

Fieldwork tips, summer 2025 Educate All project

GOALS

1. Collect **Observations**: What's happening, why?
 - Details and all sides of what people are doing, saying, thinking, feeling*
2. Start to understand: **Principles**: What matters most
 - Different (and some may be competing) principles
 - Dictionary definition: "a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning." Or "a rule or belief governing one's personal behavior"
3. Capture (but "parking lot"): **Ideas**: Dream up different who, what, when, where, hows

WHAT TO OBSERVE

1. POEMS (an acronym...)

People: The demographics, roles, behavioral traits, and quantity of people in the environment

Objects: The items the people are interacting with, including furniture, devices, machines, appliances, tools, etc.

Environments: Observations about the architecture, lighting, furniture, temperature, atmosphere, etc.

Messages (information): The tone of the language or commonly used phrases in tag lines, social/professional interactions, and/or environmental messages

Services or Systems (intangible things that help people): Services, apps, tools, and frameworks used

2. Seek what people (including you!)

DO
SAY
THINK
FEEL*

HOW TO OBSERVE

LOOK - patiently observe people and the environment

ASK - have people show, tell, draw, compare, or write you stuff

TRY - try their tasks, roleplay

WHY - ask "5 why's" to learn root causes: what people see, hear, feel*, think, experience behind what they do, use, say

Go WILD: Watch, Inquire, Listen, Do

ROLES TO ROTATE IN YOUR TEAM

- **Conversation**-leading

- **Pictures-taking**
- **Notes-taking**

TAP INTO EVERYONE'S 10+ TOOLS

HEAD: think

HEART: feel*

GUT: feel*

EYES: see

EARS: hear, listen (many ?s)

NOSE: smell

MOUTH: speak, taste

BODY: do, use, say

HANDS: do, use

WORDS: say

PICTURES: see

SPACE AND STUFF: What's around you?

HOW TO DOCUMENT YOUR LEARNING

Capture notes, images, and sketches of your observations (and any early principles or ideas) in ways that can be easily sorted and posted on your return

Jot things on a small notebook (or digital device, if appropriate) in the moment

Record audio notes afterward: On iPhone, Notes and (newer) Voice Memos app does voice to text.

Write sentences/reflections from your jottings ASAP that day (rule of thumb: don't sleep on your field notes)

*SOME FEELINGS

HAPPY: amused, courageous, content, excited, thrilled, proud, inspired, appreciated, surprised, calm, hopeful, energetic, grateful

DOWN: unappreciated, miserable, sick, hurt, lonely, small, tired, disappointed, bored, sad, ashamed, embarrassed, regretful, disconnected

WONDERING: curious, stuck, unsure, debating, confused, stumped, hoping, thinking

SCARED: anxious, worried, stressed, nervous, tense, distraught, vulnerable, threatened, insecure

CARING: kind, warm, self-loving, loving, patient, compassionate, empathetic, loved, understanding

ANGRY: furious, jealous, mad, irritated, resentful, annoyed, upset, frustrated

Credits:

- IDEO: Look, Ask, Try; Do, Say, Think, Feel; 5 Why's
- Kumar, *101 Design Methods*: POEMS
- Ela Ben-Ur and [Innovators' Compass](#): 10+ Tools, Observations, Principles, Ideas (and Experiments):
- Caitrin Lynch: TEDx talk: ["Engineers, Go WILD"](#)