

TIME & PLACE

Analyzing emotional & behavioral responses to Parkland spaces

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The Topic in Question

- We are examining the ways in which students utilize the different spaces at Parkland College.
- We are observing how the design of specific areas on Parkland's campus evoke certain emotional responses within students.
- We are synthesizing our observations, examinations, and Anthropologist and space revivalist, Fred Kent's research.

THE RESEARCH QUESTION

What characteristics of Parkland College's U-wing, C-wing, and center library area evoke certain emotional responses in people? Why?

Fred Kent

Urban Anthropologist

- Founded the Project for Public Spaces (PPS)
- According to the PPS website, Kent is a leading authority on revitalizing public spaces and a leading authority in the areas of livability and smart growth.
- The PPS website mentions that Kent studied with Margaret Mead and William H. Whyte on the “Street Life Project.”
- The website also mentions that Kent received his B.A. in Economics and Masters in Urban Geography at Columbia University, where he also studied anthropology, planning, and transportation.

Kent's Research Applied

- Kent's research on the effective uses of space, based upon human observation, is the framework of our findings.
- Kent's research processes laid a foundation on our methodological approach to our research question.

Dr. Homero Lopez

Founding President of Estrella Community College

Serves on National Advisory Boards for the Community College Survey of Student Engagement

- According to the *Educause Review*, Dr. Lopez has 32 years of experience in higher education with a special focus on designing learning spaces.
- The website also mentions that Lopez received his M.A. from the University of Michigan and his Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of Texas at Austin.

Lopez's Designs Applied

- Lopez employed the use of “Radical Flexibility” in his campus design to encourage student engagement. This principle applied to our findings in the C-Wing

Methodology

Step 1: Identify the question

- After narrowing down the topic of utilization of space, our first step was identifying a research question that was: Feasible, interesting, novel, ethical, and relevant.

Step 2: Locate our demographic

- Decided to observe student behavior in the U-wing, C-wing, and library area
- Planned to interview 10 patrons from each location
 - 5 females & 5 males from U-Wing
 - 5 females & 5 males from C-wing
 - 5 females & 5 males from library area

Step 3: Develop interview questions

- Spent half of the time interviewing and half of the time observing

Interview Questions:

How often do you make use of this space?

Why do you come to this particular space?

What types of activities do you do here?

What is the first thing you notice(d) about this space?

What type of emotional response does this space evoke for you?

What do you like about this space? Dislike?

What would you add to this space to make it more inviting?

Methodology

Step 4: Collect data

- Began observing human behavior in our three chosen areas
- Took note of activities taking place, apparent emotions/energy, material layout, and physical and structural design
- Began interviewing subjects from each area, selected at random-had subjects fill out IRB forms
- Recorded the interviewees and took note of their responses

Step 5: Interpret data

- After compiling observations and interviews, we began interpreting the data we collected and made parallels with Kent's anthropological work.
- Began analyzing findings to draw conclusions about what emotions are evoked by design of three chosen areas and synthesizing ideas to maximize the usability

C-Wing

The underdeveloped cross section of Parkland's Fine &



C-Wing

- Heavy traffic, not easily maneuverable due to bathroom structure in middle of wing
- **More enclosed: one window- view of brick walls (less exposure to natural light than U-Wing or library)**
- Sectioned-off alcoves for studying-tables and vending machines, arranged in casual manner
- Strong lighting, bigger chair to table ratio
- Classrooms and bulletin board at one end of study space
- Color scheme brown, green, yellow



Observations for C-Wing

- Groups of people who come to C-Wing everyday
- Use area because of proximity to classes and seeing people from same major
- Usually talk, watch Netflix, do homework, eat, use phone
- Typical emotional response reported: **familiarity, routine space, or no effect from space**
- Multiple quiet zones in building, usually go to one closest to classes
- **Change:** Number of outlets(then can sit anywhere)

<i>LIKES:</i>	The couch seating, secluded tables in corners of the wing
<i>DISLIKES:</i>	Harsh white lighting, space can get loud



