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PAO YUE-KONG LIBRARY

Q&A

2026 JULAC Libraries Forum
User-Centric Libraries: A Sustainable Future through
INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, and COLLABORATION

Co-Creating Better Space:

Engaging Students to Solve 24/7 Study Centre Issues

Winnie Tang
Faculty Librarian
(Design, Interim Fashion & Textiles)
PolyU, Pao Yue-kong Library

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Project Background

Project:

Collaboration between the PolyU library and School of Design Assistant Professor of Practice Marc Chataigner [*sha•ten•yee*] for class SD4002.

Focus:

The 24-Hour Study Centre was chosen due to high seat occupancy, food-related hygiene issues, and disruptions during overnight transitions—factors that impact fairness and study quality while minimizing broader library disruptions.

Goals:

- Empower 14 Year-4 PolyU design students from different design disciplines to become **Change Agents**.
- Create an opportunity for students to learn from different design disciplines.
- Apply behavioral design and nudge theory to improve the library community.
- Collect user insights on the 24-Hour Study Centre and potential library improvements.

Team 7-24 students

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Project Summary

Research time:
- 9 weeks of a research study for the 24-hour Study Centre

Research Approach:
- Data was collected through field studies, survey boards, and interviews with library users

Key Focus:
- Improve the desk hoarding behaviors
- Discourage Food consumption
- Finding any disruptive behaviors during the on-site observation study

Report Results：
- 1 Interim presentation for discovering the findings
- 1 Final presentation for providing the design solutions

Design Solution:
3D Signage by LIU Chin, Chin
Falling drink (fake) + Funny reminder

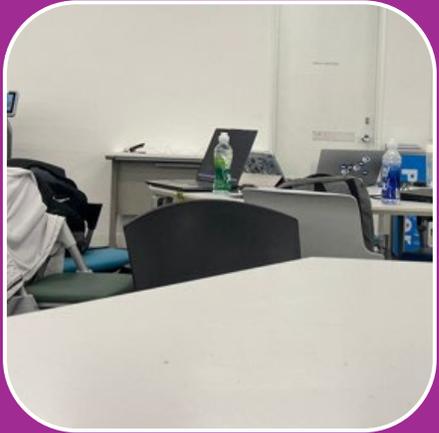請不要將食物帶入圖書館
食物殘渣會引來老鼠
老鼠會在圖書館學習知識
考上大學
接住取代你的PolyU學位

請不要將食物帶入圖書館
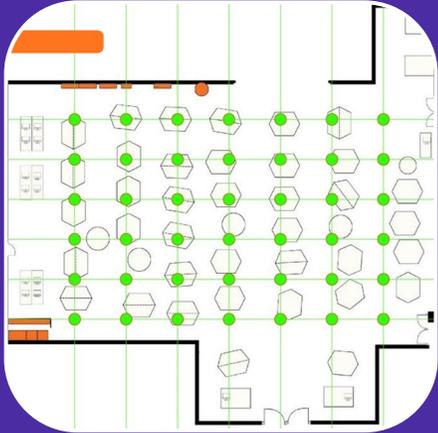食物殘渣會引來老鼠
老鼠會在圖書館學習知識
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Please do not bring food into the library.
Food scraps attract mice.
If mice get into the library,
they might study hard,
get into university,
and take over your PolyU degree.

The Issues Identified By Students In The 24-hour Study Centre

1. Seat Hogging & Food Consumption

2. Library Furniture Layout

3. Signage Design

4. Coloring & Lighting

5. Atmosphere

1. Seat occupancy & food consumption: why??

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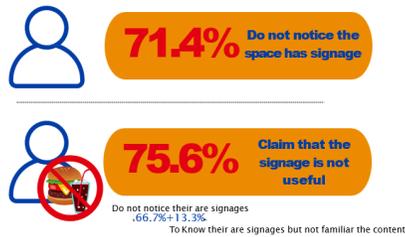INNOVATION, TECHNOLOGY, and COLLABORATION

1. Seat occupancy & food consumption: why??

Survey and interview results from both teams:

To understand why people
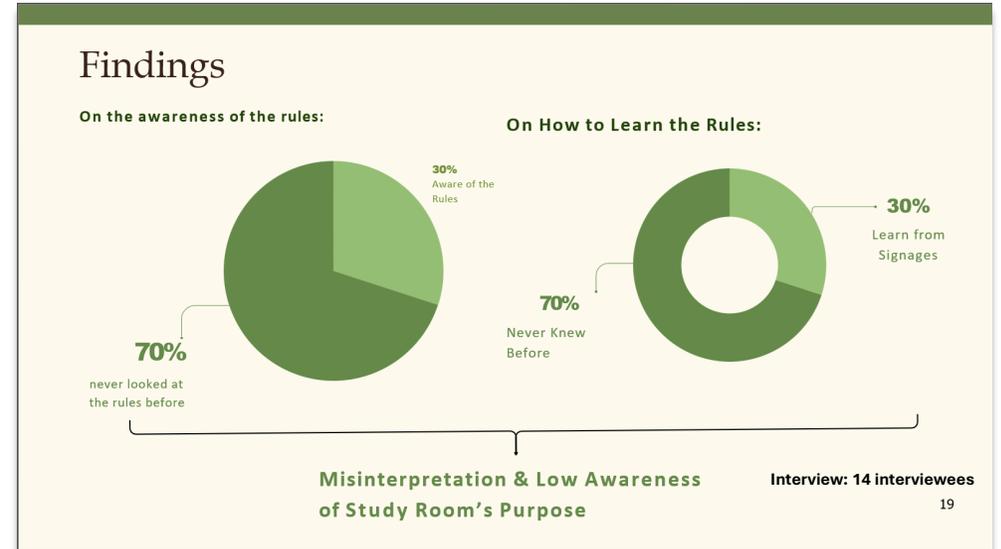keep doing disruptive behaviour
Methodology: Survey

71.4% Do not notice the space has signage

75.6% Claim that the signage is not useful

Do not notice their are signages
.66.7%+13.3%
To Know their are signages but not familiar the content

Insight

Students do not notice the signage in the 24-hour Study Centre and therefore **DO NOT** know the rules.

Most students do not understand the content of the signage due to **bad design** and **illegibility**.

Surveys: 43 interviewees

Team Avengers

Findings

On the awareness of the rules:

30% Aware of the Rules

70% never looked at the rules before

On How to Learn the Rules:

30% Learn from Signages

70% Never Knew Before

Misinterpretation & Low Awareness of Study Room's Purpose

Interview: 14 interviewees

19

Team 7-24

Affect Heuristics (情感共鳴) Presented by Team Avengers

"We often rely on our emotions/bias, rather than concrete information."

