

There and Back Again

A Thesis Journey by Rachelle Milne
SVA Interaction Design

Print Edition
26 June 2014

To my husband, Chris Milne, for New York.

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Introduction

Preface

Hello, I'm Rae Milne. I'm a graduate student at the School of Visual Arts in New York studying interaction design. This book documents more than a year of inquiry into education and learning.

Why Education?

My high school was a tough one. It had a staff of dedicated teachers, but like many California public schools, struggled with dropouts, teen pregnancy, and relatively few college-bound seniors. I was a nerdy, straight-A kid who never quite fit in.

After graduating as valedictorian, I went on to attend Stanford. The campus was a little over an hour and a world away from my hometown. Those four years of undergrad had a profound impact on my view of the world and of myself.

When I finished college, it was a shock to my system. I'd spent so much of my life working towards the singular goal of a college education that once I'd gotten what I wanted, I felt lost.

As a graduate student, I've come to value my love of learning for its own sake and not as a means to an end.

I believe wholeheartedly in the power of education to shape lives, as it has shaped my own. It is this good fortune that makes me passionate about learning and access to opportunity, and why I chose to focus on these topics for my graduate thesis.

Process Overview

My research can be grouped into three major stages. In the first stage, **Early Exploration**, I investigated large, systemic issues in public K through 12 education. Between the ever-widening achievement gap, high dropout rates and increasing teacher turnover, it's no wonder our school system is seen as broken.

Education policy and reform efforts tend to focus on preparing students to compete in a 21st century global economy. With this in mind, I started researching post-secondary opportunities. While the number of high school dropouts is large, the number of college dropouts shocked me. I became frustrated that rising costs were pushing students out of college. This led to the second stage of my thesis journey, **College & Career Readiness**.

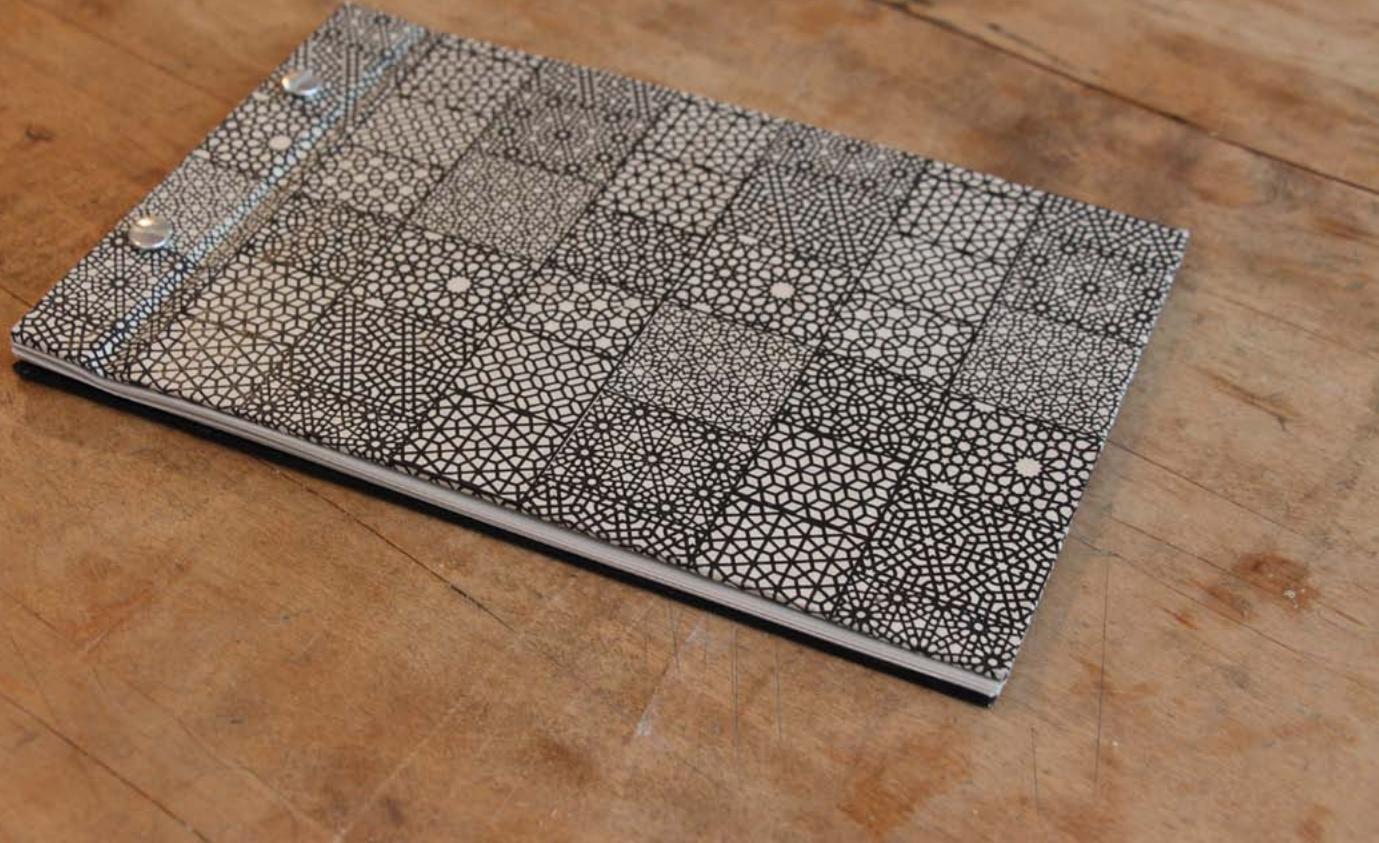
My experiences at two different high schools, DreamYard Prep, an arts-focused magnet school in the Bronx, and Avenues, a private K-12 institution in Chelsea, convinced me that the college application process and the need for financial aid reform were issues worth tackling. I looked at ways to educate college-bound seniors on student debt and to simplify the financial aid process.

After a soul-searching winter break, I started to think less about formal education and more about learning. The issues I researched in the first semester are wicked prob-

lems. They merit attention. But eventually I realized that while academic success is important, a love of lifelong learning is equally important.

My own love is deeply tied to my love of books. This shaped my final stage of inquiry, **Storytelling**, where I explored self-directed learning and literacy.

Early Explorations



LEFT: Thesis almanac, Spring 2013

A Beginning

.....

Writing the Thesis Almanac in Spring 2013 allowed me to reflect on my own motivations as a designer and on topics of interest.

In the almanac, I touch on several very broad topic areas: education, the social ramifications of technology, preserving family history, the changing role of the architect, and the future of the construction industry. Ultimately, I chose to focus on education in my introduction.

Looking back, my initial assumptions about education oversimplified the complexities of the issues, but my self-reflections still ring true:

I design because I am a maker. I could not be satisfied with my life's work if I wasn't making something tangible and putting it out into the world. Creating something and having other people use it makes me happy.

I design because I am a problem solver. Solving big, juicy puzzles is what I live for, & the world is full of wicked problems.

I design because I am an optimist. I hope to have my own children one day, and while I worry about the problems they will have to face, I genuinely believe design is our best hope for leaving the world a better place than we found it.

I design because I am a storyteller. I think stories are what make us fundamentally human. They are a vehicle for understanding ourselves and our place in this world. I look back on my adolescent self, and all the novels, and comic books, and cheesy sci fi flicks I immersed myself in played a big role in figuring out who I was.



ABOVE LEFT: Chris and Mini hard at work



LOWER LEFT: Initial sketches using Sticky Jots



LOWER RIGHT: Impromptu birthday cupcake from the event organizers

Weekend of Civic Hacking

In the summer of 2013, for the EDesign Labs K-12 Open Source Hackathon, I teamed up with fellow IxDer Mini Kim and my husband Chris.

The hackathon took place during the national weekend of Civic Hacking. It also happened to be the weekend of my birthday. The event was held at the Center for Social Innovation. There was a good mix of designers, coders, and educators at the event. Halfway through the hackathon, teachers were on-hand to provide feedback and suggestions.

Chris, Mini and I decided to create Mini Stories, a story-telling app for elementary school kids. [see page xxx for more information] We came away with the Youth Choice Award, a decision made by a committee of students. I didn't know it at the time, but Mini Stories would have a strong influence on my final thesis project.

Also, the hackathon was where I met my future thesis advisor, Hsing Wei, the director of EDesign Labs and one of the organizers of the event.

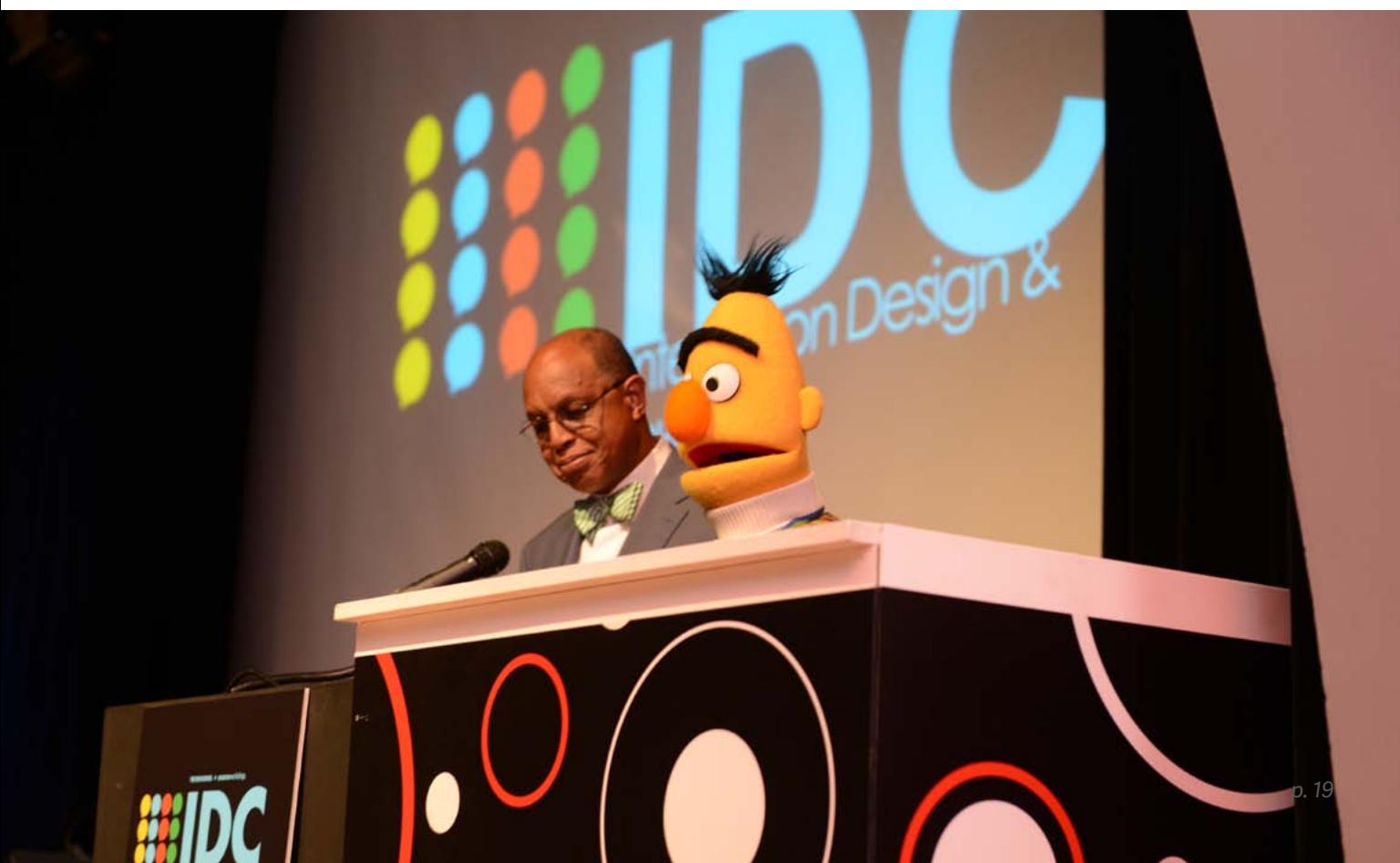
Interaction Design and Children

IDC2013 was a great week. It was refreshing to hear academics in vastly different fields discuss technology and education. The keynote by David Monina Sengeh was especially inspiring. Mr. Sengeh stated, "It is our responsibility to create the tools and platforms that enable young people to create." He was speaking about the power of young people, fueled by their optimism and ingenuity, to make real change.