The Library

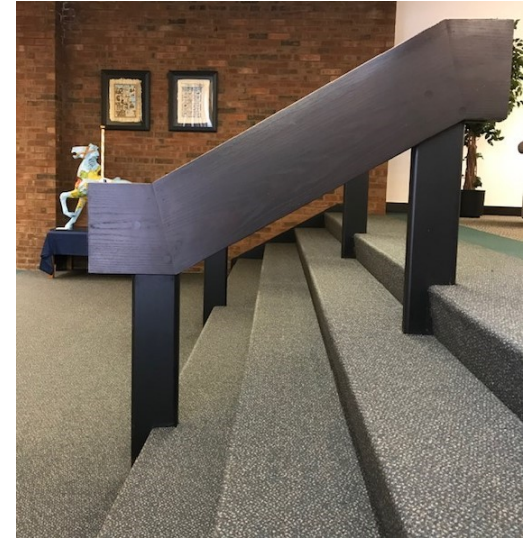
First Floor Library

- Space most strongly influenced by lighting
 - There are multiple lighting fixtures: desk lamps (which most students had turned on while studying), overhead LED lighting, Victorian-esque wall lights that create a dimmer, warmer atmosphere, large windows that let in natural



Library

- Different types of furniture-tables, love chairs-for multiple purposes
- Furniture placed in orderly fashion-open study spaces, resource desks near entrance
- Art on walls, posters- color scheme neutral accent purple/green/brick
- Combination of interior/exterior lighting
- One rooftop garden, no space for seating

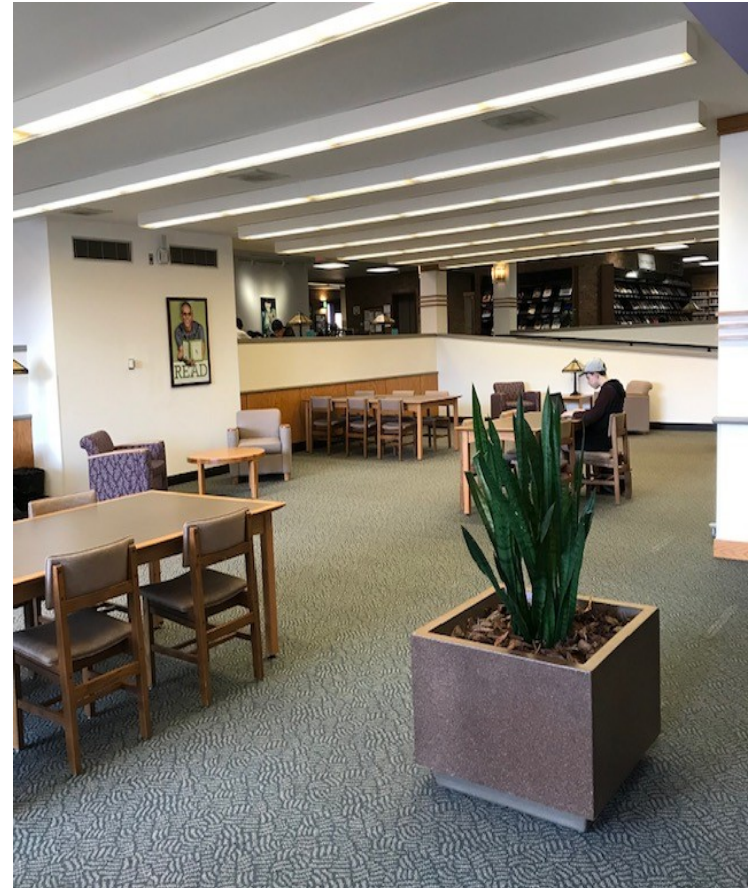


Observations for Library

- Students come to space primarily to work on homework
- feel safe, open, access to tech

<i>Likes:</i>	Private spaces and open spaces, vivid lighting compared to home
<i>Dislikes:</i>	Main service desk, lighting on second floor

- **Change:** More comfortable chairs for computer area, bean-bag chairs (comfortability), info desks together



Observations cont.

