SUDDEN SHOCK" exercise; in-class discussion of field project. FIELD SITE SELECTION CRITERIA handed out and discussed.
2	1	Recording; Observing	Different styles of narrative-writing and note-taking: advantages and disadvantages of each	In-class exercises: 1) instructor smokes a cigarette and asks students to record his actions; 2) a slide (of a large group of Sikh men) is presented and students told to record what they see. Class discussion of in-class exercises: students read their notes to illustrate different styles of note-taking (e.g., "holistic" vs. "radical-empiricist") and issues related to note-taking (e.g., level of inference, "framing," focusing). FIELD PROJECT: NARRATIVE-WRITING assigned.
2	2	Observing	"Seeing more to see"; having a strategy for observing; individual differences in powers of observation	Lecture on factors affecting observational prowess; in-class exercise: slide of a drawing with an observational "test" administered later on specifics of the scene. FIELD PROJECT: NARRATIVE-WRITING due.
3	1	Recording; Observing	"Seeing more to see"; developing observational strategies; working as a team in field research	Feedback on NARRATIVE-WRITING FIELD PROJECT. In-class exercise: slide of picture cards of a deck of playing cards presented and students told to record "all" details of the cards; discussion of exercise with emphasis on observational strategies used. In-class exercise: students divided into groups of four and told to prepare an observational strategy for a second slide (picture cards from the nineteenth century). FIELD PROJECT: ROLE MANAGEMENT assigned

3	2	Observing	"Seeing more to see"; developing observational strategies	Feedback on playing cards exercise of previous class meeting; discussion of individual and group strategies for flexible note-taking. PROPOSED FIELD SITE submitted
		Role Management and Ethics	Sensitization to everyday problems of fieldwork	Lecture: what "really" happens to most fieldworkers (e.g., facing novelty, malaise, field decision-making, ethical dilemmas), how to cope (e.g., generating questions, taking kaopectate and a diary, professional standards), typical approaches to field studies (e.g., research design, "mucking about")
4	1	Role Management and Ethics	Recognizing and dealing with ethical issues in field research	Class discussion using real and hypothetical cases in which students raise and discuss the ethical issues involved; FIELD PROJECT: ROLE MANAGEMENT due
		Recording	Mnemonic and shorthand skills in taking rough field notes	In-class exercise: film (largely unedited and unnarrated) of New Guinea initiation ceremony shown with instructions to students to record behavioral and setting details; class discussion of exercise focusing on techniques used to record multi-dimensional, complex, rapidly-occurring behavior
4	2	Role Management and Ethics	Dealing with rapport in the field and balancing the participant-observer "dichotomy"	Feedback on ROLE MANAGEMENT FIELD PROJECT and on FIELD SITE SELECTION
		Recording	Formatting and indexing field notes	Lecture and presentation of examples of field note systems; FIELD PROJECT: CODING, CLASSIFYING, AND INDEXING assigned
5	1	Interviewing	Different types of interview strategies; planning and executing a focused interview	Lecture on different types of interviews; in-class exercise: observation and discussion of video-taped interviews focusing on interviewing skills. In-class exercise: students plan and carry out focused interviews of each other on the subject of friendship; FIELD PROJECT: INTERVIEWING assigned FIELD PROJECT: CODING, CLASSIFYING, and INDEXING due
5	2	Recording	Formatting and indexing field notes	Feedback on CODING, CLASSIFYING, AND INDEXING FIELD PROJECT (individual consultations with students on field sites and interviewing)

Table 1. Instructional Domains, Observational Skills, and Class Format for a University Course on Participant-Observation (*continued*)

