



Video Observation Protocol Staff Training Manual

Prepared by:

University of Idaho

Beth Price
Janice Fletcher
Laurel Branen

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To ensure consistency, the following protocol will be followed for all video observations.

The Basic Three

Confidentiality and Ethical Behavior

Complete confidentiality must be maintained throughout this process. This includes:

1. guarding the safety and security of the tapes and Video Observation Records.
2. refraining from discussing identity or location of centers or children.
3. refraining from describing **any** circumstances or **events** that occur during data collection to non-project staff. Children may present amusing anecdotes. Keep them to yourself. Remember our research responsibility to keep confidential **all** child and staff data.

Partnering with Center Personnel

We have invited ourselves into the center facilities to conduct fairly invasive work. Be respectful of the director and the teachers as partners in our research effort. Use their expertise about their classrooms, routines, and children to benefit our data collection.

Quality Data

Loss of audio or video results in loss of data.

Introduction

This manual augments on-site training for conducting video observation as a research tool. Trainees should be familiar with the operation of the camera prior to attending the training.

This packet includes the following sections:

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Completing the Video Observation Record (VOR)

Why have a VOR?

The Video Observation Record supports the video data to help us understand the environment in which the observation takes place. The VOR documents the logistics of the center.

Complete the Video Observation Record for each observation session. Some data for the VOR may be gathered during the pre-observation phone call. You will also record data before, during, and at the end of the observation.

Before the Visit

Complete the general information for the center, director, and classroom as soon as arrangements have been made for the visit. All observations will be assigned a code and recorded on a master code sheet. At this time, obtain the center and teacher code number from the Principal Investigators.

Before the Video Observation

Designate one video researcher to complete the VOR. Document any unusual events that occurred prior to this time. List all foods and beverages that will be served during the meal. Draw the mealtime table and feeding apparatus configuration. Be sure to include any carts, microwaves, and adults involved in the mealtime. Briefly describe how the food arrives at the classroom and how the food arrives at the table (this may occur during the observation).

During the Video Observation

Record the time that the meal begins. The meal begins when the first person sits down at the table.

Complete the information regarding number of tables, children and adults involved in the mealtime. Briefly describe how bowls are replenished during the meal. Describe how utensils that become contaminated are replaced.

Make note of any data that you must delete. For example we must delete data if a child, with denied parental consent, walks in front of the camera or up to the teacher at the table you are videotaping.

Record the time that the meal ends. The meal ends one minute from the time the last person leaves the table.

After the Observation

Record any unusual events that occurred after the meal. Document any problems with the equipment during the observation (i.e.: no sound on camera #1 tape, camera #2 was not recording first 2 minutes, lost microphone on camera # 2 in the middle of recording switched to built-in small gap in sound.)

Notes

Video Observation Record

Center Name: Director Name: Address: Phone: E-mail:	Date: Videographers: Center Code: Time of Meal Begin _____ End _____
Name of Group: Teacher Code: Age range of children in months (youngest to oldest):	Accredited: Yes _____ No _____ CACFP: Yes _____ No _____ Meal observed: _____ Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Snack _____ Dinner
_____ Pre-plated _____ Self-served _____ Cafeteria _____ Buffet _____ Lunch box _____ Partial lunch box Comment:	Draw the mealtime table configuration (include all feeding apparatus such as carts, microwaves, where adults are sitting or standing and camera placement; mark an X on the table you are taping).
Food Served (include beverage):	
Describe how food arrives at the classroom. Describe how food arrives at the tables. Describe how bowls are replenished. How did the teacher replace contaminated utensils?	_____ # of tables _____ # of children at each table _____ # of adults in the room Adults present: _____ Cook _____ Teacher _____ Assistant Teacher _____ Parent _____ Other
Other: (i.e.: notes on any special or unusual events before, during, or after the meal; equipment failure or problems.)	
Data to delete:	

