

Chapter 3
Topic 2 Qualitative research methods
Page 182
Activity: Research
Different types of observation

Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Identify the characteristics of different types of observation.
- Compare and contrast different types of observation.

A. In pairs, write a one-sentence definition of each of the following four types of observation. Add an imaginary example of each type:

1. Overt participant observation
2. Overt non-participant observation
3. Covert participant observation
4. Covert non-participant observation

B. In pairs, complete the grid for the different types of observation using the information below it.

	Covert	Overt
Non-participant observation		
Participant observation		

Insert the following characteristics of observational methods into the correct box or boxes on the grid. (You may use some of them more than once.)

- Favoured by interpretivists
- Favoured by positivists
- May be problems getting in, staying in and getting out
- Gains verstehen
- May be the only method available
- May cause Hawthorne effect
- Flexible
- High in validity
- Low in representativeness
- Risk of going native
- Involves deception
- Associated with symbolic interactionism
- Produces subjective data
- Could be structured