

Lecture 3 – Field Studies II
CPSC 444
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Part 1 – Focal Points: Focusing Field Work (from Prep)

Scenario: Imagine you are a designer trying to understand how technologies can be designed to support information sharing among home activities. Evaluate the following focal points. Individually, what makes each focal point useful? What problems does each focal point have? How would you modify these focal points (if at all)?

1. Where are message centers located in the home? How does the location of these message centres facilitate coordination and communication?

2. How is incoming information (e.g. letters, phone messages) handled and delegated in the home?

3. Where is information placed when the intended recipient is not at home?

4. What constitutes “information” inside a home environment?

5. What kinds of “information” inside a home environment are passed around, but without physical embodiment? Why do they not have physical embodiment?

6. What information is not shared among home inhabitants?

7. How does the relationship among home inhabitants affect the nature of information sharing?
Part 2 –Derive Focal Points for Hypothetical Field Study

Scenario: Imagine that you work for an educational consulting firm that helps educators, educational software and technology hardware vendors. While your company has made great strides in the “school” environment, your company recognizes that much of the learning that takes place occurs outside of the school context.

The problem is that your company does not understand how students make use of space to study. For instance, your company knows that students study in a variety of contexts: at the kitchen table, in the bedroom, or even outside in the living room. Yet a variety of questions remain: Why do they use these different areas to study? What do the different areas afford? What do they do in these different areas? How do they arrange study materials in these different areas?

Your group is asked to help design a field study that helps provide an understanding of study spaces in the “home” for university students.

Step 1: INDIVIDUALLY: Develop 1 to 2 focal points for this study. (Note that when you are doing this for the project, you should do 2-5 individually.)

Step 2: GROUP: Review each members’ focal points and compile a final set of 2-5

Step 3: GROUP: Swap your set of focal points with another group
Part 3 – Interview Question Design

Following from Part 2 . . .

Assume that your group plans to conduct interviews with real students (who are not in CPSC 444, and whom you do not know well).

Step 1: INDIVIDUALLY: Generate ~3 interview questions based on your focal points.

Step 2: GROUP: Review each members’ interview questions and compile a final set of ~8

Step 3: GROUP: Swap your set of interview questions with another group