Video Observation Record – Sample

<p>Center Name: <i>ABC Child Care Center</i> Director Name: <i>Patricia Romero</i> Address: <i>1520 Apple Lane Anywhere, ID 88888</i> Phone: <i>555-555-5555</i> E-mail: <i>pjones@int.net</i></p>	<p>Date: <i>3/6/03</i> Videographers: <i>Thomas P. & Maria S.</i> Center Code: <i>Idaho.2</i> Time of Meal Begin <u>11:00</u> End <u>11:48</u></p>
<p>Name of Group: <i>Preschool</i> Teacher Code: <i>Idaho.2.1</i> Age range of children at the table in months (youngest to oldest): <i>37 months to 53 months</i></p>	<p>Accredited: Yes <u>X</u> No _____ _____ Half day Program <u>X</u> Full day Program</p>
<p>Type of Meal Service: _____ Pre-plated <u>X</u> Self-served _____ Cafeteria _____ Buffet _____ Lunch box _____ Partial lunch box Comment:</p>	<p>CACFP: Yes <u>X</u> No _____ Meal observed: _____ Breakfast <u>X</u> Lunch _____ Snack _____ Dinner</p>
<p>Food Served (include beverage): <i>Chicken patty</i> <i>Broccoli</i> <i>Vanilla yogurt</i> <i>Orange slices</i> <i>Wheat roll</i> <i>Non-fat milk</i></p>	<p>Draw the mealtime table configuration. (i.e. tables and chairs, carts, microwaves; indicate where adults are sitting or standing using code CH-child, T-teacher, AT-assistant teach, P-parent, C-cook, and O-other; indicate camera placement; mark an X on the drawing for the table you videotape.)</p>
<p>Describe how food arrives at the classroom. <i>Cook brings food into room on a cart.</i></p> <p>Describe how food arrives at the tables. <i>Cook, with the assistance of three children, takes food from cart and sets on tables.</i></p> <p>Describe how bowls are replenished. <i>Teachers request food items needed and cook refills from extra bowls on cart.</i></p> <p>How does the teacher replace contaminated utensils? <i>Spare items are kept on cart and contaminated items are placed in dish bin.</i></p>	<p><u>3</u> # of tables</p> <p><u>6, 6, 4</u> # of children at each table</p> <p><u>4</u> # of adults in the room</p> <p>Adults present: <u>1</u> Cook <u>1</u> Teacher <u>2</u> Assistant Teacher _____ Parent _____ Other (explain) _____</p>
<p>Other: (Special or unusual events before, during, or after the meal; equipment failure or problems.) <i>Fire drill half hour before lunch, children talking about it during meal.</i></p>	
<p>Data to delete: (Include camera counter # and a description of the image/sound to delete.) <i>Unknown male child with brown hair, wearing a yellow shirt, walks across room – DELETE: camera #1 11:42:27 – 11:43:01 and camera #2 11:42:32 – 11:43:11</i></p>	

Before Going to the Center for the Observation

Consent Forms

If we do not have a center consent form on file, ask the director to either fax or mail the form or to have a signed copy ready as soon as we arrive for taping. We are seeking 100% assurance that the consent is definite. Collect the staff consent form from the teacher you will be videotaping.

Inquire about the completion of all parental consents, if the center collected them. If you collected the consents earlier, double check to make certain no children have enrolled since you collected them. We cannot videotape in a classroom unless we have 100% return of consent forms. Once all the children in the classroom have returned a consent form, the video observation process can proceed.

Questions to Ask When Making Arrangements for the Observation

1. What time do the children begin to prepare for the meal?
2. What type of meal service is used?
3. How many children will eat at the mealtime you are observing?
4. How many teachers will eat at the mealtime you are observing?
5. How many tables will be used during the mealtime you are observing?
6. Where are teachers during mealtime?
7. Where will the teacher, who is being videotaped, sit during videotaping of the mealtime you are observing?
8. Where are electrical outlets in relation to tables?
9. What does our camera crew need to do to check-in at your center?

