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EDTC 809: Observational Exercise

New Jersey City University

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Jottings:

Environment Description:

- *Setting:*
 - Community-based public university
 - Designed to support diverse social work activities
 - Emphasizes community engagement and accessibility
- *Seating Arrangement:*
 - Multiple Layers of Chairs:
 - Accommodates various social interactions
 - Flexible seating for different work styles
- *Quazibo Layout:*
 - Outer Area:
 - Individual seating options
 - There is a variety of chairs to choose from
 - Encourages personal space and quiet work
 - Inner Area:
 - The central hub of activity
 - Higher foot traffic
 - Facilitates group interactions and meetings
- *Overall Layout:*
 - Open space design
 - Promotes ease of movement and accessibility
 - Encourages collaboration and a community feel

Figure 1:



Figure 2:



Figure 3:



Full Observational Notes

The university's environment reveals a solid commitment to inclusivity, as demonstrated by diverse seating options that cater to various needs and preferences. This inclusive approach ensures that all individuals can find a comfortable space that accommodates both personal and collaborative work styles. The open design further enhances this inclusivity by creating a welcoming and adaptable atmosphere that is suitable for various activities and social work practices. This layout easily accommodates solitary tasks and group interactions, promoting accessibility and interaction throughout the space. This observation was conducted in response to the following qualitative research question: ***How do the diverse seating options and open design of the university's environment, particularly in the***

Quazibo area, influence students' and staff's experiences of inclusivity, comfort, and interaction within personal and collaborative work settings?

A vital feature of this environment is the Quazibo area, a focal point within the open walk-path setting that draws significant foot traffic and attention. The Quazibo's design is characterized by its thoughtful arrangement of seating that seamlessly blends functionality with aesthetics, creating an inviting atmosphere for all users. The outer area of the Quazibo has individual seats that boast diverse options for comfort and style, catering to various preferences and needs. These seats are made of concrete, stone, or metal.

During the observation, one male sat comfortably while browsing his phone, utilizing the ergonomic seating to relax and focus on his task. Meanwhile, a female was upright and engaged with her laptop, indicating the adaptability of the seating arrangements to support different postures and activities. The design caters to solitary endeavors and fosters social interaction, as illustrated by a pair of one female and one male casually chatting. This setup exemplifies the space's capacity to support solitary and social activities, emphasizing the environment's versatility and inclusivity. The Quazibo area, therefore, stands out as a dynamic space that enhances user experience by accommodating a wide range of activities and interactions.

The inner area of Quazibo was a vibrant central hub, bustling with activity and serving as a hub for the university community. It experiences the most traffic and interactions, making it a lively focal point where students, faculty, and visitors interact, whether sitting or standing. (I was unable to determine exactly who was who, as I went by conversations I could hear.) This space facilitated group gatherings and social exchanges, providing ample room for people to congregate, discuss, and collaborate. Its location within

the campus layout allows it to serve as a main thoroughfare, giving access to different parts of the school, including direct access to the parking lot and other essential facilities.

The open design of the inner Quazibo supports free movement and accessibility, ensuring that everyone can easily navigate the space. The area is meticulously planned to encourage a harmonious blend of private study and public interaction spaces, catering to a diverse range of activities. Whether someone is seeking a quiet corner to focus on their studies or a lively spot to engage in group discussions, the Quazibo offers an adaptable environment that meets these needs.

This layout enhances connectivity between different parts of the school, promoting unity and cohesion within the campus. Pathways are intuitively arranged to guide users naturally from one area to another, reducing congestion and facilitating a smooth flow of movement. The design prioritizes functionality and fosters a welcoming atmosphere, inviting individuals to linger, interact, and make the most of the dynamic environment of the inner Quazibo.

Overall, the environment is thoughtfully designed to support a dynamic range of interactions, from solitary activities to social engagements. The variety of seating options reflects an inclusive design, catering to different preferences and needs. The open space layout enhances connectivity and underscores the inner Quazibo area's role as a communal gathering space, facilitating individual focus and collaborative efforts.

