Master's Series on Field Research

A series of interviews with major figures in field research conducted in the early 1980s
by Peter Blanck

Transcript of an interview with George Lombard

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Peter Blanck: We're with George Lombard today on 2/11/82. And why don't we just start with, maybe, some of your thoughts and your first associations with the Business School, some of the people who made an early impact on your career?

George Lombard: Well, after I graduated from the school in 1935, I was away for a year, and then Dean Dunham offered me such an amazingly interesting job I couldn't say 'no'. So I came back and started in the Dean's office, and the work I did at that time was as the Assistant Dean for the placement of the graduating class. It had been held by a man who had held the job two years, and for me to pick it up completely inexperienced was a very important challenge. And I did that for two or three years, and then the school had an opportunity for a field study at General Motors. And one of the people who been working quite closely with me in the placement work had moved over into the faculty side of the school, rather than the administration. And he said he'd found working with me - I listened fairly well, and he thought that might be an indication that I could do field work of the kind that we wanted to do on the General Motors study. That was John Fox who suggested that. He'd been working, while he was in the Dean's office, with Elton Mayo, and Fritz Rothlesberger, in counseling students. This opportunity with General Motors came up just at the beginning of the placement season early in January, and the powers that be at the school decided that I was more easily replaceable in the placement office, and they let me out of that work. And we went to New York for most of six months, interviewing General Motors's executives in questions of compensation. And that was the beginning of my work in the area - I really became the one which I was professionally interested.

We started there with interviews, as I've already said; although I think I intended today to speak a little more about observing in a work group rather than with executives. The study at General Motors was a really interesting one. We worked in four different divisions of the company in New York--around New York--and made a report to Mr. Sloane and other top executives in the company. Then we were going to Detroit and interview some of the main line divisions of the company. And Mr. Newtson wouldn't have any of it. We got thrown out on our ear. And that was a very good experience, but because of that, and because of the sensitivity of the company at that time, nothing out of that was ever written up or published.

Soon after that, we were asked to do a study at Macy's, and we spent another six months on that study. I worked for six months in Little Girl's Dresses, and I turned out to be a very good observer there, because nobody expected a, a young man to be able to answer questions about children's clothes, and so I could do my observing uninterrupted by customers' questions, and our customers didn't get mad at finding somebody in the, in the department who didn't know answers to their, their questions. And that's where I really began to learn, I think, more about field work. And after that, went along to other situations.

Peter Blanck: Were you involved--?

George Lombard: But that was sort of the kind of experience that I think I was more inclined to talk about - in the kind of setting of, I was thinking talk about today.

Peter Blanck: Were you involved in the beginning - well, in '35, the Hawthorne Studies were well on the way, I guess.

George Lombard: They were through.

Peter Blanck: They were through?

George Lombard: The book wasn't published until 1939 - The Management and the Worker - but....

Peter Blanck: Did you have any impact on that?

George Lombard: It was the - all of the fieldwork experiments at Hawthorne were finished in 1932 or '33. It stopped on account of the Depression. Then there were three years while the book was being written, and then it was submitted to the company. And it took 3 years to get it released for publication, so it didn't come out until after I was involved in the work, and I, I didn't visit Hawthorne. I didn't get to know many of the counselors out there, but I was never - I was not engaged directly in any of the so-called "Hawthorne experiments".

Peter Blanck: What were your, staying with that period a little bit, perceptions of Mayo, Rothlesberger, and Dickson at that time as field researchers, and as researchers....

