Section 4

So what I'm going to talk about to you today is something called Ethnography. This is a type of research (1) ……..…….……. It was first developed for use in anthropology, and it's also been used in sociology and communication studies. So what's it got to do with business, you may ask. Well, businesses are finding that ethnography can offer them (2) ……..……, either present or future, as well as providing valuable information about their attitudes towards existing products. And ethnography can also help companies to design new products or services that customers really want.

Let's look at some examples of how ethnographic research works in business. One team of researchers did a (3) ……..……. They watched how cooks used measuring cups to measure out things like sugar and flour. They saw that the cooks had to check and recheck the contents, because although the measuring cups had numbers inside them. A cook couldn't see these casily. So a new design of cup was developed to overcome this problem, and it was a top seller.

(4) ……..…….……how cell phones were used in Uganda, in Africa. They found that people who didn't have their own phones pay to use the phones of local entrepreneurs. Because these (5) ……..……., they were eager to know how much time they'd spent on the call so far. So the phone company designed phones for use globally with this added feature.

Ethnographic research has also been carried out in computer companies. In one company, IT systems administrators were observed for several weeks. It was found that a large amount of their work involved (6) ……..……., but that they didn't have a standard way of exchanging information from spreadsheets and so on. So the team (7) ……..…… that would help them to do this.

In another piece of research, a team observed and talked to nurses working in hospitals.

This led to the recognition that the nurses needed to (8) ……..…… , no matter where they were. This led to the development of a portable computer tablet that allowed the nurses to check records in locations throughout the hospital.

Occasionally, research can be done even in environments where the researchers can't be present. For example, in one project done for an airline, respondents used their smartphones to record information during airline trips in a study aiming at (9) ……..……

So what makes studies like these different from ordinary research? Let's look at some of the general principles behind ethnographic research in business. First of all, the researcher has to be completely open-minded, he or she hasn't thought up a hypothesis to be tested, as is the case in other types of research, Instead, they wait for the participants in the research to inform them as far as choosing the participants themselves is concerned, that's not really all that different from ordinary research-the criteria according to which the participants are chosen may be something

(10) ……..……..……, or the researchers may select them according to the income or they might try to find set of people who all use a particular product, for example. But it's absolutely (11) ……..…….. As well as the criteria I've mentioned, they have to be comfortable talking about themselves and being watched as they go about their activities. Actually, most researchers say that people open up pretty easily, maybe because they're often in their own home or workplace.

So what makes this type of research special is that it's not just a matter of sending a questionnaire to the participants, instead the research is (12) ……..…..…… of what they are doing at the time. But that doesn't mean that the researcher never talks to the participants. However, unlike in traditional research, in this case it's the participant rather than the researchers who decides what direction the interview will

follow. This means that (13) ……..……..……his or her own ideas on the participant.

But after they've said goodbye to their participants and got back to their office, the researchers' work isn't finished. Most researchers estimate that 70 to 80 percent of their time is spent not on the collecting of data but on its analysis - looking at photos, listening to recordings and transcribing them, and so on. The researchers may (14) ……..……. And to determine what's significant, they don't (15) ……..……., instead they try to identify a pattern of some sort in all this data, and to discern the meaning behind it. This can result in some (16)…….. the whole design process.