

Picture the Music: Planning Library Spaces with a Photo Elicitation Study

Nara Newcomer,
Head, Music/Media Library,
University of Missouri-Kansas City
newcomern@umkc.edu

Music Library Association Annual Meeting, Feb. 27, 2015
Denver, Colorado



Today's outline

- Background: UMKC & arts campus
- Study methodology
- Findings (selected)





**DOWNTOWN
CAMPUS
FOR THE ARTS**


**BACKGROUND:
UMKC & arts campus**



2/27/2015

UMKC: Quick Facts

- 15,746 students (Fall 2013)
- Conservatory of Music and Dance
 - ca. 600 students (undergraduate, master's, doctoral, certificates)
- Library: music and dance materials in defined area of main library



2/27/2015

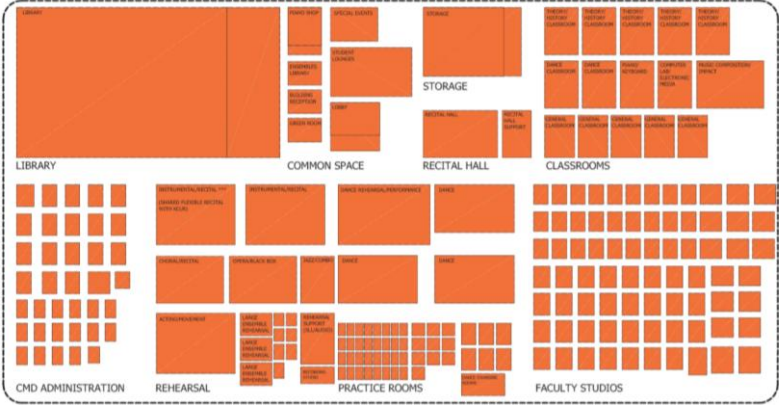


DOWNTOWN CAMPUS FOR THE ARTS

- 2011: "Big 5" idea for a Greater Kansas City
- 2012: Feasibility study
- 2013: \$20 million challenge grant from Muriel McBrien Kauffman Foundation
- 2014: Donors pledge real estate for site
- 2014: Architectural design team selected & begins work



CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC AND DANCE




LIBRARY COMMON SPACE RECITAL HALL CLASSROOMS

CMD ADMINISTRATION REHEARSAL PRACTICE ROOMS FACULTY STUDIOS

STORAGE

University of Missouri, Kansas City Downtown Arts Campus Programming and Planning Study



Study Goals

- Envision library spaces to optimally support UMKC Conservatory students and equip them to excel
- Plan for Downtown Campus for the Arts
- Discover change and improvements to implement in current spaces
- Contribute to general knowledge about needs and behaviors of university music and dance students, especially related to libraries



STUDY METHODOLOGY



Photo Elicitation: Basics

- Subjects take photos based on list of prompts
- Subjects discuss their photos in a recorded interview with a researcher
- Interviews analyzed for themes, needs, and dreams



Methodology

- Recruit volunteers
- Select random, but representative subjects
- Subjects meet with researcher to explain study (also obtained informed consent)
- Subjects take 20 photos in response to prompts regarding places, items, or situations in their daily life



Methodology: Recruiting Volunteers

- Email to student and faculty listservs
- Flyers
- Social media
- Conservatory Student Association
- Word-of-mouth
- Incentive: \$20 Amazon gift card



Methodology: Subjects

- UMKC Conservatory students (6)
 - 3 graduate, 3 undergraduate
- Representing all major areas of study
 - dance
 - vocal/choral
 - instrumental (2)
 - theory/composition/musicology
 - music education/therapy



Methodology: Photo List

1. A place where you feel most productive
2. A place where you practice/rehearse
3. Something weird
4. Stuff you carry with you every day
5. Your music collection
6. Your desk
7. How you stay organized
8. A place where you socialize
9. A great place to listen to music
10. A place where you study
11. A classroom you like
12. A piece of music that you like
13. A place you like to go to in the library
14. Cool technology
15. Something every Conservatory freshman should know about the library
16. A place you feel lost
17. How you recently discovered a piece of music that you like
18. Something you can't live without
19. The night before a big assignment is due
20. Your favorite part of the day



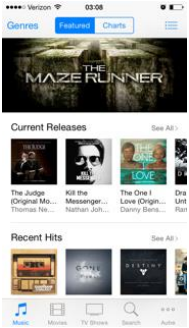
Methodology, continued

- Follow-up video recorded interview used the photographs as a jumping-off point to discuss subjects' routines, needs, and desires as UMKC Conservatory students.
- Interviews transcribed and analyzed for themes
- Co-viewing group (up to 10 people) watched and discussed interviews





FINDINGS (SELECTED)



Scores, recordings, individuals, groups

DISCOVERING NEW MUSIC AND DANCE WORKS



Discovering new music/dance

- Scores
- Recordings
- Social aspects
- Spaces and services



Browsing scores

- **Student:** When I need new ideas, I just go to this... shelf, and randomly check the piece, and, like, ah-ha, maybe this one, this one, and bring them home and study.

"A place you like to go in the library"



Oversize scores
mostly 20th & 21st century music



Browsing scores

- **Student:** ...The way things are organized in the music library, I think, is that it's organized by like sections and types of music. So, it's like all the woodwind quintets are in one area or something.... So, if it just said, "Woodwind Quintets," and I could go over there and look through the section, look at all the stuff and like, "Oh, this one looks interesting." Or like, Mahler symphonies or whatever it is.
- [different] **Student:** Yeah, sometimes I go back there [symphonic scores section] and I just am perusing, am trying to find something that looks interesting. Other times I go back there and I'm looking for a very specific piece.