George Lombard: Of course, I worked with them during most of those, during most of the two experiences I've spoken of - General Motors and Macy's. I was working directly with Fritz, and I spent many years working with him. I did a lot with Mayo, too, but Fritz was a very patient supervisor and trainer, and very thoughtful in the way he went about it - all these kinds of things. I think I'd like to distinguish the kind of setting we were working in from the field work that a case writer does for the typical business school - a class, or course. And I'd also like to distinguish a little bit from the field work that a person from one of the disciplines is apt to do if he has developed an instrument of some kind that he wants to test or use, such as a survey. These were questions that we took a lot of time on in the early years. And I think the methods that we were developing were - had a different kind of an aim in mind than if you wanted to go out just get a case for teaching purposes in an area, say, like - control provides the clearest example. The case writer can often get a case by looking at an annual report of the company, and excerpting certain pages or certain tables from it. He may visit the company to get the story finalized - that particular use of the reporting procedures. But one trip may do it, plus another trip, for the release of the case. In the setting at General Motors or in Macy's we were concerned with what we referred to in those days as "human problems", what we now call "organizational problems", where there are people engaged in them. You didn't go around and ask executives of the company, "What human problems do you have in your company?" They'd clam up fast and we had to develop a relationship with the company and talk over with many people the kinds of things that we were interested in trying to develop. Also, we felt what was important for us to get an understanding of was the experience of being in the company. We didn't feel at that time that we knew what that experience was like, and we didn't have one thing in mind, one dimension in mind, that we thought - around which we thought we could develop questions, and then use that to get the data for our analysis or diagnosis of the situation, and for recommendations that we might eventually make. We wanted to get at the questions that were important to the people working in the organization. How do you do that? All of our methods of interviewing, and of observing were to try to get the question coming up from the point of view of a people we didn't know, of a situation we didn't know, and for leading on to some kind of an action which we didn't know around which topic it was going to be. And that was a difficult thing to explain to people, because they expected professors to know things, and have answers and have clear ways of going about things.

Let me illustrate from the study of the sales, the sales girls at Macy's. When we first went in there, one of the things that we're first tried to find out about quite early on was the payment system, and the payment system in the department where I was working in Little Girls' Dresses was designed to encourage sales girls to move all over the department to go where the customers were to give prompt service. You didn't have to be on the selling floor for an hour to see that that didn't happen. The sales girls tended to stay in one place. Now there were one or two who didn't seem to move around. But right away, as soon as we saw something that was different from the way the executives said it was going to be, then there was a lead into something that looked to us to be interesting to try to understand it and try to develop it. So that began to guide what we were looking for, what we were doing, what kind of questions we are asking. Now, towards the end of the study, we wanted to get some systematic data about this, and it occurred to us that the question around which to try to develop systematic data about where the sales girls felt at home, where they felt they belonged in terms of these specific counters was to ask them where they left their handbags when they come in the morning. And by that time, we had enough trust developed with them so that we could ask them that question. If we'd gone in there early on and said, "Where do you keep your purse?", we would have been - again - we would have been thrown out, very quickly. There was a lot of theft around the store at one time or another and we would have been labeled with that rap right away. And we found, though, that indication - a very good one indeed - of where the sales girls spent their time. And, indeed, it turned out just as good a record as the sort of account of interactions that we kept when we were looking there. But we never had any - we didn't have prepared ahead of time the kinds of questions that we would ask other than to try to get them to tell us about their experiences and their sensations, their likes and dislikes, their attitudes towards their work, and so on. That contrasts with the methods that are used by people who do have surveys, or who have decided, you know, like they have that the achievement need is the important need to explore. We didn't have a tool, an instrument, of that kind, that took us in. So we had a fairly long introductory period, usually getting to know people, trying to understand what was going on. Now, I'm talking too much here, and not letting you make some, some....

Peter Blanck: That's all right.

George Lombard: But this leads to a lot of things that I want to get into.

Peter Blanck: You must have some general notions of what you were looking for before you went in or how would you have selected Macy's as opposed to - I mean, was it simply a question of access where you could get in or...?

George Lombard: Yes, if you're going to spend that much time in a place being able to get in, being able to go in, being able to spend this time where you're wanted becomes very important. This particular opportunity developed through a series of weekend discussion groups that were held here at this school under Philip Cabot, who was a professor at the school. These got to be a very famous set of meetings that were held for two or three years late in the '30s. And they were used as one way of getting the word about the Hawthorne Experiments out. Although there were many other subjects covered at these meetings, Mayo and Rothlesberger and Whitehead and the people from the Western Electric Company had more exposure than any other group. There's a group about forty to fifty people who were the second and third in commands at major companies around the country put together by John Baker, who later became President of Ohio University of Athens, Ohio, and was the forerunner of these discussion groups, the forerunner of the advanced management program at the business school. It was the first program to which companies sent executives on a continuing basis and found it very worthwhile to do so. Macy's was one of the companies recommended there. I guess without mentioning the man's name, I can say that it's an example of the kinds of things, unexpected things you can get into.

