



Six Lessons from Tiny Café

*How I Learned to
Stop Worrying and
Love UX Research*

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The next 15-20 minutes of your life

The Six Lessons

You can do a lot with a little

Sometimes you have to revise... forever

Really think about how the user thinks

Choices can say more than preferences

There's strength in numbers

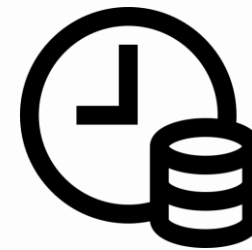
Don't let your ego get in the way

Lesson 1: You can do a lot with a little

Tiny Café, tiny infrastructure

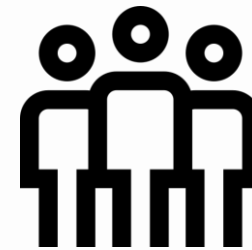


A little bit every week:



2 hours

(or less on good days!)



1+ people

(at least two if possible!)



\$5

(mostly “bribes”!)

Lesson 1: You can do a lot with a little

How'd we do?



50+
interviews
and tests



200+
survey
responses



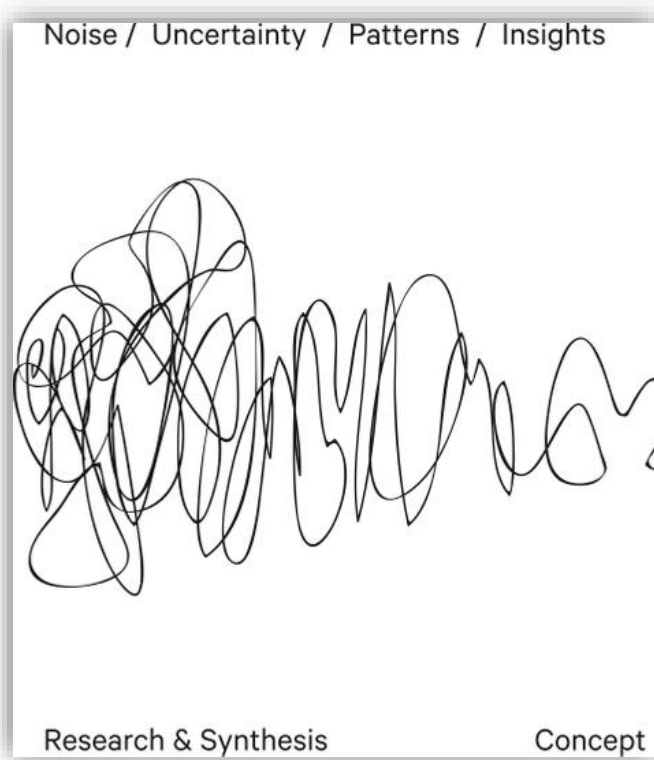
4
new
techniques

Lesson 2: Sometimes you have to revise... forever

Let go of the North Star



“[In traditional business strategy] a team identifies that fixed point [a “North Star”] as the goal of their game plan...



You don't want a North Star to guide your UX strategy; instead, you want a **goal or point toward which to steer every time you pivot.**”

– Jaime Levy, *UX Strategy*

Lesson 2: Sometimes you have to revise... forever

Understanding students: moving past satisfaction

What is student satisfaction with services?

Mostly high. But interest and awareness don't correlate.

Even "interesting" services can be invisible.
Issue so far: awareness.

What is student awareness and interest in library renovations?

They're not against it. But they don't know a lot.

Messaging isn't enough.
Issue so far: knowing what more we need.

How do students find new services in general?

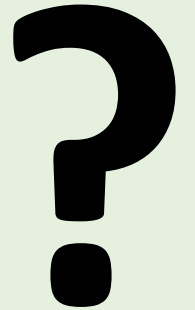
Word of mouth. "Coercion": orientation, classes, etc.

Word of mouth or mandates seem key.
Issue so far: confirming this applies to us.

Even for the library?

Yes— even for the most-used services.

Services don't "speak for themselves."
Issue so far: leveraging right channels.



Lesson 3: Really think about how the user thinks

Mental models + the art of the interview



Get in the user's head



“The essence of interaction design is **how does the user think about this and are we presenting it in a way that's consistent with that.**”

- Alan Cooper, [UX Defenders interview](#)

“A **mental model** is what the user believes about the system at hand. ... One of usability's big dilemmas is the **common gap between designers' and users' mental models.**”

- Jakob Nielsen, [Mental Models](#)



Ask gently



“There's a **difference between what you want to know and what you ask.**”

- Steve Portigal, *Interviewing Users*

“**You can't just ask people what you want to know. Sorry.**”

- Erika Hall, [Research Questions Are Not Interview Questions](#)

Lesson 3: Really think about how the user thinks

What VR experiences should we provide for students?

