

DANCE ETHNOGRAPHY – PROCESS ASSIGNMENT
DANCE 301 – BALL STATE
FALL 2014

A community of practice is an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement in some common endeavor. Ways of doing things, ways of talking, beliefs, values, power relations - in short, practices - emerge in the course of their joint activity around that endeavor. A community of practice is different as a social construct from the traditional notion of community, primarily because it is defined simultaneously by its membership and by the practice in which that membership engages. And this practice involves the construction of a shared orientation to the world around them - a tacit definition of themselves in relation to each other, and in relation to other communities of practice. The individual constructs an identity - a sense of place in the social world - through participation in a variety of communities of practice, and in forms of participation in each of those communities. And key to this entire process of construction is stylistic practice.

This definition of a “community of practice,” is from a website by Penelope Eckert, a Stanford Professor of Linguistics. This semester we will be undertaking an ethnography of a community of bodily practice, examining a group of people who move together and assessing how their bodies behave, what they give each other, and what they gain from participation in this community. This project will be broken into 6 steps, each due throughout the semester:

1. Research Proposal – Sep 3
2. Pre-observation + Group Work Schedule + Methodology – Sep 17
3. Source Portfolio – Oct 1
4. Field Notes – Oct 15
5. Write up of Field Notes – Oct 29
6. Research Conclusions – Nov 12

1. Research Proposal

Your Research Proposal will include one paragraph describing in detail the community of practice you will be studying, one paragraph on why this community is attractive to you, one paragraph that discusses your anticipated findings, and a lists of 5 research questions that will focus your research as you go. A research question might begin I am wondering...I want to discoverWhy does....What is....How can...

- 5 pts Description of Community
- 5 pts Why you are interested in group
- 5 pts Anticipated findings
- 5 pts Research Questions
- 5 pts Proposal in Class

2. Pre-Observation and Research Schedule

You will begin your research by spending 1 hour scoping your field site and gathering the information needed to conduct your research. This section of the assignment will include your contact person within the group, the time, date and place you plan to carry out your 12 hours of observational research, a list of possible interview subjects with 10 interview questions, and a list of 5-10 research goals and methods that you plan to employ in your ethnography. Examples might include, I want to dance as a student in a Zumba class and compare that with the experience of teaching. Or I want to determine how men and women use the gym differently so I will track one man and one woman each over four trips to the gym. Or I will spend time at the club hanging out and filming people dancing with their permission.

5 pts 1 hour pre-observation

5 pts Specific Observation Schedule and Contact Person (with address, phone number, email etc)

5 pts List of interviewees and questions

5 pts List of 5-10 research goals and methods

5 pts Proposal in Class

3. Source Portfolio

A portfolio of four peer-reviewed articles or books that you and your research partner have identified and perused in anticipation of your field-work in a community of practice. Working with a librarian you will identify four sources that in some way illuminate your community of practice and frame your research. For each source you will answer the following seven questions.

a. WHO wrote this article (or authored/ created this source, if it is not text)? Is there any information available about the author? What do you know or guess about his or her perspective? (Don't be afraid to Google an author's name to find out more.)

b. WHERE was this source published? (What magazine or journal or newspaper or online format)? As far as you can tell, did the source go through a process of being peer-reviewed?

c. WHEN was this source published? If it is not particularly current, why do you feel it is still relevant?

d. WHAT is this article (or other kind of source) about? Summarize what the text says IN YOUR OWN WORDS. Note: This should take you at least a paragraph or two. Please DO NOT copy the abstract or paragraphs from the source; rather, "translate" the source into your own words so that you have ownership of the

material. This is practice for being about to speak knowledgeably from your own perspective at your poster session.

e. WHY did you decide to use this article? Explain why you chose this source to help you answer your research question. (What, specifically, do you want to find out? How does this source help you?)

f. For each source, choose at least one "GOLDEN LINE"-- an interesting or important quotation from the text.

g. MLA CITATION for each source.

5 pts Each Question answered for first article

5 pts Each Question answered for second article

5 pts Each Question answered for third article

5 pts Each Question answered for fourth article

5 pts Assignment in Class

4. Field Notes

Your field notes are the cornerstone of this process and include all observations made and considered during your twelve hours of field observation. These notes must be typed, and VERY detailed. Include the date, the place and time of the observation as well as all people interviewed, all questions asked, all answers, all observations made, and all analysis and reflection done. After each observation section, students should have written at least one full page of reflections, thoughts and conclusions about their field observations. For this first sharing your field notes can be very raw.

5 pts Twelve hours of observation

5 pts Detailed notes from each observation including observations and analysis

5 pts One clear page of reflection after each field session

5 pts Organization of thoughts and materials

5 pts Assignment in Class

5. Write up of Field Notes

This formal write up of your field notes will be at least 2 double spaced pages. It will use our techniques for observing and writing about dance to vividly to paint a picture of the community of practice that you are studying. Grammar and spelling will count.

5 pts Minimum 2 page write up

5 pts Vividness of description

5 pts Clarity of thought and expression

5 pts Spelling and Grammar

5 pts Assignment in Class

6. Research Conclusions

This formal write up of the findings from your ethnographic research will be at least 1 page in length. It will use your framing research, your field note write-ups, and knowledge gained in class to draw conclusions about the community of practice you were studying. It will have a clear thesis statement with supporting evidence from your field notes and framing research. Spelling and grammar counts, do not forget to cite all sources including personal interviews.

5 pts Minimum of one page

5 pts Strong, clear, thesis

5 pts Use of evidence to support thesis

5 pts Clarity of expression, spelling and grammar

5 pts Assignment in Class