

Enhancing User Experience: Applying a Student-Focused Approach to Library Website Design

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Abigail Graham

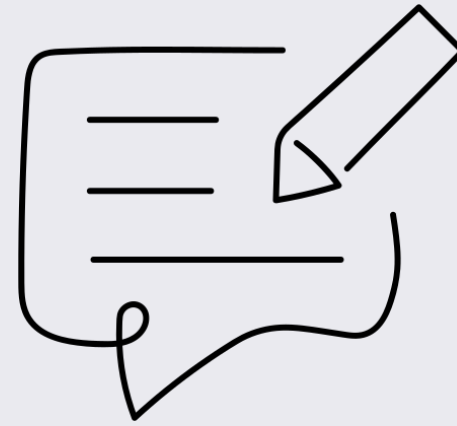
David Pearson

MacEwan University Library

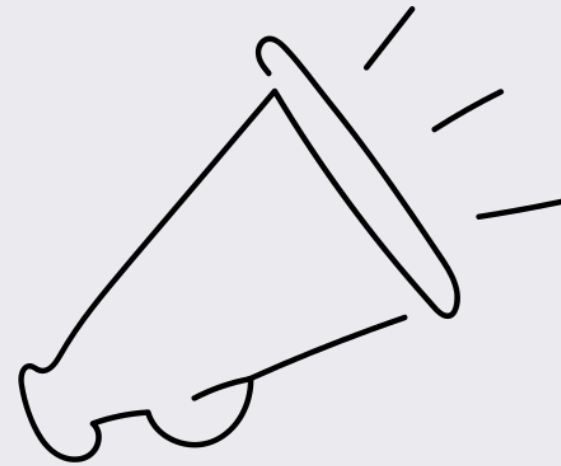


OBJECTIVES

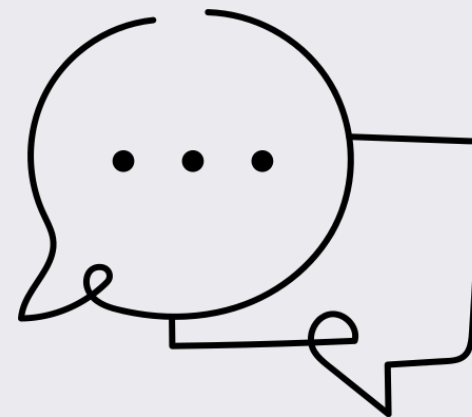
By the end of this session,
participants will be able to:



Describe student-focused
website design principles



Consider methods to
encourage library staff buy-in
for student-focused website
design



Identify means to sustainably
collect and implement
student feedback

The Challenge

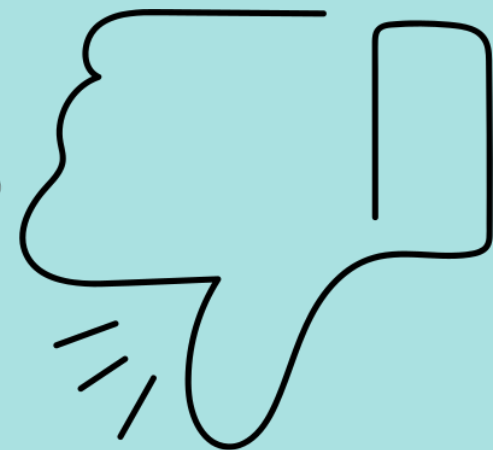
- Previous website design projects focused on internal stakeholder perspective
- No **coordinated** means of collecting external feedback
- Most recent “website refresh” in 2022 took place over a 12-week period, with mixed reviews...