Asking about VR

Key interest factors in VR

- Interactivity
- Visualization
- Simulation
- “Cool factor”

Key channels

- Passing by
- Word of mouth

Prior experience with VR: None, beyond playing around. So how much of this is real?



Asking about study tools

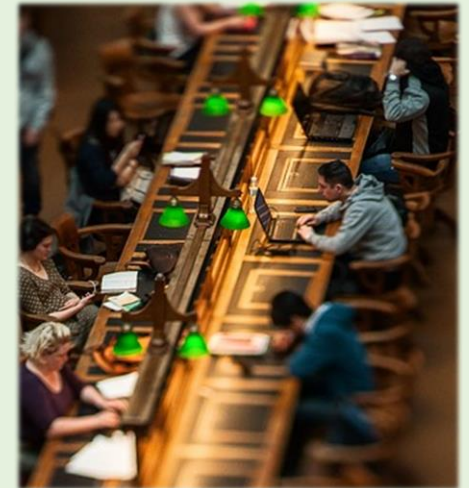
Key efficacy factors for study tools

- Low learning curve
- Efficiency!
- Knowledge testing
- Different perspectives

Key channels

- Word of mouth
- Faculty and staff

Now we have something based on real behavior– closer to how they really think!



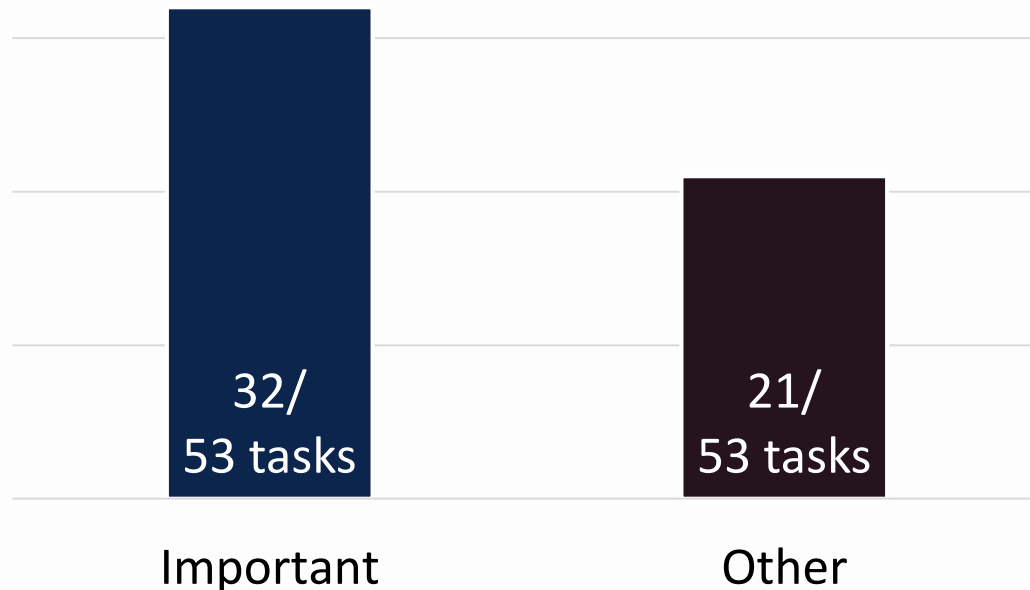
Lesson 4: Choices can say more than preferences

Top 53 tasks on the library website

Survey #1: Likert-style

Rate tasks on importance

After 37 responses...

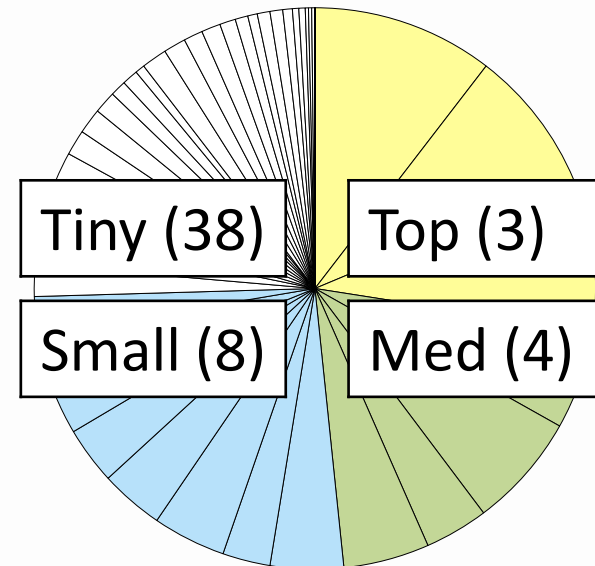


Survey #2: Cisco-style

Rate five tasks out of whole list

After 38 responses...