Peter Blanck: I just want to ask one question before we get to that - and that is trying to just crystallize this pre-World War II period. It really sounds like, from all of the people I've talked to, a period of just intense exploration and observation, without many already thought out, specific.... Does that sound like...?

George Lombard: We spent hours trying to talk about this and trying to make sense of what we were doing. I think the way I would put this now, and indeed, the way we talked about it then is - the word that was, in terms of theory, that was very important to us was "conceptual scheme". We had ideas that would guide our field work and I would contrast those with theories of explanation. And we were not trying to explain things at this time, and we didn't have ideas that would generate hypotheses. We were trying to ask the right questions and we had a conceptual scheme to help in observing and in interviewing, and in asking questions to get at what was important to the people in the situation there.

Peter Blanck: Did Lewin have any influence here at that time?

George Lombard: No, not at that time. I can talk about a little about that, but that was later.

Peter Blanck: Later?

George Lombard: What we were concerned with at that time - we thought these ideas that we had - Fritz was the main person, of all of us I think he felt the - here we have the tools of the observing and interviewing to get at what was important to the people in these situations, and what we needed to develop was a situation, questions around which these methods could be useful, and of use in business situations in business organizations. When war came along, there were a number of more applied questions, where we thought these could, these methods would be useful. One was around the training of supervisors, and we put a lot of time in studying the problems of supervisors in rapidly developing companies. And we wrote a whole, I mean Gordon Bowdon, who was just retired from the telephone company, did his thesis, which I think was the first thesis in Sociology that was done under the supervision of somebody at the business school. It was the first joint undertaking of that kind. He worked at a cable company over here in Cambridge, and we developed out of that some very interesting, and some teaching cases that were used for a long period of time. And then there were studies on absenteeism and labor turnover that Mayo worked on, and I helped a bit with. Now, those again were examples of field work in that we went into the field to get the data. They were much more focused than the kind of thing I've been speaking about because we were initially charged with trying to find out what was important in a particular department. The question of absenteeism led into that quite rapidly because you'd find contrary to the way that people watch them, would talk about this horrible problem of absenteeism with an average figure that was very high. You'd find that there were situations where nobody was ever absent, of people who would get up at three o'clock in the morning to come to work in a snowstorm of the kind that we had just the other day. And then you'd find departments, of course, where absenteeism was very high. So you'd get out on the floor and take a look to see what was making the difference in those kinds of situations, what was leading to such different kinds of experiences. You'd like people to find out about them, but that was considerably more focused than the way in which I was speaking at first about field work, to get at the problem of the work from the point of view of the people there.

Peter Blanck: Up to this point, what were the types of skills - as we are moving forward - the types of skills that you were developing, types of interpersonal skills that helped you to be more effective in the field?

George Lombard: Well....

Peter Blanck: What were there stages that you went through?

