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ABSTRACT

Libraries and the Missing Narrative:
Practitioner Explorations in the Use of Design Psychology and Environmental Autobiography
for Library Buildings and Designs

By

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This dissertation is a study of the meaning and experiences of libraries described by six library-building design practitioners in their environmental autobiographies. Participants were guided through an adaptation of Toby Israel's (2010) Design Psychology Toolbox (heretofore known as DPT) exercises. The research is intended to expand the practice of designing libraries as places and spaces where social and emotional affordance is supported. Emphasizing the significance of libraries as place and space where people often have rich and even transformative experiences serves to augment use-efficiency and evidence-based space planning. Primary goals of the study included providing an opportunity for library building and design practitioners to tap into their own environmental autobiographies to explore how experience creates meaning in the environments of our lives and to explore how narratives in the form of library stories hold rich information about place and space. As part of this research, participants were encouraged to

consider which aspects of the DPT exercises they might incorporate into future client intake exchanges and explorations for proposed library-building programs. This dissertation describes a mixed method approach inherent in environmental autobiography research where both in-depth interviewing as well as sketching and mapping is involved as participants recall their past, explore their present, and imagine their future in describing the significance of libraries over their life course.