

Expanded Fieldnotes 4: Focus on Representation and Authorship

THE ASSIGNMENT

Make Detailed Observations at Your Research Site

Continue to make observations of people, place, space, behavior, conversation, activity, grouping, artifact use, etc. at your site. In this set of observations and expanded fieldnotes you should be actively following up on patterns you are seeing from your previous observations, ideas that are emerging as a focus of your research, and connections to your secondary source research.

Focus on Representation and Authorship

As your final set of expanded notes, this is also a good time to consider how you will go about re-presenting your research site, yourself, and the people in it. In addition to your other notes, make self-reflexive observations about your own subject-position. What do you know now that gives you a certain credibility or authority to write about this culture, community, place, or issue? How will express that in your final essay?

Here are some guidelines and questions that you can use to add considerations of representation and authorship to this last set of expanded fieldnotes:

1. How do you feel about the job you have done representing what you saw, did thought and felt? Where and how do you think you could continue to improve if you were going to continue working on this research for weeks, months or (bite our tongues) even years?
2. What have you had to actively balance and think about as you made choices to **re-present the people** at your research site and what you have come to know about the culture there. What worries you about what you are writing? Is there any aspect of describing this “culture” and creating a representation that troubles you? What do you feel most confident

The Process

1. Visit your site again and take detailed fieldnotes (at least one hour)
2. Look specifically for details that have emerged as really important focus areas for your research.
3. Write Expanded Fieldnotes 4 (word-processed, double-spaced, 3-5 pages) using your fieldnotes from the most recent visits **AND incorporate a focus on representation and authorship.**
4. In your expanded fieldnotes, be sure to use different fonts, colors, or styles as you type to **CODE/MARK** differences in your detailed observations, *your own thoughts and feelings about what you are observing*, **and any analysis you are able to assert and any connections you can make to your secondary source materials.**

about? How do you feel you can create credibility in your work as **author**?

3. How you might position yourself without taking over the personalities and lives of your informants? Do you want to include excerpts from your fieldnotes, or rewrite conversations as dialogue? Use audio or video recordings? Images? The choices you make will create a difference how you, your research, and your research site are perceived.
4. How willing are you to extend authority and authorship to those you write about. Will you share your drafts with the community you are researching? Why or why not? What are your anxieties about this process? What are your expectations?

Write Your Expanded Fieldnotes (3-5 pages)

Use your detailed observations and fieldnotes, including your notes that focus on representation and authorship to write Expanded Fieldnotes 4. Turn your rough notes into a more developed piece of writing. In your Expanded Fieldnotes, be sure to use different fonts, colors, or styles as you type to CODE/MARK differences in your detailed

observations, *your own thoughts and feelings about what you are observing*, and **any analysis you are able to assert and any connections you can make to your secondary source materials** (as detailed in Chapter 4 of *Engaging Communities*)

Don't worry if your observations, *thoughts and feelings* and **analysis** overlap a bit; that will happen. Focus on building your research data and providing as much detail and thought about your site as you can. There may be some repetition of observations from previous fieldnotes. If that happens comment on whether or you not you think it is building into a pattern and what that might mean. And remember: details, details details.

Evaluation

Expanded Fieldnotes 4 will be evaluated on the extent to which you:

- write detailed observations of your research site;
- build on the information you have already written
- include your observations of and reflections on authorship and representation at your site;
- code/mark observations, thoughts and feelings, and analysis;

- meet the minimum length requirement of 4-6 pages/1000-1500 words
- are observant, thoughtful, and insightful