# Individual Assignment #2 - Ethnography

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Team2 : Unlock Boston

Location: Curry Student Center, Time Period: 1:20- 3:50

I picked curry student center as the place to focus on and chose the time period from about 1:30pm to 4:00pm. The reason why I chose this particular place and time period is that usually students will spend their spare time chatting or playing in student center and most students will not hold courses during the afternoon . Students, especially graduate students will sometimes stuck in their tasks and assignments in their spare time, so I think observation in the Snell Library will result in such consequence that everyone is busy doing their own assignment. The main question I sought to answer during this investigation is what exactly activities will people do in their spare time and whether they trend to stay indoors rather than go outside.

Sketch of location:
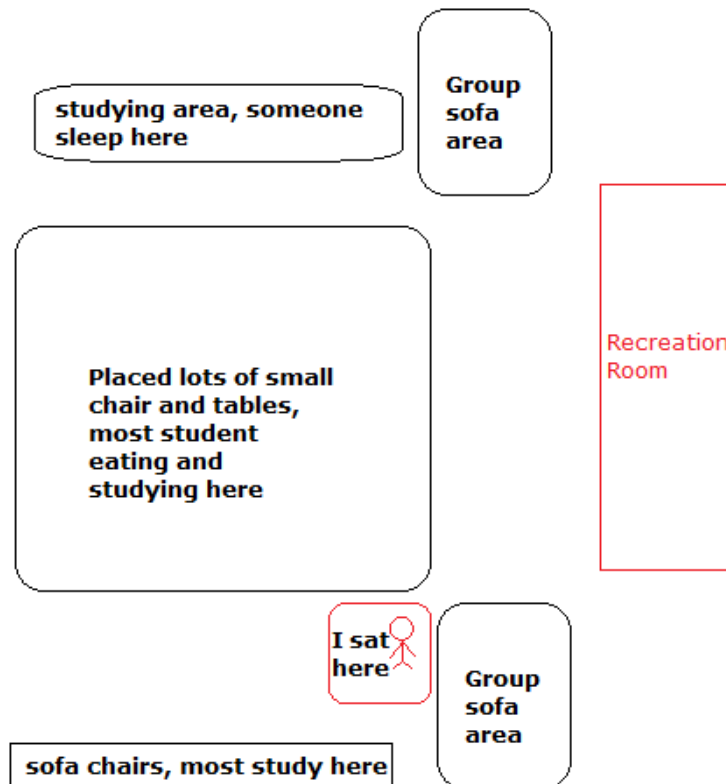
Interview Questions:

The 5 interview questions that our team developed are listed following:

1. How many hours do you spend going out rather than staying at home in your spare time weekly?

2. What do you mostly do at home in your spare time, for example, reading papers, surfing on internet, playing games, etc.?

3. Do you think your current lifestyle is healthy or not? Why?

4. What kind of factors do you think would really motivate or interest you to go out?

5. What kind of activities do you prefer most when going out?

Field Notes:

When first arrived, I found that 70 precent prople are doing their own business including doing homework and focusing on their laptops. There are two kinds of people in this group: one is staring at computer screen while having their lunch. I notice that among those who are using computer, 80% are using it searching course-related web, such as myNEU and google.com, only 2 of them are logging in social network sites like facebook and watching some vedios; the others just sat there, writing in their notes, and looked like seriously. It seems that they   may think hard about their homework and met with some problems. Most of them chose to sit at table because of placing their laptops.

The remaining 30 percents people are not single, most of them sitting together in sofa with friends or in couples, they focused less on their own jobs and more likely to chatting, some also took lunch here and had meals together with friends.

The recreation room is very busy, people played billiards, video games much often. However, just small amount of people chose to take table-tennis, which takes more exercises. The reason might be that due to the heavy load of assignment, students trend to choose recreation much more relaxed rather than tired.

About 20 minutes later, there came a group of people, chatting and laughing while seeking for seats. However, when they sat down around a sofa chair, they just took out their own laptop and focus on the screen, became less talktive and someone just played smart phones. Rather than being social with friends in reality, people are used

to chatting and sharing through the Internet.　After a while, some people who were at first focusing on their assignment and laptop felt tired and fell asleep in their seat or around the table. Even when they're sleeping, I could see that the laptop is still working and their materials are spread all over the table.

At this moment, I found the sunshiness in the curry center, shows that it's really a sunny day and good weather. Really a pity that people kept sitting indoors and stucked in their own business.

The most interesting I found here is that when some people's friends came here, bringing food to eat, those who were at first focusing on their laptops stopped doing works but shut down their power and started chatting, not talked about the assignment, but some trifles. Here I found that when people stay alone for a long time, they always hope for chatting and accompanied by others, however, when lots of people get together for a long time, they usually don't know what to continue and would choose focus on their own business, such as smart phones and laptops rather than communicating with friends.

In the remainning time, people kept leaving and coming frequently, sometimes maybe classes are over, groups of people will appear in student center, seeking for seat or avilable equipment in recreation room. Those who stayed here for a long time are usually alone and took some electronical devices with them, including ipad, laptops, smart phones etc. The recreation room kept be full of people and most students still chose playing video games and billiards rather than doing exercises.

Based on the phenomena I noticed during the observation, there can be summarized two kinds of health related problems of most people. Firstly, although students came in group, they're not real social, while gathered together in a group more than 6 people, they can hardly find topics and activities and so, refer to electronical devices. It is mostly because that some kinds of people are introverted and shy in face, but on the Internet, they can be very active. This point calls a necessity of application and website to be social to attract lots of people. Secondly, lots of people I observed looked really tired, and some even fall asleep. The main reason of this might be that the disorder of life result in the lack of sleep and unwillingness to do exercises. Students got high pressure because of the requirement of courses and assignment, which is likely to occupy their sleeping time. Thus, application which can really help student plan routine is very useful in this situation.

Implications for Design:

- High pressure: Going out, refreshing, relaxing, sports benefit us to study better.

- Non-social: App's social features, attract more user, help social relationship based on the Internet become social relationship in reality.

- Sedentary lifestyle: Notification function for alerting user to move around after some period.

- Effect of active buddies: Promoter for activities, easy for people finding noval and interesting activities, sharing their experience about activities.

- Listener: follow promoter, provide them a way to associate with those active people.