

RMES Observations and Interviews in El Campo

The purpose of these assignments is to practice qualitative research methods in the field. To this end, you will collect information in rural Nicaragua via: observation and interviewing.

Observations using the D.I.E. method (RMES)

You should make *daily* journal entries while in the campo. Each of your entries should follow the D.I.E. method. Remember, the idea is to practice making detailed field observations, which will help you prepare for your ISP. For each entry please note your location(s), date, and time of day for every observation entry.

- *Describe:* During the first couple of days in the campo choose a location from which you can make culturally acceptable observations. Focus on what you think are indicators of Nicaragua's rural culture—gender patterns/machismo, agricultural practices, lifestyle, family, conditions of life, etc. Do not focus exclusively on objects (architecture, goods, etc.), but rather on how people are interacting with these indicators. Note as much detail as possible. Who is doing what? Where? For how long? Is there a relationship between the activity and location? For example, if you are observing food preparation or working in the field, take note of who does what. How do people interact? Try to observe both what is present and what is not. Sometimes the absence of something is noteworthy. For example, how many men do you see working in the kitchen? How many women do you see planting crops?
- *Interpret:* After you've done with your observations, write up your "interpretation," which should include not just "what" and "how" things are done, but "why" things are done. Try to remain neutral in this portion of your journal entry. Draw connections between observations and make an attempt to explain the function behind your observations.
- *Evaluate:* Finally, after you describe what you see and interpret your observations, you should reserve some space in your journal to evaluate your thoughts on what you have seen. This is where you should let your gut reactions bleed through. How do you feel about what you've seen?

Interview using StoryCorps (RMES):

During the last couple of days in *el campo* you should conduct an interview or *entrevista* with someone about different forms of "literacy." For this assignment, you should use the StoryCorps app to record your interview, so that upon your return to Managua you can make a short podcast. You will work on your interview script with your Spanish professors in the days leading up to the campo experience. For your interview please focus on any theme related to different forms of literacy including:

- The National Literacy Crusade
- Agricultural literacies
- Technological literacies in the countryside
- Financial literacies
- Digital illiteracies related to lack of access to technology

In addition to editing a short podcast, you should transcribe your interview. Be sure to include the full name and age of your interviewee, as well as the time, place and subject of your interview. Please turn in both your podcast and transcription via Moodle.