Analytic Section:

Part#1: Coding

Full Observation	Notes Code
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Observations of the University Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusive seating diversity - Comfort for all work styles - Welcoming, adaptable design - Supports all activities - Influence of seating on inclusivity
Quazibo Area Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quazibo as a focal point - Blend function and aesthetics - Diverse seating options - Study without isolation
Example Observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relaxed posture with phone - Laptop adaptability - Solitary and social support - Activity range enhancement
Inner Quazibo Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active community hub - Facilitates collaboration - Efficient movement channel - Easy navigation and access - Blends study and interaction - Promotes unity
Overall Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solitary to social support - Inclusive seating reflection - Enhances connectivity

Part#2: Analysis and Interpretation

Observations of the University Environment

As a doctoral student researcher in educational technology with a professorial perspective, I bring a unique lens to my exploration of communal learning environments. My academic journey is deeply intertwined with my hands-on experiences in these settings, where I actively engage as a fellow community member. Immersing in this space, I utilized my iPad to integrate into the environment, capturing the design and functionality of the space.

This approach allowed me to experience firsthand the dynamic interplay between individual and collaborative workspaces. As an educator and researcher, I am particularly interested in how such environments can be optimized to enhance educational experiences. My observations were conducted from within the space, allowing me to appreciate the meticulous crafting of an environment that supports diverse needs and promotes accessibility and community involvement. By situating myself within the community, I gained valuable insights into how design facilitates learning and interaction, ultimately contributing to my research in educational technology.

Quazibo Area Description (Inner & Outer)

The Quazibo area is a cornerstone of the university's architectural vision, embodying a duality that supports both introspective study and vibrant social interaction. **The Inner Quazibo Area** is designed with precision, offering a cocoon of focus for students who seek solitude or small group collaboration. The seating arrangements are ergonomically designed and strategically positioned to maximize natural light and acoustics, creating a serene atmosphere that fosters deep concentration. Meanwhile, the Outer Quazibo Area extends this vision into a more open and expansive setting, inviting larger groups to gather and engage in dynamic discussions. The transition between these spaces is seamless, allowing users to move fluidly between introspection and interaction, reflecting the university's commitment to fostering a holistic educational environment.

Example Observations

In the **Inner Quazibo Area**, I observed students immersed in a state of flow, surrounded by design elements that subtly encourage sustained focus. The choice of materials, such as soft textures and muted colors, complements the acoustically optimized architecture, minimizing distractions and enhancing concentration. The seating is versatile, offering configurations that can be easily adapted for individual study or spontaneous group discussions. This adaptability is key to the space's success, allowing it to meet the diverse needs of its users while maintaining an atmosphere of tranquility and productivity.

Overall Environment

The overall environment of the university is a testament to its dedication to inclusivity and adaptability. The design philosophy seamlessly integrates private study nooks with expansive communal areas, promoting a fluid transition between different learning modes. This fluidity is achieved through architectural elements such as open corridors, glass partitions, and multifunctional furniture that encourage movement and interaction. The environment is not static; it is a living, breathing entity that evolves in response to the needs of its users. As a researcher and participant, I am struck by the profound impact this environment has on fostering a sense of belonging and community. It is a space where individuals are empowered to engage, collaborate, and innovate, underscoring the transformative potential of thoughtfully designed learning environments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the space is meticulously crafted to support the dynamic nature of social work within a community-based school setting. It offers a flexible and adaptable

environment that facilitates personal and group activities, which is critical for effective social work practices. By accommodating diverse needs and promoting a balance between individual and collaborative work, the environment enhances the educational experience and supports the school's community-driven mission. The thoughtful design effectively balances areas for independent work and social interaction, fostering a collaborative and engaging atmosphere. The open layout and strategic placement of seating options promote both accessibility and community involvement, enhancing the overall functionality and appeal of the space. This design supports the diverse needs of social work within the school setting, creating an environment conducive to learning and interaction.

References

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