- The 24-hour study center **offers a relaxed environment** for studying, but users **do not notice that it is part of the library and subject to its policies**.
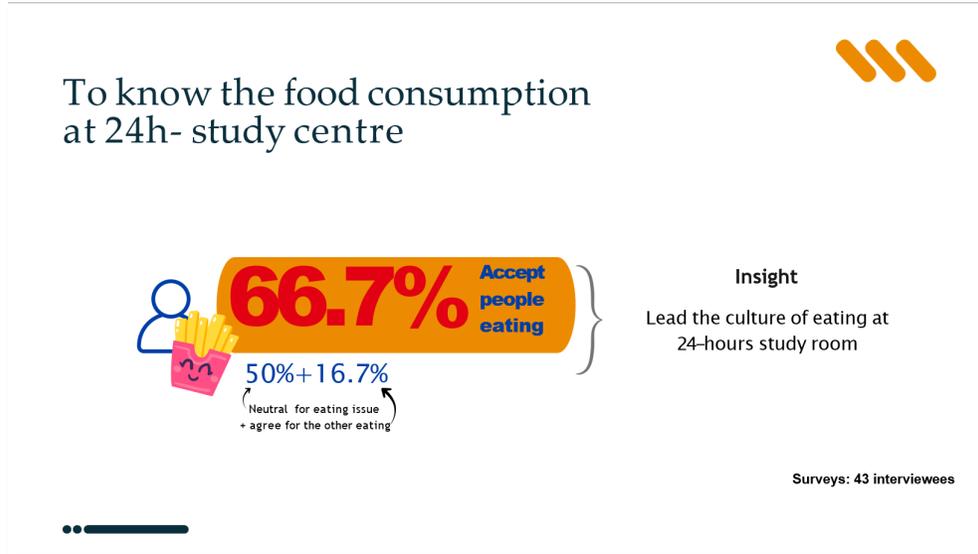- Users will **focus on what feels right**, rather than what they think is right.

1. Seat occupancy & food consumption: why??

Bandwagon Effect (從眾效應) Presented by Team Avengers & Team 7-24

- **"Monkey see, monkey do"** type of behavior from students.
- Users observe other users' disruptive behavior and **mimic it because they believe it is normal in this area.**
- There are **no penalties** for exhibiting disruptive behavior in the PolyU library.

Survey and interview results from both teams:

To know the food consumption
at 24h- study centre

66.7% Accept people eating

50%+16.7%
Neutral for eating issue
+ agree for the other eating

Insight

Lead the culture of eating at
24–hours study room

Surveys: 43 interviewees

Findings

90%
consider eating snacks is okay

80%
Ate due to no Penality

Tendency to adopt behaviours due to conformity/ no penalty (bandwagon Effect)

Interview: 14 interviewees

20

Team Avengers

Team 7-24

NO FOOD PLEASE!

