Be an Observer

Phase one: Align space descriptions with Library mission statement.

- Investigate and define how the library's spaces support the overall mission by providing a specific type of environment.
  - Example: PCC Library supports the college mission by providing an environment that fosters discovery, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.
- Use this language to create a framework to hang space descriptions from
- Include self-reflective language or questions in the space descriptions

Investigate: Library Spaces working group members become anthropologists by observing people (doing field work). The idea is to capture visual and text-based reflections on how they observe people using spaces to do work/collaborate/accomplish shared goals/those sorts of things.

Quick reads about field work:
- How to Increase Your Powers of Observation, Time Magazine
- How to Develop Sherlock Holmes-Like Powers of Observation and Deduction, Lifehacker
- Systematic Observation, UC Davis

In Plain English: Observe people doing stuff - are they working alone, in groups? What kinds of things do you notice about them? There's no wrong observation to make. It's normal to have observations that contradict one another. There cannot be too many observations - the more we have, the better conclusions we can draw.

You could capture your observation by writing a few notes. You might take a photo of a large group of people working together (it's polite to ask someone for consent to take a picture). You could grab a pencil and sketch what you see a lone person doing as they focus on some project or work. Again, not a wrong way to do this - so try to have a little fun with it.
Goal 1: To have something concrete to work from that will allow the group to consider themes and language that emerge. These themes will likely feed into the process of naming the zones in Library spaces by the following characteristics:

- energy
- noise
- furniture

Goal 2: Use the observations collected to generate options students can vote on in a walk-up process, we recommend any of the “dot voting” methods [example 1, 2, 3]. Remember that you want to have natural, student-friendly language to choose from.

Some potential questions/voting options:

- How are you currently using this space?
- How did/are you use this space today?
- What spaces are most important to you?
- What spaces to do visit most often? Why?
- What is this space?
- What does this building/space feel like to you today?
- Today, the energy or vibe or state of being in the library feels ______.
- What if this space wasn’t here anymore?
- What do you come here to do?
- What is your favorite/least favorite thing about this space?
- Questions about:
  - core features
  - rigidity, soft/not soft
  - moveable/fixed
  - comfort
  - size

“Refrigerator poetry” voting: Use your observations to create a list of words/phrases. Put out a prompt or series of prompts and let participants create responses with the words, phrases, ideas.

During this week the library feels:
- comfortable
- calming
- stressful
- tense
- crowded
- noisy
- quiet
- lonely
- chaotic
- supportive of group work

What’s your comfort zone? | Allie Flanary & Sara Robertson