Some other talks that stood out include *The Arcane Gallery of Gadgetry*, a transmedia ARG (alternate reality game) for middle schoolers developed and researched by graduate students at University of Maryland's HCI program, *Roberto*, an interactive picture book that teaches children about programming, and *moosikMasheens*, musical instruments especially designed for special learners..

ABOVE RIGHT: All of the day's talks took place in a single auditorium

BELOW RIGHT: Speech from a special guest



*It is our responsibility
to create the tools and
platforms that enable
young people to create.*

David Monina Sengeh

A Plan of Action

I am a planner, and planners love calendars. The following pages summarize major events and activities during Fall 2013, both thesis and non-thesis related.

I color-coded the calendar as follows:

Pink: Assigned tasks from Thesis II

Blue: Research and reading schedule

Yellow: Personal goals for thesis

Orange: Major non-thesis related events

Datum / Date: SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2013

Datum / Date:

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	GOALS
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
CONTACT KATIE KOCH	BLOG: CLASS EX. (Shelly)	BLOG: 1999 A.D. MIG w/ LIZ		WATCH: BROOKLYN CASTLE	CHAT w/ KATIE KOCH	TALK TO STRANGERS	READ: B-sols to Poverty
29	30						
READ: DEATH + LIFE OF GREAT AM. SCHOOL SYSTEM	HISTORICAL THINKING	RESEARCH PLAN MOCKUP	WATCH: MISS REPRESENTATION				RESEARCH: -GAMES -Transmedia storytelling
6	7	Comment on PLANS BLOG-MOCKUP II	READ: college dropout readiness studies		VISIT TO AVENUES ivan cestero.	READ: SMARTEST KIDS IN THE WORLD.	RESEARCH: -Ed Non-Profits
13	14	WATCH: THE CRUISE		10	IT'L DAY = THE GIRL.	[9am] FEAST HACKATHON	RESEARCH: -Alternative Schools
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
FEAST HACKATHON	READ: WORLD PEACE GAME.	MOCK UP! GAME.	FEAST CONFERENCE [30pm]	FEAST CONFERENCE	FEAST CONFERENCE	← VISIT TO DREAMYARD PREP.	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
PLAYTEST GAME	REVISE + PLAYTEST GAME	PRESENT + RESEARCH FINDINGS + PROTOTYPE PROPOSAL	SERVICE DESIGN-RUMBLE	SERVICE DESIGN-RUMBLE	9AM) COFFEE w/ HSING	BLOG ABOUT -FEAST -READINGS	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2	
READ: Connected Learning		5pm Girls Write Now!!					
		PRESNT (small groups) Prototype					

Datum / Date: NOVEMBER 2013

Datum / Date:

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	GOALS
3	4	5	6				
HOME FR. BOSTON	MID TERM PROTOTYPE DUE 11.30pm Dream. Sec. Do.						
10	11	12	13				
17 10a) Service <u>NARRATIVE</u> Stakeholder journeys. 1pm) Mtg	10-2 P.I.) MAKE PRESENTATION.	18 DYPREP MT RUDY + Jen					
24	25	26	27				
FAFSA Breakdown	COLLEGE App checklist + calendar	FIN. AID Guidebook		THANKSGIVING			
							DYPREP Sr. seminar [12.10-12.47]

Datum / Date: DECEMBER 2013

Datum / Date:

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	GOALS
	1 P.I.) org prez split work	2 11AM) D.M. Finalize Proposals send to print.	3 THESSIS- PROTOTYPE PRES. (PUBLIC INTERFACES)	4 ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP APP DUE. ✓	5 THESIS DESIGN BRIEF ✓	6 10g) 9am Service design	7 DESIGN BRIEF (D. Mgmt)
15 work (service)	16 FINAL (service D.)	17 FINAL (THESIS)	18 1pm) DM. Finalize Pres.	19 FINAL (D. Mgmt)	20 MOVIE + FINALIZE PRES.	21	
22	23	24	25 <u>CHRISTMAS!</u>	19 HOME TO CALI →	20	21	28
29	30	31		26 BACK TO NY ←	27		

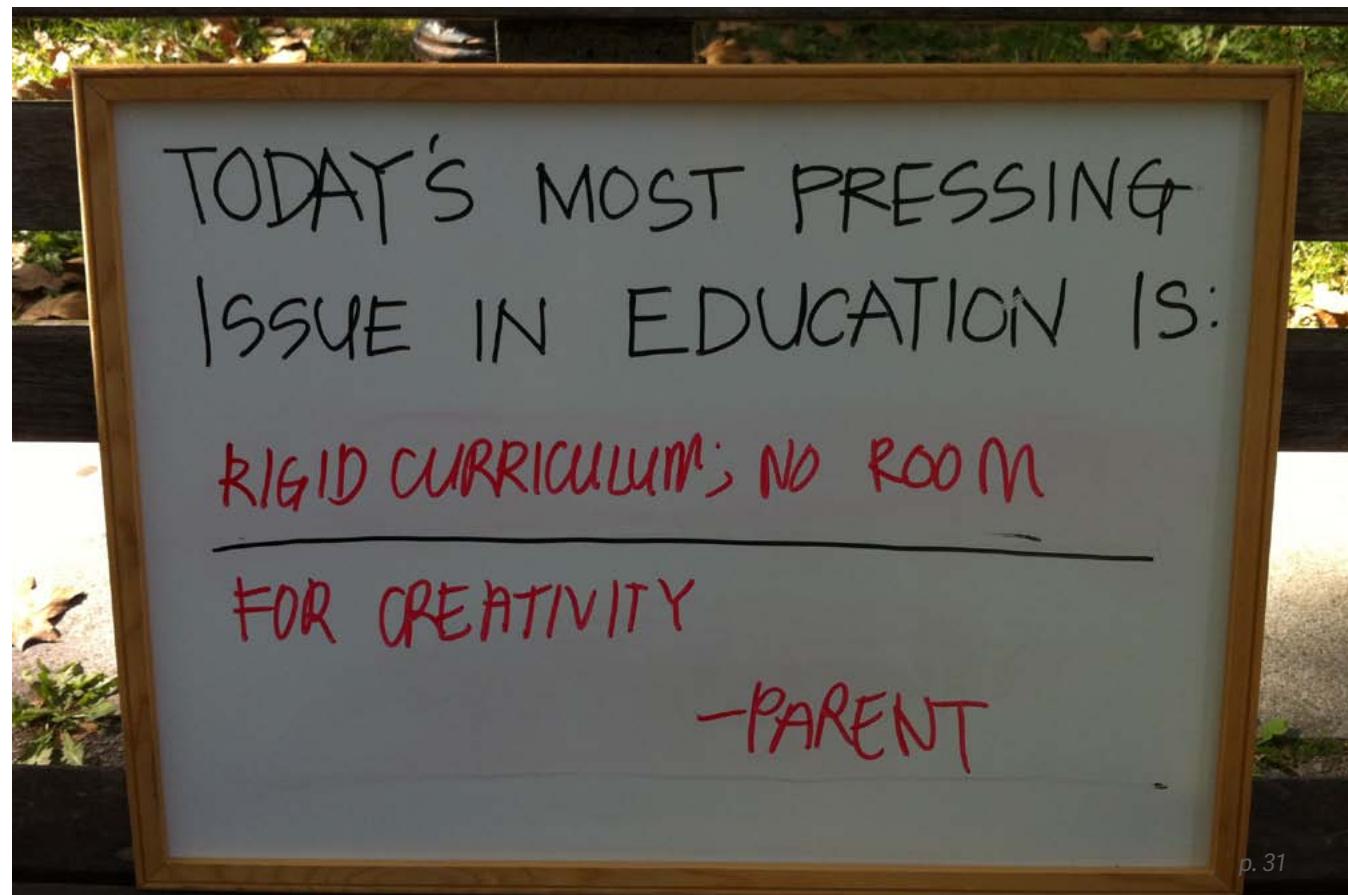
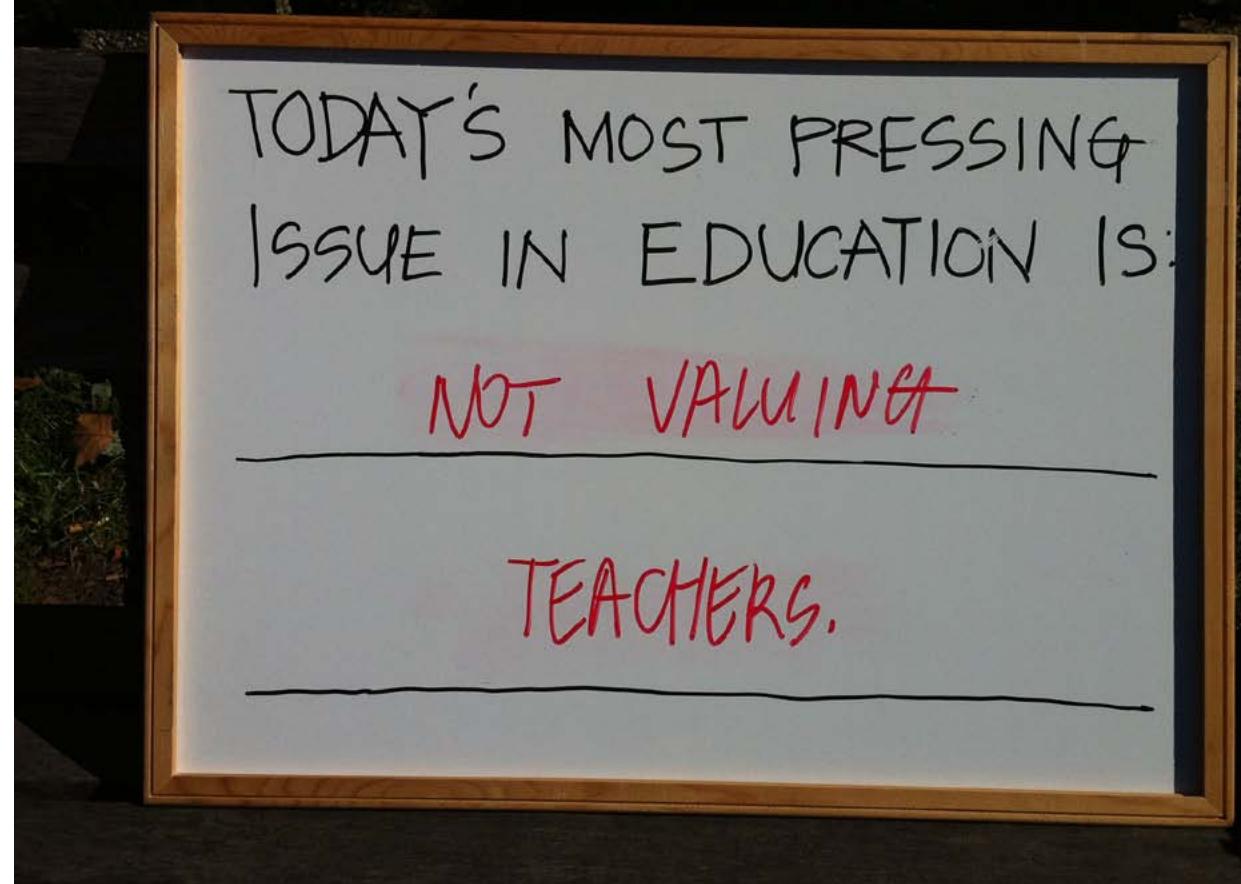
Initial Experiments