Vote share among top tasks



5 tasks
had a
significant
number of
non-zero
votes

Lesson 5: There's strength in numbers

Collaborators keep it interesting

Within the UA Libraries

MarComm

- Surveys: space naming
- Interviews: student habits

AIS

- Cognitive maps: study spaces
- Interviews: study space concerns

UX

DDA

- Surveys: search tool naming
- Usability tests: search feature testing

Other libraries

- Interviews: VR tools
- Interviews: user motivations

Beyond the library

Think Tank



UX

Methods, perspective

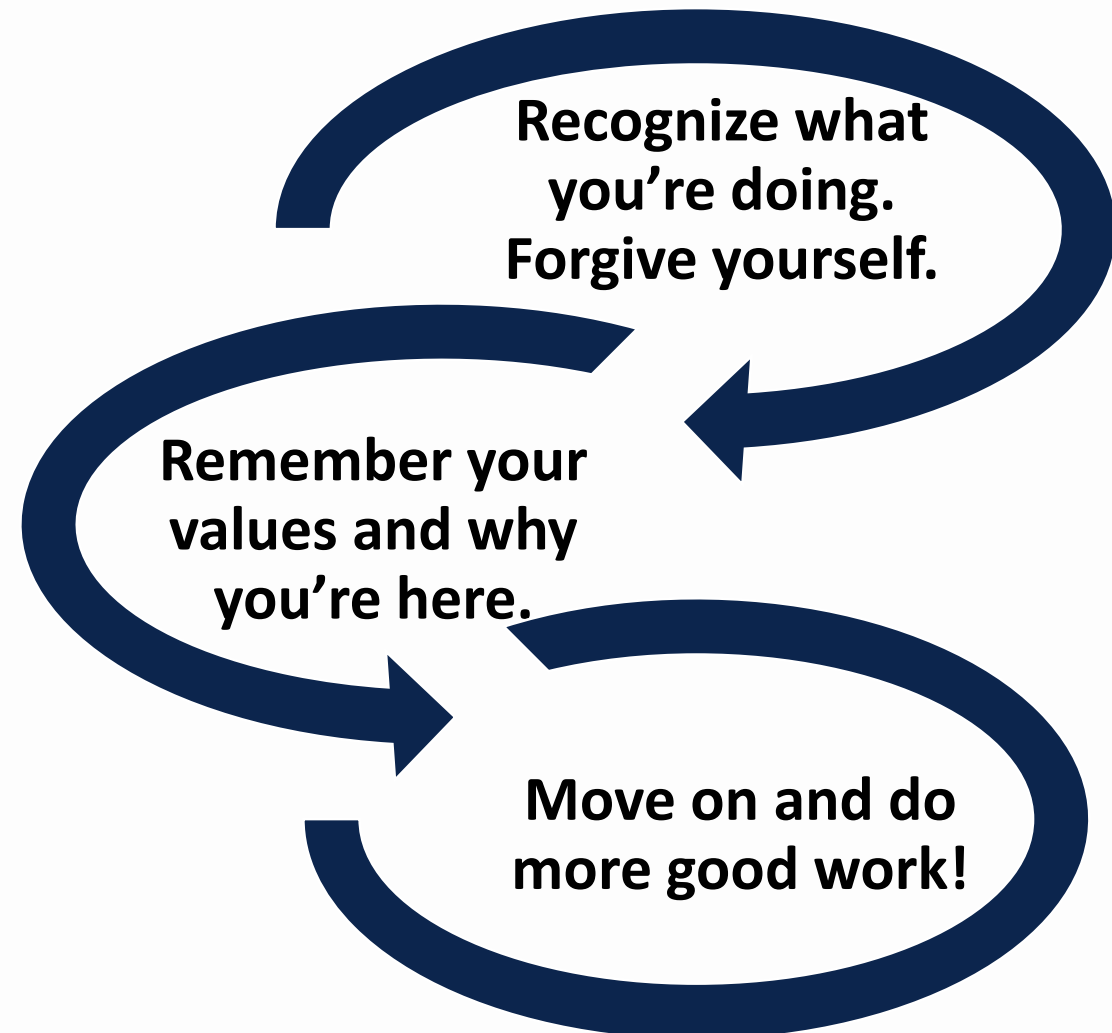
Collaborators

Expertise, opportunity for impact

Lesson 6: Don't let your ego get in the way

But don't beat yourself up

Lesson	Ego protest	Possible price
You can do a lot with a little	<i>But this isn't complete enough. (I'm going to look dumb trying to justify this!)</i>	The project never gets started.
Sometimes you have to revise... forever	<i>It's not smart to keep changing things. (Lack of structure makes me uncomfortable!)</i>	You stick to false conclusions.
Really think about how the user thinks	<i>I have a research question to answer. (I'm not going to get the answers I need!)</i>	You ask poor questions and get poor answers.



The SparkNotes version (and acknowledgements!)

Thanks!

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Tiny Café Co- Baristas

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UA Libraries (and beyond!)
