



## EYPC E-Docs Observation Methodology

### Key Terms

- **Naturalistic observation** occurs when the observer collects data where a behavior naturally occurs.
- **Hawthorne effect** occurs when people modify their behavior after discovering they are being observed.

### Principles of Observational Data

- **Objective** observation occurs when the observer recognizes a behavior and reports only what was observed. Opinions and thoughts are not recorded because they are not measurable to the observer.
- **Unobtrusive** observation occurs when the observer does not change environment in which they are observing. Observers either position themselves within the location and act similarly to those they observe, or they position themselves out of sight of those being observed.
- **Ordinary behavior** occurs when the behavior matches the setting of the observation.

### General Observation Guidelines

1. Observe for 30-60 minutes.
  - You want to observe long enough so you notice patterns in behavior among a representative group of people, but if you are there too long, people may notice you are observing them.
2. This is a naturalistic observation, so you do not interact with the people whom you observe.
3. Document noteworthy, objective behaviors.
  - Use the “field notes” section to document patterns in behavior and any exceptions to these patterns.
4. Be aware of your non-verbal cues, including eye contact, body posture, and space.
  - People may recognize you are observing them if you stare while you take notes. Instead, act like you are completing a class assignment, talking with peers, or walking a pet.
5. Be respectful.
  - If you take pictures or videos that may identify people, ask if you can use the picture or video for your data collection efforts.
6. If you are surveying on business property, you may require permission to observe and take pictures or videos.