- Found space to be conducive for studying and concentration
- strikes balance between comfort and focus
- Lighting influence
- interviewee stated-library resource centers could be grouped together to create the most efficient use of the space



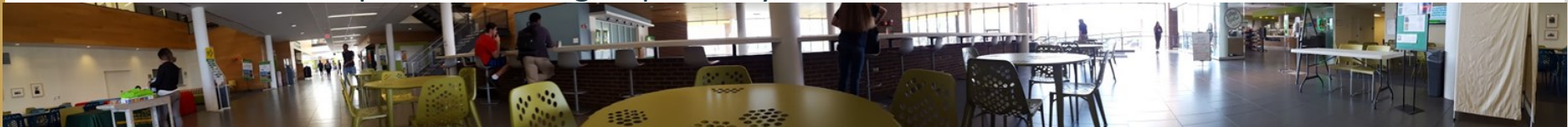


U wing

The once non-existent, now colorful and bright social oasis for
Parkland students

Physical and Structural Description of U-Wing

- Open space
- Ample windows for natural lighting
- Colorful, modern design in building and furniture-accented
 - Blue
 - Green
 - Red
 - Grey
- Bistro and bookstore
- Furniture placement for group activity



Observations for U-Wing

- Used for lunch as leisure/waiting spot
- Bright and inviting, homey, colorful
- **Dislikes:** noise, sometimes rude people, not a place to study
- **Change:** more closed off spaces, comfier tables/chairs



Overall view

- Bright, open, well designed space for its purpose
- Interviewees' suggestions-closed off spaces/comfortable furniture



The importance of natural light

In both our observations & interviews people expressed the tendency to gravitate towards spaces that included larger windows



- ★ Seats facing windows in the *library* were filled during every observation time
- ★ Librarian Jane Smith deemed windows her favorite feature of her classroom
- ★ Student majority expressed the windows to be pivotal to their experience at the *union*

The Politics of Seating

Students say they spend enough time and energy on campus to have to sleep on site/ some staff agree yet the furnishings and placement of these prove to oddly encourage/discourage this behavior

Jane Smith(instruction librarian):

“bean bag chairs would be even more inviting to take a nap”

“There was a sofa -- people thought ‘oh wow i’m going to sleep here’-- so we got rid of the sofa.”



Dr. Lopez's Findings Applied

Design Principle: Radical Flexibility

- According to Lopez, Radical Flexibility,

“means freeing up faculty and students to customize the learning environment to meet the teaching and learning pedagogy, delivery system, and technology needs on demand.”

- As an interviewee suggested the space needs more outlets and more interaction/use of outside lighting/views-windows
- Based upon the appearances and responses of the students, the C-Wing is a “routine” area, but generates a “trapped” feeling due to the lack of mobility and harsh lines
- Radical Flexibility will provide students with engaging learning space, while having access to proper technology to maximize the learning environment

Learning Studio Features



Source: Herman Miller, Inc.

- ✓ Comfort, Flexibility, Easily Reconfigured, Functionality
- ✓ Supports Array of Collaborative & Social Learning Activities
- ✓ Aesthetically & Visually Stimulating

Source: DesignLearningSpaces.com

Conclusions

- **The general research question was:**
 - What characteristics of Parkland College's U-wing, C-wing, and center library area evoke certain emotional responses in people? Why?
- The emotional response we found overall from interviewees was that they felt relatively relaxed and familiar with the spaces, and even happy in the certain locations we surveyed
- As Parkland is a college, these responses mean that the facility is doing well at its job, which is to facilitate study and concentration and creating a "successful" space
- **The characteristics of the spaces that interviewees had the emotional responses to:**
 - ample use of outdoor lighting (library, union)
 - many outlets readily available (library)
 - moveable seating(c-wing, union, library)
 - bright colors(union),
- These points correlate with Lopez's concept of **Radical Flexibility**, which is said to force students to work collaboratively, which in turn benefits the college/educational process

Overall Conclusion

- This research is valuable due to the increasing importance of inclusive and dynamic spaces on college/university campuses as students spend an increasing amount of time on campuses in order to aid academic and social development
- Thus far, our conclusions suggest that Anthropologists, architects, and designers should utilize human observation as a tool for developing positive and effective college/university spaces as many patrons are unaware of what design principles influence them

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