Exploring Undergraduate Student Use of Learning Studio Space at the University of Kansas (KU)

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The Learning Studio

The Learning Studio is a collaboration between KU Libraries, the Office of Undergraduate Studies and IT. It is comprised of the top two floors of the 3rd floor of Anschutz Library. The Learning Studio provides open collaboration spaces and group study rooms where undergraduates can use the technology. It is hard to further their academic experience. There are also a number of students and services available.

- Research support provided by the Libraries
- The Writing Center
- Academic Achievement & Access Center tutoring
- Career advancement & professional development
- Learning Communities Peer Mentors
- The University Career Center (new addition)
- THE Work Help Room (new addition)
- Media Crossroads (new addition)

Project Team Members:
- Sofia Leung, Learning Studio Coordinator/Librarian
- Stephanie Gamble, Undergraduate Learning Specialist, KU Libraries
- Ellen Raimond, Program Coordinator, Undergraduate Studies
- Anne Madden Johnson, Assistant Director, Information Technology
- Amalia Monroe-Gulick, Director, Information Technology
- Students from the Social Sciences Content Development & Collective Assessment Librarians, KU Libraries

Process & Methods

The Libraries, Undergraduate Studies, and IT wanted to establish a baseline understanding of how undergraduates are currently using the Learning Studio space and which undergraduates. This would help us plan future programs and events. We determined that the best way to do this was via a survey.

Methodology: Survey with a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions

Sample: At randomly selected times, we asked students to complete the survey. The survey popped up on every computer workstation, although people could opt out or opt in to complete the survey.

Considerations: We tailored the questions to specifically reflect what KU currently provides. Instead of what we hoped it would provide, we thought it was more realistic and meaningful to ask students to complete the survey that the services were still free and available.

Limitations: Since the survey was made available via computer workstations, whenever the library was open, the majority of our completed surveys were generated. We thought it would help us learn if students recognized when services are available.

Survey Results & Findings

We received 1,900 survey responses, which is above and beyond what we expected. We tailored the questions to specifically reflect what KU currently provides. Instead of what we hoped it would provide, we thought it was more realistic and meaningful to ask students to complete the survey that the services were still free. We knew from a snapshot survey that the majority of undergraduates would go to work in group study space. This made sense as the reason for coming to the library for 1-2 hours.

We received 3,900 survey responses, which is above and beyond what we expected.

What have we learned from the data?

Q1. Why did you come to Anschutz Library today?
- 31% of survey participants reported "searching for group study space in the library" as the reason they came to the library. This made sense because the survey was more readily available to students than other options.
- The majority of survey participants reported that the majority of participants preferred to work in a group in the group study space. It is unclear that this was due to a lack of group study space. The results were not clear that the reasons were clear, which are already available.

Q2a. Where did you go to work in a group?
- The majority of participants preferred to work in a group in the group study space rather than in the group study rooms. It is unclear that this was due to a lack of group study space. The results were not clear that the reasons were clear, which are already available.

Q2b. Where did you go to work alone?
- The majority of survey participants, almost 60%, that came to the library to study alone, chose to work in quiet study space.
- 37% chose to work in group study space.

Q3. What is your major, if an undergraduate student?
- We found that the majority of survey respondents, almost 60%, that came to the library to study alone, chose to work in quiet study space.
- 37% chose to work in group study space.

Q4. How long did you stay?
- 27% reported staying in the library for 1-3 hours.
- 34% reported staying in the library for 4 or more hours.

Q5. What one thing would you change about Anschutz Library?
- We received 1,900 survey responses, which is above and beyond what we expected.
- Many respondents wanted better lighting or more comfortable seating. A few respondents wanted a more relaxed or comfortable environment.

Q6. What is your KU status?
- We received 1,900 survey responses, which is above and beyond what we expected.
- Many respondents wanted better lighting or more comfortable seating. A few respondents wanted a more relaxed or comfortable environment.

Recommendations

Future research & work
- Focus groups to explore student needs in more depth.
- Improve signage and wayfinding to help users find new & existing services.
- Questions to address with future research.
- Encourage students to complete surveys.
- Future research will help us strategically plan intentional programs, especially now that we have a better understanding of who these students are and how they use the space.

Lessons Learned
- We learned that participants were actually using the computer workstations, although we assumed they were used to help users find new & existing services.
- We should have provided an answer for "write a paper," which we assumed would correspond to a "write a paper" task.
- Our computer workstations were not distributing surveys. We now know that using the computer workstations for surveys could result in higher participation rates.

Conclusions

The Learning Studio's goals are to create opportunities for learning, encourage engagement with a wide range of information resources and collections, strengthen the importance of collaborative inquiry and support students as they adjust and succeed at the University of Kansas. This research will help us strategically plan intentional programs, especially now that we have a better understanding of who these students are and how they use the space.

Questions to address with future research:
- Improve signage and wayfinding to help users find new & existing services.
- Focus groups to explore student needs in more depth.
- Future research will help us strategically plan intentional programs, especially now that we have a better understanding of who these students are and how they use the space.
- How can we improve wayfinding especially when our spaces and services are constantly shifting and moving?