Purpose: Capture and analyze data from ethnographic research

Steps:

1. Conduct your ethnographic research. You may want to use the AEIOU categories to help you observe or interview. You can also take the form with you into the field and fill it out as you are doing the observation.

2. Review all the data from the research (written notes, videos, etc.) and start characterizing the information in the following categories. Here you are working from the global level, combining the data from all your observations.

   Activities: what goals do those you are observing want to accomplish? Example: listening to music in the morning, drinking coffee, dancing...

   Environment: what do you see around the people you interview or observe? Example: in their home, work, train, friend’s house, coffee shop

   Interactions: what interactions do you observe between the people you interview or observe and other people, animals, objects, etc? Example: students getting coffee at Starbucks, student making coffee at home with the coffee maker

   Objects: what objects do you around see the people you observe or interview? Example: iPhone, coffee maker, ballet shoes

   Users: who did you observe or interview? Example of users: student, secretary, ballet teacher, Starbucks employee

“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.”

- Henry David Thoreau

An example of an AEIOU chart filled in during field work.

Source: Point Forward
AEIOU (con’t)

3. Supplement observations with photos or video tapes.
4. Review AEIOU data to indentify needs and create insights.

**Outcome:** Data organized in the five categories.

**Variations:**

Here are a few other variations on ways to observe and analyze customer and user needs data:

![Spradley's 9 Dimensions Table](http://palojono.blogspot.com/2007/07/recording-ethnographic-observations.html)

“We realized that these are tools that we can artfully use to advance our thinking. If our quest is to see what we couldn’t see before, then these tools will be helpful. But they are not the stopping point -- just the starting point.”

- Clark Kellogg