Digital Ethnography Feedback



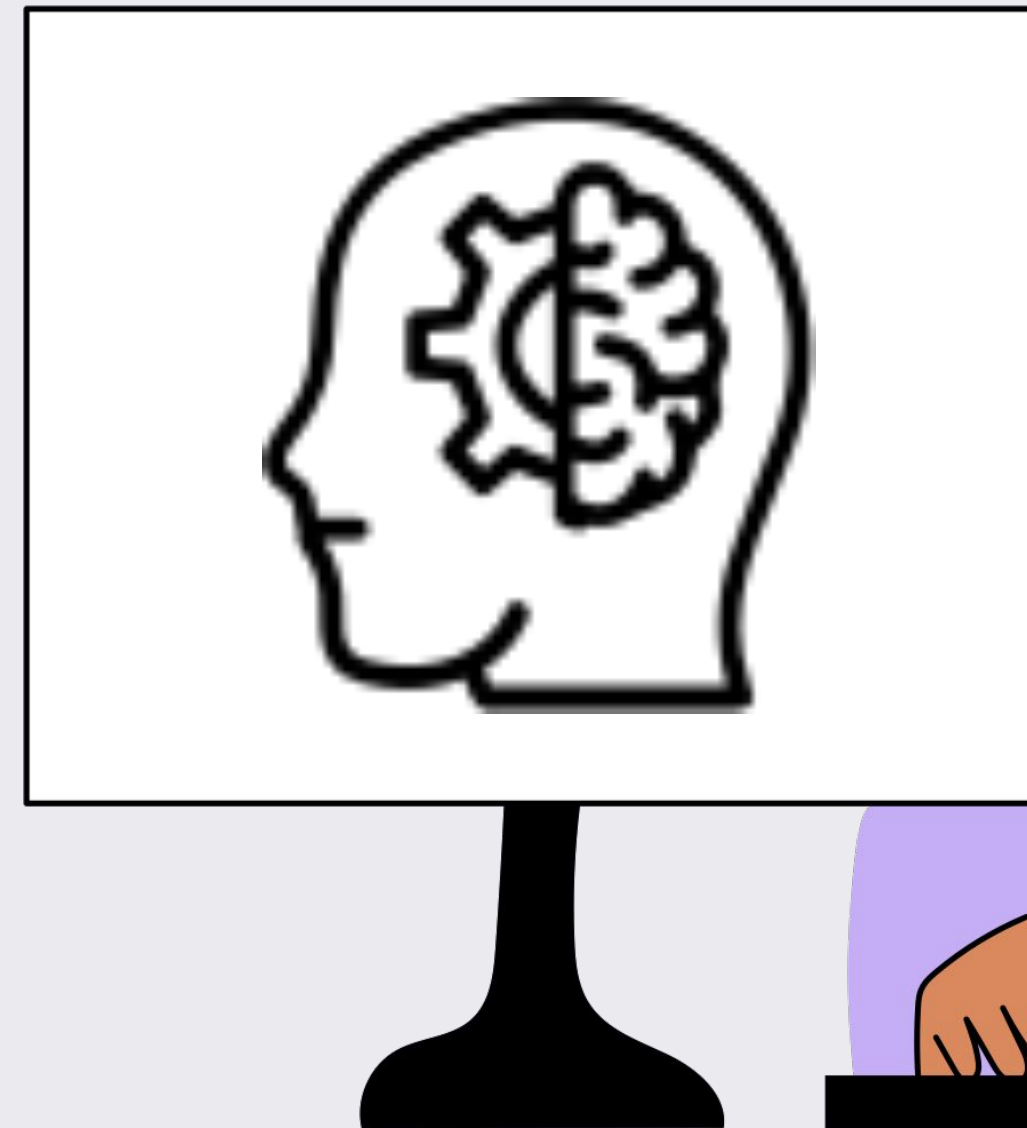
- Able to find most key resources/information
- Easy to access library help e.g. Chat Icons
- Large text and icons
- Interesting homepage design - engaging visuals



- Design of the website was "busy," "overwhelming"
- Website tone: dry, uninviting, often too technical
- "Branded" services that had titles without any context
- Layout and tone of website = assumed knowledge
- Hard to navigate, unintuitive menu design

The Opportunity - Redesign 2.0

- New Library Services Platform coming in 2024/2025
- Opportunity to integrate lessons learned from “website refresh”
- The Digital Ethnography results helped us to make a compelling case to library leadership



What were the concerns from our library?

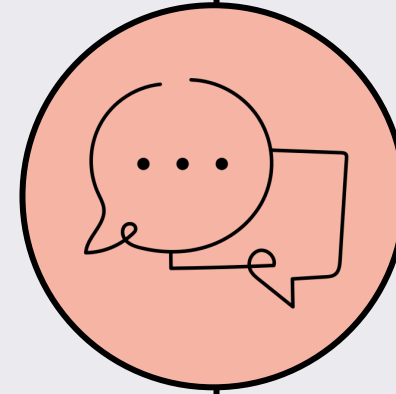


- Will internal stakeholder feedback still be:
 - Sought?
 - Valued?
- How would internal feedback be reconciled with that of other users?
- How would library staff be involved?
- How would they be supported during these changes?

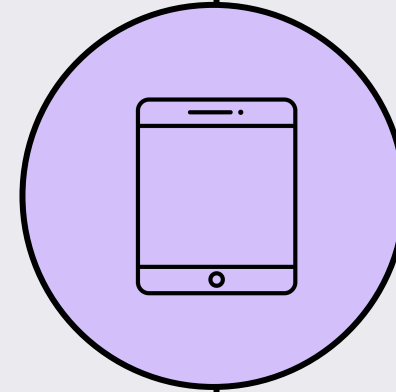
Project Goals

Timeline: October 2023 to January 2025*

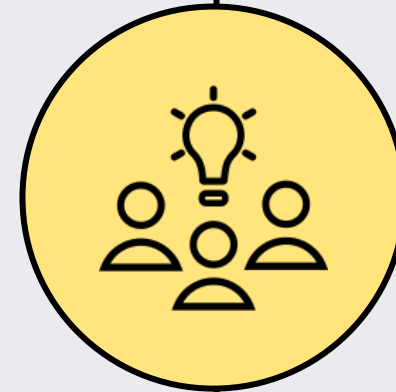
*Original Timeline: October 2025 to April 2025



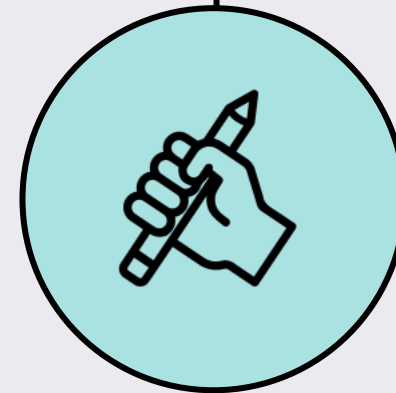
Student-Focused: seek feedback from students at each stage of the process; seek to better understand the needs, goals, and challenges of our students



