



Observing Where the Rubber Meets the Road

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What are Mystery Shopping and Ride-Alongs?

- Observational Data Collection Methods
- Type of Qualitative Inquiry



When are Observational Methods Most Useful?

- Retail Products
- Mid-stream incentive
- Examples:
 - Energy Trust of Oregon Products Program
 - Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance Consumer Electronics Television Initiative



What are the 'Best Practices' for Direct Observation Methods?

- Decide sampling strategy: purposive vs. representative sample
- Standardized but flexible guide
- Observer Training



Why use observational methods in evaluations?

- Discrepancies in implementation
→ Unanticipated findings



Why use observational methods in evaluations?

- Program design breakdowns
 - Actionable recommendations



Why use observational methods in evaluations?

- Unique perspective
 - Alternative to other methods



Conclusions

- ✓ Direct observations add value but are underutilized in process evaluations
- ✓ Useful in mid-stream evaluations
- ✓ Having a sound methodology will improve results

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Thank You!

Questions?

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