Pre-plan with the Teacher for Set-up

The equipment set-up will take approximately 20 minutes. Explain how long set-up will take. Talk with the classroom teacher about the schedule for mealtime and activities prior to mealtime. Ask the teachers for suggestions about the best time to set-up. They will be able to work with us to make set-up the least disruptive to their routines.

The room arrangement, placement of tables, AC outlet availability, and tripod leg span, impact camera placement. If possible, the videotaping crew should check the layout of the room well in advance of the observation session. Set-up goes faster if decisions regarding camera placement can be made ahead of time. It is important to find out where the teacher will be sitting at the table.

Preparing the Children for the Visit

Suggest to the teacher that, on the day of the video observation, she might talk with the children. She can explain the visitors, the camera and why we are in the classroom.

“Todd and Carolyn are here to see how we do breakfast/lunch/dinner. When they are working with their cameras, we’ll just go on about our meal and do what we always do.”

Notes

Before Equipment Set-up

Check In at the Center

Be sure to check in according to the visitor procedure for the center. Checking in supports the center's safety procedures and helps us create a positive working relationship with center staff.

Check in with the center director. Present the director with the educational packet for their center and thank the director for the center staff's participation in the project. Ask if the director has any questions. Explain to the director that you will be delivering an educational packet to the teacher.

Consent Forms

Collect any consent forms that were not previously gathered. Make a final check of the parental and staff consent forms from the classroom.

Check with staff regarding parental consent to videotape for any children whose parents denied permission. Make sure that child will be seated at a different table than the one videotaped. In addition, make sure that cameras are set up so that the child is not visible in the background of either camera. Make a mental note of the child's appearance. If the child enters the video area, note the place on the tape so that data can be deleted. Make sure that both videographers are aware of children without consent so they can be mindful of the child during the observation.

Children's Assent to Be Videotaped

Children have the right to agree or decline to be videotaped. Researchers are bound by ethics to respects their decisions.

The teacher in the center will be instructed to tell the children that they are being videotaped so that other people can learn about mealtimes.

The videographer will also tell this same thing to the children and teachers.

Children's assent does not take the place of parental consent forms. You must have parental consent forms for **all** children in the videotaping setting.

Three procedures will be used to ascertain assent from young children:

1. If children are older than two years, ask them if they want to participate in being taped. Tell them they can tell you to stop taping if they want you to stop.
2. Children who are younger than two years will be observed for displays of displeasure, including such behaviors as hiding their faces, frowning at the camera operator, whimpering, crying, or shaking their heads or saying "NO." If children express negative responses, the camera operator will cease photographing or recording the child.
3. If children are old enough to sign their names, use the Assent Form below, prior to taping. Collect assent forms and attach them to parental consent forms.

I agree to be videotaped at the mealtime. I can tell the camera person to stop videotaping me, if I want to.

Child Signature _____

Videographer Signature _____

Date _____

YOU MUST ABIDE BY THE CHILD'S ASSENT DECISIONS, BOTH BEFORE AND DURING VIDEOTAPING.

Unusual Events

Check with staff regarding any unusual events that may affect mealtime. Be sure to note any unusual events that occur before, during, or after the meal on the Video Observation Record. These might include:

- fire drill
- weather emergency
- severe illness (i.e. seizure, loss of consciousness, vomiting)
- substitute teachers
- non-staff guests
- teacher sitting in unusual place
- teacher leaving and another taking over
- upcoming or just completed fieldtrip or exciting event
- overcooked food
- food arriving late

Planning for Camera Placement

With the teacher, choose the table to be videotaped and determine where the teacher will be sitting during the meal.

Notes

Videotaping Equipment Set-up

Power Supply

Use AC power to eliminate the possibility of battery-caused loss of data. Since LCD screens drain batteries, using AC power will allow liberal use of LCD screens to monitor recording.

Extension cords will be required. To prevent tripping, it is essential (no exceptions) to tape the entire length of the cords directly to the floor with duct tape (leave only enough cord to maneuver camera). Plug the cord into the outlet before you connect it to the camera to guard against power surges.