Pressing Needs In Education

(30 September 2013) Talking to people I don't know is not my strong point, so when Eric tasked us with going out into the wild and getting strangers to discuss our thesis topic, I decided I needed a prop. With a friend in tow, I hit up a local stationery store to pick up a whiteboard and a few markers. We then made our way to Riverside Park and stationed ourselves on a bench. I scribbled "TODAY'S MOST PRESSING ISSUE IN EDUCATION IS:" onto the board, propped the board up next to me, and waited.

After spending an afternoon in the park, I'd spoken to a former educator who'd taught art in Harlem, two parents with elementary school age children, and one student in the 4th grade. The pressing issues they cited include: not valuing teachers, too much homework, rigid curriculum that stifles creativity, and an overemphasis on standardized testing.

RIGHT: Sample responses from various parkgoers



Crowdsourcing Education

Early on in my research, I became inspired by The Independent Project, a school-within-a-school run by the students themselves. The experiment took place at Monument Mountain Regional High School.

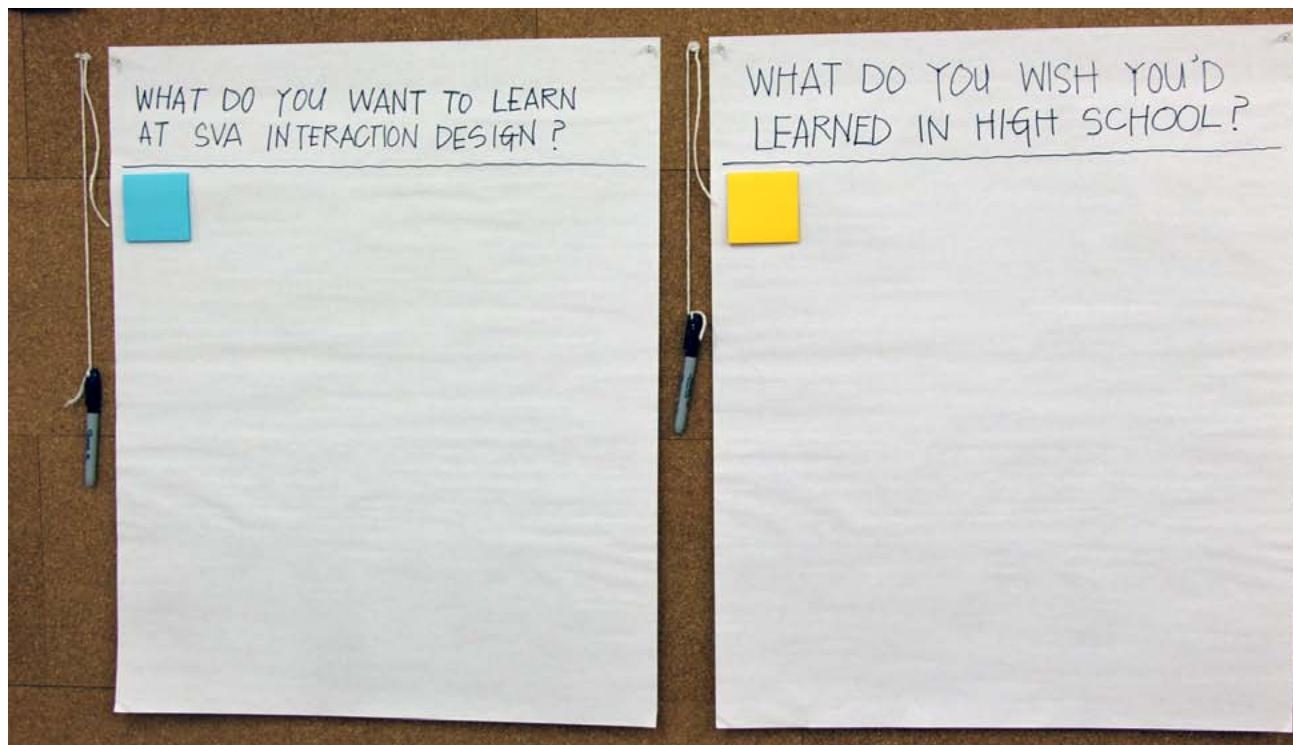
As a rough and dirty prototype, I decided to put up a couple of posters in studio to gather student opinion.

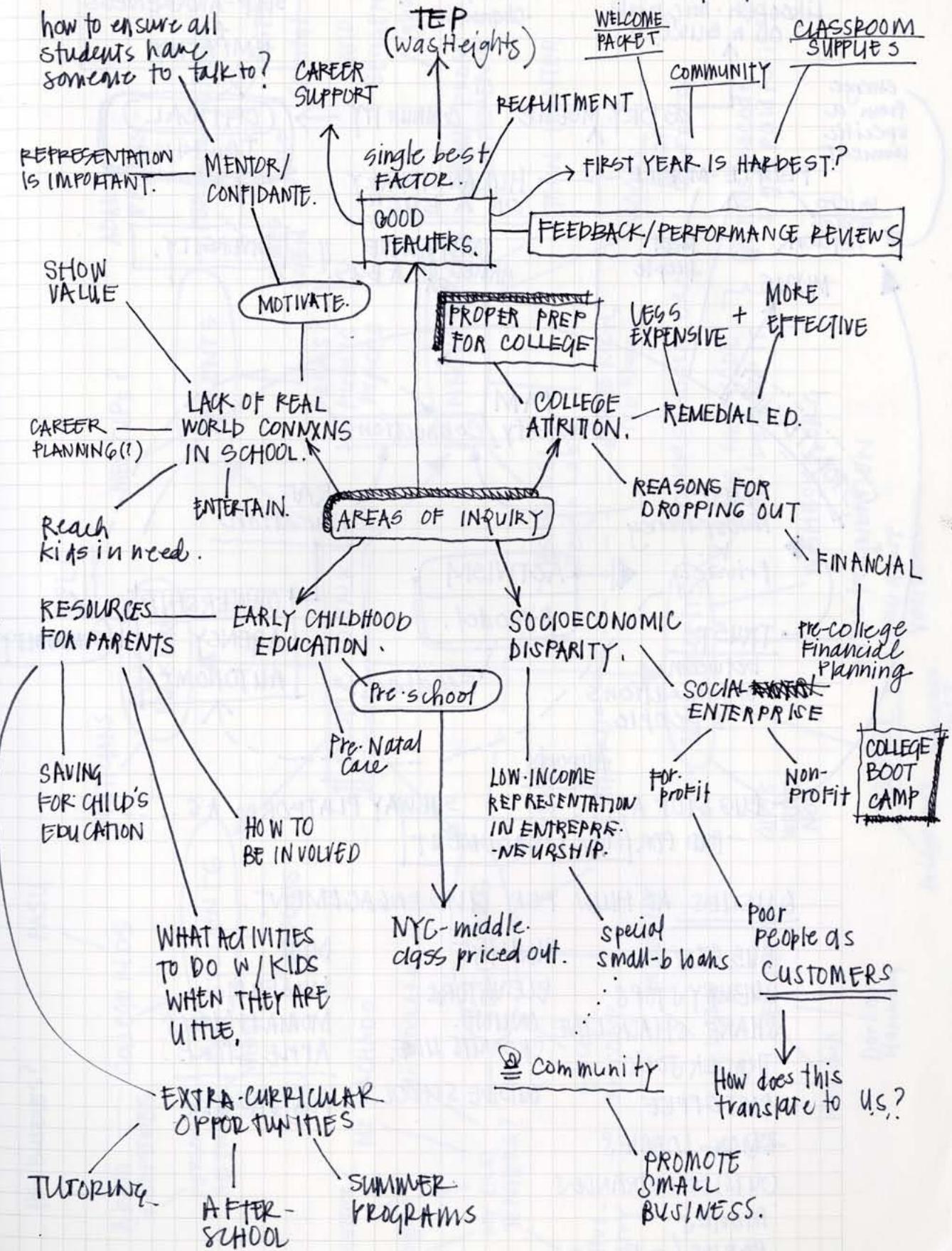
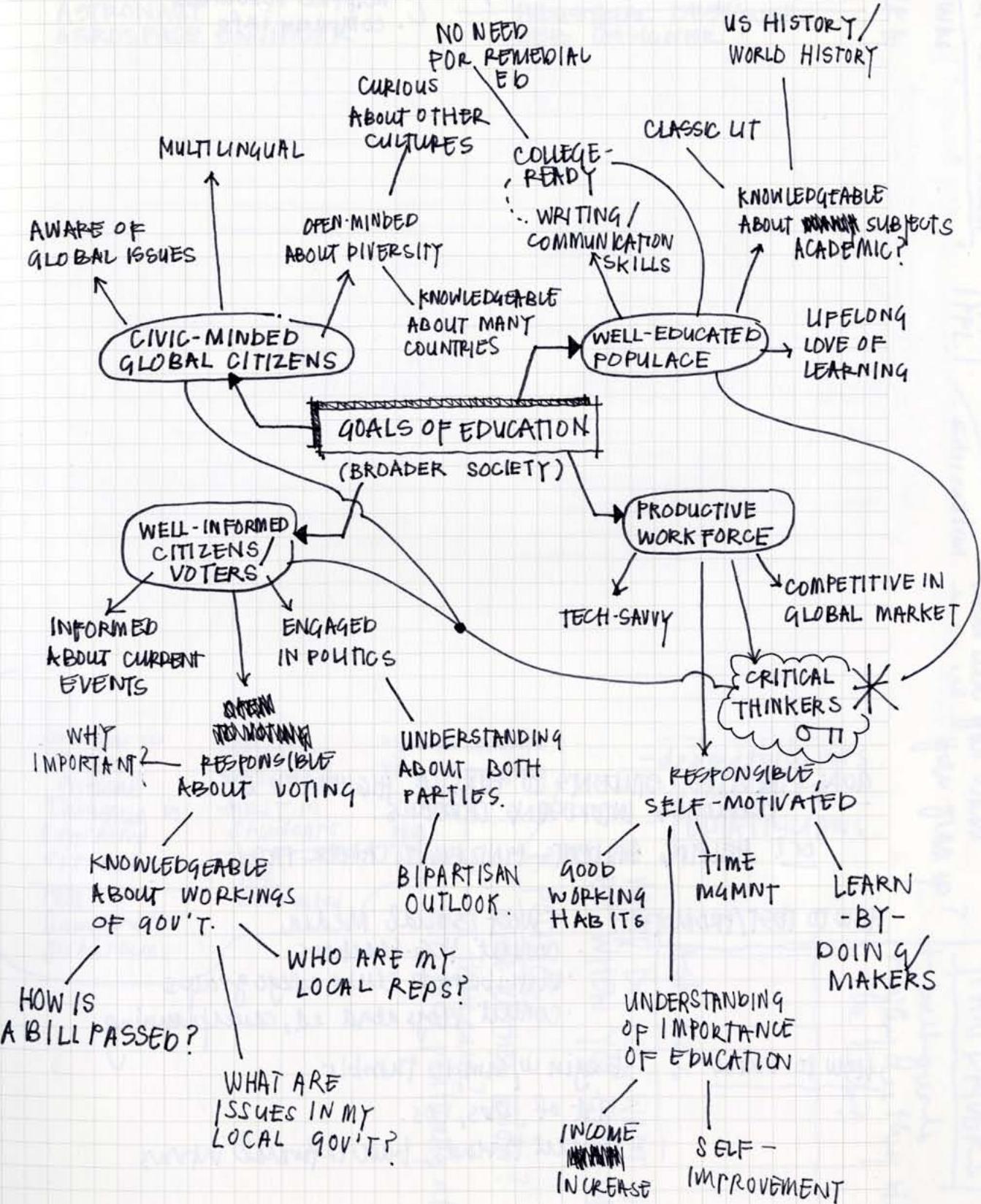
(08 October 2013) I asked two questions: "What do you want to learn at SVA Interaction Design?" and "What do you wish you'd learned in high school?"

