



## Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

By Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, Linda L. Shaw

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In *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw present a series of guidelines, suggestions, and practical advice for creating useful fieldnotes in a variety of settings, demystifying a process that is often assumed to be intuitive and impossible to teach. Using actual unfinished notes as examples, the authors illustrate options for composing, reviewing, and working fieldnotes into finished texts. They discuss different organizational and descriptive strategies and show how transforming direct observations into vivid descriptions results not simply from good memory but from learning to envision scenes as written. A good ethnographer, they demonstrate, must learn to remember dialogue and movement like an actor, to see colors and shapes like a painter, and to sense moods and rhythms like a poet.

This new edition reflects the extensive feedback the authors have received from students and instructors since the first edition was published in 1995. As a result, they have updated the race, class, and gender section, created new sections on coding programs and revising first drafts, and provided new examples of working notes. An essential tool for budding social scientists, the second edition of *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* will be invaluable for a new generation of researchers entering the field.

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#### Review

"Ideal for the novice field researcher trying to muddle through the messy job of recording experiences." (Harvard Educational Review, on the first edition) "I find [this book] pervaded with such ontarget common sense about the ethnographic enterprise, and in particular with strategies to introduce this method to new recruits, that I recommend it highly to all who teach fieldwork." (Contemporary Sociology) "There is a tremendous amount of good advice for anthropological ethnographers in this book." (American Anthropologist) "A wonderfully instructive and useful piece of work. It will prove to be of considerable assistance as a text in both graduate- and undergraduate-level courses." (Journal of Contemporary Ethnography)"

#### About the Author

**Robert M. Emerson** is professor emeritus in the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the author of *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations*, now in its second edition. **Rachel I. Fretz** is a lecturer in the Writing Programs unit at UCLA. **Linda L. Shaw** is professor in and chair of the sociology department at California State University, San Marcos.

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