In those extreme situations where AC power fails, camera batteries may be used. Make sure that they are fully charged and attached properly. When batteries must be used, LCD screens should be used **very** sparingly as they drain the battery.

Tripods

The tripods used for the observations are fluid head tripods. "Fluid head" allows for smooth movement of the camera from side to side (panning shots).

Adjust tripods to be level with the children/table. Using this eye-level position helps the videographer avoid recording subjects at an awkward viewing angle. The tripod legs may need to be spread up to 4 ½ feet to achieve eye level. Make sure that ample room is available to allow for safe movement around the tripod. Use the built-in bubble levels to make sure the tripods are level. This allows for level alignment of the tripod legs and a level platform for camera placement.

Cameras

Poor quality video or loss of video is loss of data. Use two cameras to provide visual coverage of the teacher and of as many children at the table as possible. Special attention should be given to securely attaching the cameras onto the tripods to prevent falling cameras and expensive damage to the camera. Even worse, would be a falling camera injuring a child.

Camera #1 will be positioned to record the adult sitting at the table. With this camera, use the directional microphone to record the conversations at the table. **Switch the directional microphone button to ON.**

Camera #2 will be positioned to record the rest of the table capturing as many children's faces as possible. Use the PZM microphone with this camera and place it directly on the table to record the conversations of those seated at the table. The PZM microphone must be taped to the table to prevent unnecessary movement due to bumps or curious children. Be sure to check that the table has been sanitized before final placement and taping of the PZM microphone.

Position the LCD screen or viewfinder for easy viewing during observation. If a chair is available, sit down during the observation. This will create a less intimidating presence in the classroom and make monitoring easier.

Audio

Loss of audio is loss of data. Headphones will be worn at **all times** to monitor the quality of audio data. Do not assume that once you have checked the audio it is good to go for the entire session. You never know when something may cause a change in audio quality. If audio is suddenly lost, **immediately** pull out the cord for the attached microphone so that the built-in camera microphone will receive audio. Change batteries everyday to decrease the possibility of losing PZM microphone power in the middle of an observation.

Coding

All observations will be assigned a code and recorded on a master code sheet. Use the master code for the center that you obtained from the Principal Investigators. Label the cassettes with the appropriate code, date, and camera number before inserting into cameras.

Equipment Check

Once equipment is in place and before observation recording begins, complete an equipment check on all equipment. Record a short clip, approximately one minute. Look to see if the cassette reels are turning. Use camera VCR playback and the LCD screen to check to see if the camera is recording, and to make certain the microphone is picking up quality sound (use headphones).

Notes

During Video Observation

Interaction with Subjects

During videotaping, it is important to maintain a neutral relationship with the children and staff in the classroom. If you smile at children or talk with them during taping, you open the door for interaction. Once that door is open it is very hard to close. Remember we are there to collect data not to be with the children. If children become inquisitive, tell them “I am working” and look away.

Respecting Subjects

Do not talk about the children in front of the children. Do not exchange glances, in response to subjects’ activities, with other researchers or other adults in the classroom. Refrain from overt shows of emotion, such as laughing or gasping. This can be hard. Children are sometimes amusing or unpredictable.

Videographers are bound by the signed children’s assent agreement. If a child indicates that they wish to have taping stopped, research staff must no longer video the child.

Timing of Recording

Begin recording just before subjects arrive at the table. Stop taping one minute after the last person has left the table to allow for unanticipated returns of children or staff.

Monitoring Data Quality

Monitor recording equipment throughout the observation. Wear headphones at **all times** to monitor audio recording. Check the LCD/viewfinder screen and tape reels continuously to monitor video recording.

Using the LCD screen may distract children from their normal routines. They will want to see the picture displayed on the screen. When this happens, close the screen and use the viewfinder.

While recording, do not move the tripod. If the subjects move out of camera range, use the fluid head handle to move and realign the camera.

