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We See You, We Hear You:

Using Mixed-Methods Assessment to Observe Student Activity in Informal Learning Spaces

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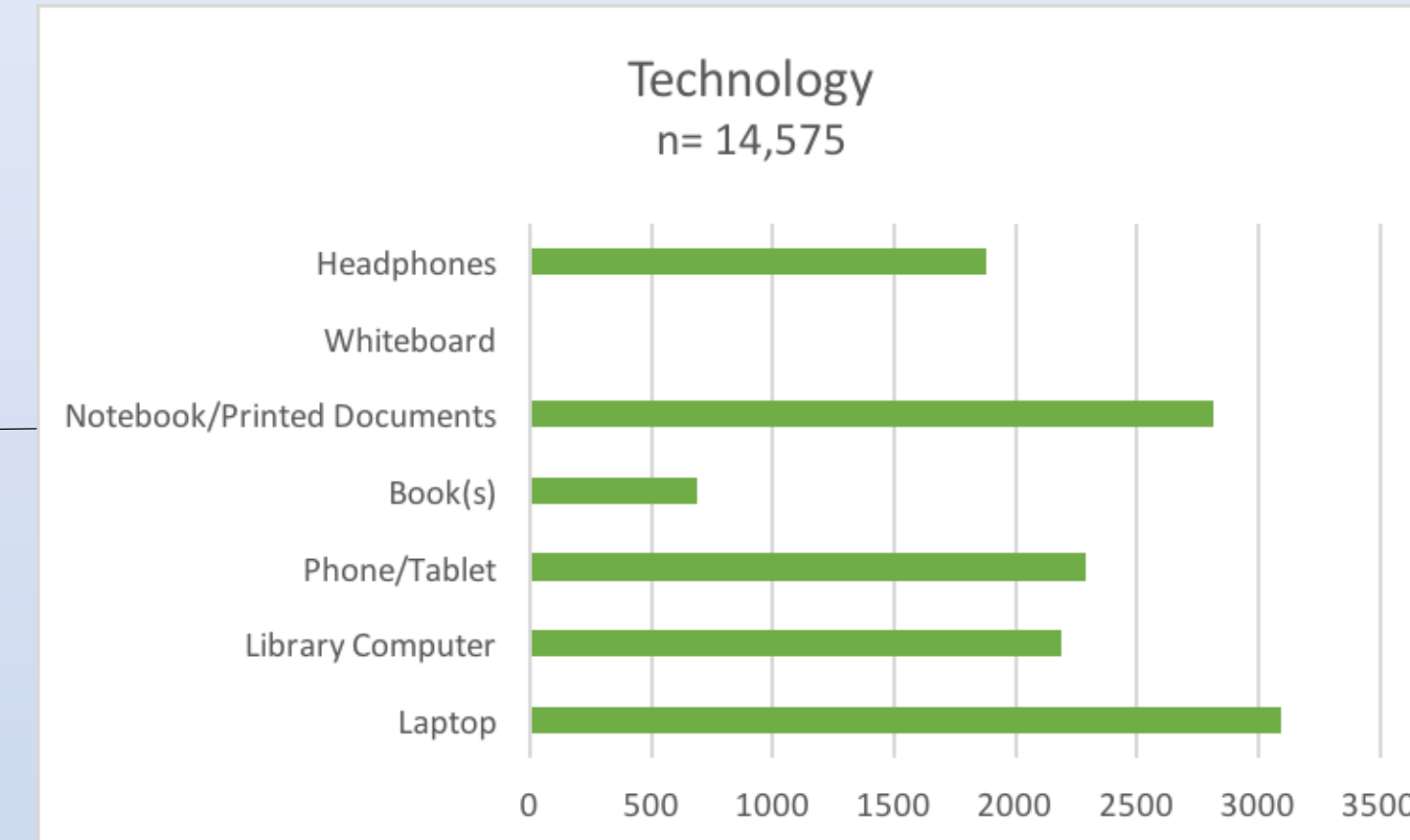
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Problem: How does one assess the impact of informal learning/library space?

Background: IUPUI University Library was up for a planned renovation. Librarians wanted data on the use of library space to inform the design plan.

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.