George Lombard: What I'm thinking about in answering that question is, again, it leads into a question we talked about a lot. We never did come out with a set of very satisfactory list of skills. Fritz' chapters in *The Elusive Phenomenon* on skill is quite illustrative of what we were trying to do, I think. We thought of skill as a unitary thing, a behavioral thing, and not as something that you can break down into a checklist of different parts. And there, I suppose it was, in that sense, the skill of interviewing, of being sensitive and responsive to the problems and feelings and attitudes that people had. When Roger's books were published, we latched on to them fast. And those methods made a lot of difference to us. And the chapter, what is it, Chapter 10, "Management and the Worker", which is on interviewing, which is a much more intellectual statement. We didn't use that as much after Roger's very simple way was put up about these things. On observing, we drew on Malinowski, I guess, more than anybody else. I think he's quite unpopular these days. Maybe he's come back a little bit. But he was so tied up to work was done during a period of colonialism, which accepted the mode for relations between industrialized countries and the non-industrialized countries, and, of course, that's all going out, and his work is going out too. But at one time, I could almost recite whatever it is in Chapter 1 of the introduction in Haganazur's *Western Pacific* by heart, and I still think it is one of the great pieces of writing in the social sciences. But the experience wasn't too difficult or different landing those selling counters and showcases of Little Girls' Dresses, from landing on the island where the natives have their own customs, and where you've got to begin to observe them, and to take account the interactions with them, and the feelings, too, that they express. So, we used that as the background of the work we're doing in developing the skills of observation. But I'm not very good at giving a minute list of skills. It was this holistic quality of these things as they resulted in people's behavior that was the thing we were trying to develop. What I've always thought of as a very sensitive example was the one that we talked about at the hospital the other day when we first met. We found the hospital and like the place to interview because it's an open environment. They expect a lot of strange people - nuts, if you want - to be wandering around and an extra person doesn't make a difference. It's very easily accepted. One of the wards where Fran Fuller, who was the observer, was working had an elderly Polish woman in it as a patient. And in connection with some problems, she had to take a biopsy of her. She was obviously quite nervous about having this done, and Fran offered to hold her hand while a biopsy was being taken. She welcomed that. Well, now, was that an instance of sensitive behavior, for a researcher given the kind of setting? The objective question was how the doctors would handle the patient's nervousness given the situation. When Fran held her hand, that anxiety on the patient's part was relieved, and the doctor didn't handle it. And we discussed this quite a bit on staff meetings, on whether this was really a good instance of what the researcher ought to do, how he or she ought to handle himself in a field situation. What happened was that the patient and Fran began to develop a relationship at that point, and the Polish culture opened up to us. We were at Floran Znaniecki's *Polish Peasant* two or three or four volumes - I've forgotten how many there are. Some very fascinating thing has turned out in the Polish culture - being stuck with a knife is something you do to a pig, and a pig is apt to be an unclean animal. Holding hands is something you do as a friend. It's an act of friendship, and there are some very expressive different kinds of gestures with the hands in cultures of this, of this kind. Well, the fact that Fran had done this with the patient, had held her hands under the circumstances, really was where we began to understand the sensations of the patient in that hospital, it became a very - it became the thing that that really made the whole research go.

Another kind of an example that came up many years later that we didn't quite know just how to handle was when the company that we were doing an extensive field research on during the summer planned a moonlight cruise down the harbor, and we were asked to go on it, and of course, it was a wonderful time to make observations. And so, sure, we went, but that raises some questions of behavior. What to do after you get out on the cruise? How much you participate? How much do you not? So, that training that we had organized for our field workers had to take account of this wide range of kinds of problems which they had to handle, and develop in their own behavior to be able to respond sensibly and sensitively to a wide range of people, often from different cultures from their own, and at the same time still get research data. I've kind of wandered around a lot....

Peter Blanck: Did you know Bill White at the time? He was....

George Lombard: No, Bill was through here before I was really signed....

Peter Blanck: When was he actually doing his wandering around the North End? Was that in the late '30s?

George Lombard: No, it was the middle 30's, early to middle 30's, I think.

Peter Blanck: How was that book received? You must have read that as an example of intensive....

George Lombard: Yes, well, he didn't publish his account of the field work until the second edition of the book. That long appendix came in several years later. That's a good, good account. We never, we should have done more of writing up these kinds of things about the methods and experiences we had. But....

Peter Blanck: Well, we can move in sort of the next time period of next major phases that you felt you went through, or experiences that you had. I guess in the '50s.

George Lombard: Well, during the war, the school's regular courses eventually all closed down, and we had a number of military training courses of one kind or another located here at the school. And then, after the war ended, and civilian instruction reopened, we were admitting three classes a year, and the college was back, too. And when the school re-voted its civilian program, a course in the area of human behavior was included as a required course. So, our needs for teachers escalated at a terrible rate. We were pulling people in from all kinds of fields. Because this meant - you see, we were hope - we were admitting six or seven or eight sessions three times a year. Our needs for case material escalated very rapidly. One of the ways in which we met that was to assign a written report to students to be based on their experiences of a human problem that they had encountered in their work or in the services. And we got a lot of good cases that way. But it didn't give us field work, so I'm diverting a bit from our subject matter here. But as soon as we could - as soon as the early - almost crisis of developing courses and teachers was through, then we went back towards trying to establish field stations in different companies, where our researchers could spend up to six months, or even in some cases, I guess we had pretty active contacts with one or two places for a period or two or three years. We'd go back to visit them again. We had a paper company in Maine. It was called the Marshall Company, where we spent a lot of time. Then there were a couple of electronics companies, and companies around Boston where we did, again, a lot of time that resulted in books like Paul Lawrence's and Larry Longam's *Resistance to Change*; and articles were written out of those, too. And we'd get a series of cases of twelve or fourteen cases in a series. Sometimes we'd teach most of them. Sometimes we'd take selections of the cases for class. During this period, the thing that was dominating was the need to get good teaching materials of all the cases that we were developing. So, the research component leading towards knowledge was played down during this period.