2. Furniture layout at the group study area in the 24-hour study centre

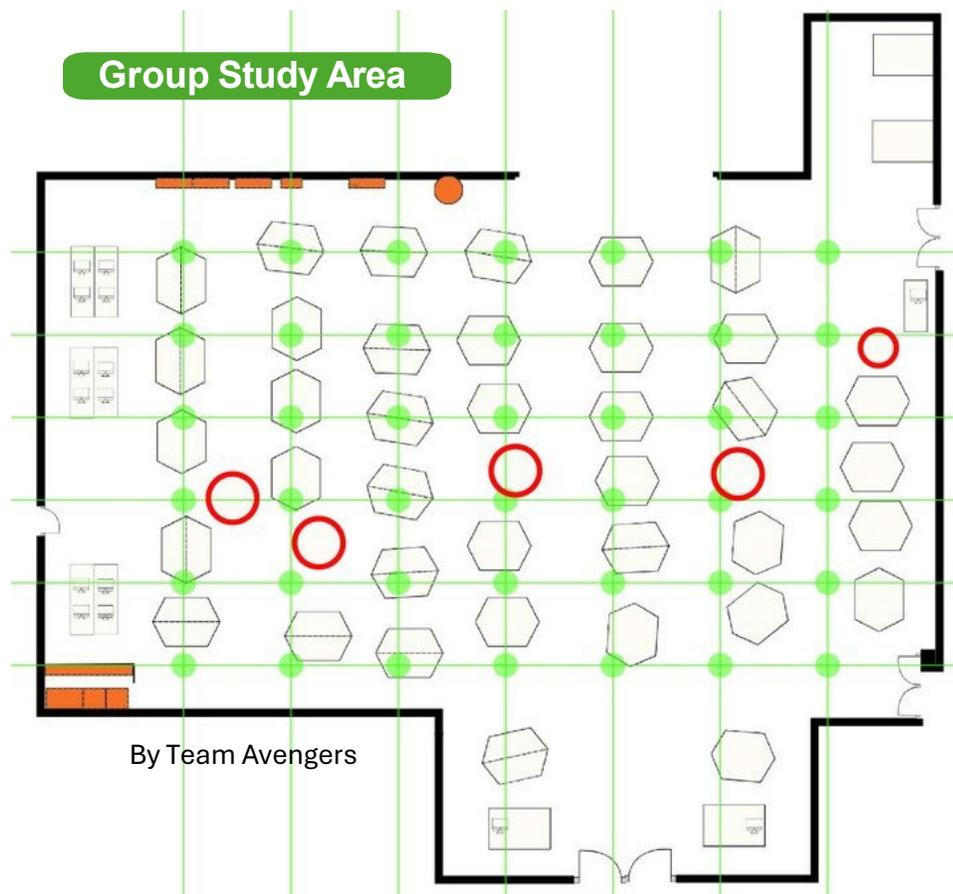**Group Study Area**

By Team Avengers
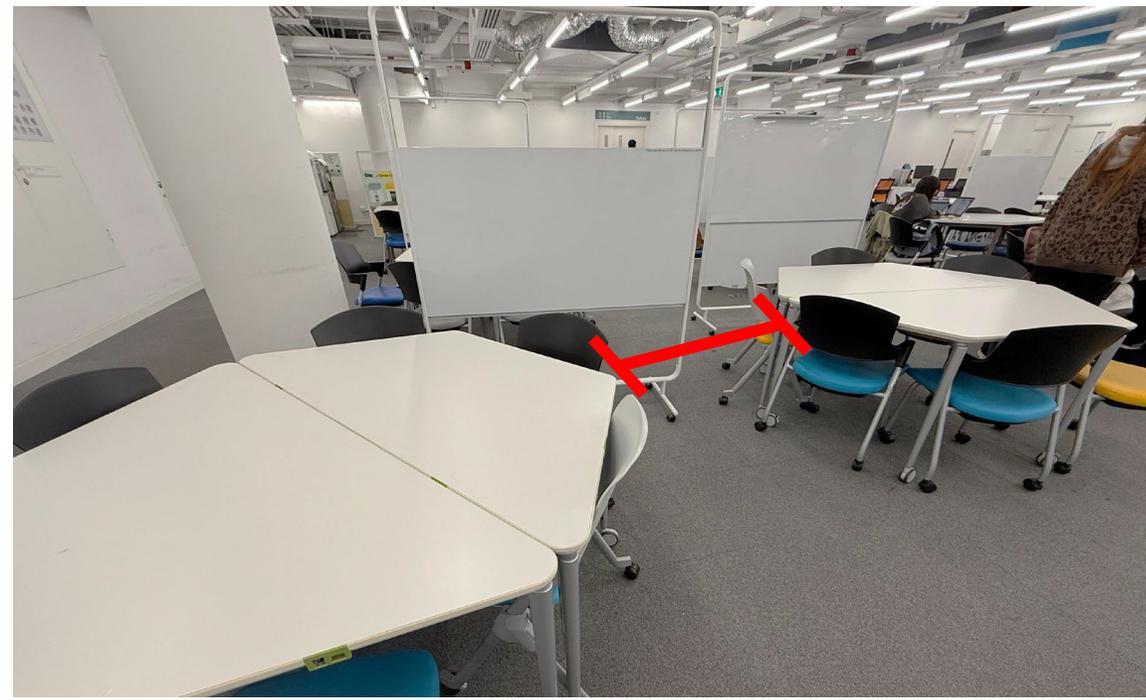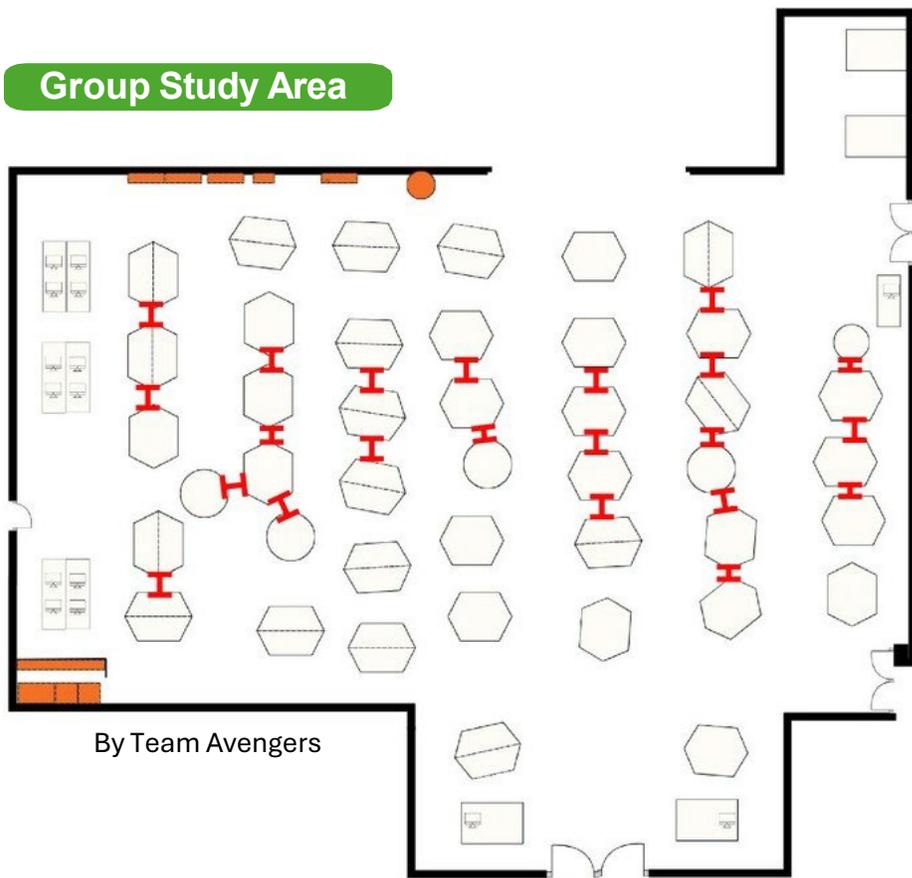
Users Feedback:
- Too noisy, crowded
- Difficult to focus

- **There is insufficient space between tables, which affects other users when they discuss loudly in the area.**

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2. Furniture layout in the group study area

Group Study Area

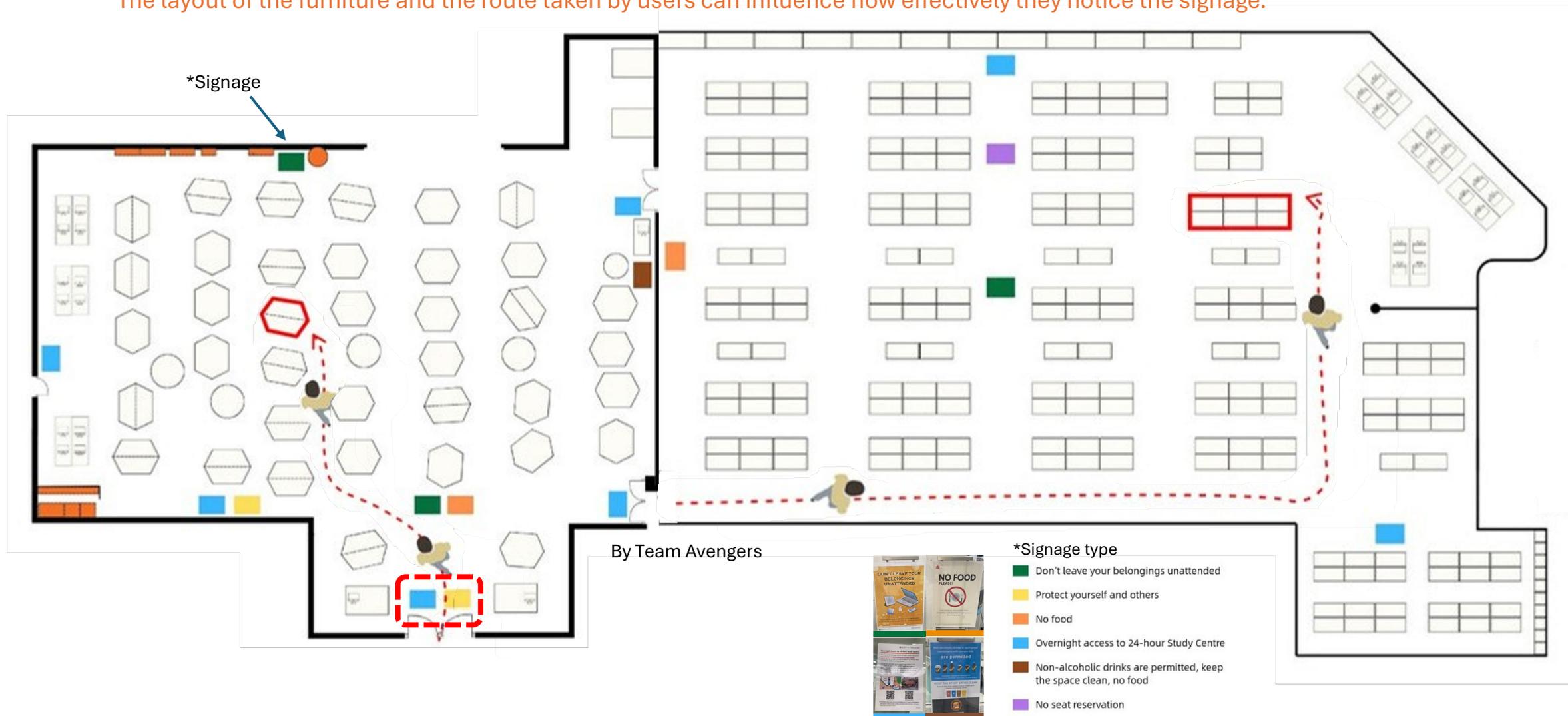By Team Avengers

Users Feedback:
- Messy
- Disturbing

- **The furniture layout resembles a grid structure, creating an uneasy feeling for users.**