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

1. Unobtrusive Observation
2. Behavior Mapping
3. Questionnaires
4. Interviews
5. Visitor Tracking
6. Mental Mapping
7. Overt Observation
8. Diaries

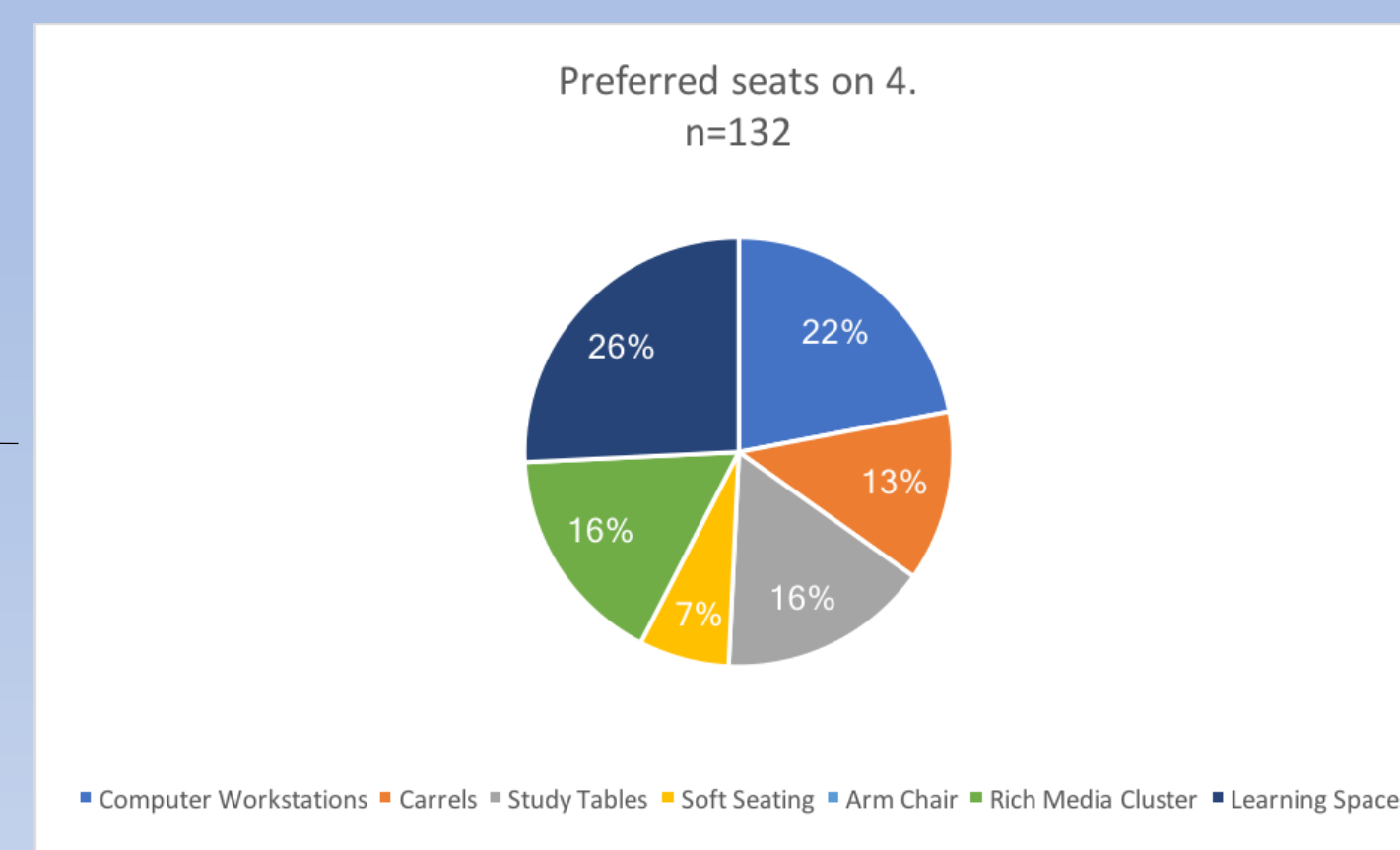
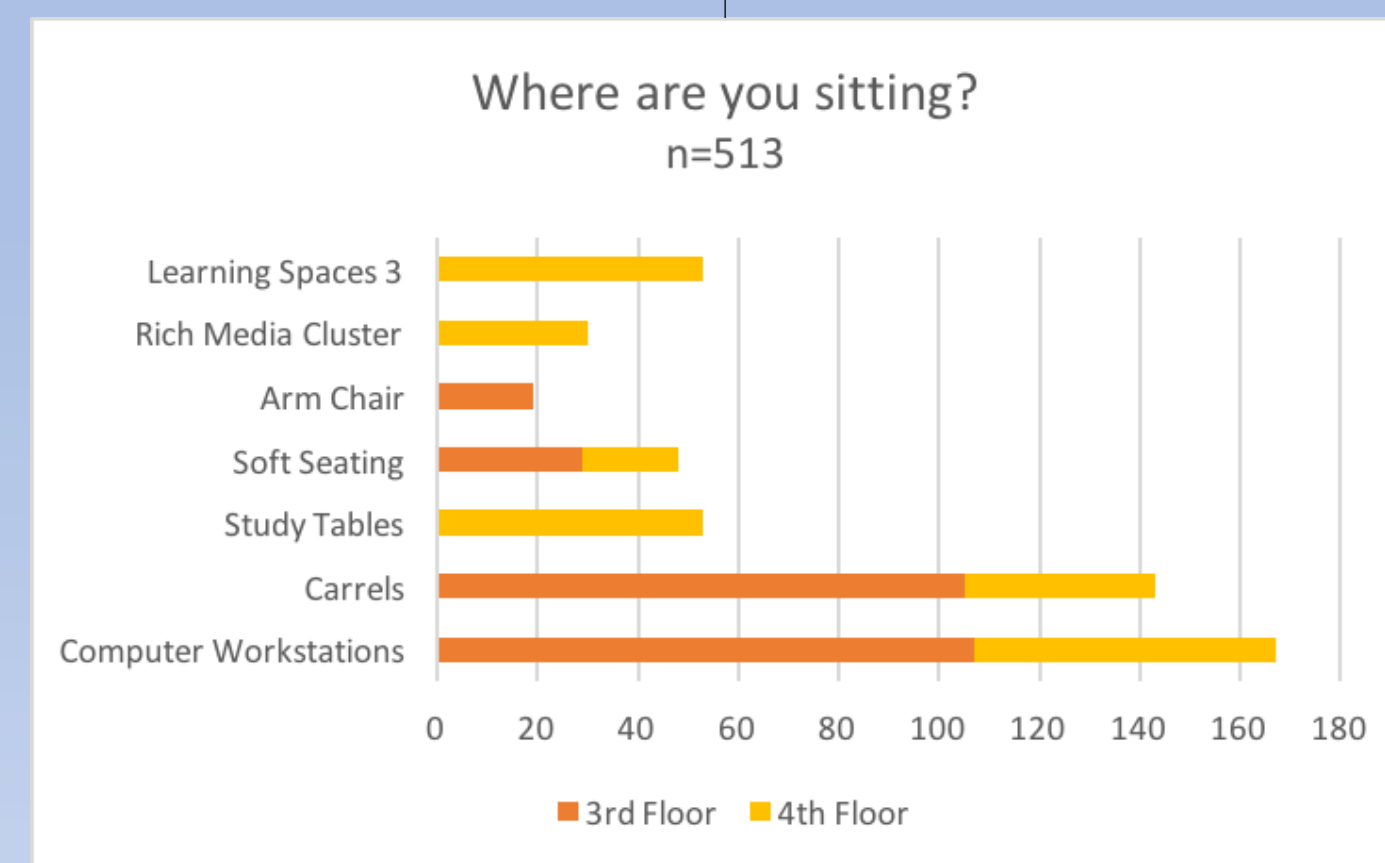
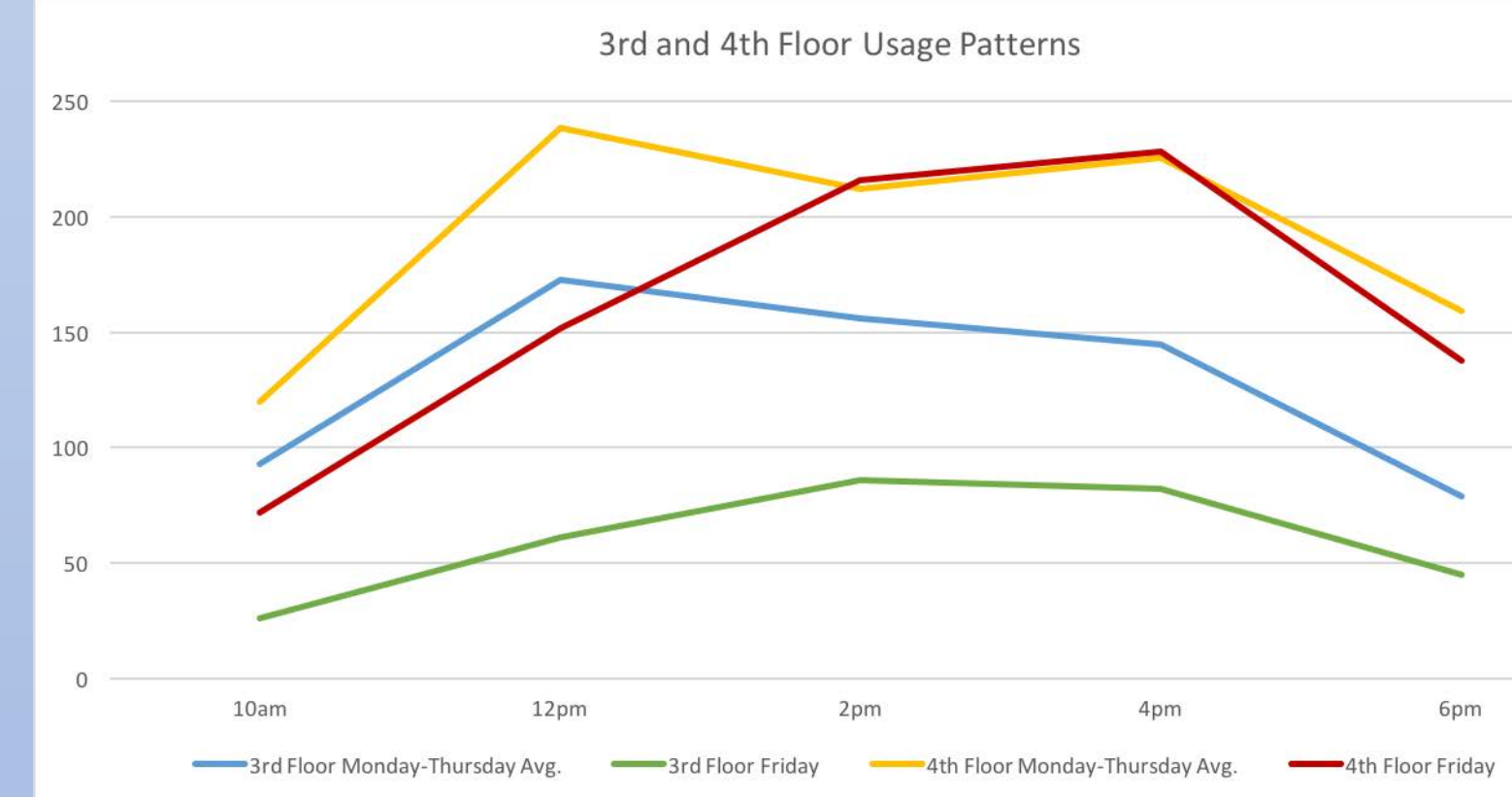
2. Open Questions and Survey

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 survey¹ during finals 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	Observation	Open Questions	Survey	Space Utilization
Students chose carrels and computer workstations most often	X	X		X
Students prefer to work alone with minimal distractions	X	X	X	
Groups come to the 4 th floor to work collaboratively	X	X	X	X
The library needs better noise control		X	X	
The 3rd floor needs better lighting	X	X	X	
Students want more white boards and outlets		X	X	
Students want more study rooms		X	X	

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

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¹Odegaard Library In Library Use Survey Instrument 2014: <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/25940>