Course: Anthropology 201

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Design Ethnography Assignment 4 and 5

Steps

1 scope of problem, what interests us

2 what is known and what had been done

3 asking the good questions, variables and categories for analysis

4 interviews, video images and capturing content

5 analysis, story board 3 themes from 20 minutes of video, what to leave out

6 reflecting across cases, how do

Briefly, in steps 4 And 5 you will work with a team of between 1 and 5 people to produce a short video (3-5 min) or PowerPoint presentation summarizing a focal follow interview with some "expert user" who offers useful design information for one of the two design projects.

At this point, based on prior exercises, you should have a team, a theme, clear ideas of what elements from past projects were informative or limited, five or more interview questions, and an expert user identified.

Each group will turn in a 'story board' and a video or PowerPoint. There are two options for collecting information, **option A** is to conduct a focal follow interview with a new expert user, **option B** is to use 5 existing student made videos to summarize, highlight and demonstrate design features already identified. These are due for each group as an upload to Canvas and the linked OneDrive in 2 weeks Wed 3/14 before midnight.

Assignment 4&5 Instructions

The goal of this assignment is to teach applied cultural anthropology by supporting the design phase of these two sustainability projects with insight from an anthropological observational method called a focal follow. The two design projects are. The WWU Vehicle Research Institute (VRI) Lyn Okse—

Norwegian for “lightning ox” campus electric utility vehicle developed in collaboration with University grounds staff. This project is in the ‘styling’ phase where interior and exterior aspects of the cab are being built. The second design project is the Viking eBike program where WWU aims to increase sustainable transportation through increased use of electric bicycles https://www.facebook.com/vikingebike/. In the eBike project, the ‘design’ goes beyond the actual features of the bicycles to the community perceptions, use, access and pricing elements.

The focal follow is simply a type of participant observation where the researcher engages in an everyday activity but with a gaze focused on observing a specific person or a specific behavior with the purpose of answering a question. In this case we are focusing on the current and imagined uses of the vehicle cab for University maintenance and gardening activities, or an eBike for transportation. Based you’re your review of prior projects you should have a detailed idea of which specific design features you are interested in and some questions you can ask (or for **option B** questions that have been asked) to get users to describe their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with those design features. (Assignment 2 had a list of design feature types. The ‘focused’ part of a focal follow means that you should try and address between 1 and 3 of these features so that you can address them in enough detail to offer meaningful insights to the engineering students).

Recording Methods and Final Product

The focal follow observation will produce a 20 minute recording of the observed interactions with a vehicle. The final product will be **either** a 3-5 minute edited video or a comparable powerpoint presentation alternating still images and narrative text slides. To record the 20 minute focal follow, you may use either video (cell video is often sufficient) or a combination of still images of the vehicle use and handwritten notes on the discussion. Video recording is the easiest format but will require editing the video footage down to produce an edited 3-5 minute video identifying the highlights of the experience and for sharing with the engineering students designing the vehicle. If video editing is not possible or of interest you may capture still photos during the 20 minute observation that will be inserted into a short video or slideshow (the latter would alternate images and textual summary of narratives on alternating slides in powerpoint).

Option B: If you do not want to or cannot conduct a focal follow you may individually or in groups of up to five produce a focused compilation of prior student videos. Each member of the group must review 5 separate prior student produced videos, story board the useful design and visual elements of these videos and compile them into a new detail packed and beautifully imaged final video (or powerpoint).

Before the experience you need to have a set of ideas about what types of information to focus upon. Our goal is to imagine a vehicle, or an eBike access plan, that meets the end user’s needs better than their current vehicle through modified form and function (and access for bikes). For the vehicle we are interested in ‘styling’ at this point, design features of **the front seat area as ‘mobile office space’** or design **features that relate to backing.** Through the focal follow you will observe current use of these vehicle features by people of interest, these volunteers can be anyone who has an interesting or relevant experience with a vehicle and is willing to assist you in completing your assignment. Note that

these people are volunteers offering to help you with an assignment rather than formal research subjects.

Considerations for observational focus and drafting focus questions:

The front seat area as 'mobile office space' topic may focus on the type, volume, size and storage location and experiences with things that are used, stored or transported in the front seat of the vehicle. I call these 'tools' below but they may be radios, laptops, maps or GPS, gloves, jackets or gear, lunch totes, file folders, charging plugs, wired or wireless devices and anything else. Possible questions: Do you transport these tools each time you use the vehicle, do you wish you had height, weight or length capacity to transport other tools, or to access/store these tools more efficiently? Would modular loading allow you to load all of the tools for a particular job at one time? Do some tools need protection from rain, dirt or theft? Do you ever experience injury or strain loading tools? In response to the questions try and get an image (picture or video) of the volunteer showing you what they experience? Do you transport powered tools that could be charged or powered from the vehicle battery or motor, if so how do you currently arrange these and how would you ideally arrange the cords chargers and tools?

