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Reading Assignment 2

Research & Development Methods

February 7, 2019

This article talks about public spaces that have been designed for people to sit in and enjoy watching a show, and/or to observe art in. The study mostly looks at the way that New York is played out, and how people tend to congregate.

People in New York tend to congregate in the areas that are closest to their places of work or where they live. During the lunch hour, many people will come out of the building that they work in, and sit in the courtyard nearby. There they will find benches to sit on and a vendor that is selling food they can eat during their break.

People tend to want to congregate in a place where there are already people. Women were observed as being some of the most selective of spaces to hang out in. Men tended to not be as selective as women, and thus an area that has many men, but not many women, is probably not the best area one could spend their time in.

The design of the spaces and their sitting objects were also taken into account. The size of a bench will allow for so many people to sit on it. If a bench is wide enough to accommodate people sitting on either side of it, then this allows for more people to enjoy that space and feel socially comfortable being on the bench. Some benches are made too shallow, and this causes discomfort to people when trying to sit. This can lead to fewer people wanting to relax on the bench, and thus that plaza itself.

Socially people want to be able to engage in conversation, and having a focal point such as a performer or a piece of art can help to encourage communication between people in these spaces. The example of a corny magician was used to point out that if the magician's tricks are predictable and laughable, people will feel compelled to comment on the performance, engaging in a conversation that is usually reserved for close friends.