3. Signage placement

User Route
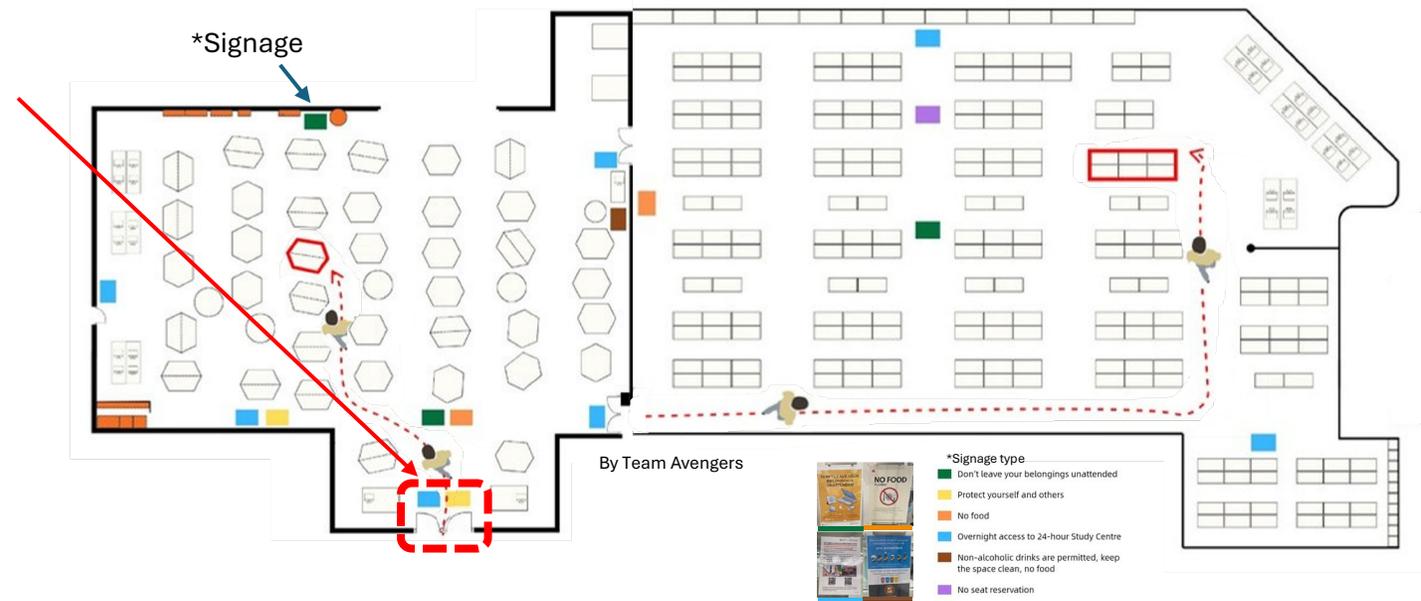The layout of the furniture and the route taken by users can influence how effectively they notice the signage.

*Signage

By Team Avengers

*Signage type

- Don't leave your belongings unattended
- Protect yourself and others
- No food
- Overnight access to 24-hour Study Centre
- Non-alcoholic drinks are permitted, keep the space clean, no food
- No seat reservation

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3.1 Signage placement

*Signage on the side of the door

*Signage

By Team Avengers

*Signage type
- Don't leave your belongings unattended
- Protect yourself and others
- No food
- Overnight access to 24-hour Study Centre
- Non-alcoholic drinks are permitted, keep the space clean, no food
- No seat reservation

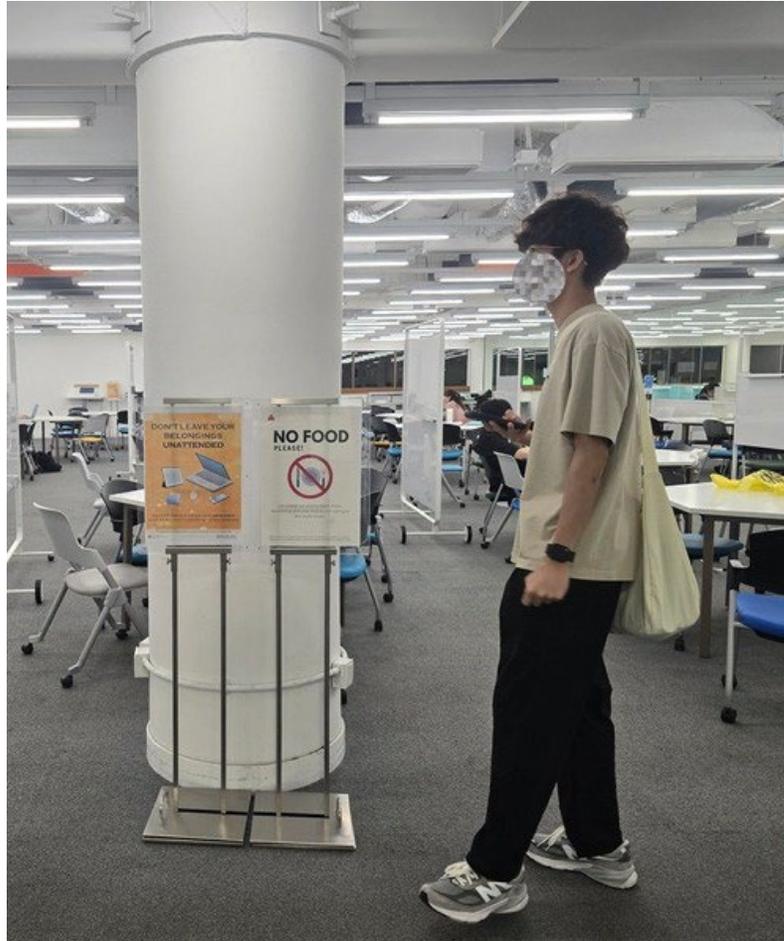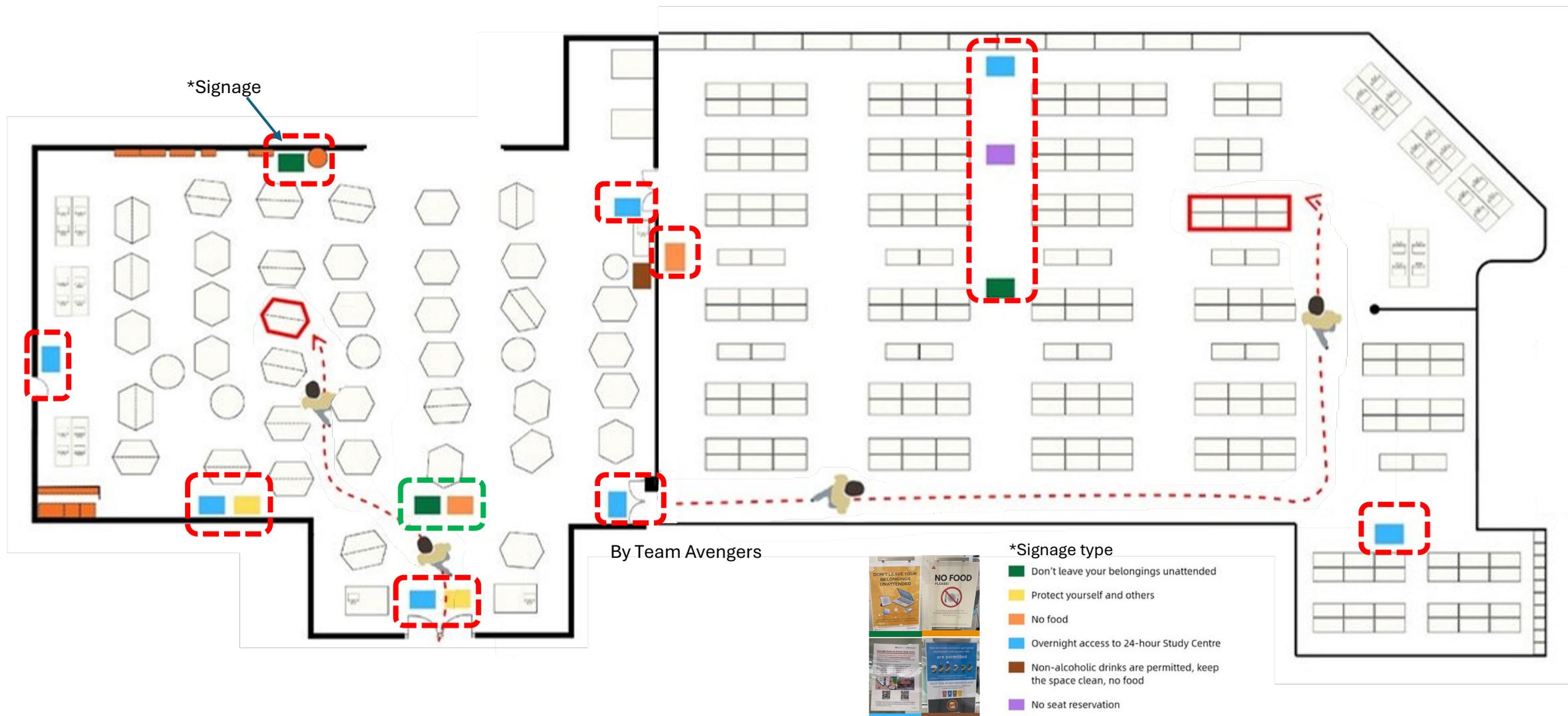# 3.2 Signage height and size