Almost never use the zoom function. Zooming in and out can be a distraction during analysis. Useful data from a wide shot can be lost while you are zoomed in on a tight shot.

Videotaping the Children

Be aware if subjects show signs of discomfort due to the camera. If a child becomes uncomfortable, ask a teacher for help. When children do not settle into eating routines (i.e. excessive mugging to the camera), ask the teacher for help. This is rare.

Videotaping the Teacher

Sometimes the teacher leaves the table for a food-related task. Follow the teacher, panning with the camera, as far as possible without removing the camera from the tripod or moving the tripod.

Notes

Following Video Observation

Secure Data

Immediately following taping, data must be securely stored. Complete the Video Observation Record and place in a file folder in the equipment bag. Eject the MiniDV cassettes, slide the write-protect tab, and place in the camera case (a spot can be created in the foam core). Once you have returned to the office, transfer these to your locked storage box or file cabinet.

Equipment

Take down all equipment. Repack with as little disruption as possible. Remove the camera from the tripod and place it in the case immediately following taping. Be sure to use the checklist as you pack equipment so that no item is overlooked and left behind. When cords are untaped, remove any sticky residue from the floor or table using GooGone.

Check the Area

Do a thorough check of the area to make sure that **all** data, equipment, notes, or documents have been collected.

Sign Checklist

Sign the completed videotaping checklist and attach it to the Video Observation Record.

Educational Packet

Present the educational packet to the teacher and thank the teacher for their participation in the project.

Check Out of the Center

Be sure to check out according to the visitor procedure for the center. Be sure to say good-bye to the director.

Notes

Video Observation Checklist

Teacher Code: _____

Before Going to Center for the Observation:

- Center Consent
- Parental consent – 100%
- Pick up staff consent form
- Pre-plan equipment set-up
- Visitor Procedure
- Complete sections of VOR

Before Observation Set-up:

- Check into center
- Meet with center director
- Deliver center educational packet
- Pick up parental consent forms
- Pick up staff consent form
- Talk with staff about children with denied parental consent to video/audio
- Note on VOR any children without consent (not names but brief description of appearance)
- Inform both videographers of children without consent
- Check with staff about any unusual events that may affect meal; note on VOR
- Confirm camera placement and where teacher will be during meal

Videotaping Equipment Set-up:

- AC power – tape all cords directly to the floor
- or**
- Camera Batteries – use LCD screen very sparingly
- Tripod – adjusted to be level with children/table
- Camera #1
 - Position to record adult sitting at the table
 - Directional microphone (switch microphone **ON**)
- Camera #2
 - Position to record the whole table
 - Fresh batteries in PZM microphone
 - PZM microphone taped to table

- Headphones – connect headphones to cameras
- Tapes – date and label

One Minute Equipment Test:

- Camera running smoothly and recording
- Microphone picking up quality sound (use headphones to check)
- Cassette recording

During Video Observation:

- Begin recording just before subjects arrive at the table
- Wear headphones at **all times** to monitor audio recording
- Check viewfinder/LCD screen **often** to monitor video recording
- Complete VOR for observation session
- Stop taping 1 minute after the last person has left the table

Video Observation Checklist

Following Video Observation:

- Secure VOR in a folder in the equipment bag
- Eject tapes, slide write-protect tab, and secure in camera case

Break Down Equipment

Headphones

- Headphone #1
- Headphone #2

Microphones

- PZM #1
- PZM #2
- PZM adapter cable #1
- PZM adapter cable #2
- Directional #1 (switch microphone **OFF**)
- Directional #2 (switch microphone **OFF**)

Cameras

- Camera #1
- Camera #2

Tripods

- Tripod #1
- Tripod #2

Cords

- 25 Foot #1
- 25 Foot #2
- 15 Foot #1
- 15 Foot #2
- Remove sticky residue

- Check that all data, notes, etc. have been picked up
- Complete and sign checklist
- Check out of center

Comments:

Signature _____

Date _____