We're in the field a lot, but it had a different kind of objective than the earlier period I am speaking of....

Peter Blanck: When did you start getting back into - the school back into field research?

George Lombard: I suppose in the 50's. We were beginning, shifted back…

Peter Blanck: And were you doing any studies at that time?

George Lombard: Well, sort of.... I think I specialized more in trying to work up the advanced training programs rather than - and this often included going out and arranging for a field station, a field site somewhere, but I did that more than research myself. I'm not - theory comes hard to me. I'm not a conceptual innovator or anything like that at all. But we worked - I was helping on the other part of it. I suppose I think of the capstone of this period that we're speaking now is previously the so-called prediction study that Abe Slesnick and Roland Christensen and Fritz worked on, and that resulted in the book, *The Productivity Satisfaction in the Development of Workers.* That was George Homans' - I don't know how much he talked about that, but he was engaged in that one, too.

Peter Blanck: What would it be like if you were describing the prediction study to somebody who had no idea what it was. What would be a description of that? The kinds of things they did?

George Lombard: They started off first making a diagnosis of a situation. The company, where, again, we'd.... The head of the company had been a person who had taken courses here at the school, was familiar with the kinds of things that were done here, and said, "Certainly. We'd let you come here for 6 months if you want to." And they made a - the researchers made a study of the departments that they thought looked like they would be useful for the kinds of study they had in mind. Then they were organized so that the people who were going to make the predictions of what they expected to find on the basis of what they knew about the people, who were about, the employees of the company, didn't get into the field, and didn't have the chance to observe what was going on at all. But they made predictions about who would have high productivity, who the high output workers would be, who would be the satisfied people, who would be the disgruntled people, and about the kind of work groups that they'd find in the company, and the kinds of problems that would be - people would find in working in those different sections. These predictions were then checked with the actual data. And that was the form of the study. To see if the data that you could get about the ages and education and ethnicity of people, and clustering, the combinations of them in their different groups, given the setting and the kind of products that they were working on, could result in predictions about what would actually be happening, and how the configurations were actually developed.

Peter Blanck: Were you, at this point...?

George Lombard: But that was a much more sophisticated kind of thing than what we started before the war.

Peter Blanck: It's almost like an experimental field work.

George Lombard: Yes.

Peter Blanck: Were you at this point - you had mentioned at the beginning that you were interested in observing in work groups in particular - were you developing your styles or continuing your research in this area or maybe you'd want to go to some of the books that you were...?