Wayfinding in the scores

Student: ...when I was a freshman...I didn't know how to use the library, so- so difficult to find a book, you know, and I don't want to ask people all the time.



"Something every Conservatory freshman should know about the library"



Wayfinding in the scores

Student: It would be nice if the label is [on the spine.]



Wayfinding in the scores



Summary – score discovery

- Keep scores in stationary (non-compact), publicly accessible shelving
- A few tables and chairs nearby for students to lay out scores and examine
 - Students often examine many scores before selecting a few (or even none!) to check out
- Add wayfinding and guidance on call numbers



Listening to music

Often happens online

- **Student:** ...YouTube, they have links that click. So, if you like this piece maybe you can just random click on the other piece, and then you find the other interesting music too. Yeah. Very good.
- **Interviewer:** So that happens to you often, that you find a piece by clicking randomly?
- **Student:** Yeah. Just-finished this piece and- OK! Give that piece a try.



"How you recently discovered a piece of music that you like"



Listening to music

The physical experience

- **Student:** Yeah, so he just has a zillion records and a record player and there's lots of good stuff....I was just flipping through and I found some neat piano music that I hadn't heard before. I don't have anything specific. Just, like, a fun thing I might listen to.
- **Interviewer:** So, you like...that you can, kind of just poke through?
- **Student:** Yeah.



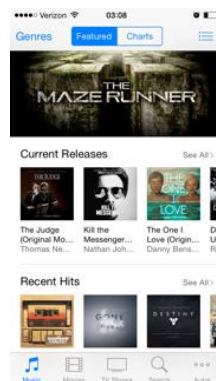
"How you recently discovered a piece of music that you like"



Listening to music

Online, yes, but that's not all.

- **Student:** ... how I recently discovered [a piece of music I like] was **iTunes**. But, otherwise, if it's like a piece of music that I would like to play, **I'll hear it in a concert. I will hear somebody talking about it because a lot of times in studio class, we'll talk about rep and stuff like that.** So, sometimes, I'll just be like, "I want to go find something specific in the library," and I will stumble across this other thing that sounds interesting.



"How you recently discovered a piece of music that you like"



Listening to music

Need spaces with good sound for this to happen

- **Student:** The only reason that I said this was a great place to listen to music is because at home we have these speakers. And they look kind of crummy and little, but they also have a sub. So, we listen to music there. My roommates and I...
- **Interviewer:** ...If there was a place on campus that had good speakers... that were available to you- what space would they be in?
- **Student:** I don't really know, to be honest. I don't really know where it would be acceptable to just have loud noise playing. I mean, if there were, like, a magical room in the library, or in the music building somewhere that uses space to just listen to music, that'd be pretty cool.



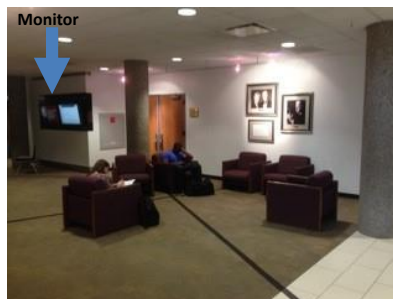
"A great place to listen to music"

Dancers – same concept, but video!

- Interviewer: ...Are there multi-media, video resources, that you could imagine being helpful to you?
- Student: **Add every ballet you can find. Choreography. Any works by anyone. Add it. Because they can all be helpful to us.** Especially with our choreography classes to get inspiration or ideas, and the fact that some of us are huge dance nerds and we just like watching it.
- Interviewer: **If there was a place in the library...that you could watch some of this, would it be like a home theatre setup, ...would it be a personal place, just for you to watch?**
- Student: **...both...** a personal place that you could do it, or even like, a room, with just like a nice...TV, just like- with some beanbags on the floor, or, even chairs... **I know we would utilize it, because it's easier than us all sitting on top of each other in the dorm room.**

Encourage “passive” discovery

- **Student:** [The monitor] just shows an event list of everything that’s happening... you’ll see something and you’re like, “I had no idea. You know, Berlin Philharmonic Quartet is going to be here. What?” So you can go and you’ll see some concerts you’re interested in or something.



“A place where you socialize”
Area is a natural gathering spot as people wait for rehearsals nearby



Traditional Library Listening



Individual listening -- headphones



Traditional Library Listening



Group listening/study room



UMKC
2/27/2015

Summary - listening discovery

A place to invite scholarly discovery & collaboration

- Room(s)/area(s) dedicated for group listening
- Open and inviting – half glass walls?
- Near music/media service desk and collections for easy access to CDs, DVDs, and scores
- Fairly soundproof (avoid disturbing nearby quiet study)
- Excellent audio and video system, internet, ability for students to connect own devices
- Large monitor(s) for videos & for viewing online scores
- To accommodate groups – perhaps 4-8?
- Reserveable, but open when not reserved (technology secured)

UMKC
2/27/2015

Ethnographic research

- Holistic approach
- Guides prioritizing
- Lends credibility to voiced needs
- More needed surrounding performing arts libraries!



Selected bibliography

Briden, Judi. "Photo Surveys: Eliciting More Than You Knew to Ask For." In *Studying Students: The Undergraduate Research Project at the University of Rochester*, edited by Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons, 40-47. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2007.

Briden, Judi and Sarada George. "Picture My Work." In *Studying Students: A Second Look*, edited by Nancy Fried Foster, 25-44. Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2013.

includes list of published library photo-elicitation studies

Hursh, David W. and Christine B. Avenarius. "What Do Patrons *Really* Do in Music Libraries?: An Ethnographic Approach to Improving Library Services." *Music Reference Services Quarterly* 16, no. 2 (Apr-Jun 2013): 84-108.