Backing topics: The shape of a vehicle varies in how it is compatible or incompatible with a user's size, height and ability in determining hos vehicles are backed up (reversing) in situations such as parking, entering and leaving a roadway or accessing a loading or unloading site. Possible questions: How does your vehicle performs when you drive in reverse in different contexts like driveways, across sidewalks or curbs, when staging for a delivery or when parallel parking? how and why have you experienced limitation of your vehicle when backing, can you show me? What changes to window openings or seating would offer a better experience while packing? Are there any times when the vehicle you were using had insufficient visibility, where backing led to a collision or some other undesirable outcome? What kinds of damages have occurred while backing, what do you think would have prevented this?

Work site backing topics: How are barriers such as pedestrians or other obstacles a problem when backing? Is the vehicle sufficiently visible to pedestrians and other vehicles when backing, how could we improve visibility? Would a different size or shape of vehicle allow you to park in better locations, or allow you to carry loads a shorter distance? Would a remote control joystick at the rear of the vehicle allow you to move the vehicle short distances around a worksite for loading or unloading? What size and shape of the bed is ideal for the types of loads you haul, would an extendable bed be useful for some loads, would a modular trailer system be useful for some loads?

Before your field observation select 5-8 focused questions from those you drafted in class. If you are working in a group then you should have a lot of questions, select the ones that will get the most focused detail. Print out the key questions you aim to answer and check them off as they are covered during the focal follow. If you note and write down the time of the start of the video and the time of a good response to one of the questions or the time of a good image related to one of your questions, then writing this timestamp next to the question will help you efficiently find the information for phase 2 of the project. Most recording devices will have the running time of the video, others may have the

time of day, either work. Insert unanswered question if there is a lull in conversation or down time, but don't feel limited by the questions if something new and interesting comes up.

Finish the focal follow by asking if there are any ideas they have for improving the vehicle, or in their wildest dreams what features would the vehicle have to improve the feature of interest. Thank them for their time and note that you will share the edited video with them for further feedback when complete.

Your focal questions with time stamps and notes will be turned in

10points credit for Design Ethnography Assignments 4 and 5. This could also take the form of a story board.

The story board might look something like this for each of the ~5 key questions answered by your focal follow.

Question 1: Would an extendable bed be useful for some loads?

1. Timestamp: 11:22 Image: long branch sticking out of bed Narrative: (time 11:01) " yea, sometimes we get blowdown branches this long, we can saw them or just try and make them fit"

2. Timestamp: 4:42 Image: truck bed tailgate down Narrative: (time NA) voice over "this is the current size and shape of the truck bed"

3. Timestamp: 5:02 Image: truck bed tools loaded in Narrative: (time 14:01) "we can't carry the tools back in the same load that we are hauling these larger branches"

Final product

The remaining 20 points come from producing an edited video or powerpoint presentation, condensing the 20 minute observation with video, skype recording or still images with note recordings into a 3-6 minute video presentation. The idea is that you will review the recording and note when important observations for each of your 5 most useful design feature topics occur (these are the questions you chose to focus on in phase 1). This process, can be called storyboarding, and is very similar to writing an essay but including images (well video).

Begin by organizing your 5 best questions by grouping similar ones, or creating some other logical order/sequence of the questions. Also leave out questions that were not answered/not interesting and include news ones that may have arisen. You can use these questions as on screen text at the beginning of each 1 minute section in your edited video. Next include 1-4 sections of video clips that offer about 1 minute of explanation of what you observed about the question or the feature. Select video clips showing the images that you are talking about modifying or retaining in the vehicle design or interesting narrative explanations. If you have good audio and images together in the video then that is great, if just the image you can type the narrative and overlay it on the image, record your own audio narrative summary or play with the audio track if you have those skills. End the video with some tantalizing

information, like the best suggested design feature or something tastefully humorous. The final video should not be longer than 5 minutes. Alternatively each of the five topics can be presented as a series of image and text slides in a powerpoint presentation. **Each of the 5 key points should consist of question (1 pt), image (1pt), narrative response to the question (2 points) 5x4=20pts.**

Attach the final short video and questions or story board as uploads to the Canvas assignment. Check submitted videos by downloading the submitted file to make sure that they play on standard software. Alternatively the videos could be uploaded to YouTube and a link submitted in the assignment.