Photo By Team Avengers

- The signage is not at **eye level**

- Average eye level: 152cm -163 cm

- The size of the signage is not noticeable

3.3 Users cannot notice the signage

Signages are on the side of the 24-hour study center or off the user's route.

*Signage

By Team Avengers

*Signage type

- Don't leave your belongings unattended
- Protect yourself and others
- No food
- Overnight access to 24-hour Study Centre
- Non-alcoholic drinks are permitted, keep the space clean, no food
- No seat reservation

3.4 Difficulty in seeing the signage

Once users found a seat, the signages were blocked by the whiteboard and other users.

Photo By Team Avengers

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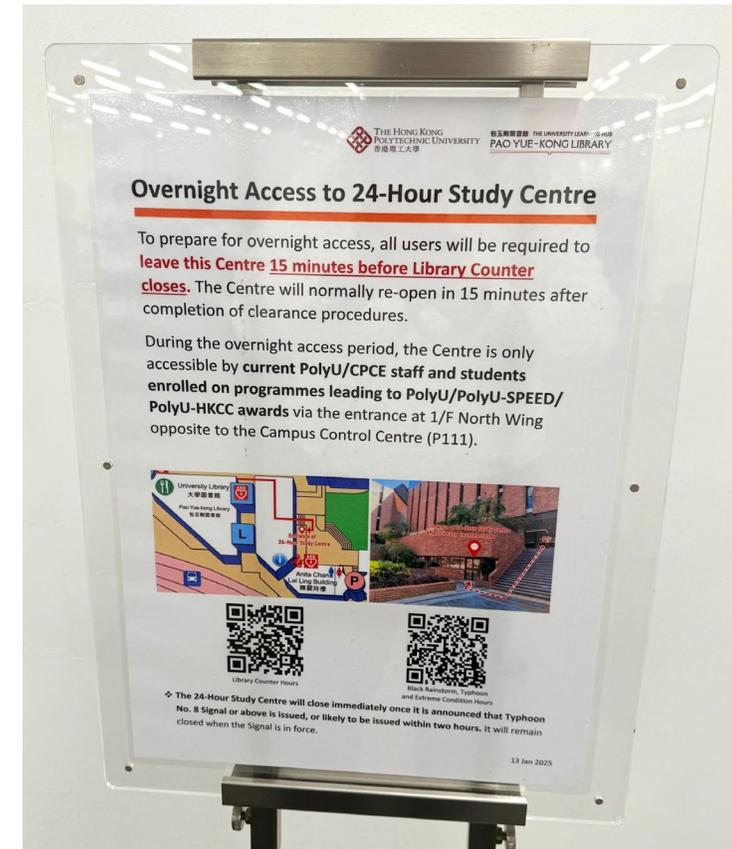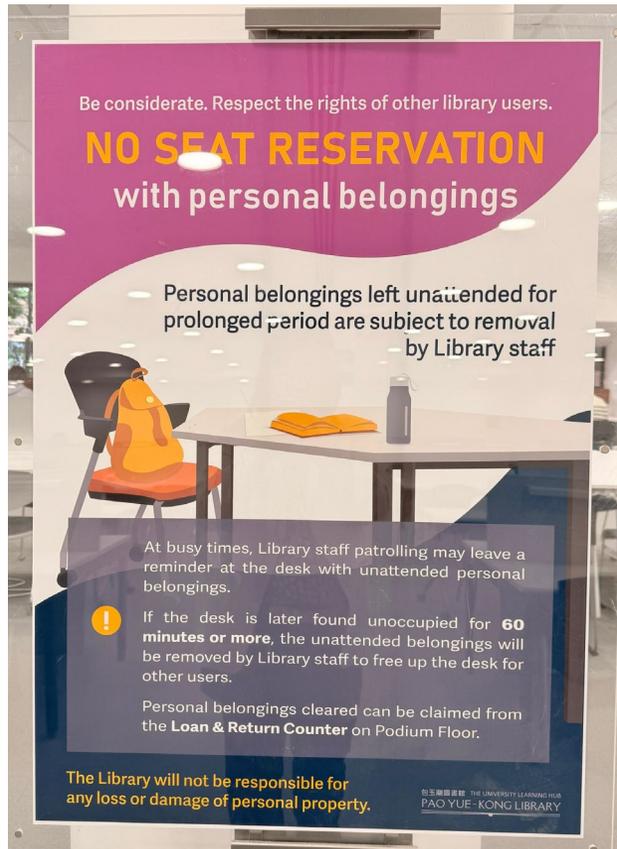# 3.5 Message hierarchy: overly wordy and not visually appealing

Photo By Team Avengers

4. Coloring & lighting

Situation:

- Mainly in grey, white, and black
- Strong white light
- Dirty walls
- Back door wall elements

Users feedback:

- Discouraging, boring, clinical, dizzy
- Lightings are too bright

Photo By Team Avengers

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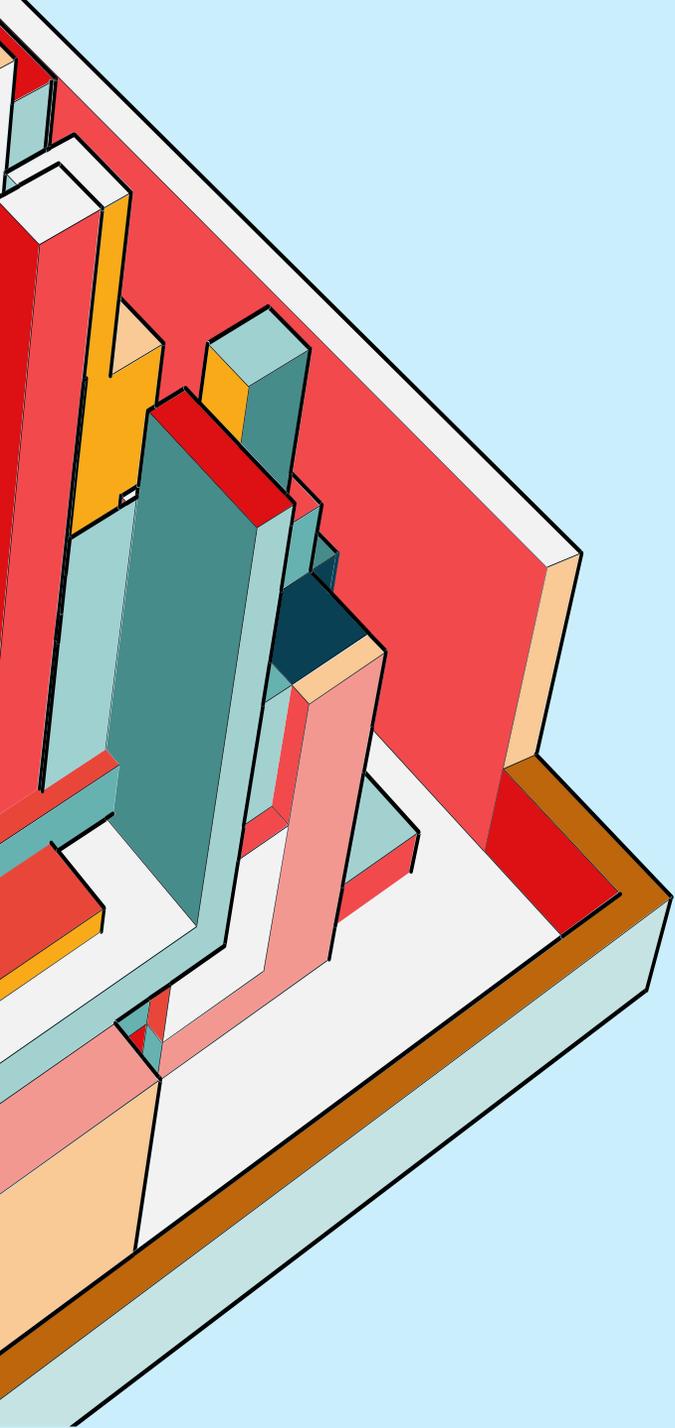# 5. What is the overall atmosphere like in the study centre?

By Team Avengers

24-hour Study Centre
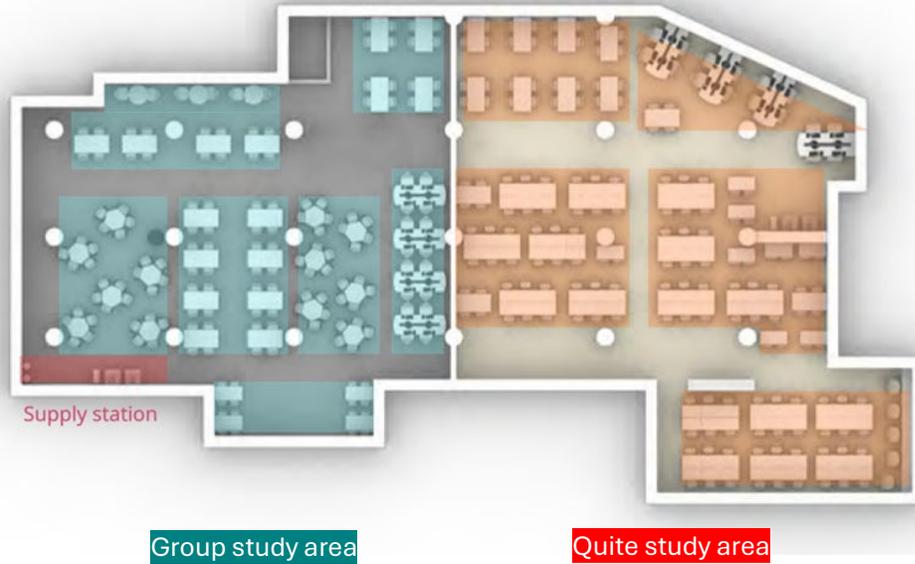(Group Study Area)

➡️

Mahjong Parlour
(麻雀館)

What Are The Solutions From The Design Students?

1. Improving zoning through effective furniture arrangement and lighting design

- Better circulation
- prevent moving furniture inappropriately
- More organized environment

Group study area   Quite study area

Supply station

By YEUNG Yan Yuet, Agnes

By LAI Pak Wang, Alex

- Using a more effective furniture layout makes the 24-hour study centre more comfortable for users and enhances circulation.

- Less like a Mahjong Parlour.

Using color lighting to divide the study area

- Warm color tone lighting for group study area.
- Cold color tone lighting for the quiet study area.

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1.1 Installing comfortable lighting