George Lombard: Well, I think the first problem that you encounter in this kind of work was getting access to the data, and there's a long chain thing there. How do you pick the company that you're working with? Then, once you go in, how do you explain your study? What kind of steps you take and all that? Well, maybe it's not very scientific, but you work with your friends; you work with the people who know your work, and who have some willingness to let you go in, and who'd be interested in seeing the same kind of products that you'd have.   When you explain your study to one level of the company after another, we didn't have any set rules for this kind of thing. We'd usually say, "You know your plant. You know your people here. We don't. What suggestions do you have about how we'd go in and make the study?" And we'd let them do the explaining until, finally, somebody would ask us a question about how we talk about it, and then we'd begin to try to answer that. But we put ourselves in the posture of answering questions about what we were doing rather than saying we know that this is the way that we ought to do it. Once you get through that stage, then two problems come along. One is selecting the data to be recorded, and we never developed any effective way of shortcutting, putting down pretty much everything that happened to us. We came out of Macy's with a three or four, five inch stack of pages of paper of just detailed descriptions of the things we'd seen, and the things that people had talked to us about. Now, eventually, George Homans was a godsend to us, because when he wrote *The Human Group*, and separated out the internal system, the external system, we began to see collecting data around those two concepts. Now, we used terms "formal organization", "informal organization" for--. But external - the concept of external system and internal system developed a dynamic that allowed you to relate your different kinds of data together in a way, whereas the concepts of formal organization, informal organization kind of dichotomized it and it was more static. It didn't give you the concept and the background of a developing system, as the way George's concept, I think, did. But yes, we tried to. From the beginning, we almost, each day, as you got a little bit of your data, as the data began to come in, you'd begin to separate it, but separate it in a way that kept the different parts related. And the thing I think I would now say, which I don't think I saw as clearly then, is that, from the beginning, you'd try - it helped us to try to state an overall diagnosis of what we thought was going on in the situation, of what we thought was important there, what the problem was there. Now, we stated that because if it's explicit, then I think you can begin to check whether it was actually going on. And then that idea is available to you to change and correct as the data shows. It may not be quite accurate. Now, I think this goes against a lot of traditions of research according to which you go in with a blank mind and you don't try to make your statements about what is going on until you've got a lot of data. But the blank mind is an impossible thing. You just don't have that to begin with, and second, I do think that to begin to test out the ideas you're working with very early on, but with the attitude that you're stating that tentatively, that you're trying to make it available for further correction. I think that's the thing that leads you into making progress on a study better than anything else. And I guess I would say that the attitudes of being able to put things into words and yet not get rigid about them, become authoritative that that's it, but keeping it open-ended, so that you can make changes in it is very central to the skill of doing this kind of field work.

Peter Blanck: That's interesting. Did you want to talk in more detail now about your own work with groups, or maybe you brought a couple along there. I don't know what you want to talk about in those, but maybe you want to.... Do you want to use those...?

George Lombard: Well, I've.... Let me see if there's anything else here that I put down that would be useful on this. I've stated fairly well what I had in mind. One thing I guess I ought to talk a little about this report, "Training for Human Relations," because when it was about early 1950's, criticisms of what we were doing began to develop. Of course, the Hawthorne work was under attack from younger sociologists and psychologists almost from the beginning, but there were also criticisms about whether the work that we're doing in the teaching really belonged to the curriculum. I haven't used the term "self-awareness", but I'm sure you can see where the kinds of skill that we were talking about, of a researcher going into a field situation required some degree of understanding on the part of a person of what he or she was bringing to the situation of, understanding of his affects of his or her own behavior in the situation that he was, or she was, working in. Now the culture at the business school, and the stereotype of executives' behavior that there's a very confident person who doesn't have doubts and indecision but who's taking action all the time is at the extreme contrast with that. And some people in the faculty felt that the human relations people were requiring too much introspection for the successful executive. And in the speed of the development of the teaching that we'd gone through and I spoke of earlier, another problem had developed. The role of the executive, stereotypically, I suppose, is to get somebody else to do what you want him or her to do for the company, and listening to the other person's point of view can easily become - then sort of an indirect way of getting what the company wants - so we landed into a bunch of ethical questions that we hadn't entirely expected, and that we weren't dealing with entirely successfully. In our instruction theory here, there are answers to all these things, ways of thinking about them, answers, answers, ways of thinking about them that certainly helped me to work through these kinds of controversies and problems that developed, but at one time, the name of the course in the first year became--, was "Administering of Practices", and that got turned into a verb - "adprac" - which you still hear around. And you adpracted somebody as a way of getting him to do, or her to do, something that you wanted, not necessarily was in his or her best interest. There's still some character around who had "adprac" on his license plate of his automobile. You see it out in the parking lot there. A case - I hope it's not a friend of yours. I'm sure he isn't. But this got to be quite a hassle here at the school as to how you'd handle all these things. Fritz, many of us, Fritz particularly, got very concerned about this, and once he'd reestablished the second year course in interpersonal behavior, he sought for an opportunity to - how can I put it - to think out where we were and what we were doing. And this resulted in what we called a "human relations clinic", which was a 2-year period that was financed by a generous grant from the Ford Foundation that allowed us - he and

