

## Instructions for Class Practical: Observation

The following instructions should help you to get started with the class practical on observations. Please, in addition to this document, carefully read **Kognity 3.3**.

### *Ethics in Observations*

Observations should always be done under the supervision of a teacher, and everyone involved must follow ethical standards. Participants must have the option not to participate and can stop at any time.

If carried out in school, participants must sign a **consent form**. Before they agree to take part, everyone must know what the observation is about.

Parental permission is not needed for students 16 and older. A parent or guardian must give written permission for students under 16. If students under 12 are involved, extra care must be taken, especially for parental consent. Teachers must also give their written approval if an observation is done in a school with younger children.

When doing a **naturalistic observation**, the people being observed won't be able to give their consent, and explaining the study afterward might not be possible. If you tell participants they're being studied, it could change how they act. It is acceptable to observe people in public places where they would expect to be seen, like in a shopping mall, on public transportation, or on the street.

*All information collected during the observation must be kept private and not shared with others. The names and details of the participants must stay anonymous even after the observation is over.*

### *General info on class practical: observation*

The class practical on observation can be done as an individual task, but **it is strongly recommended that it is done as a group activity**. Maximum group size if five persons.

The observation must relate to the context of **human development**. You are free to choose any topic or content related this context.

Here are three examples for observation topics:

- Observations of language learning classes
- Playground observations
- Observation of group dynamic in a public setting

**Minimum sample size** for class practical on observation is *one* participant.

**Ethics in class practicals** should be followed thoroughly. See the [guide](#).

### *Planning your observation*

Consider the following before getting started with the observation:

- What behaviour do you want to observe? **Identify the behaviour** as specifically as you can.
- What is the **aim of your observation**? What do you want to study with observation? State this as clearly as possible.
- What is your **research question**? Aim for clear, focused and researchable RQ.
- What is **topic** or **content** in the context of **human development** your observation plan is connected to?

- **What kind of observation** are you about to do?
  - Are you doing an **overt observation** (the participants know you are observing them) or **covert observation** (the participants do NOT know you are observing them)?
  - Are you doing a **participant observation** (you are participating with the participants in something, you are *insiders*) or **non-participant observation** (you are NOT participating with participants in something, you are *outsiders*)?
  - Are you doing a **naturalistic observation** (in an every-day environment) or **controlled observation** (in a laboratory environment)?
- **How are you going to collect your data?** What kind of techniques or technologies are you about to use? Try to make as specific a plan as possible.
- **How are you going to follow ethical guidelines?**
  - Protection from harm?
  - Informed consent (if possible)?
  - Anonymity and confidentiality?
  - Data deletion after the observation is finished?
- What could be possible **bias** in your observation? How can you reduce the amount of bias? How can you uphold **credibility**?
- What kind of **sampling method** will you be using?
  - Snowball, self-selected or opportunity?
- **What kind of data** are you collecting with your observation?
  - Are you doing a **quantitative observation** (measurable observations) or a **qualitative observation** (descriptive observation)? Or **both**?
- How are you going to **analyse your data**?
  - Are you going to use **frequency counts** of different behaviours? Are you going to use **thematic analysis** to interpret patterns in behaviour?
- How are you going to **draw conclusions**?
  - How can you apply **reflexivity**?
  - How can you **review** and **reflect** your observation?

*InThinking tips for observation*

1. Clearly identify what behaviour or phenomenon you are studying and the specific questions you want to answer.
2. Select a location relevant to your study, such as a classroom, park, workplace, or public space.
3. Create an observation guide to record behaviours systematically. Include clear definitions of the behaviours you're observing.
4. Observe all ethical standards. Consent should be obtained, and the anonymity of the participants must be maintained.
5. Record data immediately to ensure accuracy and prevent forgetting details
6. Use frequency counts or thematic analysis to interpret patterns in behaviour.
7. Conduct a pilot observation to refine your methods before the main study. Adjust your observation guide or approach based on initial challenges or unexpected results.