Ethnographic Reflection

An ethnographic observation as described by *oxfordbibliograhies* is “a method that involves a period of immersion in a local group, community, or place. It gathers accounts of practices while also observing and/or participating in those practices” (“Ethnography”). My group participated in an ethnographic observation in the lower level of the Morris University Center at SIUE.

The main question that my group was sent to observe was, “When going to the MUC, do most go to socialize and eat? Or to work and eat?” I chose to go to the MUC around the same times that I typically do, between 11-1 and while I was there, I sat between two distinct divides that I had never noticed before my observation. I sat on the window side of the MUC close to the booths. I opened my laptop and started typing away on what I was noticing around me. Within the lower level of the Morris University Center, there is a very clear sound divide.

The side with the food is set up more for larger groups to socialize with many tables with anywhere from 4-8 seats at one table and there were also booths that quite a few had pulled extra chairs up to the booths to include more in the socialization aspect of the MUC. Most had either sandwich wrappers open sharing TikTok with each other or laughing with each other over stories about their days.

However, on the opposite side of the MUC, there are more high-top tables and spaces with not as much room for socialization. The people I observed on this opposite side mostly had headphones on and had their laptops out working either typing or watching videos. I did also take note of the difference in volume on this side. The noise of a pen dropping could’ve easily been noted. Most on this side were sitting alone.

Overall, I didn’t find it too awkward to sit in this area and take notes of the observations around me. The only slightly uncomfy part about this ethnographic observation was that in order to witness certain interactions I had to kind of break my neck to see them and it was hard to try to be oblivious. Besides that, I enjoyed this observation.

Works Cited:

“Ethnography.” *Obo*, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199874002/obo-9780199874002-0171.xml. Accessed 14 Mar. 2024.