Mobile-First: create a high-quality mobile experience, then scale out



Inclusive and accessible design: embed UDL principles and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)



Iterative process: at least one prototype to undergo user testing prior to launch

Our (Amended) Approach

To better understand the needs, goals, and experiences of the MacEwan community (e.g., students, staff, and faculty) **with an emphasis on student feedback**, to leverage what we have already learned from our users, and to embed UX throughout the process

Pre-Planning

- User interviews
- Card sorting exercises
- Surveys
- Internal and External Communications Plan
- Stakeholder engagement

Prototype

- Scenario-based testing
- Preview version of the site, publicly viewable
- Embedded feedback options on preview site

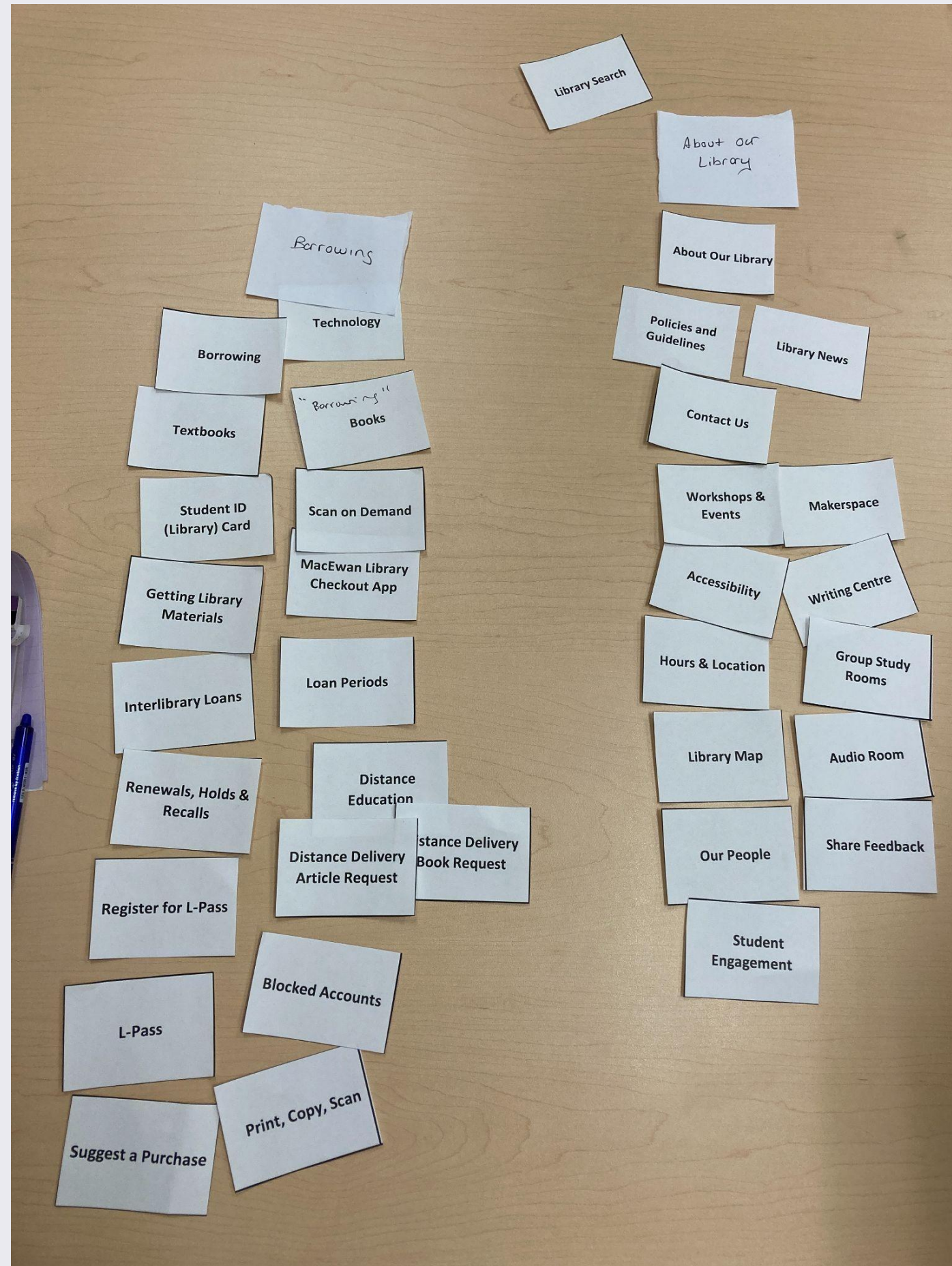
Launch

- More visible feedback function on live website
- Ongoing UX testing
- Library Student Engagement Committee input

