Building Utilization Ethnographic Survey

Date of Study: December 10 and 11 2019

Population: Library Patrons using Library space
Format: Ethnographic survey
Type: Observational free-text

Method: To supplement the photo ethnographic survey that we completed in November, as well as the other Building Utilization Assessment projects, we selected times during finals to observe how the students are using the Library spaces and record our observations.

Data: See Appendix.

Discussion of the Data:

Lower Level:
- Quiet study room not that popular
- No one using collab spaces were using the screens
- Fairly popular area, mostly quiet use. Good mix of grouped seating and solo
- Overall, the lower level was fairly quiet
- Grad area fairly well used, but can’t confirm that they were all grad students.
- 107 open area very popular with the mixed seating (carrels, bean bag seats, lounge seats, etc). Lots of electrical outlets in this area.
- Hallway seating fairly popular, could be because of the dim lighting and powered tables.

Main Level
- Very limited use of lounge chairs
- Use of high top tables as standing desks
- Spaces (math lab, tutoring room, writing center) that were made available as extra study space for students after 6pm were not used that often. Especially compared to the rest of the building, which was near capacity.
- Charging station in café was typically about half-full.
- Café had a good mix of group work and individual work.
- Innovation lab was popular and very quiet.
- Café and innovation lab popular because of big windows & natural light?

Upper Level
- Some lounge seating use, mostly the ones directly next to windows.
- Computers left charging next to wall.
- North side carrels not as full, likely because of a lack of electrical outlets. Only full at times when rest of the building full.
- Back area near curric and dvd collections was an interesting space. The seating was mixed and got a lot of use. Some students took those bean bag seats and created a comfortable, secluded space between the wall and the last curric stack.
- White boards very popular

General
- Trash and recycling bins throughout building often overflowing.
- Lots of students had left their belongings behind to hold their seats. This was especially true around the lunch and dinner hours. Shows that they trust the Library as a safe environment.
- White boards very popular, some as privacy screens
- Areas of the building with lots of natural light (café, innovation lab, carrels and tables on the upper level, and grad study room) tend to fill up before the other areas.
- The spaces with electrical outlets nearby also filled up first.
- We had to bring out folding tables and chairs that were in storage to meet the high demands for seating.

Recommendations:

Easy fixes:
- Add electrical outlets to the northside carrel wall
- Replace soft lounge seating with seating that students have shown to prefer
- Advertise the extra study space (math, tutoring, writing, 114) better.
- Provide more rolling white boards
- Get bigger trash and recycling bins and request a more frequent ABM presence to empty bins.
- Look at how many vacant carrels are in the Quiet Study Room and determine if they are more useful elsewhere in the building

Long term planning:
- Think critically about the spaces on the lower level, especially the microforms area and the open area in 107, and how they can be redesigned/updated to better accommodate the students who like to study there.
- Update the furniture in the back area of the Upper level to be more consistent and/or more flexible.
- Find ways to add more outlets throughout the building.
- During finals, investigate the turn-away rate for students unable to find spaces and how to mitigate.

Crazy idea?:
- Knock out some of the walls on the upper level and add windows for more natural lighting.
- Because students appear to like studying in isolated areas, add private study rooms
- Real-time seating availability app so students can see where seats are available.
Appendix:

Appendix 1. Selection of Notes

Date/Time 12/10 5:00

Upper Level Reading Room
- TABLES NOT AS FULL (Avg 3 per)
- WORSE CHAIRS - 1 per grouping
- A FEW EMPTY CHAIRS
- LOTS OF EMPTY SEATS W/ STUFF LEFT TO NO WRITE BIRDS IN USE

Carrels
- NOT MUCH SIDE LESS CROWDED
- THAN 324 SIDE
- 324 SIDE MOSTLY FULL

Back Area
- TWO STUDENTS UP AGAINST WALL USING BENCH CHAIRS, LEANED
- ALSO NOT AS CROWDED AS EARLIER

Other
Main Level
Main Open Area
- Whiteboards in use
- No high top table use
- A few seats w/ stuff left to hold spot
- Soft seating not well used
- Some @ public camps using personal

Café
- 4/8 change station
- Early empty, most sitting near windows
- Some working together, most solo

Innovation Lab
- One using desk chair
- Quiet
- No public camp use
- Stand arrangement

Other
Lower Level
Main Open Area
- A few open tables
- Not as many place holders

Quiet Study Room
- Writing in use
- No one in there, but stuff left behind at one specific table

Collabs
- Fairly empty (3/10)
- No screens in use

Microforms
- Some in very back corner all hooked together

Hallways
- Not half full

Grad Study Area
- No groups
- Stuff left behind

Other
- 3 using computers behind journals
- Lots of food
- Lot of open work, using research
Date/Time 12/10 11:30 A.M.

Upper Level
Reading Room
- Some tables are used as chairs on hand (2)
- All open tables used 5-6 per table
- Not many using soft seating (tables 2)
- Not all using common chairs
- Laptops at every seat (mostly mice)
- More drinking cups than reusable bottles
- Some working in groups, but mostly individual

Carrels
- All sides being used,
- Out on floor, in common
- On side of limited desks, but put in
- 2 stairs

Back Area
- Not completely full, some open carrels
- No use of soft seating

Other
Main Level
Meizh Open Area

- Not all using soft lounge chairs (1)
- Most open tables have 3 students
- One @ high top using standing desk

Cafe
- Painter during THE only one in dining
- No camps being used; but high tables facing
- group work & group
- 5/8 computers

Innovation Lab
- Tiffeny busy
- No camps in use, just laptops
- Natural light?
- Do we use desk chairs
- Not many plugged in

Other
Lower Level
Main Open Area

Mainly full middle spots empty
Most w/ laptops

Quiet Study Room
Rather empty
Most w/ head phones

Collabs
Full, no screens in use
One laptop

Microforms
Pretty empty, quiet

Hallways
Floor clutter
Most seats open

Grad Study Area
Most seats open
Quiet
No groups

Other
L47 open
L4f full
mostly at computers not open tables
Date/Time: 12/11 - 9:00p

Upper Level Reading Room
Six faculty students on arm chairs
All tables in use
About 3 Carrels filled in the main room open
Very quiet

Carrels
All filled - even the one by the elevator.

Back Area
All tables and Carrels full
Many pillows - the long one on use
A couple were tucked in back under the windows in the rear sections on pillows.

Other
White boards in use
Study rooms in use
Very quiet
Main Level
Main Open Area

3 windows + 3 mac computers available
7 carrels open all often filled
all tables in use including height adj. + folding table.

Very quiet: all study rooms are except 2:

1 person in the math lab
1 person on the soft area
2 girls by the tree

Café

14 in café — 4 people in line at D + M

Lots of people wearing headphones

Innovation Lab

20 kids. 2 on the MACS
Some in the room in the back

Other
Hand held white boards - with handle left downstairs.

All tables full except one - and the round one.

All folding tables on LL and main level in use.

114 - has 1 person

Collabs

Only 2 tables free.

Messy - no one using monitors.

Many had their laptops plugged into the outlets.

Microforms

1 bag on a soft chair -

Hallways

Full on side of elevator - better lighting?

It looks more inviting over there - IMHO

Grad Study Area

10

Study room full

Movie! No one was at start of movie - movie had ended when I went down to lock up -

But most of the smokes were gone - I had a full bowl of popcorn & pretzels.