We See You, We Hear You: Using Mixed-Methods Assessment to Observe Student Activity in Informal Learning Spaces

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Methods of Assessing Informal Learning/Library Space (May, 2011)

1. Unobtrusive Observation
Protocol: Observed library users 6 times a day for 5 days in the Fall ‘16 and Spring ‘17 semesters. Noted number of users in a group, technology, and other features of environment.

2. Open Questions and Survey
Protocol A: Library users studying on 3rd & 4th floors responded to four questions posed on large notepads during the Fall and Spring Semesters.
Protocol B: Library users completed a 12-question in-use library survey during final week Fall ‘16 and Spring ‘17.

3. Behavior Mapping/Space Utilization
Protocol: Data from the observation was analyzed to identify patterns of space usage.

Insights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Open Questions</th>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Space Utilization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students chose carrels and computer workstations most often</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students prefer to work alone with minimal distractions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Groups come to the 4th floor to work collaboratively</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>The library needs better noise control</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>The 3rd floor needs better lighting</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students want more white boards and outlets</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students want more study rooms</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
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Implications for Space Design

- Additional seats and power outlets
- Redesigned reading room
- Large rooms for silent study
- New one and two-person carrels
- Open concept group study areas
- Redesigned study rooms
- Noise control solutions

References