Interesting to see how many more answers there were about the second question. The most popular answer was coding/programming which makes me think current schoolwork here at SVA had something to do with it ;)

The experiment never really went anywhere. The opportunity for students to craft their own curriculum is intriguing, but didn't fit into the larger topics I wanted to explore.

RIGHT: Experiment results





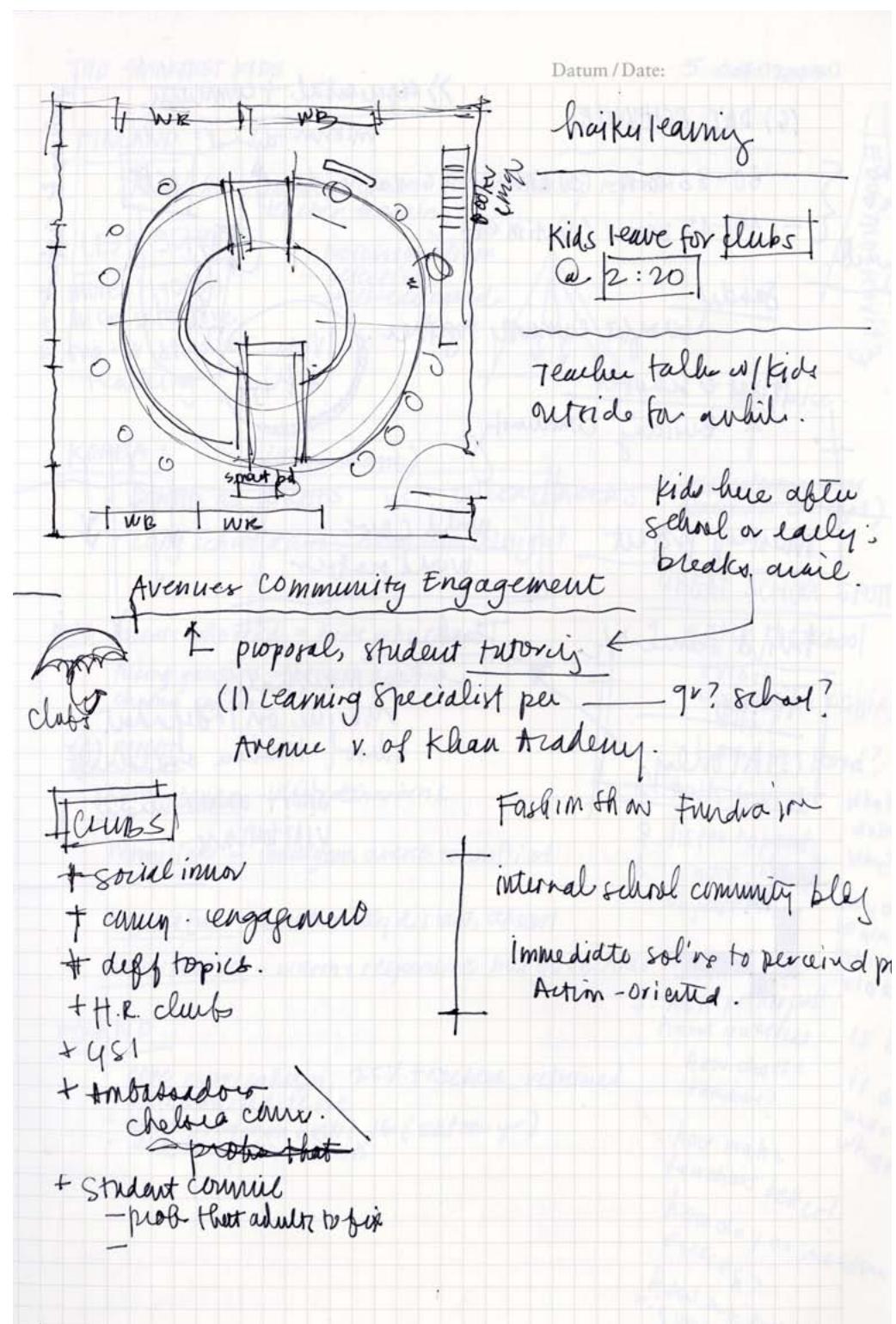
A Classroom Visit

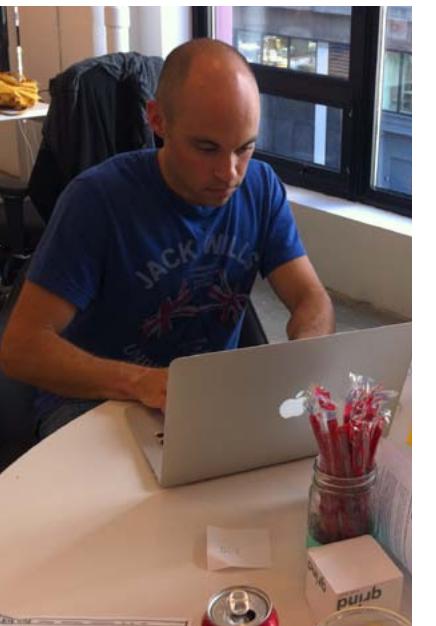
.....

Following a chat with Katie Koch, I was introduced to Ivan Cestero, an educator at Avenues World School. I sat in on one of Ivan's classes, called Global Social Innovation. Afterwards, I listened in on a club meeting.

GSI was more of a college seminar than the classes I remember from high school. They sat in a circle. The students brainstormed about a few topics, taking turns commanding the room.

Ivan's assessment of criteria was unique. He evaluated his students in 3 categories: Flexibility + Creativity, Patience + Grit, and Awareness + Empathy.





Feasting on Good

LEFT: Various snapshots from the week's events including the Hackathon and the day on the Do Good Bus

(12-13 Oct 2013) The Feast: Hackathon

The Feast hackathon took place the week before the conference. At the hackathon, the Dream Team was formed. We were complete strangers with similar interests in college and career readiness. In roughly 24 hours, we brainstormed a concept, did some rough wireframes, and implemented a design. Dream See Do ultimately won in the Learning category and we were invited to present our project at The Feast conference.

(17 Oct 2013) The Feast: Talks

The first day of the conference was packed with inspiring speakers. Robyn Chase spoke about her experience creating ZipCar and the building blocks of a collaborative economy: excess capacity, a platform for participation, and peer collaborators. S. Craig Watson discussed the current crisis in public education: schools are good at what they do, but they are outmoded. Anil Dash warned education innovators to remember what we've learned from other industries disrupted by technology: the cycle is always the same; it begins with big institutions underestimating the value of technology. They question whether people prefer the old way of doing things, and then the technology people mess everything up.

(18 Oct 2013) The Feast: A Day on the Do Good Bus

On Friday, after presenting our hackathon projects during the morning session of the conference, Pam and I boarded the Do Good Bus along with a handful of other Feast-goers, headed towards DreamYard Prep in the Bronx. DreamYard Prep is an We got the chance to sit down and chat with several students before getting down to work on upgrading software on DreamYard Prep's laptop inventory.

