

PSYCO 494

Human Factors and Ergonomics

Hands-On Project Handout

Introduction

Grant MacEwan University's City Centre Campus (10700-104 Avenue NW), designed by Barry Johns Architects, Wood O'Neill Architects, and Wensley Spotowski Architects, opened on May 16, 1993. It has been described by many casual visitors as "a nice place." Critically evaluate this statement in terms of the principles of Natural Design presented in class and in the readings. The write-up is due in class on **Thursday, October 13**; late papers are penalized 10% per day (including weekends).

Goals

The goals of this hands-on project are:

- to apply the four principles of **Natural Design** to a critical analysis in a case study
- to give you an introductory "**hands-on**" experience in human factors, ergonomics, and design
- to become familiar with **APA style**
- to have some **fun** ;-)

Walkthrough

Note: Class is canceled on **Thursday, September 29**, to allow you to complete the walkthrough.

Imagine you were a student here. (If you are familiar with the campus, go with someone who is new to it, and have them do the walkthrough while you "shadow" them.) You have just arrived on campus, most likely by car or bus.

- Is parking/taking the bus or LRT convenient?
- How would things be different if it were -30 °C? (or +30 °C?)

It's time for your first class, a psychology lab, in room **5-168**.

- List the steps involved in getting to this room, and the path you took (including any errors!).
- Describe the ease of finding this room (e.g., how is the signage?).

Now you have to do some research for one of your classes, so you decide to go to the **library**.

- Where is the library?
- What helped/hindered your finding the library?

Next, you have some questions to ask your instructor, so you head to the office in room **6-392**.

- Again, briefly describe the steps you took in locating this office.
- Whose office is this?

You need help with your wireless Internet connection, so you decide to go to ITS--Web Services in **7-306**.

- Describe the ease of finding this office, again describing the path you took.
- How efficient is the path you took?

The staff in 7-306 tell you that you actually need to go to "Technology Support" to get help. They think the room number is **6-209**.

- Where is room 6-209?

By now, you are getting a little hungry and thirsty, so you want to buy something from one of the vending machines you have passed on the way--but you only have \$100 bills (okay, you only have a \$20 bill).

- Where are the change machines located? Do they accept \$20 bills?
- Where else can you get change?

Your seminar tomorrow is in the **Kate Elizabeth Stollery Nursing Wing**.

- Go to a map, and try to find this location.
- Where is this wing located? (Does it even exist?)

A friend calls on your cell phone and asks to meet you at the campus pub, "**Towers on Fourth**." Before you can ask directions, your battery dies.

- Again, how easy or difficult is this location to find, and why?
- Where is the entrance, and what is the room number?

Critical Questions

Come up with **two** different critical questions about problematic design of the City Centre Campus, and **answer** them (i.e., propose a redesign) using what you have learned in the course. For example:

- Consider your typical day as a student: What amenity is particularly difficult to find? What amenity is lacking? (Or, what important amenities are provided that are missing from the UofA campus, or vice-versa?)
- Consider the typical day for someone else: What aspect of the design makes it challenging for someone with different abilities to use the campus?

Place these questions in a separate section from the walkthrough. To receive marks for these critical questions, you must not repeat what you did for the rest of the walkthrough.

Write-Up

The walkthrough is not intended to dictate the structure of your write-up; you may organize your findings any way you like--but you must address the goals of this assignment (do not just answer the questions in the walkthrough). A significant portion of the marks for your write-up will be given to your critical evaluation of the design of the campus, based on the principles of Natural Design presented in class and in the readings.

The body of your paper must be more than 5 pages long, but not longer than 10 pages. You may use the first person ("I") in your write-up. Otherwise, you **must** write your hands-on project in "**APA style**". No abstract is required.

You may be familiar with MLA (Modern Language Association) style, often used for high school papers. ([MLA style](#) is about the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation, quotation, and documentation of sources.) However, psychology term papers and professional journal articles require APA (American Psychological Association) style, recently updated to the 6th edition. APA style dictates fonts, spacing, margins, etc. It also explains how to cite, in the appropriate format, all sources of information--otherwise, you are claiming those ideas as your own (i.e., plagiarism); and how to reference, at the end of the paper, all cited sources (the citation aspects of APA style do not apply to this assignment; no References section is required).

The Purdue Online Writing Lab has a good, updated APA formatting and style guide at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/>. Or see the recommended readings for the course: *A Short Guide to Writing About Psychology* (3rd edition), or *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition, 2009) and www.apastyle.org.

In your write-up, make sure that you address these specific issues:

- What do the room numbers (e.g., "6-392") mean?
- How does a room number correspond to the physical location of the room on each floor?
- Are there any problems with maps/directories? (Hints: see the Main Directory just north of the cafeteria.)
- How does this campus compare to the UofA campus? It is better/worse? Why? What role does familiarity play?