I and two or three other people to take a long look at what we were doing and see if we could assess it and come up with something that we thought would make a little more sense out of what we were doing, and to develop an advanced training program that would help handle some of the problems that we thought we were getting into. Well, we became, I think, more thoughtful about the research and training methods as a result of that, although we did not establish a formal training program of the kind that we envisioned at the time we completed the report for the program. It was a very fruitful period indeed for all of us. What we envisioned was a program to develop second level practitioners. The first level practitioner would be the supervisor, or manager, or the executive in a business firm. The second level would be somebody who could train people of that kind. They needed to know something more about the concepts and the literature of training methods and research methods, and so on, than the person on the firing line, but it didn't seem to us at the time that they needed a full doctoral program, a PhD. At least that was the idea we were fooling - that we were playing with. That takes so long, it puts in so much on the research side, and so little on the side of helping people to develop sensitivity and warmth in their own relationships, that we thought there was room for a different kind of a program.

Peter Blanck: Now, this was going on during what time?

George Lombard: This would be early 50's. This was published, I think, in '54?

Peter Blanck: And during the '60s and '70s, what sort of things were you doing in the field? Were you involved in a training program?

George Lombard: Yes, '50s, '54, this was it. Well, let me say one more thing in relation to this and then come to that. At about the same period, the school was giving renewed attention to its doctorate program. Previously, a doctorate program at the school was sort of an apprentice-type program, but after World War II, the expansion of business schools in this country and around the world became very rapid, and the need for trained teachers and researchers became very high, and one of the experiences that we got into - one of the conclusions we came into as the result of this training program was that you couldn't force the personal development of the people at an accelerated or even rate. In a sense, we knew that when we started, and we certainly should have known it thoroughly, but we got into - we were really - it was one if the important conclusions that came out if this. So, we decided that having more of an intellectual component, more of a research component to training than we envisioned when we were working on this kind of a concept that I've just spoken about was very important, and the opportunity to take part in the development of a new doctoral program here was one that we all welcomed, and was a big relief to us and that was the direction in which that work went. At about the same time here that I'm speaking of - a little bit later - I was asking to come back into the Dean's Office as Associate Dean for educational programs, so I took that work up and really at that time dropped out of teaching and research and I held that job for a long, long period - twelve or thirteen years, I guess - until I got quite close to retirement. So that from, towards the end of the '50s, I wasn't as directly involved with the research and training in the field as I had been earlier.

Peter Blanck: What did you find - it's a little off the track...?

George Lombard: No, no.

Peter Blanck: What did you find most satisfying for yourself and fun about what you did in the field? Intellectually satisfying, and interpersonally satisfying?

George Lombard: It's a - you see this over and over again. In people that are doing field work, there's an excitement that comes from it. There are new insights that come out of it, and you get excited about things. Then there comes that long, boring period of trying to write things down, make sense out of it, but the thing just reverses on you very, very quickly. I don't know. You're seeing unexpected relationships between yourself and others, between different pieces of the data that you're working with, and the insights that develop, and so on, can be very, very exciting.

Peter Blanck: You started to talk briefly about the ethical considerations. Was that one of the most critical issues you faced in the field besides developing this relationship with the participant - the concept of confidentiality - the concept of....