By YEUNG Yan Yuet, Agnes

→ **Reduce the rows of light at the Group Study Area**

→ **Light intensity**   **500lux – 600lux**
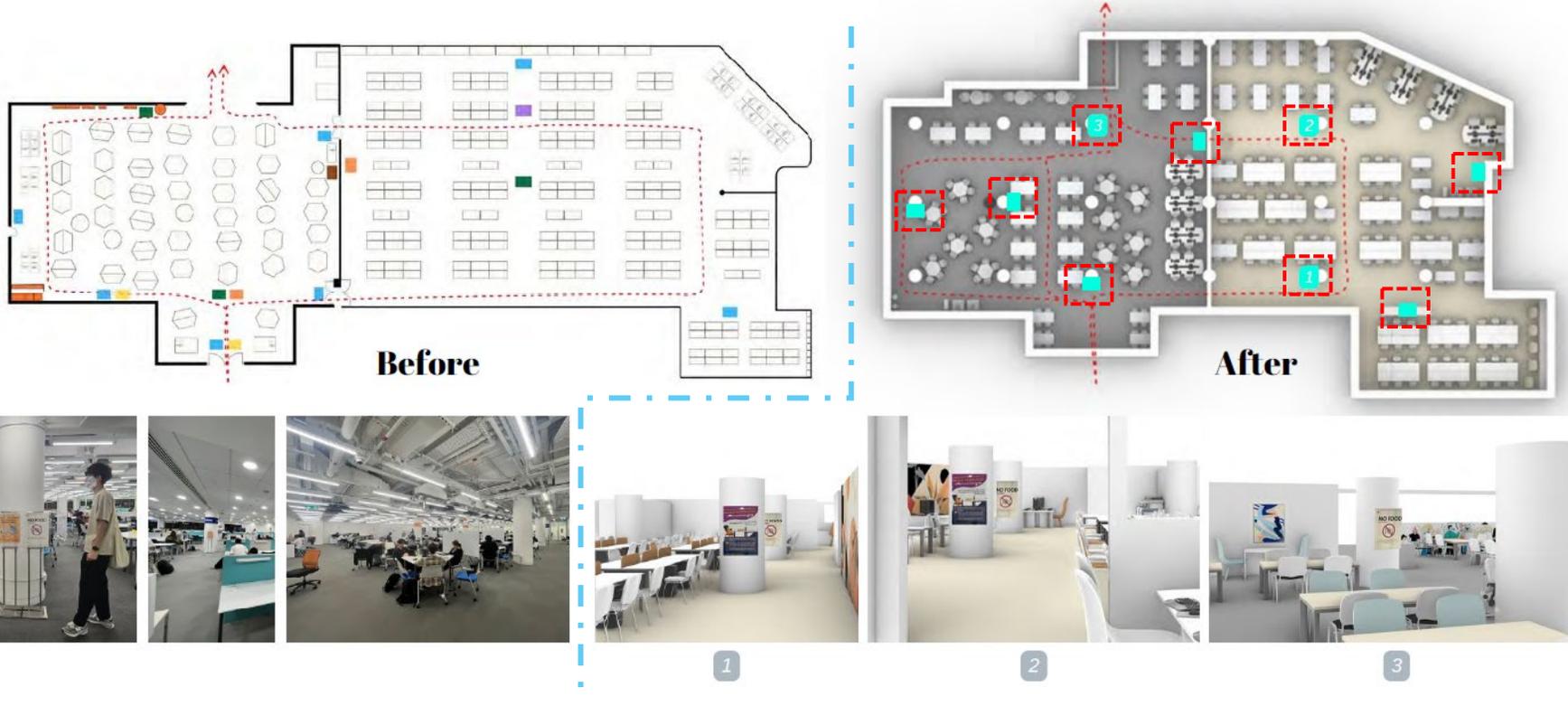
→ **Use neutral white light**   **3500k – 4000k**

2. Better furniture layout, create better circulation
Recommendation for placing signage to improve awareness of library policies

- Improved visibility of signage
- Signage becomes more noticeable when users are seated.

Before

After

By YEUNG Yan Yuet, Agnes

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3. Signage designs
Less wording, clearer visual messages

DON'T MAKE IT EASY FOR THIEVES

BRING YOUR BELONGINGS

By CHEUNG Sin Ying, Helen

By LAI Pak Wang, Alex

THE LIGHT KNOWS YOU'RE SNACKING

Eating is not allowing in the library
Violations will trigger a red warning light

THIS DESK
DEFAULTS TO:
STUDY MODE
本桌預設：自習模式

STUDY MODE
ON

WANT ANOTHER
MODE? ACTIVATED
ON ENTRY
想用其他模式？進入即啟動

Eat → Outdoor area
吃飯 → 戶外用餐區
Chat → Café upstairs
聊天 → 樓上咖啡吧

WE'VE
PREPARED
FOR YOU:
我們為你準備了：

• Free Study Space
  免費的學習空間
• Charging Ports
  充電插座
• Clean Desk
  乾淨桌面

YOU CAN
GIVE BACK BY:
你能回饋我們：

• No Eating
  不進食
• Whisper Only
  低聲交談
• Tidy Before Leave
  離開前整理

Table tent by CHAN Natalie

Welcome to 24-7 LibHub

KEEP IT QUIET AND CLEAN
— SAME LIBRARY SPIRIT

KEEP IT QUIET AND CLEAN — SAME LIBRARY SPIRIT

By HO Man Lai, Edgar

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4. Create a colorful environment for less psychological repression
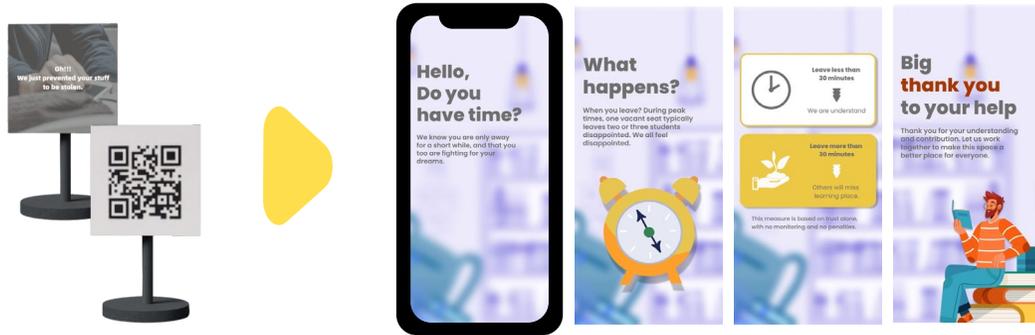To establish a relaxed, focused, and peaceful study environment.

Before

After

3D modeling by YEUNG Yan Yuet, Agnes

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Extra: More interesting design solutions

A Reminder through the QR code and App

By CHUI Ka Hei, Tony

Interactive signs printed on a roll of tissue remind students not to eat in the library

By Tse Ho Sze, Natalie

Free snacks with reminder

By WOO Tsz Yi, Cheery

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Extra: Other design solutions using technology

Using Simple Design Technology To Achieve Effective Results

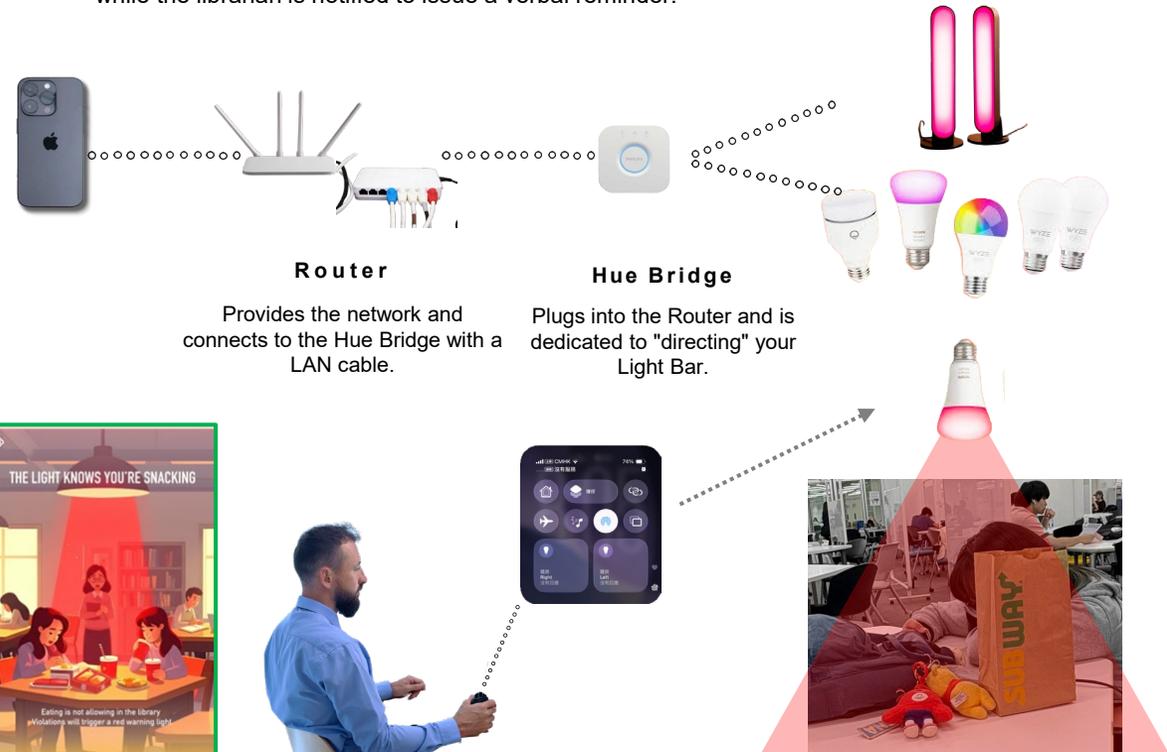## Funny pop-out reminder through connecting PolyU WIFI service

- A funny pop-up reminder to remind users about the library policy and rules.