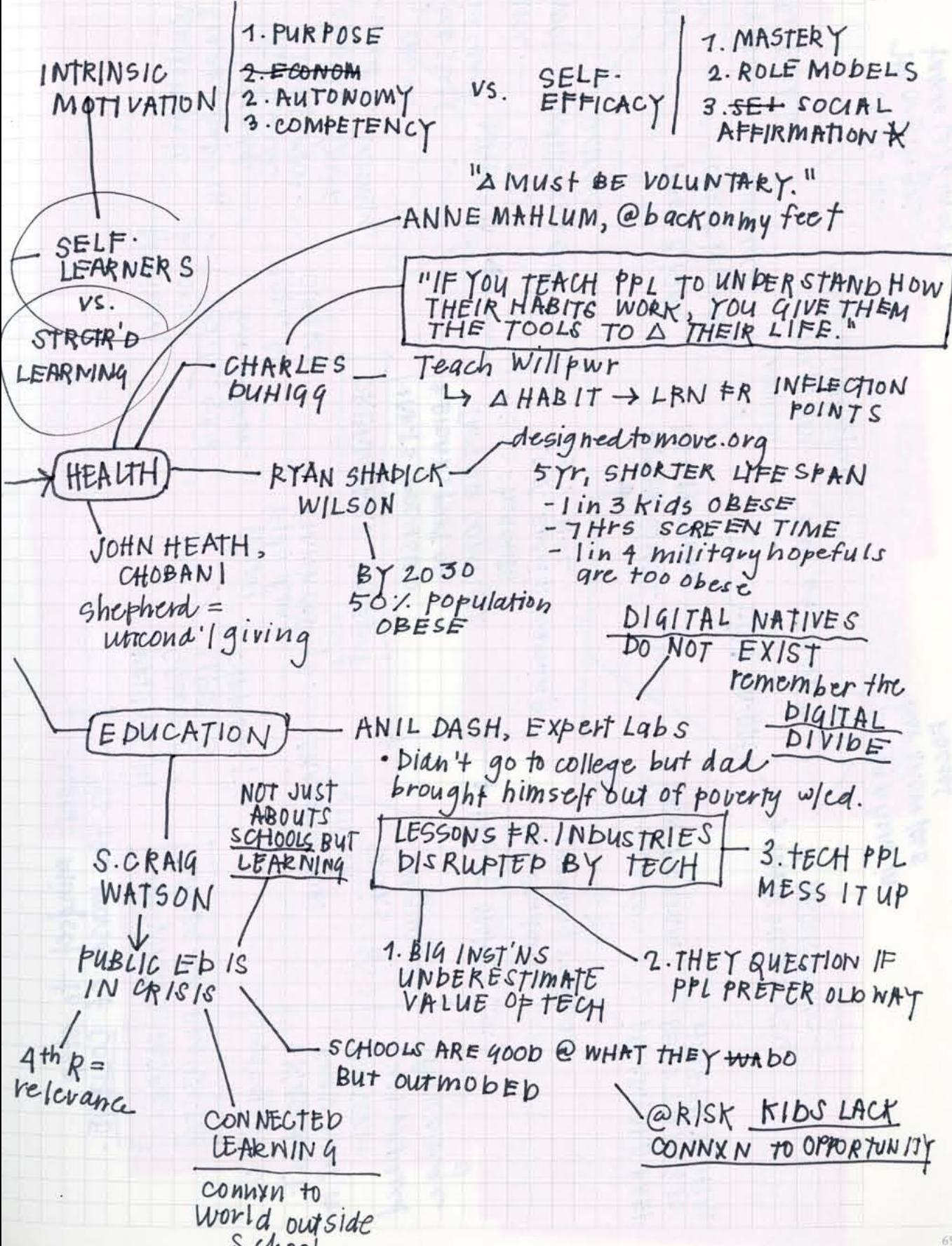
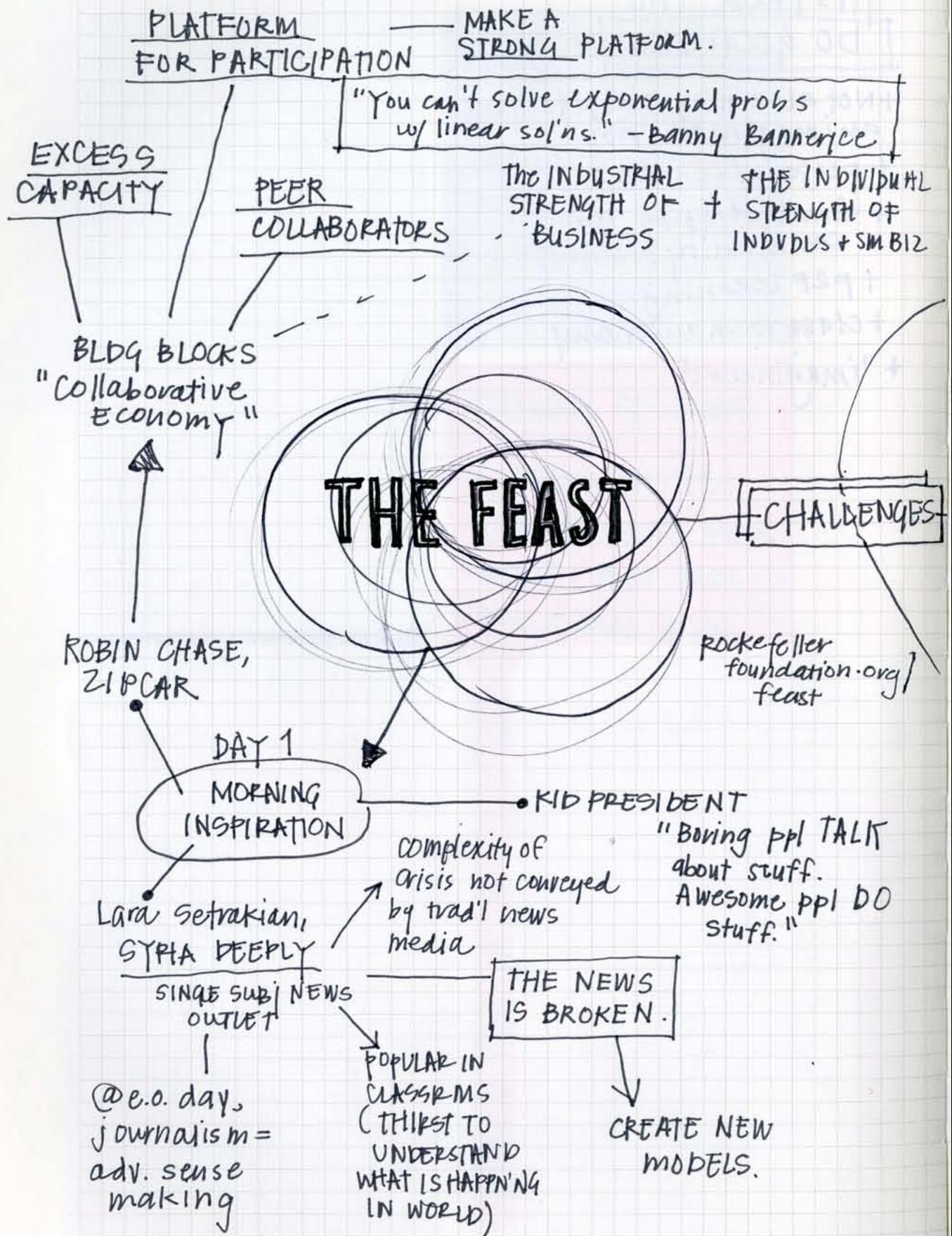
The students were all very open, sharing their individual experiences, struggles, and dreams and for the future.

I met one student who said that DreamYard is the best thing that's happened to him. Perry* comes from Ghana. He speaks four languages but is illiterate. Perry said he's eager for more real world, hands-on projects in high school. He has friends in college who feel they were ill-prepared for postsecondary academics.

I met another student, Neesa*, who wants to be an actress. Neesa's family is from New York. Neesa is the 7th of 8 kids in her family, none of whom graduated from college. She wants to be the first.

This first visit to DreamYard fueled my interest in improving the transition from high school to college.

**names have been changed*



College & Career Readiness

College Debt: The Game

For my first full-blown prototype, I created a card game about student debt. The first player to pay off their student loans won the game. It wasn't a complex game system and was easily defeated during a user testing session in class.

For future versions, I added more resistance and a series of scenarios to make the game more of a critical thinking exercise than a numbers game. Eventually, I dropped a game-based approach for a more narrative one.

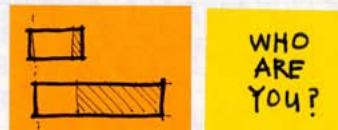
RIGHT: Testing various prototypes of the game



Datum / Date: 28 OCT 2013

STUDENT DEBT INFOGRAPHIC

① INTRODUCTION ② MAKE CHOICES



WHO ARE YOU?

③ REVIEW OUTCOME



\$1.2 TRILLION
vs.

ACCEPTANCE LETTERS;
CHOOSE A SCHOOL.

+ TUITION
+ FIN. AID

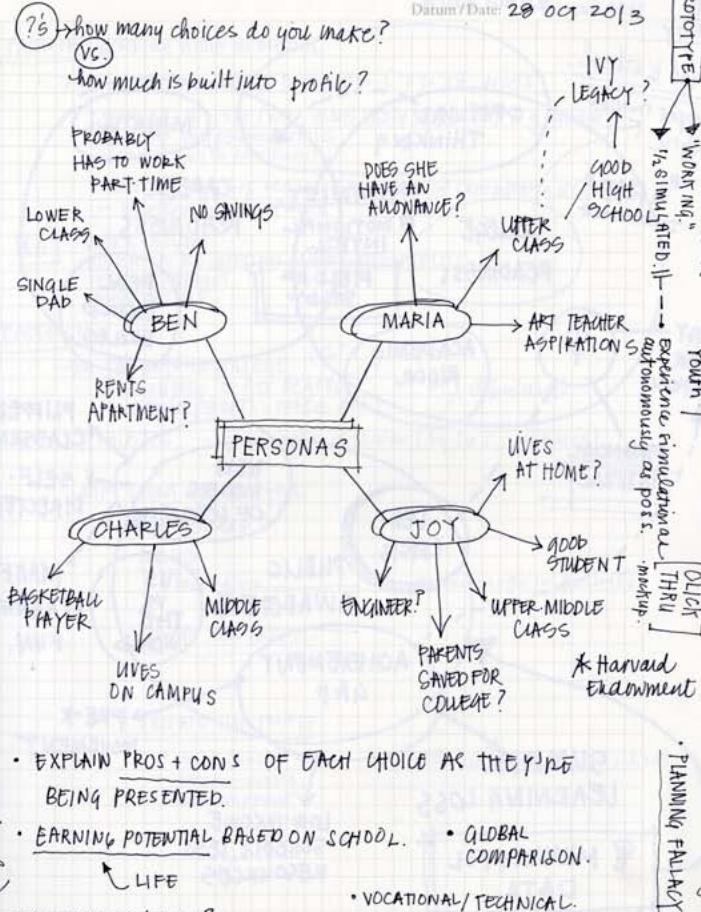
CHOOSE A MAJOR.

+ FUTURE SALARY

④ COMPARE TO OTHER CHOICES

YEARLY
\$XX,XXX
(\$XXX DEBT)

DEBT
OVER ⌂
Monthly \$\$\$



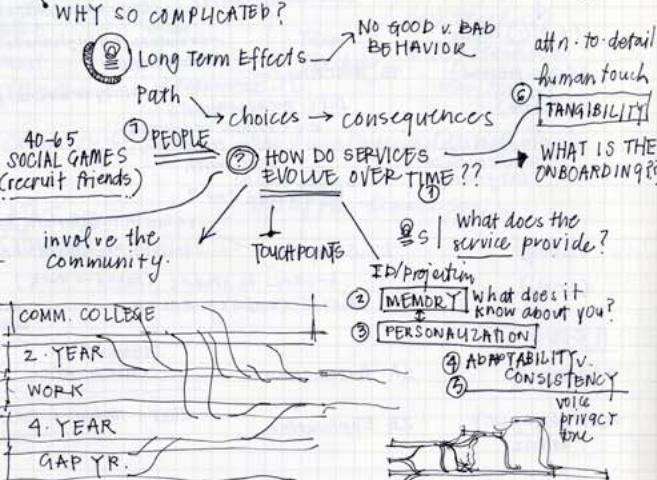
Financial Aid Brainstorming

After I decided to drop the game, I experimented with various financial aid and college planning guides, college and FAFSA application worksheets, and a digital narrative featuring four prospective college students with differing financial situations.

Datum / Date: 10 NOV 13

FINANCIAL PLANNING

WHY SO HARD TO DISCUSS?
WHY SO COMPLICATED?



THESES

OK to have a suite of prototypes (FINAL)
- testing diff ideas (only way)
- all part of the same project

What are functional prototypes that I can test?

Must be usable enough
to test w/o holding their
hands thru process.

IDEAS

- college application checklist
- FAFSA handbook (Feb)
- college readiness file guide

- net cost calculator
- high school career timeline *

- potential paths timeline
- Marketing

- Financial Aid Guide
- *Types of Aid
- *Applications

- Net Cost Worksheet or Storyline

- interactive narrative
what are they making?