Week	Day	Major Domain of Instruction	Specific Skills Being Taught	Class Format and Content
		Interviewing	Interview types other than "focused"	Lecture and examples from on-going research of faculty illustrating different interviewing strategies
6	1	Data Reduction and Analysis	Research design and interpretation issues: sample selection, qualitative *vs.* quantitative knowing, "objective" *vs.* "subjective," experimental and naturalistic	In-class exercise: actual cases from the literature offered with students raising and debating alternatives in design and rival plausible explanations of results; lecture and discussion on research design issues FIELD PROJECT: INTERVIEWING due
6	2	Interviewing	Designing interviews and interviewing skills	Feedback on FIELD PROJECT: INTERVIEWING
		Observing	Research design issues: problem and topic focusing	Discussion and consultation: class members help each other with problems related to focusing in their respective field sites in preparation for participant-observation research report; FIELD PROJECT: PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION RESEARCH REPORT assigned
7	1	Observing	Research design issues; problem and topic focusing; peer consultation	Small-group consultations; class members (with instructors) help each other with fieldwork-related problems; each student discusses field site problems
7	2	Data Reduction and Analysis	Coding of behavior; issues of reliability; quantitative techniques	Lecture and general introduction to quantitative techniques in observational research; in-class exercises: videotape of elementary-school classroom behavior, students asked to do narrative of behavior; students given pre-set behavioral code; discussion of difficulties in using a code; lecture on time *vs.* event sampling; videotape on teacher-child interactions; students told to develop their own code for "teacher praise" and asked to code the tape in pairs and measure inter-observer reliability

8	1	Data Reduction and Analysis	Coding of behavior; issues of reliability; quantitative techniques	Feedback on in-class coding exercise of previous week; lecture on frequency/intensity/latency/duration measures of observations and reliability; lecture on and examples of coding in natural settings; methods such as "spot" observations, surreptitious counting techniques, post-field checklist methods
8	2	Data Reduction and Analysis	Coding of behavior; quantitative techniques	Lecture and discussion of focused coded observations and relationship to qualitative data.
			Uses of qualitative materials; specific data-manipulation techniques; "paths to insight"	Lecture on the manipulation of qualitative data
9	1	Data Reduction and Analysis	Uses of qualitative materials; specific data-manipulation techniques; "paths to insight"	Lecture with detailed example of instructor's work from initial data collection phase through early formulation period to final, written product; emphasis on problems, frustrations, and work strategies; lecture and instructors' "show and tell" examples of on-going research projects FIELD PROJECT: PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION RESEARCH PROJECT due
9	2	Data Reduction and Analysis	Uses of qualitative materials; specific data-manipulation techniques; "paths to insight"	Lecture and instructors' "show-and-tell" examples of on-going research projects
10	1	All	All skills covered in course	Feedback on PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION RESEARCH REPORT FIELD PROJECT
			Self-evaluation and reflexivity	In-class discussion in which students are asked to describe problems they encountered in doing the fieldwork or writing the final report and what they felt particularly good about; FIELD PROJECT: CLASS DIARY due
10	2	Evaluation	Student and instructor reflexivity; accepting feedback	Discussion of course and both student and instructor critiques; use of diary as an aid in self-feedback and class evaluation

involved in fieldwork in other settings or who want to learn these skills as part of their training. Furthermore, by limiting class size to thirty or less, we can provide a high degree of individual attention and make the best use of the special skills and abilities of each instructor. This fortuitous mix of self-selected students, high teacher-student ratio, and small class size helps to facilitate this type of methods course.

How have students themselves evaluated the course? The ordinary university rating system (based upon questionnaire responses of students taking the course) has consistently ranked this class high among all anthropology and psychology department courses. We also devote the last class day of the quarter to an in-class review of the course. By and large student comments are highly favorable though there may be specific complaints or suggestions about assignment requirements or their timing, class readings, and the like. Students seem to agree with the fundamental assumption that participant-observation research methods are best taught by doing participant-observation. For those students open enough to talk about it, this "leap of faith" which we require of them at the beginning of each quarter seems to be justified by its end.

Endnote

1. Turner and Weisner began the course in 1972, with Gallimore teaching an intensive two-week session on classroom and quantitative research techniques. Beginning in 1973, all three instructors participated and began a series of intensive revisions each year through 1975. Levine began participating in 1976, introducing new materials on field note recording, indexing, and analysis, and contributing to further revisions of the course structure.