Slider:
more interactive

By LAW Hau Ying, Venus

Lighting system for alerting users

- Warning mode — the red and white lights flash alternately to signal inappropriate behavior.

- Alert mode — the light stays solid red as a direct warning to the user, while the librarian is notified to issue a verbal reminder.

Router

Provides the network and connects to the Hue Bridge with a LAN cable.

Hue Bridge

Plugs into the Router and is dedicated to "directing" your Light Bar.

Poster For The System

By LAI Pak Wang, Alex

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Project Opportunities And Challenges

Opportunities:

- Integrating design students into the library team opens the door to innovative perspectives and fresh ideas. They are trained to understand others' needs and develop creative solutions, enabling them to approach library challenges in a unique and enriching way, bringing diverse insights to the project.

- Gaining insight into what the library users' hidden opinions are, which can not be obtained from a formal survey.

- Enhance library services and policies by integrating user feedback from project surveys, interviews, and observations, as well as evaluating design students' prototypes and design solutions to better understand the needs of library users.

Challenges:

- It may not be able to implement immediate changes within the current library infrastructure.

- Some of the students' design solutions might not be suitable for use in the library setting.

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Honoring Our Students, Instructor, and School of Design

Subject: SD4002 Cooperative Project (2025)

Project Name: User-centric Libraries: A Sustainable Future through Innovation, Technology, and Collaboration

Field visit group photo at WeWork offices in TaiKoo

Team 7-24
WONG Hoi Wing, Harry
IP Tsz Kin, Kin
TSE Ho Sze, Natalie
CHAN Natalie
HO Man Lai, Edgar
LAI Pak Wang, Alex
LAW Hau Ying, Venus

Team Avengers
LIU Chin, Chin
HUI Pui Chi, Pui
YEUNG Yan Yuet, Agnes
CHUI Ka Hei, Tony
WOO Tsz Yi, Cheery
CHEUNG Sin Ying, Helen
Maylin Cassandra Eilertsen QUINN

Dr. Marc Chataigner [sha•ten•yee]
Assistant Professor of Practice, Teaching Fellow

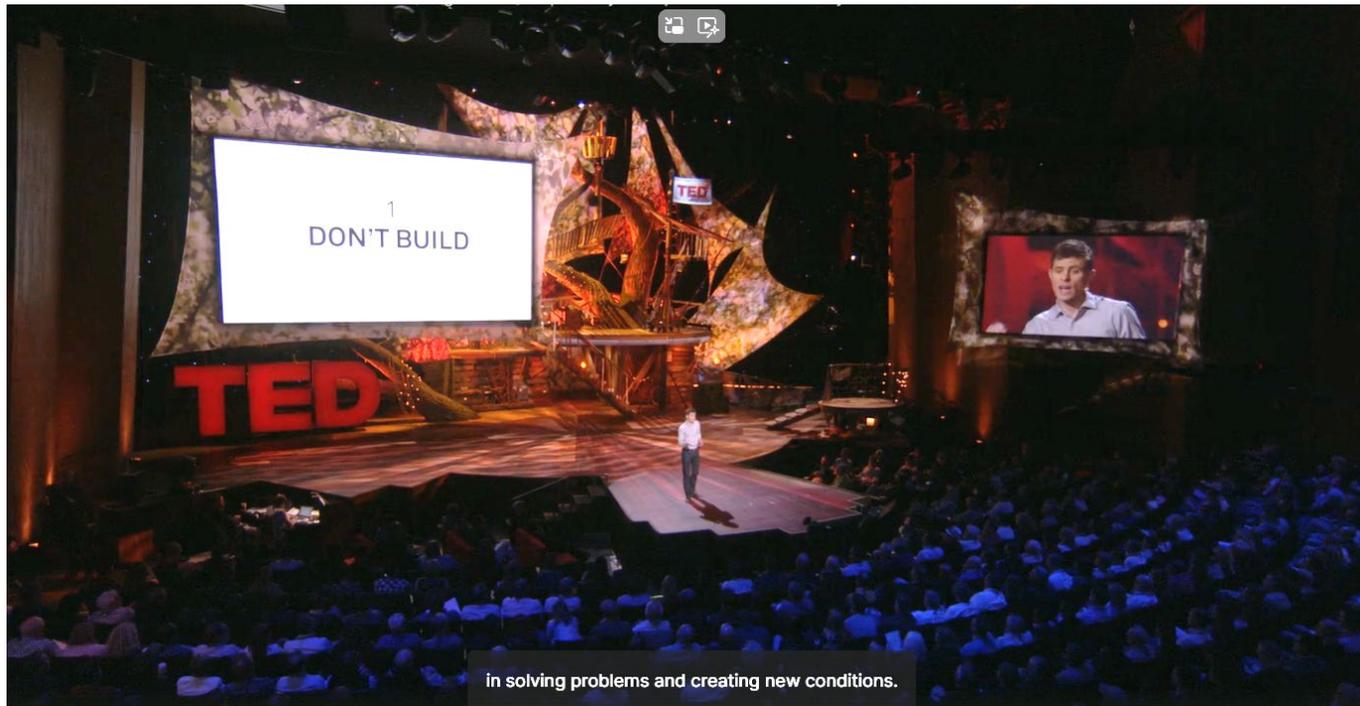**+852 2766 4752**
Mail: marc.n.chataigner@polyu.edu.hk

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Thanks:

wework

Wrap Up

Key Concept:

- The best design solution may not be a physical object but rather a change in systems or behaviors.

- Focus on solving problems and creating new conditions, rather than resorting to building construction as a solution

Parvin, A. (2013, February). *Architecture for the people by the people*. TED. [starting 02:50 - ending 03:51]
https://www.ted.com/talks/alastair_parvin_architecture_for_the_people_by_the_people

Latest Update

- Installing some new tables in the quiet study area

Based on the design solution by IP Tsz Kin, Kin

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Thank You

Connect With Us!!
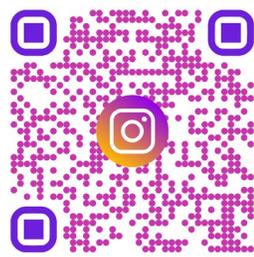
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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University