- highlight fin aid/cost journey
- shadiff PCE paths

- shadiff PCE paths

COLLEGE APPLICATION TOOLKIT

I. PERSONAL INFO

- * ADDRESS
- * SOCIAL SEC. NO.
- * PARENTS
 - Where born?
 - Socials
 - College Education
 - Work / Job titles
- * SIBLINGS
 - Ages
 - Colleges Attended
- * LIFE TIMELINE
 - Where born?
 - Where lived?
 - big events?
 - citizenship?

III. LETTERS OF REC

- * GATHER EARLY (if soph/jr)
- * GIVE DUE DATE

digital

- net cost calculator
- manual
- info brochure?



infographic

- steps thru the FAFSA.

booklet

- comic



IV. FINANCIAL AID

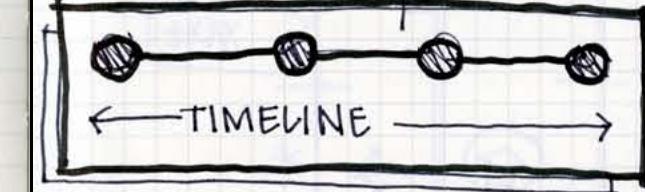
- * TYPES OF FIN AID
- * UNDERSTANDING NET COSTS
- * FAFSA BASICS
- * WAYS TO EARN MONEY OR SAVE \$

overcome skepticism

BRAINSTORM CARDS



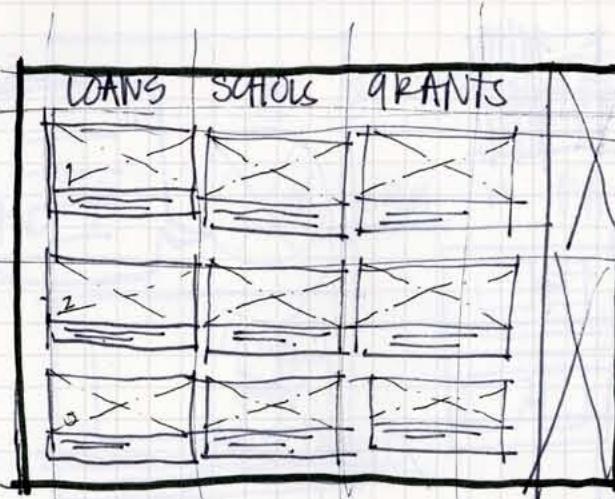
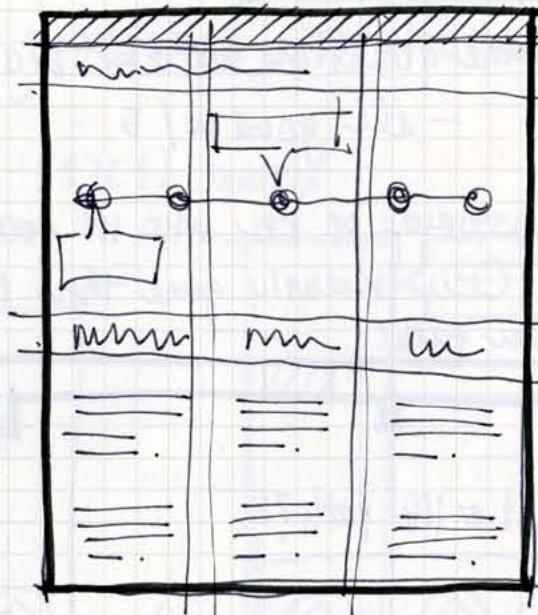
* PRESENTING YOUR STORY



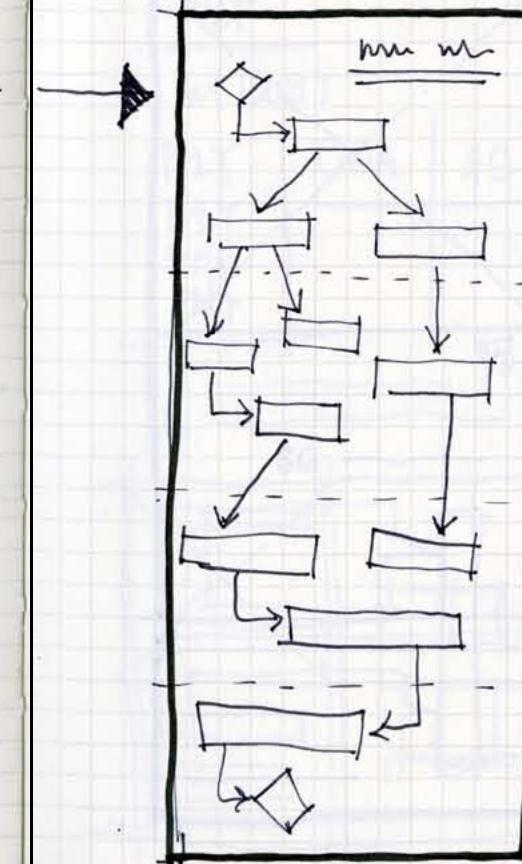
MANUAL

stickers

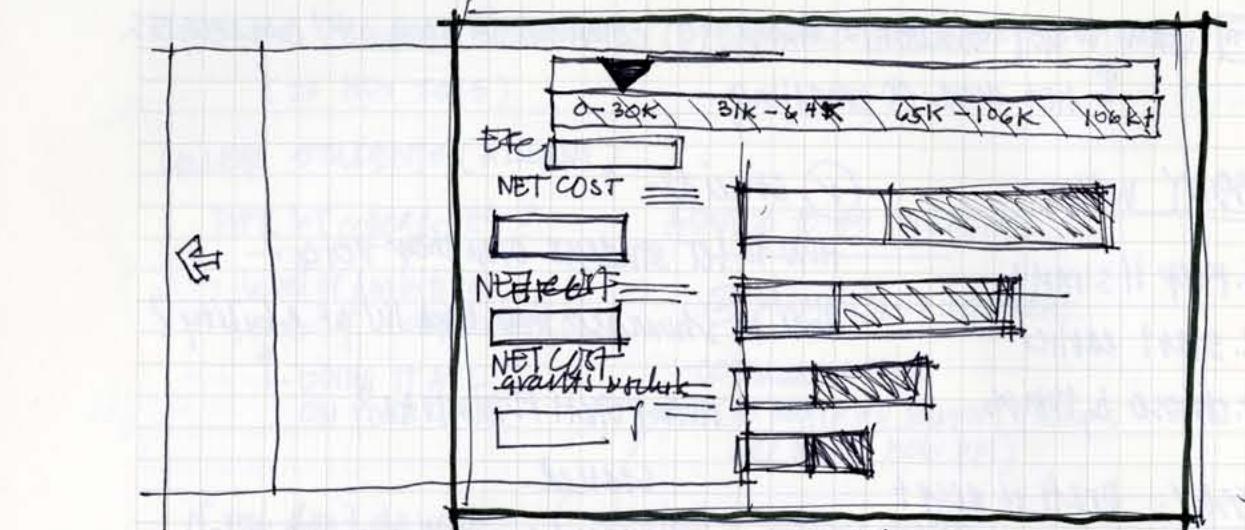
WORKSHEETS



WAYS TO EARN MONEY OR SAVE \$

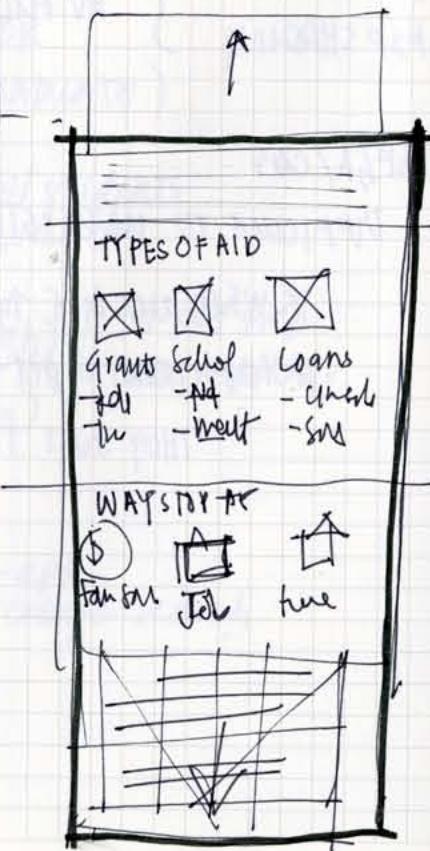
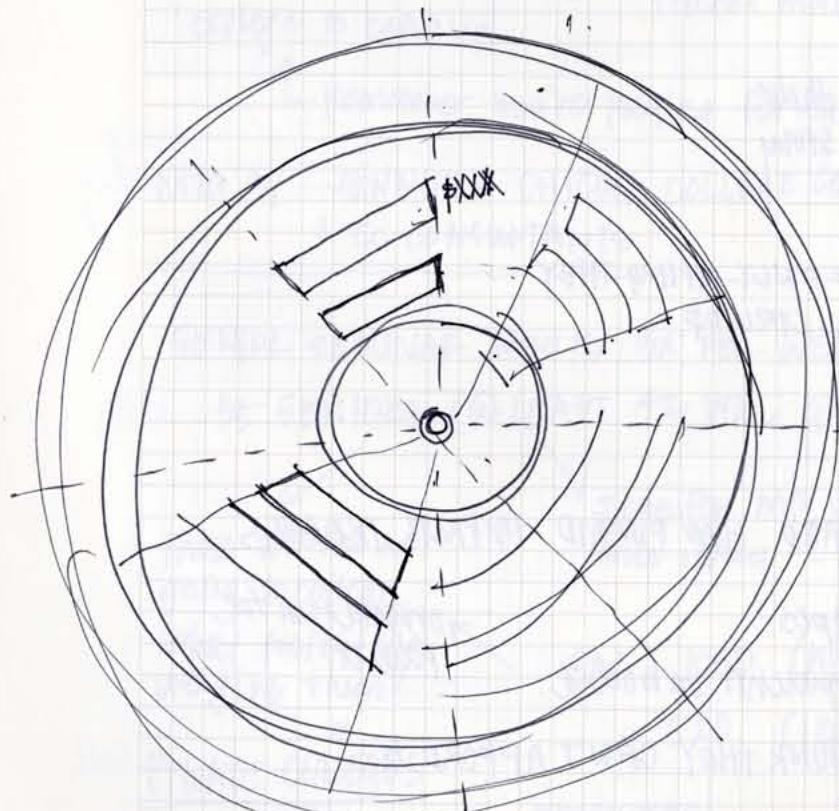


