Dear Diary Study: Student & participant leadership in a library assessment project

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What We Did

- ☑ Recruited **6 undergraduate students** for a **ten week semi-asynchronous online diary study.** Volunteers were a variety of high and low on-campus library users from prior survey
- ☑ Students completed a weekly **asynchronous prompt** using **ethnographic & UX methods.** 1 week deadline with payment for each completed prompt. Prompts were a **mix of reflective writing, photos, and creative assignments.**
- ☑ Biweekly **synchronous group sessions** to discuss responses, follow up on previous discussion, and **collectively decide on next steps.**

Results

- ☑ Coordination with other Libraries staff facilitated **immediate improvements students could see**: a comment about broken outlets led to a systematic test throughout the building, repairing 10 outlets within the next month
- ☑ Students gained confidence as the environment empowered them to share thoughts and ideas. Feedback often reaffirmed findings from other studies, but **seeing connections made students feel less alone**
- ☑ We found this a successful model for **sustainably incorporating student voices in assessment decision-making**.

How We Did It

1. Comments on documents and +1s connected students to each other
2. Discussion of themes, areas of interest & presentation for the next session.
3. Students suggested & voted on upcoming prompts through Zoom polls
4. Invited staff to respond to student questions & ideas - including previews of work in progress - so student could see their impact.

Week 9: Shared Study Space Reflection

Over the course of the week, please visit Foster Business Library in Paccar Hall and spend some time studying or working there. In a few sentences (approx. 300-500 words), please reflect on your experience in the space. You are welcome to include photos if you would find it helpful.

Figure 1: Participant-generated weekly prompt

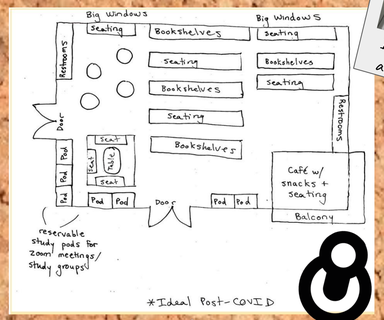
Key Takeaways

- **Make it fun!** Students liked prompts that allowed for more creativity (meme creation; library space design). This fostered deeper engagement with the design and feedback process and made it their own
- **Say 'yes' to your students**: show them they have agency wherever possible and be flexible - align your goals with theirs as much as you can!
- **Mix it up**: Different ideas, methodologies & alternatives help spark their own ideas. Include ways to engage beyond unmuting and speaking up
- **Act now**: Share feedback as you get it & invite other staff to participate along the way
- **There won't always be new data** but confirming findings is still valuable; students see themselves in the data
- **Relationship building is <u>crucial</u>** for substantive engagement and nuance

Memories

Dear Virtual Chat with a Librarian,
I think you already know what I'm going to say, because it seems like there's very little you don't know...
Can I imagine my college career without you?... Well; can dogs meow? Can bats navigate with just their eyesight?...
I think you know the answer.

I think it'd be really cool to have adjustable lighting



Maggie and Truc cared about our opinions and really tried to factor in our suggestions every week. As a result, I think as the quarter moved on more people started giving more personal details because we felt more comfortable sharing since we connected more with the prompts

Taking the last table at Ode with a power outlet