Card Sorting

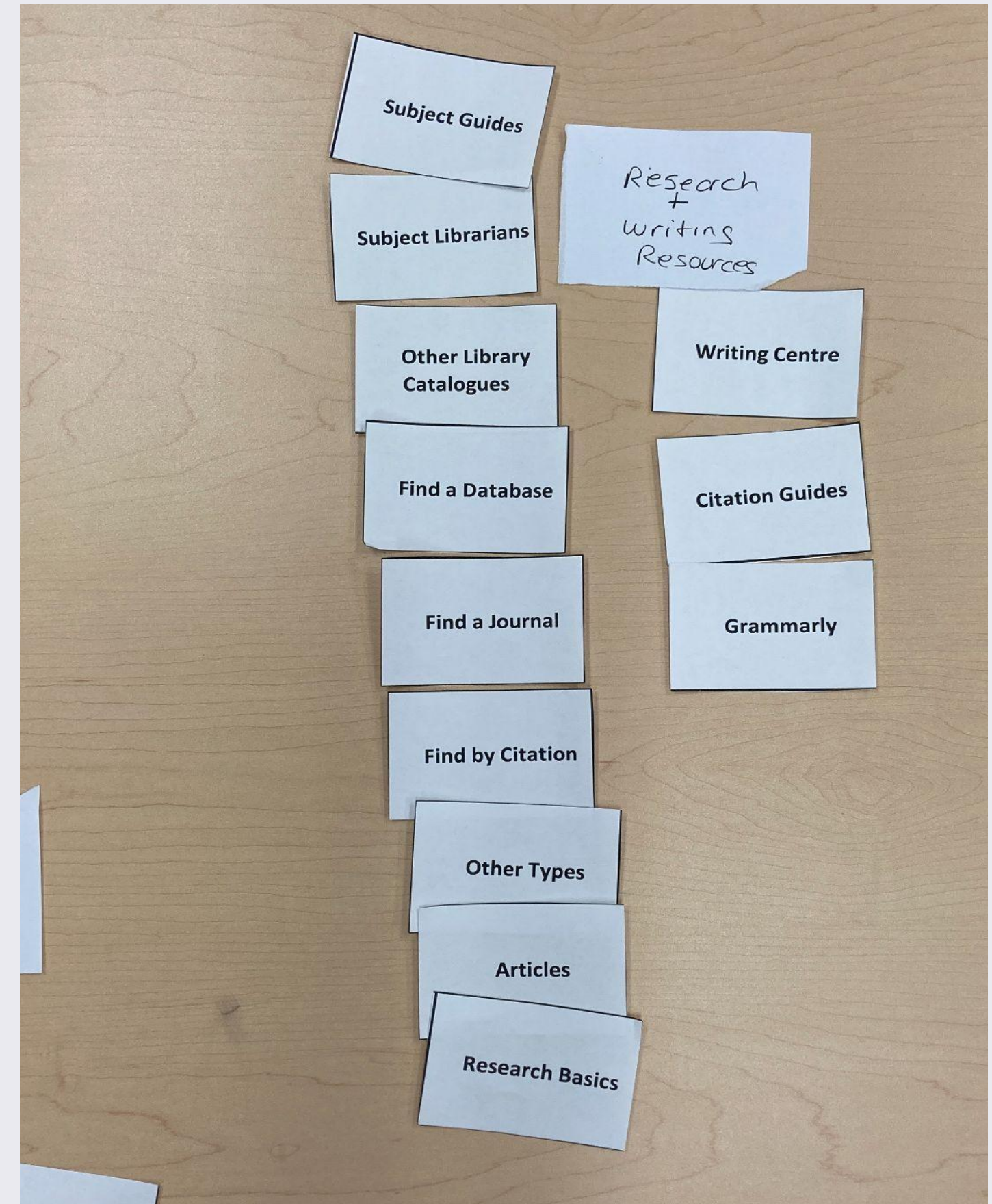
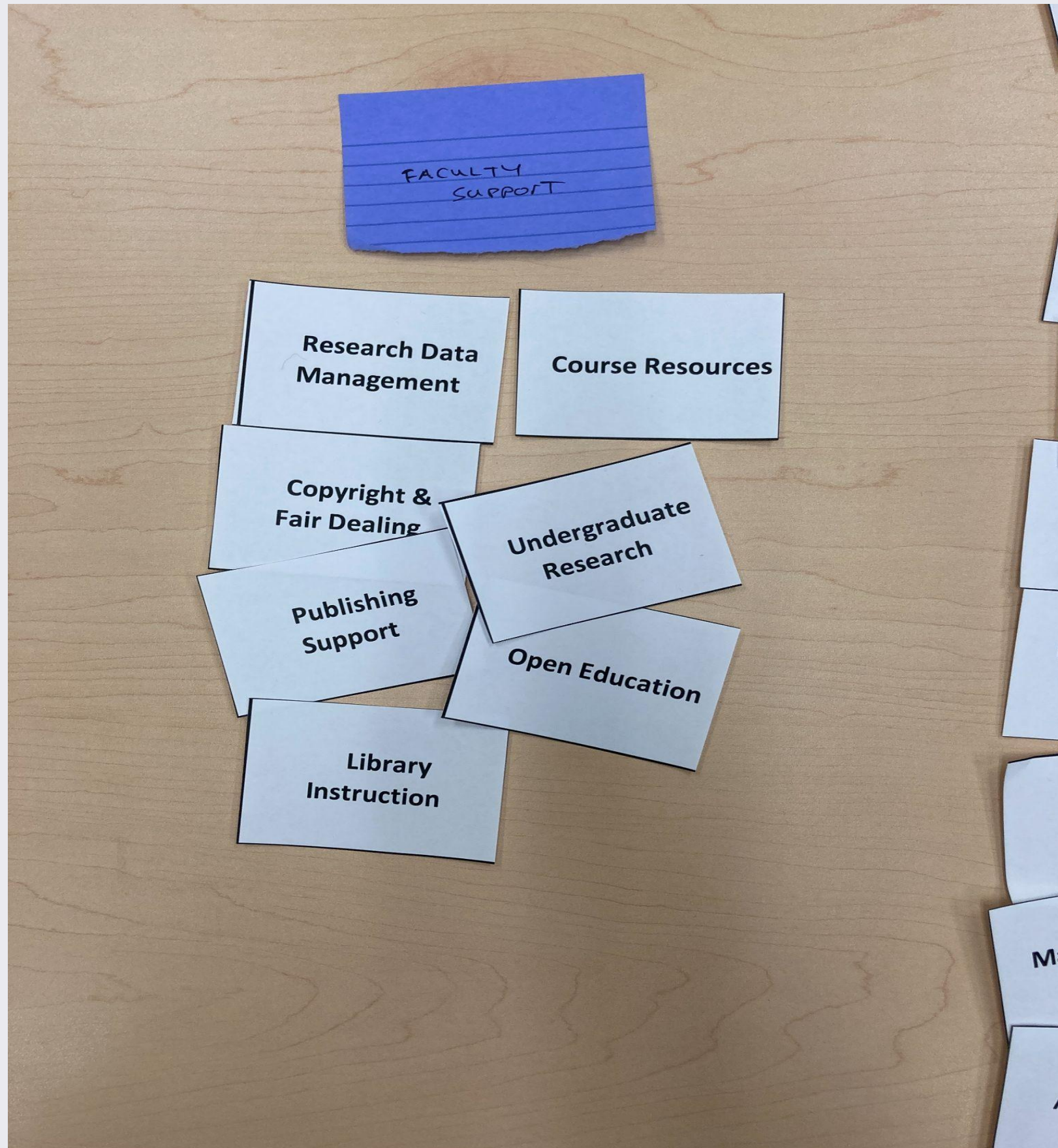


