**Dear Diary Study:**

**Truc Ho and Maggie Faber**

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 crucial for substantive engagement and nuance.

**Figure 1: Participant-generated weekly prompt**

---

**Memories**

I think it’d be really cool to have adjustable lighting.

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.

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.