Datum / Date: 29 Nov 2013



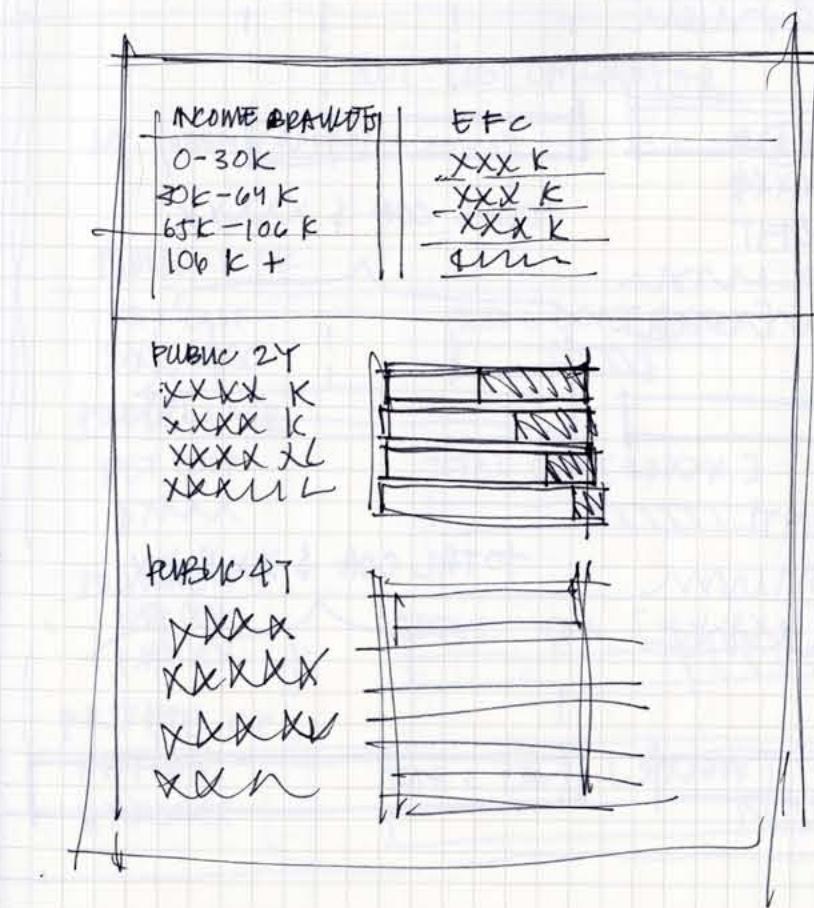
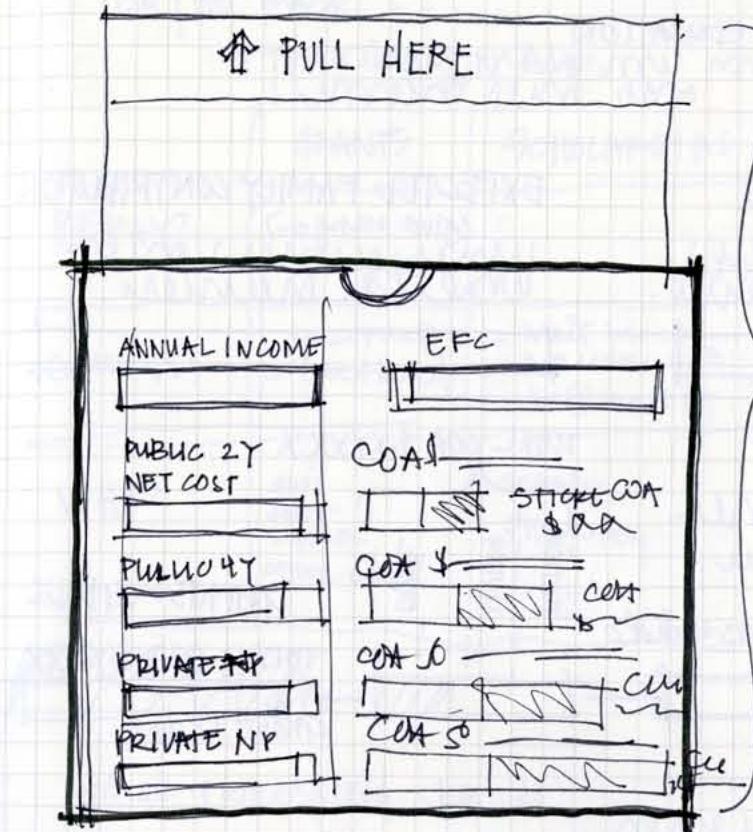
* nice b/c inset = chart.

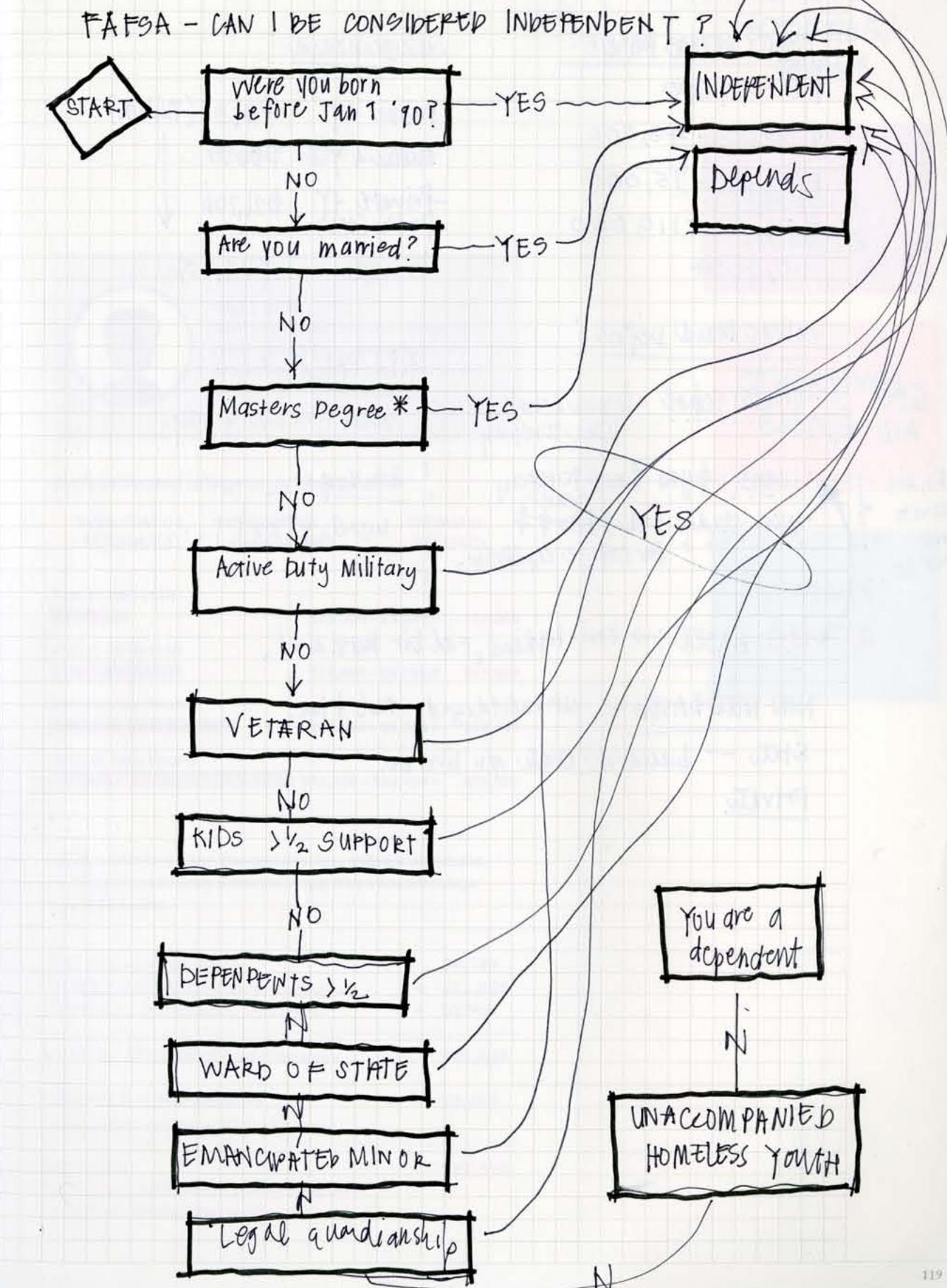
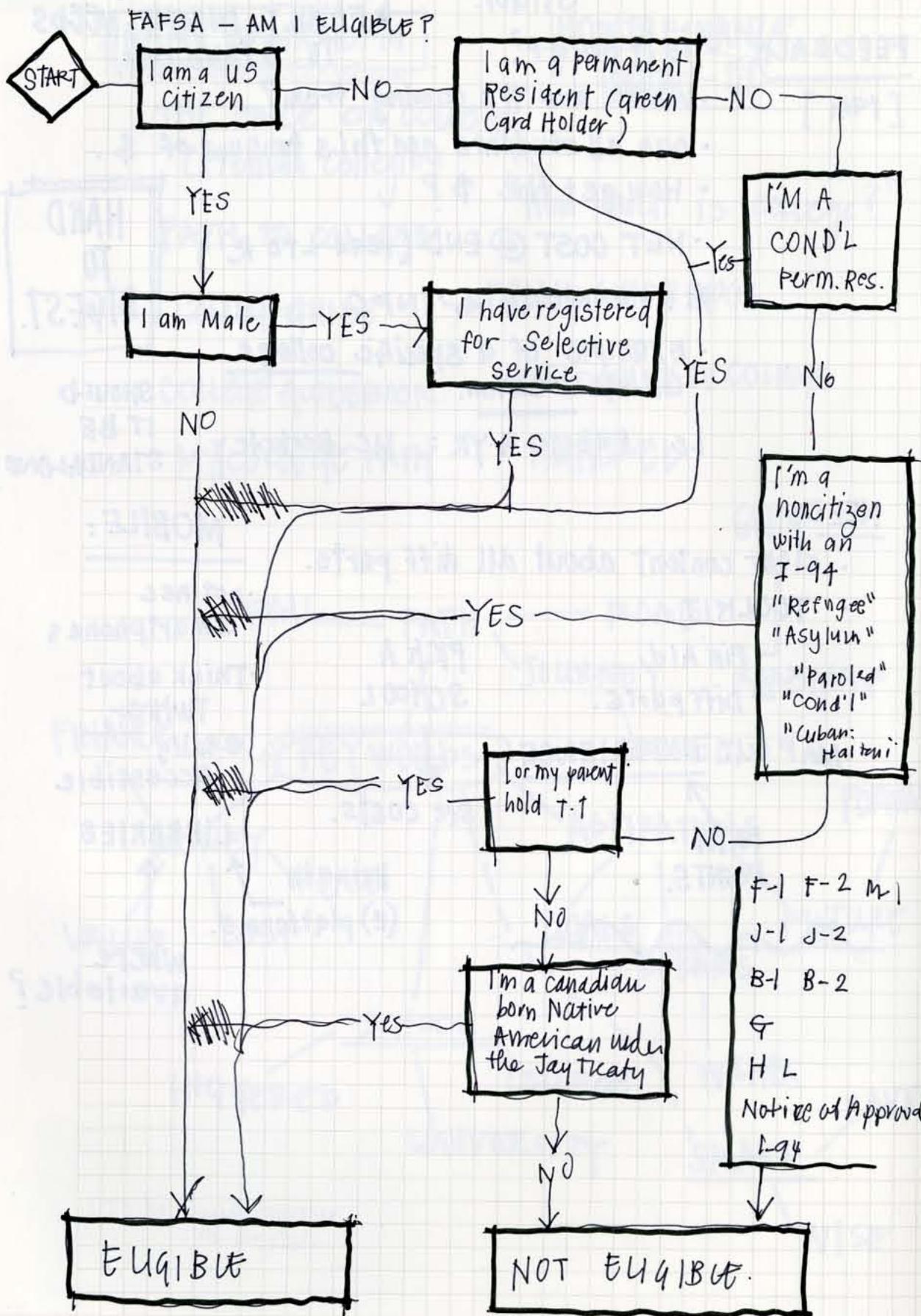
hard b/c
of this part



could be
color coded.

