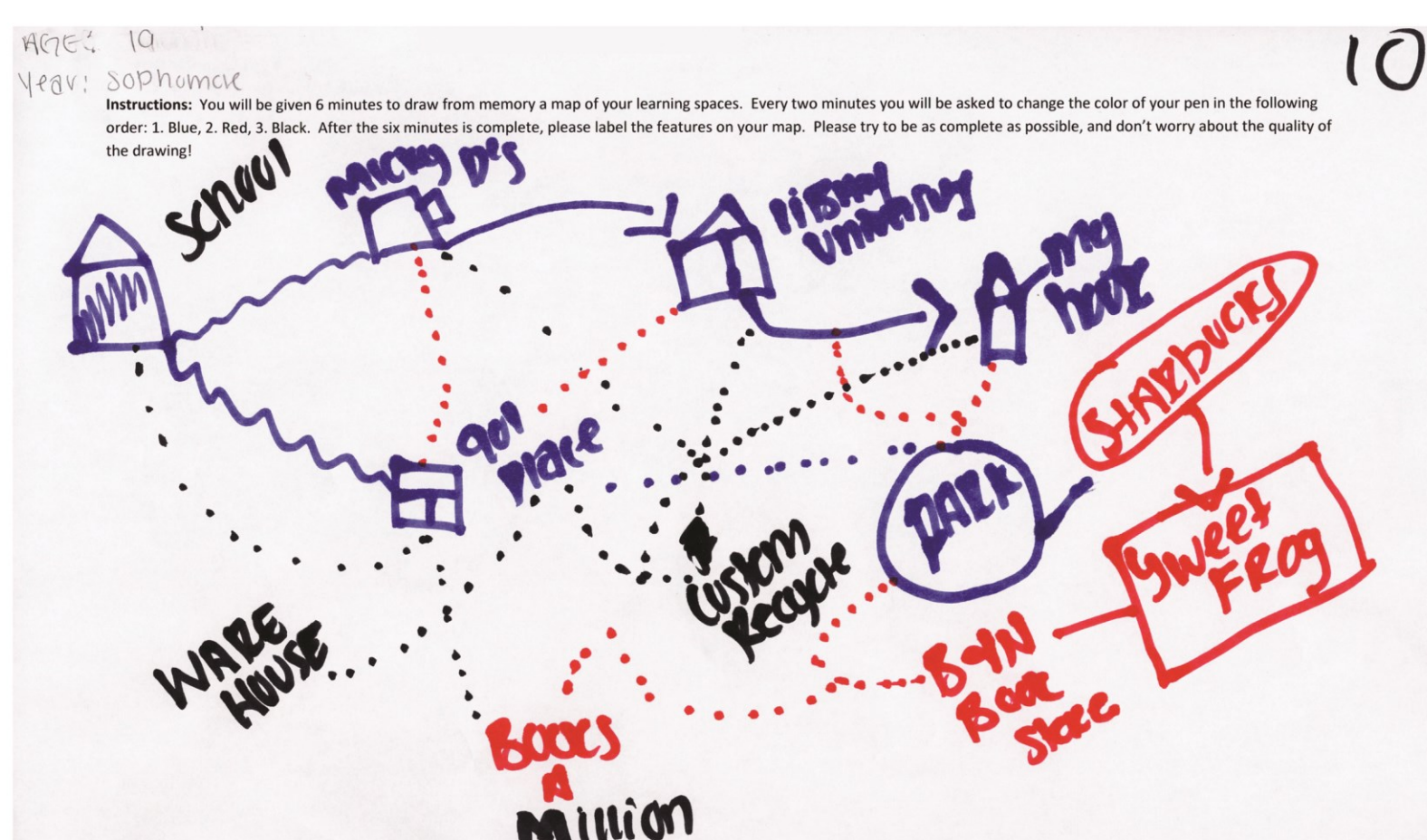# Let's Talk about Space: Assessing Student Space Needs in the Library and Across Campus

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The library plays a significant role in providing a variety of spaces that facilitate scholarship but without ongoing assessment, we cannot understand the changing needs of our students. The library's ethnographic research provides researchers a deep understanding of user practices and what they desire for a campus learning space. This contextual, qualitative research helped create a new type of learning environment on campus known as an "Atkins Space." Atkins Spaces are designed to provide users a space in campus buildings that offers a learning environment similar to the library.

Methodologies

1 Open forums were conducted to solicit input on the "dream arrangement" of library spaces from undergraduates and graduate students.