George Lombard: Yes, there were ones we worried about a lot. They became very prominent, of course, during the late '50s and '60s, and early '70s. I guess, though I wasn't as directly connected with the work, the position I felt we had to take and that I think, in fact, people did take, was that you had be very open about the data you're going to go over. In some of the later studies that we did, we wouldn't make any quotations from anybody without going back to him or her and say, "Look, this is what we're going to use from some of the things you've told us. Is it okay with you?". Sometimes, we'd ask for their signatures on a release form so that we were sure we'd be behaving ethically on all this. Actually, these questions would have to be explored when you're first setting up a study, because there's no sense in getting a six-month study and then finding that in the end, you couldn't get your material released. It's just a waste on everybody's part to get into that, so we did talk over, at some length at every level that we went into about where we were going to come out, how we were going to handle these kinds of problems. If somebody said, "That's something I don't want. No, no. This is being done confidentially," why that was it. You're stopped at that point and didn't go any further. Actually, a lot of these questions the students or beginning researchers pose in the most difficult form that you can ask them, and that's a game that graduate students like to play and probably always should play. But those most difficult questions don't come up everyday. The kinds of things that we were working with were the kinds of things that could be observed by everybody at any time. The executives around the Little Girls' Dresses Department at Macy's knew the sales girls didn't move all over the place, even though they stayed at the payment watching the other way around, so we weren't revealing any secrets when we discovered that. Perhaps we had a little, we could put the importance of that behavior in a little different context than the executives of the store did, but again and again, we 'd remember our experiences and we'd say, "How do we ever...? Can...? That's really confidential," and then we'd be talking to some executive about it and he'd mention that it was something he knew about all the time. I don't want him to play down the importance of these ethical questions in saying this, because they are important. There's no question at all about that. But I think that the fact that we were allowed to stay in as many places as we did for as long as we did indicates that the people we were working with thought we could handle these kinds of things as they came up. Any experienced manager has to handle confidential material. He knows what kind of trouble he's going to get in if he violates confidences, and if materials are brought to him which we say have these kinds of things in it, and if you rather we didn't put this in, we'll take it out, he understands the situation we're in, too, and we could always negotiate and reach some kind of a way of handling these things. Sometimes we'd have a major series of cases, and you just look through. "Look, you people have been around here long enough so that I don't have to go through this in detail. Sign a release card and give it to us."

Peter Blanck: Were there any other issues that you want to...?

George Lombard: I think in terms of this question though, the thing I want to emphasize is, making the materials we were gathering, and the thoughts we had about them open and available to all people we were working with, was the way to, the way to go on this. Well, this covers....

Peter Blanck: I think you've covered most of it. Are there any other things?

George Lombard: Those were most of the things I had in mind.

Peter Blanck: Is that Fritz Rothlesberger up there?

George Lombard: No. That's Fritz over there.

Peter Blanck: Maybe....

George Lombard: That's Dean Dunham.

Peter Blanck: Yeah.

George Lombard: And this is Elton Mayo

Peter Blanck: This is Elton Mayo?

George Lombard: No, this is Mayo.

Peter Blanck: Uh-huh.

George Lombard: This is L. J. Henderson, who was George Homans' - did George speak of L. J.?

Peter Blanck: Not too much. Did you know him?

George Lombard: I was his assistant at the time he died. He was one of the.... They were wonderful people. He was a very distinguished medical scientist. He was called "Pink Whiskers" because he had a great big pink beard. He established the Junior

Fellows here at Harvard. He established that program. He did a lot of work on physiology of blood. How did he get over to the business school? Well, a set of ideas that he was working with, methods of science that was working with were very compatible over here. He said of himself that it was very strange to find him associated with a group of human relations people, because he didn't have any training in that. It was said of him - and I think he understood this - that his assumption about a colleague was that he was a fool until he proved himself otherwise, and he acted on that basis. So, there were a lot of very rich stories about him. Mayo was quite a different person. Mayo was much warmer, but also impatient if you didn't come through - if you didn't pretty soon with Mayo, he'd lose interest in you quickly. Henderson was head of what was called the "Fatigue Laboratory" which has been written up, had a treadmill down in the bottom of Morgan Hall, where they do the cases now, and Clarence Demar, the marathoner, used to run on this treadmill. And they had a bunch of dogs that they do tests on to try to understand what happened to a human organism when it was in a situation that fatigue was prominent. And a lot of the early work when Mayo.... [Interruption on tape]

And he died before it was finished and I edited it and got it out. But the Cabot Group, the General Motors studies, and the Macy studies, all the these things I've been talking about were developed here much more at length than what we'd been able to do today. But Henderson and Mayo and Dunham were three people who really got the work established here, and then they weren't systematizers, Fritz was. That combination of those four of them really was a unique combination. Henderson's Fatigue Laboratory has been called the most fruitful physiological laboratory that ever existed. The papers that came out of it were an extraordinary collection of things.

Peter Blanck: Great. Okay. Good.