**BEHAVIOR + EXPERIENCE:**
**EBT IN FARMER'S MARKET**
**READING JOURNAL**

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"Ethnography: A Way of
Seeing"
Harry F. Wolcott

I think its often the case that designers can easily make decisions for communities based on their own impressions and perceptions. But as Wolcott notes, there should be a greater sensitivity to what local communities can contribute toward identifying social problems. It is the responsibility of the designer to observe and interact with the people they are designing for. In terms of my project, I have been entrenched in a farmer's market and a soup kitchen, and being a present member of the situation without regard to myself as a student or designer. I need to begin approaching these experiences with an ethnographic frame of mind, asking more questions and thinking more holistically than in the present.

"Interaction Design
Foundation
'Ethnography'"
Randall & Rouncefield

Our experiences are much deeper than they may appear to be on the surface, and people who live these activities on a daily basis are more in touch with the complexities of a situation than any observer or designer would be — especially as a designer only weeks into preparation for a project. I believe its important to allow a community to guide your perception of a social problem, rather than prescribing it yourself. As an outsider, it can be easy to pinpoint a problem area, but often this problem area is only one of many in the strings of the social fabric of the situation. For myself, I need to try to understand more context of situations I am studying. More so, I need to understand what I am designing, "what it should do, and who should use it in what circumstances."

The Interaction Design Foundation's chapter on ethnography points out that looking in to a community provides sensitivities, not direct answers. A designer's ethnographic practice promotes empathy, and helps collect the context of activities and social actions. To understand a user experience, we must realize it is more than a user's discrete actions, but their cultural and emotional engagement in both the action and the situation. Similar to the notion that designers should attempt to attain a deeper sensibility of the situation they wish to impact, in the Psychology of Waiting Lines, Maister shares that an understanding of backstage actions gives people power that is lost waiting ignorantly. It is therefore the role of the designer to understand a user's and help a user understand the process laid out by designer.

"Psychology of
Waiting Lines"
David Master

I think this will involve me trying to reveal the mental models of actors in situations I am studying. It will be not only trying to replicate these models and understand them, but to bounce them off of the individuals they are meant to represent. Is my concept of your concept accurate? Where are my biases obstructing the representation of your ideas? And in ideating solutions for potential problems I see arise, I must mark all point of information that should or may be of interest to a person during a waiting process of any experience.

"Prototyping is the Shorthand of Design"
Tom Kelley

In going through many ideations, each bout of thinking and sketching will solve some part of the problem being addressed. Some concepts may blend better together and create hybrid-ideas. The key to sketching is to be quick and free, encouraging "accidental discoveries."

Just in my first foray into quick sketching for intervention ideas, I saw this put into use. Through analyzing my sketches, I found that not just one but many parts of different ideas should be implemented in cohesion to address the issue I bring up in my project. Using EBT at the farmer's market involves many people with different goals accessing the same information system, and one simple product cannot create a more positive experience for all.

"Sketching User Experiences"
Bill Buxton

Sketches and prototypes will serve different functions at varying points in this project. It will be important to share my ideas along the way, even if half-baked or ambiguous, with my colleagues and the audience I'm addressing. This can lead to more brainstorming with others, who may bring up ideas that I didn't see from my perspective, or bring up ideas that will help me strengthen my own thoughts.

For instance, when talking with Irene about my sketches, she proposed a mobile app for one of my ideas, a card-holding product for EBT users to keep track of their money, among other functions. From being a vendor, this thought felt like the most natural intervention from my experiences in EBT transactions, as many people are writing things down and not holding out their phones.

When Irene bought up this point, it also made me realize that many EBT users do not have access to smartphones that would allow them to use a mobile app — this reinforced my physical product idea, but also made me think an app alternative would also be useful for those EBT users with mobile access. Especially if I am proposing physical objects, it will be crucial to test them within the audience I'm targeting to aid in perfecting them to the users most pleasurable experience.

"Beyond Interaction: A Short Introduction to Meditation Theory"
Peter-Paul Verbeek

When thinking of interventions for farmers market EBT use, I need to think about all the ways in which humans, technology and the world interact. The information system of EBT is at the center of all transactions at the market, and humans (customers, vendors, market mangers) are all at the will of technology to access it. Technology very obviously plays a mediating role in this context, and I think it will be useful to explore where this process can be automated to streamline processes and possibly decrease error.

"The Urban Improvise"
Kristian Kloeckl

The interpretation of artifacts is related to the personal experiences of those using them. As designers we often try to plan and guide behavior with our artifact, exhausting and planning for all the potential users and use cases. But we cannot possibly plan for all potential human-artifact interactions, so maybe we should move toward facilitating interactions that allow for possibility and evolution. In relation to the market, there is little room for improvisation in the current system. Users engage at the will of a system, of whose connections and functions they are largely unaware.

Why EBT users must have a transaction with the market manager before they can purchase something from vendors seems to be lost on some users. They know their card is run through a different system than any other card transaction, and have become too aware of the inefficiencies of the system.

"A Theoretical Model for Enjoyment"
Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

In this way, customers cannot move toward attaining a state of flow. The wait times and confusion increase the chances of being bored or worried. As the current EBT market system is stable, with the customers and vendors being the elements in flux, their interactions often do not coalesce or allow adaption to changing demands and the feedback loop is broken.

Users load money from their SNAP balance into a farmers market account that is drawn from the same physical piece of plastic. They are given a receipt for their starting total, and as they continue to have transactions with vendors, their receipt becomes moot. The system has no built in way to keep track of your spending or balance. As I make one purchase, I can be unaware of the availability of funds of my next purchase.

"Technics and Civilization"
Lewis Mumford

The clock gave society a means of organization, a way to synchronize actions. As we could increasingly measure time, it became something of value. If time is money, then those with less money can't afford to waste time. When users have prolonged waits due to system inefficiencies, their valuable time, along with the vendors, is squandered. The timing of sharing data between organizations to coordinate payment to the vendor is a long convoluted process that may require hurt business functions.