Draw your dream first floor participant example.

2 Atkins Photo Diaries are from a series of applied anthropology classes that have been collected since 2011. Students take photos from a list of prompts, and then discuss the content of their diary either individually or in a group.

Favorite place to study participant example.

4 Cognitive Mapping identified that the library is just one piece of the students' distributed learning landscape and revealed the need for well configured non-classroom learning spaces with flexible & comfortable furniture, wi-fi, access to technology, outside of the library.
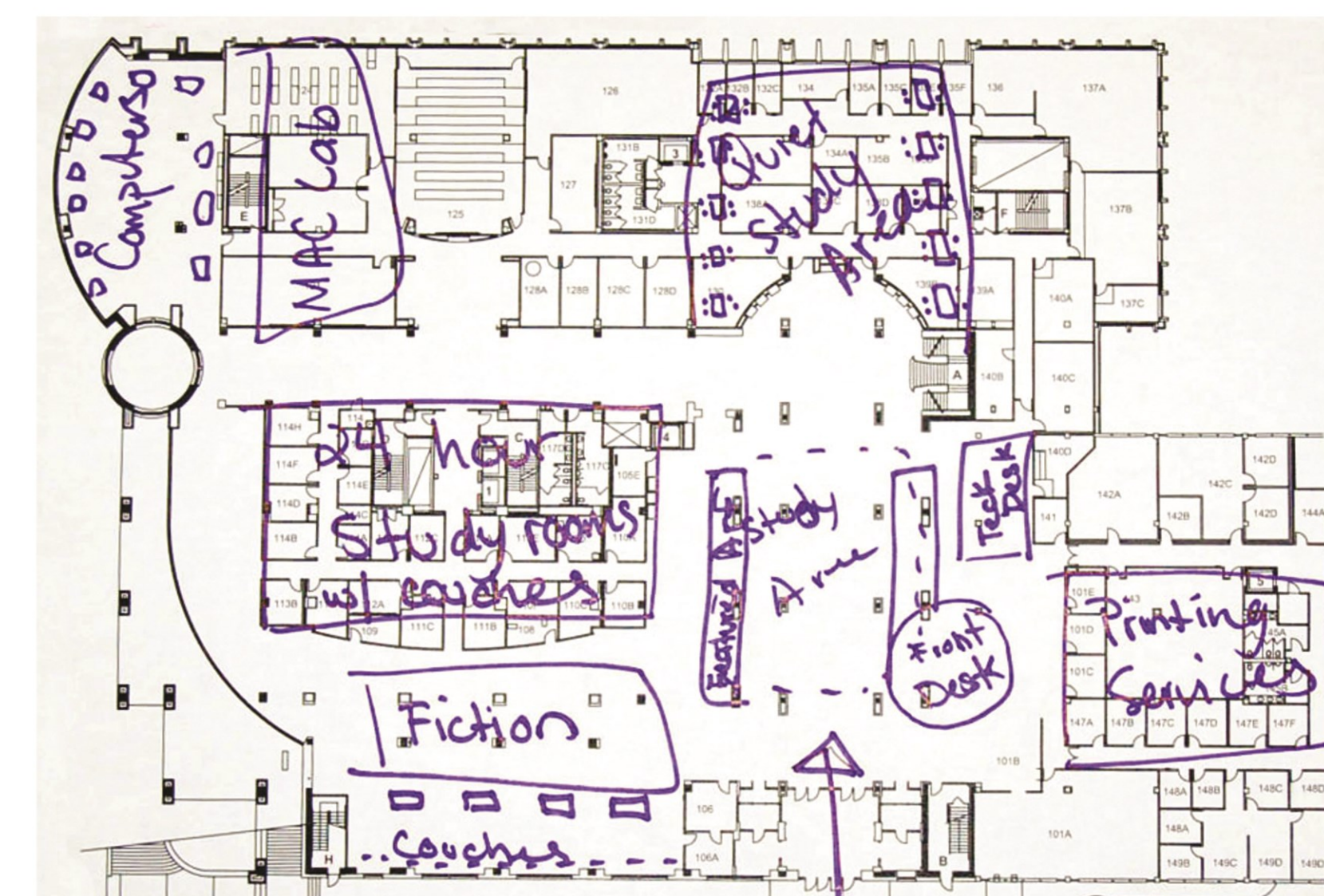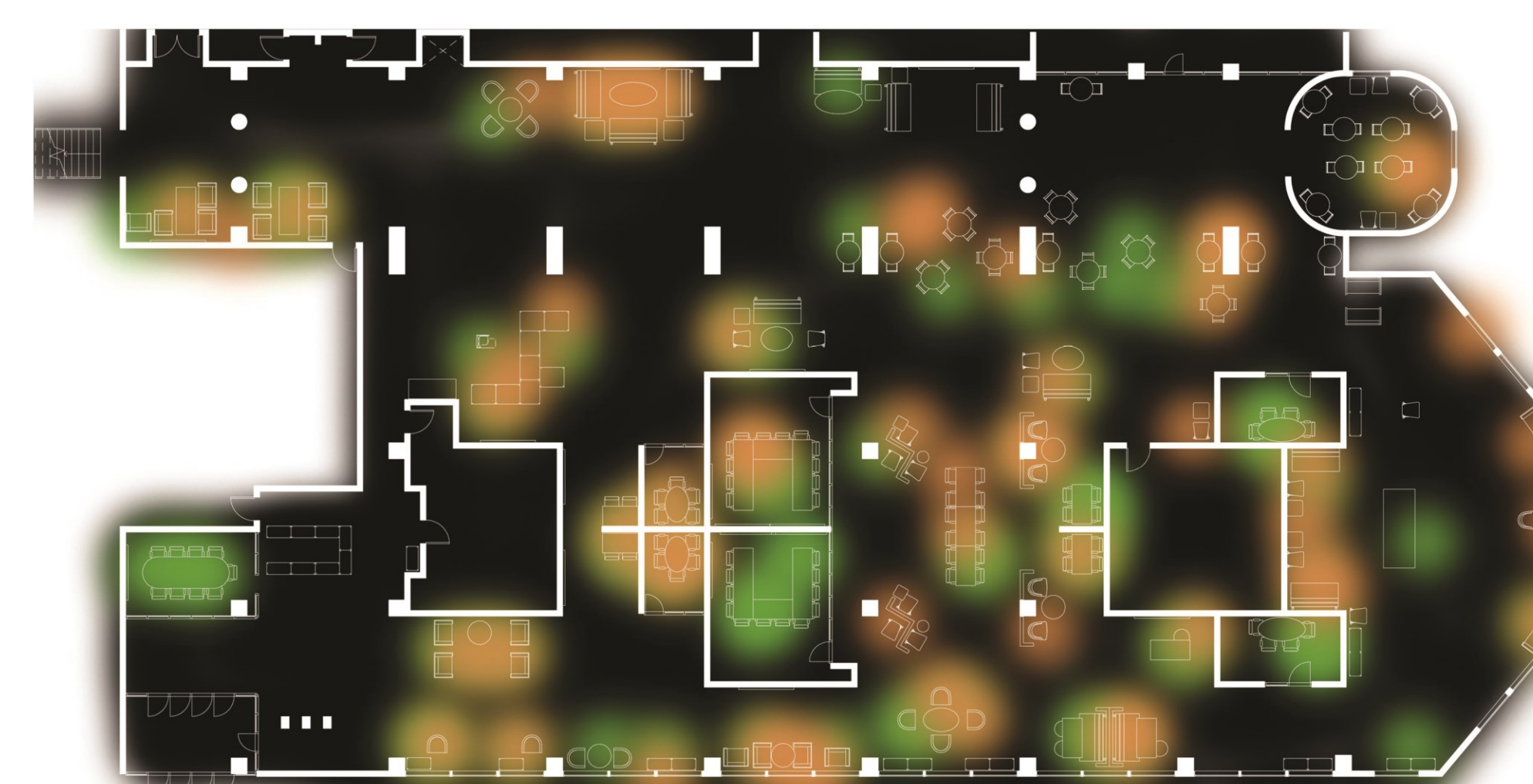

This student mapped learning spaces from UNC Charlotte to the City of Charlotte to across the border in South Carolina.

3 Observation and activity mapping work done by MA Architecture students helped researchers observe what students were doing in the space, learn about technology setups, and furniture settings that attracted students to study spaces.

Activities in overlap [Studying (green) and laptop use (orange)] demonstrate how these are not always mutually exclusive activities.

Next Steps

1. Continued assessment
   a. Post-occupancy evaluation
   b. Conduct semi-structured interviews
2. Inform recommendations
3. Identify the next Atkins Space
4. Deploy Library Information Kiosks in Atkins Spaces