

The Energy Vulnerability Lab - Participant Observation Exercise

Participant observation is traditionally conducted in communities of people, i.e. work settings, public spaces, households, schools, etc. In the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS), we also conduct participant observation of materials, infrastructures, and spaces. Because we study assemblages...

If you do not have access to your heating systems, for whatever reason, you can reach out to a friend or family member, etc. who does have access to their heating system (and is OK visiting their basement!) Walk them through these questions, like an interview, and see if you can collaborate on the participant observation.

The respondent's home is a three storied independent house in Philadelphia, PA, USA

- Respondent Name
Mona
- Identify your heating system
Gas heating
- Where is it located?
First floor closet, next to the kitchen
- What is nearby?
Kitchen
- Can you get close enough to it to touch it?
Yes
- Do all members of the household/building have access to it?
Yes
- Does at least one member of the household know how to operate it?
Yes, respondent's husband, George
- How old is the heating system?
At least 14 years
- What are its components? (pipes, radiators, water, vents, dials, etc.) Get detailed
Ducts, vent, furnace and the Thermostat

- Does the heating system look like it's in good condition? How can you tell?
Yes, because it's working and keeps the house warm when required
- What would you look for to see if the heating system is broken or malfunctioning?
Whether the furnace is working or not. If the connection between the thermostat and furnace is working is not. Whether the ignitor of the furnace is working when thermostat is turned up
- Do you have access to the thermostat?
Yes
- Where is it located?
Living room
- How old is your thermostat?
Two years old, brand is Ecobee
- Does it employ current technology?
Yes
- Do you think the connection between your thermostat & heater is a good one?
Explain
Yes, Connection between thermostat and heater is good coz when the thermostat is lowered or raised the heating or cooling comes on immediately

Survey response collected by Lopamudra Bhattacharyya