- In-person sessions with faculty and students
- Completely “analog;” interacting with portable “card decks”
- Goals:
 - Gain a better understanding of what users considered a navigable menu
 - Determine if our webpage naming conventions are meaningful to users



Reflections

- Tactile, increased engagement
- Could more easily identify confusing web pages
- Increased understanding of user priorities
- Small groups (2-3) mitigated people being spoken over
 - Facilitators could note when consensus was not reached
- Challenging to find students and external staff willing to attend card sorting sessions



(Handwritten list on a strip of paper, tilted at an angle)

- Incoming
- Outgoing
- Distance Education
- Adult Books
- Children
- All Size Collections
- University Archives
- Archives Open Books
- Archives Open Journals
- Archives
- Books
- Other Types
- Archives Authors (-Publishing)

Technology and Spaces

Technology
Engineering and Architecture
American Digital
Exhibits
Rock City: Great
Architecture
George West, Kansas
Architecture
African American
Architecture
Architecture
Military Center
Architecture
Military Center
Architecture
Military Center
Architecture

Research and Writing

- 1. American Data Reporting
- 2. University of Arkansas
(see page 100)
- 3. Political System
(see page 100)
- 4. Data & Statistics
- 5. Columbia Studies
(see page 100)
- 6. Understanding Economics
(see page 100)
- 7. Research Power
- 8. Community
(see page 100)
- 9. Subject Index
- 10. Subject Index
(see page 100)

Faculty

Terms &
 Conditions
 Receipts
 Copyrights &
 Fair Use
 Reporting
 to ROOM
 Case Studies
 Library Trustees
 Open Education
 Second Step
 Program

About

[illegible]FACULTY

Writing Centre

Connectable

Simple Calling

History Grade 18%

Performance requirement

1

Student ID

Programmable

Addressable

History Review

History Grade

History Connectable

History Grade Shift

3rd Picking

Timable

Makespac

Borrowing 2

Surgical + Rehabilitation	L-Press + Registration
United Records	Low Records
Records, Halls, & Records	Scan on Record
Inter-Hallway Library	Archives Library Checked App

Technology

A mind map on a corkboard with 'Distance Education' at the center. Six branches radiate from the center, each with a sticky note containing text. The branches are: 'Distance Delivery Local Regional' (top left), 'Learning Delivery Networks' (middle left), 'Distance Delivery Local Regional' (bottom left), 'Learning Environments' (top right), 'Learning Technology and Engagement' (bottom right), and 'Community for the Learning' (middle right). An arrow points from the top right towards the center.

```

graph TD
    DE[Distance Education] --- DDLR[Distance Delivery  
Local Regional]
    DE --- LDN[Learning Delivery  
Networks]
    DE --- DDLR2[Distance Delivery  
Local Regional]
    DE --- LE[Learning Environments]
    DE --- LTE[Learning Technology  
and Engagement]
    DE --- CL[Community for  
the Learning]
  
```

Distance Education

Distance Delivery
Local Regional

Learning Delivery
Networks

Distance Delivery
Local Regional

Learning Environments

Learning Technology
and Engagement

Community for
the Learning

Library
Instruction

A 2x2 grid of sticky notes with handwritten text. Below the grid is an upward-pointing arrow and the text 'Course Resources'.

