



# YPAR in School

## Making Observations



### Objective

To understand how observation assists researchers and create a plan for observations

### Activity: Observation Research Tool

#### Materials

- Handout “Observation Research Tool” for each participant
- Flip chart and markers

#### Pre-Activity

During an observation, researchers identify a set of locations that they want to observe that relate to the research questions. The research team creates a list of features to observe and decides how long they will observe at a site. After the observations are completed, the researcher will look for themes and commonalities from their collected observation data.

Have students answer the following questions in their process journals:

- What are some good locations to make observations?
- When can you do this?
- How are you going to observe? Be specific if you are going to take notes, video, audio, etc.

(continued on next page)



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## Making Observations

### Activity: Observation Research Tool, continued

#### Part 1: Make a Pros and Cons List

With students, create a pros and cons list of using observations for research. Here is an example to get you started:

<u>PROS</u>	<u>CONS</u>
You can document what you directly see which may differ from what people report about their behavior in interviews, focus groups or surveys.	You cannot typically ask any specific questions to allow participants to explain their behaviors so you may not fully understand what you see.
This is a good way to collect information about how people act or interact in a specific situation.	You may miss the whole story because people are not using their own words. People may feel uncomfortable if they realize that they are being observed.
Useful for collecting information about the environment and people interact with it.	

#### Part 2: Observation Research Tool

Pass out the Observation Research Tool. Lead a discussion on the “Skills you will practice and develop” section and the “tips for observation” section.

Next, have students get into their groups to fill out the Observation Research Tool. Notice that they will have answered some of these questions during the Pre-Activity.



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## Making Observations

### Activity: Observation Research Tool, continued

#### **Part 3: Making a Plan**

When students are finished with the first section of the Observation Research Tool, have them begin making a plan. Make sure that each student has specified the when, where, and how sections individually. They should also add their observation plans to their main planning document

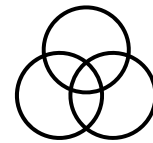


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## Observation Research Tool

### Skills You Will Practice and Develop

- Active listening skills
- Attention to detail
- Note-taking skills
- Data analysis skills



### Tips for Observations

- Before you start your observations, you should have **clear guidelines** about what you want to be looking for when you conduct your observations. For example, you may be looking for interactions between people (e.g., youth and storeowners; police and youth; students and teachers, etc) and/or you may be looking for things in the physical environment (e.g., who is hanging around; how many times students are asked for input). You may be watching something online: how many tweets are posted by someone in a set amount of time, who is posting on a certain Instagram account, etc.
- The guide may be looking for **numbers** (i.e, how many people retweet?) or **descriptions** (i.e, what type of things are people doing in the space?)
- Make sure that your notes are clear and can be read by someone other than you. Make sure that you are making notes about what you are actually seeing and not what you think is happening. Describe only the things that you can directly observe.
- With observations it is important to make sure that you do not make assumptions about what is happening and instead **document** things as you see them. You will be documenting some of your impressions, but you need to make sure that you are documenting what is really happening.
- Make sure your observations are helping you to answer your research question.



# YPAR in School

## Observation Research Tool

What are some good locations to make observations?

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- 
- 

When can you do this?

- 
- 
- 

How are you going to observe? Be specific if you are going to take notes, video, audio, etc.

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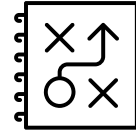


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## Observation Research Tool

Make a plan. Include:

- When you are making observations
- Where you are making observations
- How you will document these observations



<b>When:</b>	<b>Where:</b>	<b>How:</b>



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## Observation Research Tool

Research the organizations, institutions or locations that you would like to observe. Include:

- Physical location (e.g., address)
- Contact information, if necessary
- Operating hours, if applicable
- Other considerations, such as security and privacy concerns

