

# Team/Individual Assignment 2: Ethnography

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## Jointing

Please refer to the attachments.

## Summary

The setting I choose is the 2nd floor of Curry Student Center of Northeastern University. It's the place of gathering to the most approachable target users of our team project, Northeastern students. I wish to observe the lifestyle of Northeastern students and trigger the design inspiration to encourage students to go outside. Staying inside Curry is on the contrast of what we try to achieve, solution is also what I look for.

## Interview Questions

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

**Settings:** 2nd floor of Curry Student Center of Northeastern University excluding the gaming areas and the offices. A big open area with high ceilings and three kinds of seating, table, couch, and booth. Tables and couches are loosely arranged among the area.

### **Actions and Behaviors:**

Mr X stayed alone by a table with earphones on and facing the laptops. Courses slides are shown on the laptops. He stayed still for almost all the time I observed.

Mr Y was watching a soccer game with his mac. He was very exciting and shouted a little bit out of sudden though nobody seems to with him and listen to him.

Girl M and N were sitting around a small round table checking on their own cellphones. They talked to each other randomly. Judging from the response time, the conversation between didn't deliver very well.

A group of three guys were sitting by the couch and chatted loudly. They teased each other and laughed. They left 20 min after I noticed them.

Around the square table near the gaming area. A couple stayed studying and exchanged some conversation. They don't talked much and stayed there the whole time.

Several people came alone or with friends and looked for available seats. The places got crowded at that time and they left.

Mr Z came and sat on the very end of a couch trying not to disturb the person already on it. He pulled out his cell phone as soon as he settled. He stayed for 10 min and left.

A pair of students stayed for an hour and one of them went downstairs to get food and spread on the relatively small table. Laptops, books and gloves were squeezed by food and drinks.

### **Quotes and Summary from Interviews:**

Answers for each question from both interviewees are as followed.

1. 5-10 hours weekly for going out during spare time.

2. TV drams, surf the internet, play card games, reading.
3. Almost not healthy, sleep too late, use too much computer.
4. Weather, special days, adequate social connection, transportation, etc.
5. Shopping, bowling, dining, traveling, and some outdoor activities.

**Reflection:** People mostly spend a gap time during classes in student center. It's a place bearable of noise and comfortable with much room. Though most people stayed for a long period of time, those still were their time of spare that they can control. From interviews I concluded that people are not satisfied with their current lifestyle and craving for better motivation to go outside. Mobile devices and electronics takes up much time of a student.

**Impact of Observer:** None. Basically I'm one of them.

## Implications for Design

- People use mobile phones most of the time. A mobile app will be more accessible to people when designing my system.
- The gap time of students or other people can be sufficiently utilized to go outside and see more things. The system might be more attractive to pick the gap time of people rather than a carefully-scheduled trip.
- Good weather and transportation is essential for going outside. A good integrated system should provide routes and weather information about multiple locations.
- People enjoy watching soccer or sports events together. A social system can utilize this to gather strangers to watch games together in the same area.
- People sitting right in front of each other might focus on cell phones rather than each other. The system should encourage people met to interact in person using a pop-up notification that blocks all content for instance.

# Attachments

Jointing / 2:00pm roughly

People normally sit in pairs or alone in Army student center 2nd floor.

The sitting area can be categorized into 3 different types:

- ① table seat
- ② Couch
- ③ Booth

When I arrive, it's difficult to find a seat in booth areas. Table seats are almost full.

People sitting alone all with their earphones on, seems to be isolated from the surrounding. They are all focused on whatever they are doing.

Some are studying with course slides on their screens.

Some are browsing websites. Facebook, watching video streaming.

Some are watching online streaming of sports game. They even hurraed loudly when players scored.

Student centers are bearable of noises. So they may giggle or some other noise making.

Apart from people sitting alone, other people sit with 2-s groups. (Mostly in pairs, almost no groups more than 3 people)

The behaviors of them becomes a bit diversified.

Two girls sitting on a round table, they are checking on their own cellphones and talking to each other randomly. It's not likely that they can hear each other clearly.

Three <sup>peop</sup> groups of guys are chatting on the couch. ~~also~~ They just leaning on each other and laugh very loudly. They didn't stay for very long time. They left after roughly 20 min. after I notice them.

Around the square table near the gaming area. A couple stay there trying to study together. They are not doing the same school work, but they exchange some

conversation every other time. They pretty stay there the whole time till now.

Another two guys are sitting by the couch. They seem to discuss some serious topic. During one's speech, the other person will nod and make response to them, they left for roughly 10 min.

The overall space in Army student center is not fully ~~upt~~ utilized. ~~Some peop~~ Space begins to get crowded and all tables are filled. Booths are filled long before I came to the student center to try to observe.

People started to show up at the entrance of the side I sit on and look around to find places. Noticing there are no available seats, they left. Several more people came alone by themselves or with friends look and left.

New people came in, they can only find seats in the big semi-circle couch.

A guy with thick clothing came in and sit near me on a yellow couch. He sits

by the very end of it, because there are people on the couch already. Right after he sits down, he takes out his cell-phon and play with it. It's not polite for me to go closer to see what he's doing though. Several more people came in and sit. One even takes a nap on the couch.

70% of people stays in the Army student center the whole time I was there they barely change a position of their staying. Some pair of people gets food from down stairs in order to stay longer. The space is busy in the round table areas, they spread the area with books, laptops and food and drinks. It's a bit clumsy to them.

(End roughly 4:10.

And I interview a girl with my prepared questions. See if I can get more

### Interviewer 1

1. Hours weekly going out rather than home:  
= Roughly 4:3 ratio, going out in respect to staying. 4 days going out. 3 days staying in. roughly 20 hours per week.
2. Things to do staying in.
  - ① Surf the internet
  - ② Watching movies online
  - ③ Play card games, electronic games
  - ④ Reading
3. Healthy or not  
= Not healthy, sleep too late.  
Fitness regularly, actually not bad
4. Factors:  
Good weather / holidays (special days)  
Hang out with friends

### 5. Activities:

Shopping, Bowling, Dining,  
Outdoor activities, skiing, etc  
Hiking (more like taking a walk)

Test subject is a Chinese Girl.

### Interviewee 2

1. 5-10 hours weekly.  
Mostly dining with friends.
2. Watching tv dramas.  
Mostly doing homework, even no spare time
3. not so healthy. Regularly exercising, but going to bed quite late.  
Don't like drinking water.  
Use computer too much.
4. Convenient transportation.  
more spare time  
adequate social connection  
weather

### 5. "I'm pretty standard"

Dining, travelling,  
bar, karaoke  
movies.

Shopping