Learning to Write Responsibly	Course Outline
Writing about Physical Science	Upcoming Assignments

↑
Course Resources

Publishing
Sue and

Copyright to Research

Copyright to Teaching

Copyright to Students

Copyright Issues

Substantial Reproduction (Rosen)

Open Access

Research Ethics

2 Copyright + Fair Dealing

Undergraduate
Research

Our People

A.R. (Gangster)

Liberals' discrimination

Social Issues

Working in America

Living in (On) Poverty

Living in Confusion

Confusion

Getting Educated

Policies and Guidelines

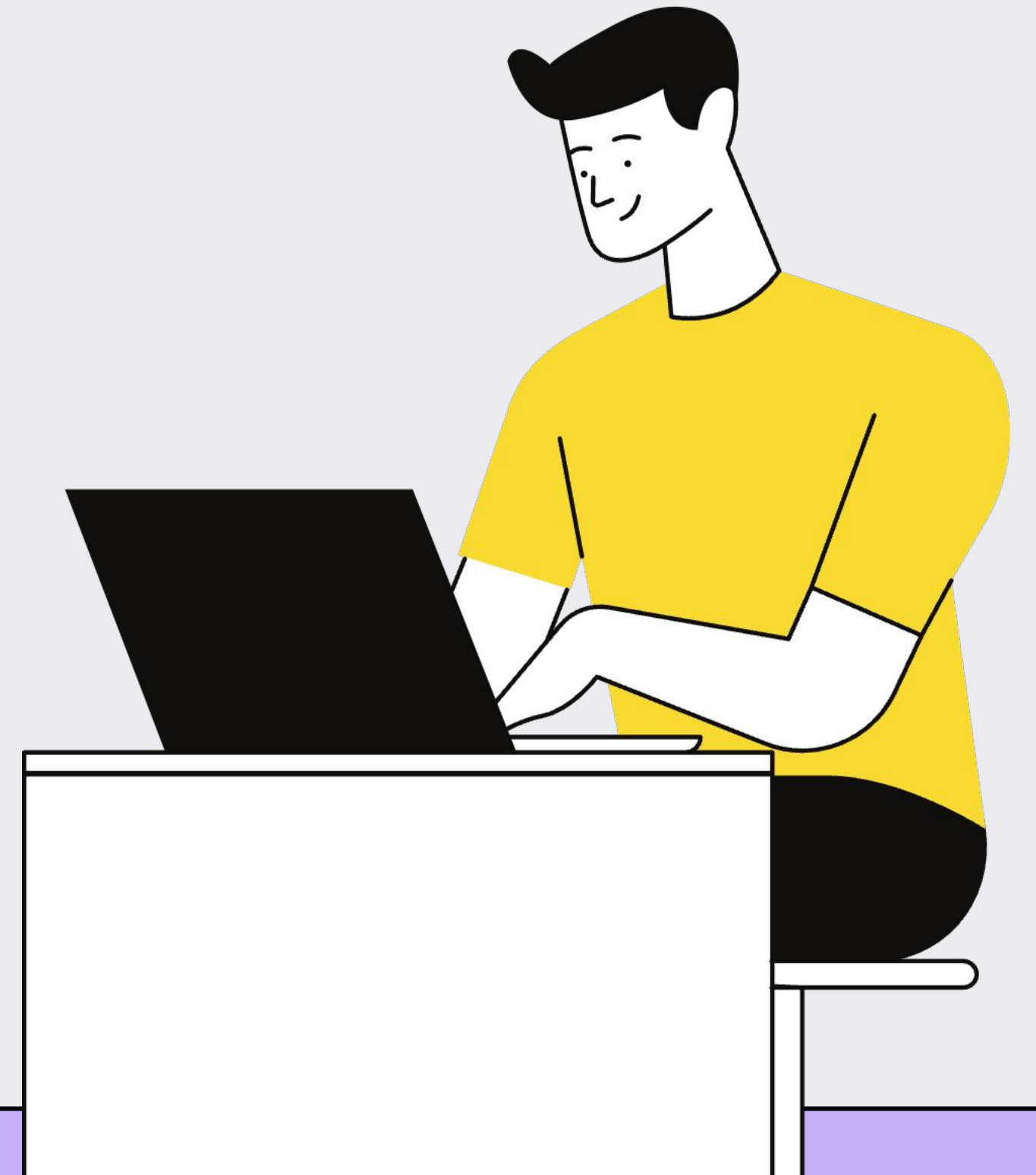
A photograph of a wall covered with sticky notes. The notes are organized into a grid-like structure, with a large arrow pointing down from the top center. The notes contain various phrases related to library services and policies.

