

Understanding Student Use of a Disciplinary Library:

Focus Group Script

Welcome, students. Please help yourself to food – feel free to get up and about during this discussion. First, thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this discussion. My name is [Assessment Librarian Name] and I'm a librarian here at [Name of Institution]. – I'll be facilitating the discussion and [Subject Specialist Librarian] will be taking notes. We are also going to record this session so that we can make sure that we capture all of what you say.

The reason we've invited you today is to talk with you about how you use the [Discipline] Library, what kinds of things you do here, and how we can best support your work as students. The focus group will last about an hour and will be very informal.

First, let's go around and quickly introduce ourselves. Just use your first name and tell us what school and department you are from, and whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student. I'll also be sending around a sign in sheet. You can be sure that we will not be using your name in any report that we write about these feedback sessions.

There are a few ground rules.

1. We want you to do the talking. I'd like everyone to have the opportunity to participate.
2. There are no right or wrong answers. All of you have important experiences to share.
3. You can be sure that your names will not be used in any reports. We will record this session and take notes in order to make sure that we are accurate, but won't use names in reporting out.

So let's get started.

As I stated before, I'd like to talk with you about how you use this space here at the [Branch Name] Library?

When you come here, what are the kinds of things you do? [Probes relate to]

- studying – study for a test or for class
- meeting up with friends
- meeting up with colleagues or fellow students
- collaborating – on school projects
- meet with library staff
- get assistance from library staff
- check out a book
- use equipment like special software or printers
- look at books or journals; check out a book or something on reserve

What are the other spaces you use for these kinds of activities, particularly those related to your work as a student? [Relate these follow ups to what was said in previous responses] [Probes could include:

- Main Library

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- Other study spaces in the [disciplinary] school
- Tech Center
- Dorms

So how does the library space compare to other spaces you use for these kinds of activities? [Relate these follow ups to what was said in previous responses]

What works better at the library?

What works better for you in other spaces?

Are there ways that working in the library makes you more successful as a student? [Probes might include]:

- better grades on test
- convenient to classes and instructors
- opportunities to work or learn from others in your department
- more connected to the department
- meet up socially with friends or students in your classes or department (Engagement)
- easy access to help from specialists/librarians

What are some things the library could do to make this a better place for you to do your work as a student?

My final question for you to consider is a more theoretical question.

I want you to imagine that you are in charge of the School of [Discipline] here and you have limited space for student work – how would you prioritize space needs, i.e. library space or lab space? What would be most important to you as students trying to get that work done? If you had that space, how would you organize or furnish it so that you could do all that you need to do?