Progress Report Part 1

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## Informatics 162W

# Summary of site

The Science Library is located near the back of UCI campus. It has 6 floors. The first floor is the lobby. The second floor is called the Grand Reading room, it is a large open study area without any books. The third floor is staff only. The fourth floor looks like a typical library with bookshelves, study areas, and study rooms. The fifth floor contains mostly offices with some study lounges, study areas, and technical study room. The sixth floor contains OIT lab, faculty/graduate study room, and 2 normal study rooms. Most of the space is not available to students.

# Summary of Project

My research question is:

**How does the organization view study rooms? How do they encourage or discourage usage?**

I am looking into the organization and use of study rooms. Digitally I am looking at the reservation process and any patterns in students booking rooms. Physically what the rooms have to offer and how students use the room.

Some observations I have made:

Students must go through the online reservation process to book a room. You can see what times and days students book rooms. The booking system is also clunky, with confusing popup messages and unintuitive navigation. Even so, there are always many bookings the day of and several days into the future.

The rooms themselves also tell a lot about how the Science Library views these rooms. One of the first notable things in the study room is the two brightly colored guidelines fliers to being a “good neighbor” on the wall. Across the library, rooms are the only place where guidelines are prominently displayed. There are also fliers outside of the rooms stating students must have a reservation before using the study rooms. The flier has multiple QR codes to scan as well.

I’ve noticed the discrepancies between the reservation and use of study rooms. Many times, all rooms are booked yet some study rooms remain dark and unused. There are also polices on the website and in the rooms while most of the library does not. There are also a different feel between study rooms on different floors. On the fifth and sixth floor each door has a flier stating rooms must be booked before usage. Why the difference? What is significant about this? Though study rooms are meant to be reserved, if rooms on the fourth floor are empty, some students use them without reservation. It seems that the culture is unwanted on other floors compared to the second floor.

# Accomplishments on project

Overall, I have done several 1-2 hours observations at the Science Library totaling approximately 8 hours. My observations have spanned different times of the day and different floors. I have also done observations of the library’s website and participated in the space by booking a study room and studying in the space.

I have done many refinements of my research question. I first wanted to observe noise canceling technology in the space, but it would rely on too many assumptions and hard to figure out intentionality. I still wanted to focus on noise and how space balances collaboration and individual study. Based on the nature of collaboration noise will occur while individual study involves focus and for most lack of noise. The question is hard to answer from observation alone. I presented several more research questions, but each was deemed either unanswerable or too broad. After talking to the TA and professor and doing more observations my current research question came to be. Still the research question is unclear as a suitable question.

### Questions progression:

How does the organization and structure of the Science library mitigate disruptions (noise and

movement)?

How do the different spaces in the Science library facilitate different collaboration and their need for noise?

How does the Science Library handle collaborative and individual study?

How does the organization view study rooms? How do they encourage or discourage usage?

**Additional proposed questions:**How do the spaces facilitate different types of studies? (Use of whiteboards, Booths with televisions, group work, etc.)?

The inefficiency of booking study rooms. (People not showing up, only able to sign up for 1-2 hours, etc.)

How do the different areas of the library promote collaboration and discussion?

What does the Science Library provide to support the various students at UCI?

How does the library support self-governing?

How does the space balance collaborative and individual study?

# Challenges

The frequent deadlines of project drafts conflict with the natural change of research questions. Not having a specific research question has been extremely stressful. Every day I do not have a specified question I am behind in the project. For example, having to re-write most of my project proposal.

It has been frustrating as I feel no progress has been made and without a clear direction it is difficult to gauge a plan or schedule moving forward. Overall, trying to figure out a research question has been a frustrating and demoralizing process.

# Plans moving Forward

My plan moving forward is to continue talking to the professor and TA about my research question and hopefully getting more guidance. My next steps are to try to conduct observations of group interactions within study rooms. This may include getting another of my groupmates to come and do a group observation with me. I need to see whether it is possible to coordinate. I don’t know if I’m on schedule or behind as my research question is still not concrete.

# Assessment

It is unlikely that I will meet my objectives as my research question is questionable. I still foresee challenges related to my research question and with my anxiety on the project and in general asking others for help or conducting surveys or observations. I will address them by talking to my peers and teaching staff.