References Cited

Adams, Richard N. and Jack J. Preiss, eds.
1960 Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press.

Bandura, A.
1977 Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Bennett, John W.
1960 Individual Perspective in Field Work: An Experimental Training Course. *In* Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques. R. N. Adams and J. J. Preiss, eds. Pp. 431–440. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press.

Bogdan, Robert
1972 Participant Observation in Organizational Settings. Syracuse: Syracuse University.

Bogdan, Robert and Steven J. Taylor
1975 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods. New York: John Wiley.

Bruner, Edward M.
1979 Personal Anthropology. Anthropology Newsletter 20 (8): 18–20.

Bruyn, S. T.
1966 The Human Perspective in Sociology: The Methodology of Participant Observation. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Campbell, D. T.
1973 Qualitative Knowing in Action Research. Paper read at American Psychological Association.
Crane, Julia G. and Michael V. Angrosino
1974 Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.
Cronbach, L. J.
1975 Beyond the Two Disciplines of Scientific Psychology. American Psychologist 30:116–127.
Degérando, Joseph-Marie
1969 The Observation of Savage Peoples. Berkeley, California: University of California.
DuBois, Cora
1967 The Curriculum in Cultural Anthropology. *In* The Teaching of Anthropology. D. G. Mandelbaum, G. W. Lasker, and E. M. Albert, eds. American Anthropological Association Memo, No. 94. Pp. 27–38.
Edgerton, Robert B.
1978 The Care and Feeding of Fieldnotes. Unpublished Field Research Guide, Socio-Behavioral Research Group, MRRC, UCLA.
Filstead, William J., ed.
1970 Qualitative Methodology: Firsthand Involvement with the Social World. Chicago, Illinois: Markham.
Freilich, Morris, ed.
1970 Marginal Natives: Anthropologists at Work. New York: Harper and Row.
Golde, Peggy, ed.
1970 Women in the Field. Chicago, Illinois: Aldine.
Johnson, John M.
1975 Doing Field Research. New York: Free Press.
Malinowski, Bronislaw
1961 Argonauts of the Western Pacific. New York: E. P. Dutton.
McCall, George J. and J. L. Simmons, eds.
1969 Issues in Participant Observation. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.
Myers, James E.
1969 Unleashing the Untrained: Some Observations on Student Ethnographers. Human Organization 28:155–159.
Rabinow, Paul
1977 Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco. Berkeley, California: University of California.
Rossan, Sheila and Ned Levine
1974 Field Methods: A Course for Teaching Non-Laboratory Research Methods. Bulletin of the British Psychological Society 27:123–128.
Runcie, John F.
1976 Experiencing Social Research. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press.
Sanders, William B., ed.
1974 The Sociologist as Detective: An Introduction to Research Methods. New York: Praeger.
Schatzman, Leonard and Anselm L. Strauss
1973 Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
Spindler, George D., ed.
1970 Being an Anthropologist: Fieldwork in Eleven Cultures. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spradley, J. R. and David W. McCurdy
1972 The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society. Chicago: Science Research Associates.
Tharp, R. and R. Gallimore
1979 The Ecology of Program Research and Development: A Model of Evaluation Succession. *In* Evaluation Studies Review Annual, Vol. 4. L. B. Sechrest, ed. Beverly Hills, California: Saga Publications.
Thomas, W. I. and F. Znaniecki
1918–20 The Polish Peasant in Europe and America, 5 vols. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago.
Tikunoff, W. J. and B. A. Ward, issue eds.
1977 Special issue: Exploring Qualitative/Quantitative Research Methodologies in Education. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 8 (2).
Turner, Jimmie L.
1973 Powers of Observation: The Measurement and Correlates of Observational Ability. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.
Wax, Rosalie H.
1971 Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago.

CALL FOR PAPERS

CAE Annual Meeting with the American Anthropological Association, Washington, DC, December 3–7, 1980.

For information and forms, see November *Anthropology Newsletter*. Copies of submissions should be sent to CAE Program Chairperson Courtney Cazden.