Example of Field Notes 1

Taken by writing notes directly on the template and typed up afterwards.

This first example has lots of problems. Overall, it is too brief and lacks useful detail. If you conduct your first observation and the notes look like this, then it is sensible to return to the literature and schedule a meeting with your supervisor in order to discuss how you can improve. Remember that this is a skill and you won’t necessarily get it right first time!

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| **To look for:** | **What am I seeing?** | **Interesting because...** |
| Space | I am on the bus  Which bus, route? Can you be more specific? |  |
| Actors | There are lots of people and one driver. People are sitting everywhere. Everyone seems happy.  More specific with the number of people, types of people, descriptive factors. Try to be less general. |  |
| Acts | People get on and off, this is random, can’t see a pattern.  Is there any system you can see in how people get on and off? Are more people getting off at one stop than others? |  |
| Activities | People pay when they get on, but some people are confused. Why do they seem confused?  People are not talking to each other much, but two people begin talking. At what point do they begin talking? Does something trigger this?  One person is talking loudly on the phone and other people might be listening. Why do you think they are listening? Does body language, or facial expressions tell you this? |  |
| Events | It is in the morning so I think that people are probably going to work. What suggests that this might be the case?  Everyone is sort of behaving the same on the bus. This is vague, more specificity needed, what is this ‘same’ behaviour. | Maybe there are some norms? |
| Goals | Everyone is going somewhere.  More detail needed. What is the route of the bus? |  |
| Objects | People have bags, some have papers, lots of people use phones and headphones.  How are they using these? |  |
| Time | People get on and off when they ring the bell to signal they want to leave, there are specific stops, and the bus stops regularly.  Good, but any comments on how people behave when getting on and off or when pressing the bell? | Shared understanding of the rules of how the bus works. |
| Feelings | The bus is quiet, people seem relatively happy, there are no significant or extreme behaviours, people are getting on well. How can we tell they are happy?  I am comfortable on the bus, happy in my research. Good, but why in particular are you happy or comfortable? |  |

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