Planning Book New Titles	Collection Development Policy	Advanced Digital Collections
Table & Book Exchanging	Overseas Collections	Library Website Policy
Print and Digital	Library Book Services Policy	Interagency collection Policy
Our People		
Our Resources		

Below the grid, there is a large handwritten note that says "About our Library" with a small arrow pointing to the left.

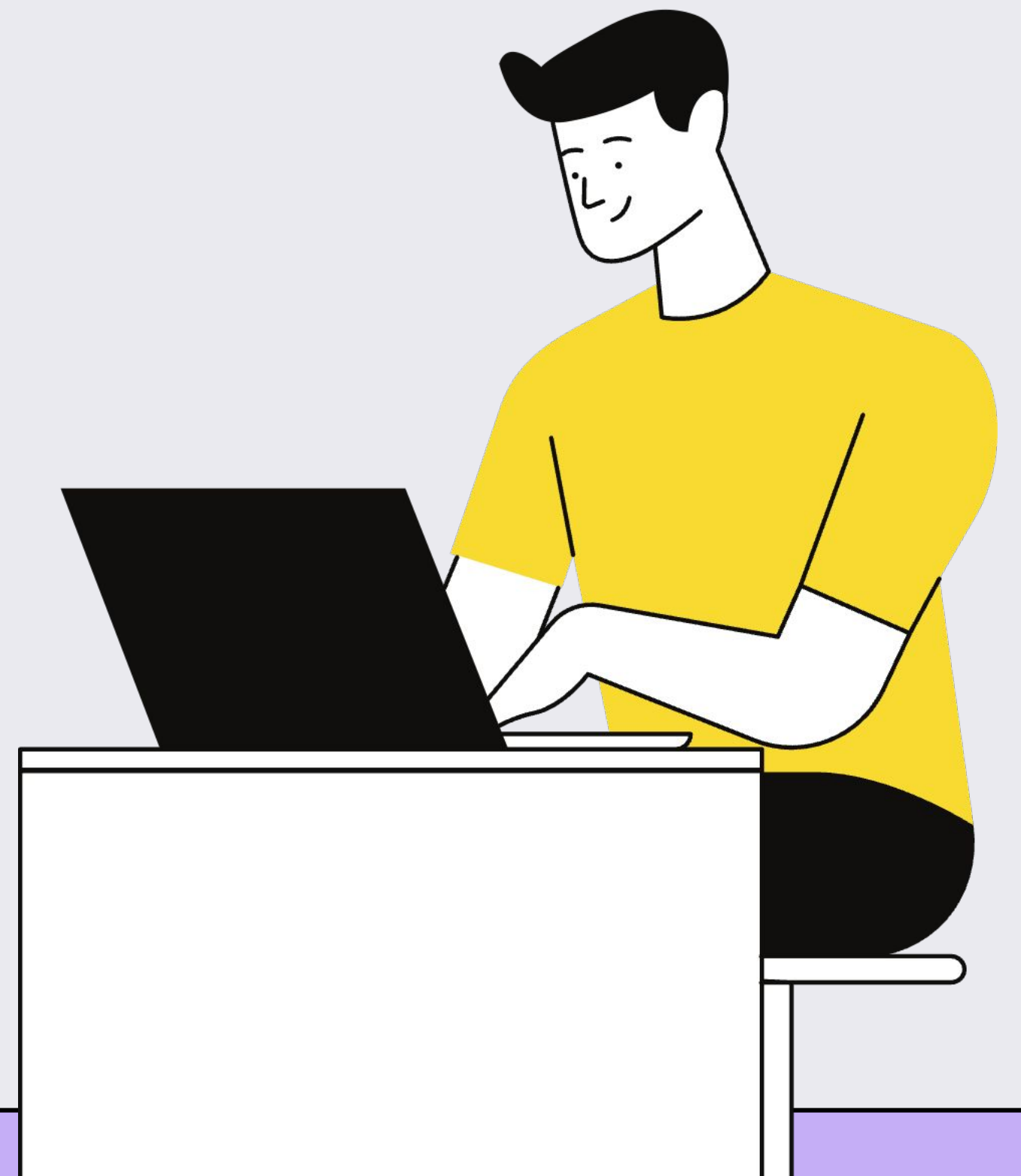
Scenario-Based User Testing

- Used UX Software [Userbrain](#) to facilitate online testing
- Identified top five tasks, then narrowed to three
- **Pros:**
 - Removes observation by in-person facilitator
 - Potential to increase our reach, more accessible
 - Cross-test devices
 - Did not require in-person test spaces
- **Cons:**
 - Recruitment more challenging
 - Disconnect from facilitator



Reflections

- Testing on a time crunch - could not fully test until October
- Small sample size
- Very candid, thoughtful feedback
- Prioritized navigability and comprehension
- Format of each scenario:
 - What menu would you choose to complete this task?
 - Try to complete the task
 - Did you complete the task?
 - Feedback about the ease of the task
- [Link to Proposed Scenarios](#)



Example Scenarios

Task	Specific Scenario	Success Indicators
Learn about borrowing and lower-cost options for textbooks in the library.	You want to save money on textbooks and heard that the library has some textbooks to borrow, plus suggestions for lower-cost textbook options. a. Which menu would you click on to find information about textbooks in the library? b. Try to find the library's Textbooks page.	The participant indicates what menu heading makes the most sense for finding textbook information.

Due to the Canada

New Course: WRIT 250

Learn about writing pedagogies, enhance

[Learn More](#)

Library Search

Journals

Search books, articles, videos, and

Enter search term

[Advanced Search](#)

Preview tasks

Step 2/17

Please remember to think out loud while you work through the tasks.

You want to save money on textbooks. You're trying to find options for lowering your textbook costs and want to see if the library has any options for borrowing them.

Which menu would you click on to find out more about textbooks in the library?

- ☐ Borrowing & Collections
- ☐ Technology & Spaces
- ☐ Research & Writing
- ☐ Faculty
- ☐ About

[I can't answer this question.](#)

Back

Next

ts will be delayed

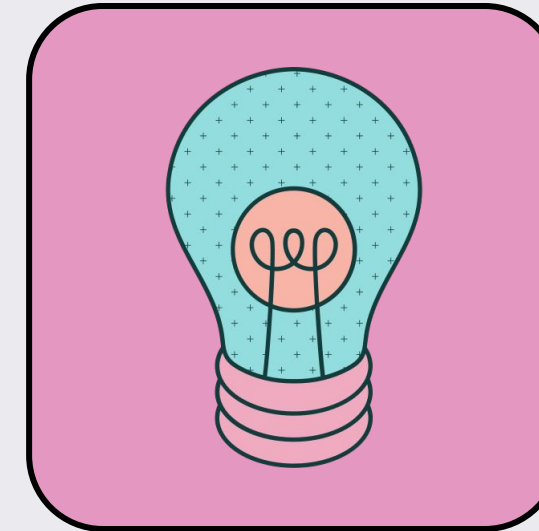
the Writing Centre

Course Reserves

Site Search

Se

What increased buy-in for our approach?



Variety of feedback mechanisms: could “meet people where they are”



Consistent Communication: increased sense of ownership, collective effort



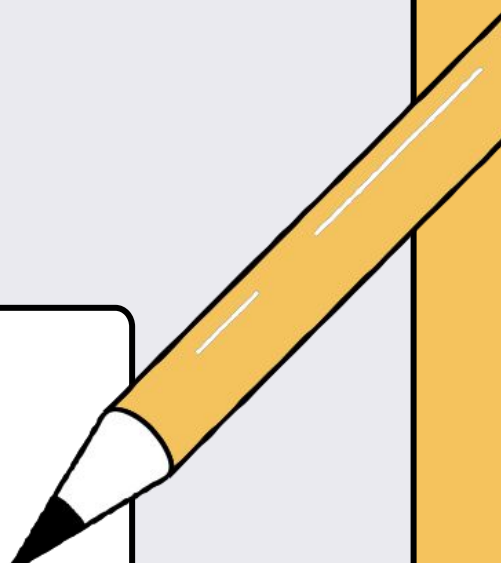
Sharing our findings: highlighting student perspectives as part of communications

Post-Launch Reflections

What went well

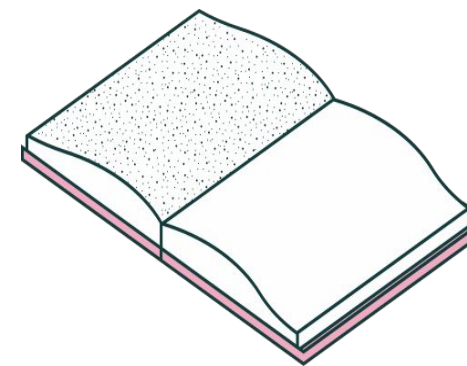
- Dedicated Communications Coordinator
- Multiple UX/Feedback mechanisms
- Prototype Preview and pre-launch feedback
- Increased user satisfaction (so far)

What could be improved

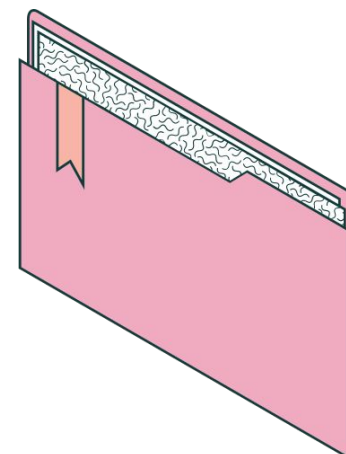
- Simultaneous, large-scale projects
 - Outreach/recruitment
 - Maintaining momentum for UX & Student-focused culture of assessment
 - Formalize feedback practices
- 



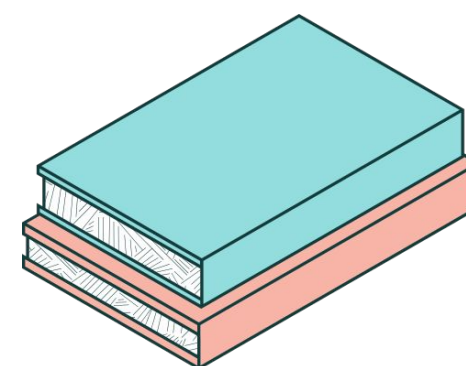
THANK YOU
FOR LISTENING!



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