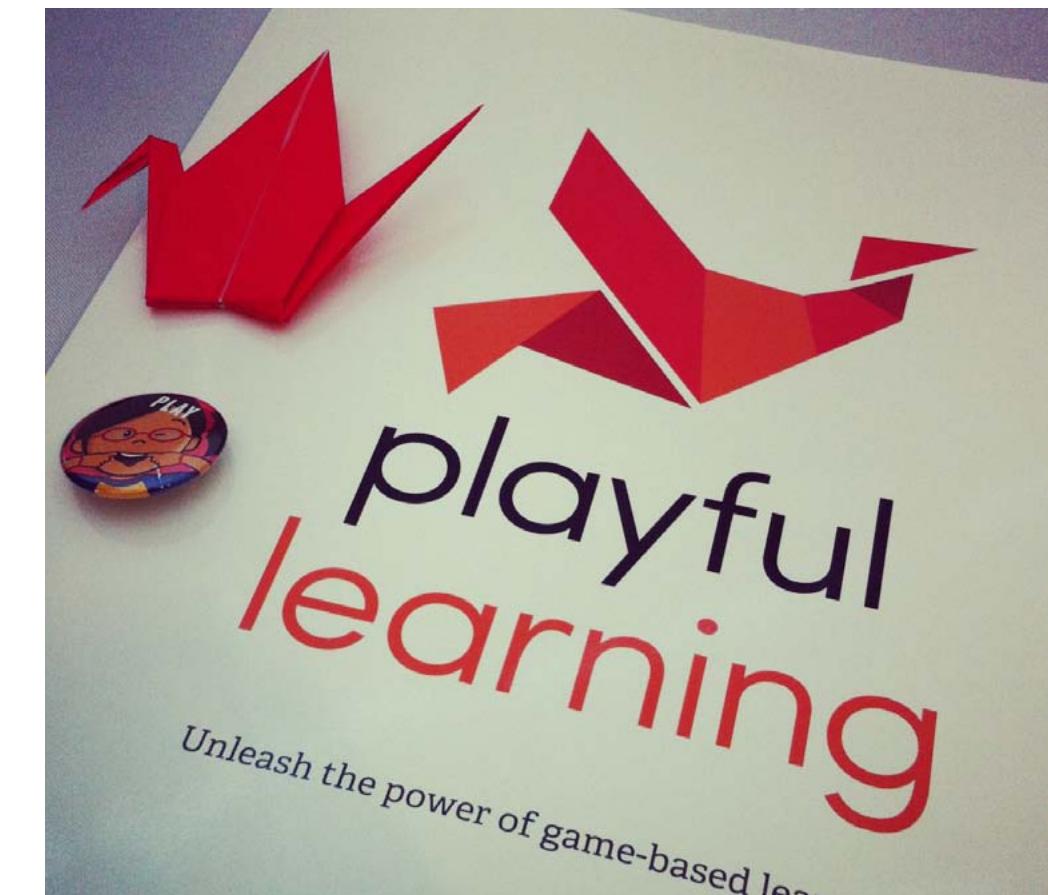
Is this best
rep. of data?







p. 56



Playful Learning

I'd been planning to attend the Playful Learning Conference in Boston for months. By the time it came around, it was an interlude to then-current explorations on college readiness. That said, the talks there had a significant influence on my ultimate focus.

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PLAYFUL LEARNING CONFERENCE

KEYNOTE: NICK FORTUGNO
(PLAYMATICS: PROF@PARSONS)

WHAT GAMES CAN DO FOR EDUCATION



WHAT ED. TECH GAMES DO WELL & NOW: ASSESSMENT
+ PROVIDE ISOLATED CHALLENGES
+ TARGETED FEEDBACK
+ GENERATE DATA
+ UNIVERSAL OVER DIFF LVLS

DATA = GAMES TRACK EVERYTHING

free, sounds like a TEST!
but a game is NOT a test.

- don't scale well
- often lack dynamic difficulty
- failure sucks.

Games are USER DRIVEN.
They promote repeated, graceful failure.

WHAT GAMES DO

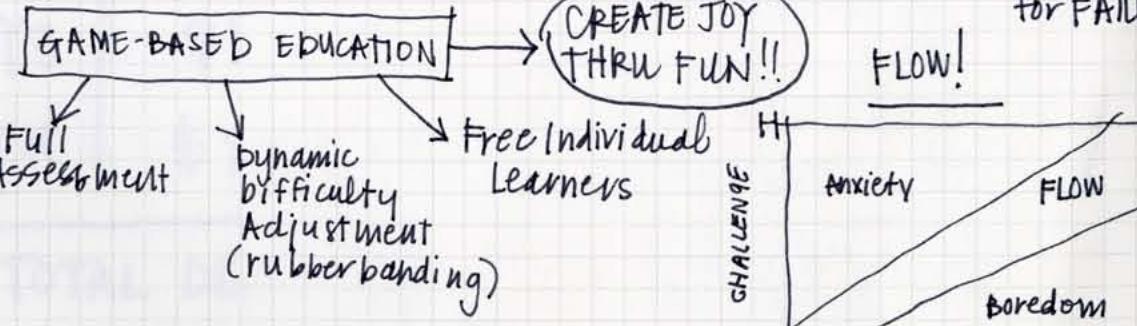
- + create DEDICATED players
- + Inspire team LOYALTY.
- + Encourage EXPLORATION and CURIOSITY
- + use competition to motivate (OPPORTUNITY TO WIN)
- + CREATE JOY.

A successful game is played 20-40hrs per week.

GAMES ALLOW REPEATED FAILURE W/O DISCOURAGING PLAYING (game player logic)

- Don't read rules
- Learn by doing
- High capacity for FAILURE

so...



"I don't think learning is anathema to people. I think inappropriate learning is anathema to ppl."

ENGAGEMENT GAME LAB (Emerson College)

Community Plan IT (Flagship game)

give stakeholders a VOICE

ADULTS

YOUTH

BUY-IN & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

[shift in ownership]

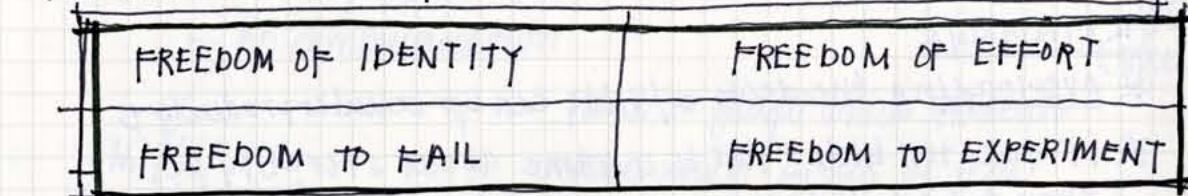
involving students in content creation
Δ's LVL OF engagement

LEARNING GAMES NETWORK

The Game Design Toolkit

EXPLORE → DISCOVER → CREATE → SHARE

(4) FREEDOMS OF PLAY



QUANDARY GAME = game for ethical reasoning

Linked to ELA / Social Studies COMMON CORE.

GOALS OF THE GAME

- Identification
- Perspectives
- critical thinking
- decision Making
- Prediction

Students are encouraged to play in pairs.

Game prompts DEBATE and DISCUSSION.

DESIGNING + ASSESSING GAME-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO COMBAT STEREOTYPES & BIASES < DARTMOUTH >

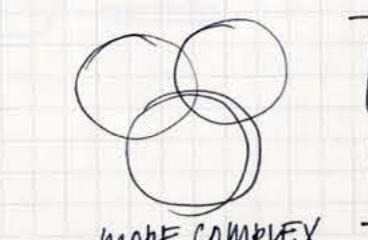
jordan@tiltfactor.org

geoff@tiltfactor.org

Looking esp @ risk + underrep groups in STEM
Addresses



LESS COMPLEX



MORE COMPLEX

SOCIAL IDENTITY COMPLEXITY

Midterm: College Debt Narrative

(14 November 2013) As a midterm prototype, my focus was paying for college. I mocked up an interactive narrative highlighting the rising costs of college and growing US student debt. Based on class feedback, while the mockup had a clear purpose and concept, it lacked immediate appeal.

How do I make a serious subject like finances more engaging?

Is there anything fun about figuring out how to pay for school?

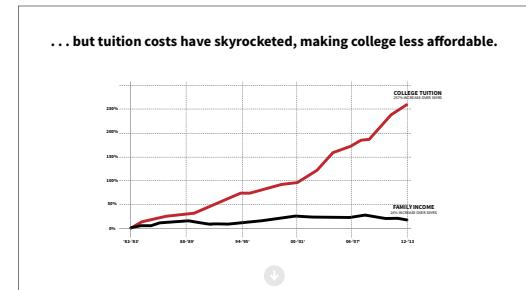
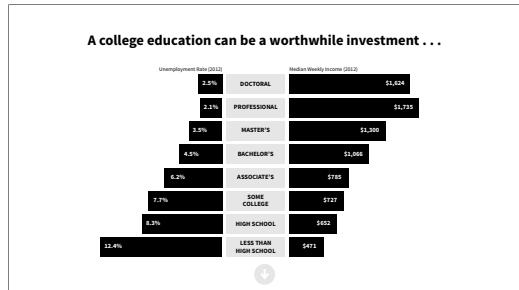
My main concern is that, while the narrative highlights important issues, it's geared more towards the general public than towards high school students. For students, it may make college feel like an even more unreachable and daunting goal instead of guiding them on their quest to pursue postsecondary education.

Since the midterm presentation, I've been looking into studies targeting underserved students already planning to pursue higher education, including the ECO-C Intervention project by Dr. Caroline Hoxby and team which has been studying the college paths of high-achieving, low-income students, and Pathways to Postsecondary Success, a multi-year study looking at postsecondary paths for low-income students in California.

Among the issues highlighted in these reports is the prevailing lack of reliable information and support for low-income students who wish to enter into postsecondary education. Certain-

ly, real lives are complicated, and outside of the information gap, a complex combination of personal challenges, life events and financial difficulties work against these students; however, it is clear that in spite of difficult backgrounds, when students are well-informed and well-supported, they have much higher chances of success.

Moving forward, I plan to focus on addressing this information gap. My intention is to develop a physical college application and financial aid guide, coupled with web resources such as a net college cost estimator, to help high students navigate their postsecondary options.



What does this mean for students?
Choose a student below and find out.

BEN **CHARLES** **JOY** **MARIA**

BEN: Ben is one of six kids from a low-income household. He wants to be the first in his family to go to college.
[View Ben's Story.](#)

CHARLES: Charles is a single dad. He makes ends meet by going to school, working full-time and raising his young son.
[View Charles's Story.](#)

JOY: Joy comes from a middle-income household. She gets good grades and excels at math and science.
[View Joy's Story.](#)

MARIA: Maria spent four years in the armed forces right after high school. Now that she's out of the military, she wants to go back to school.
[View Maria's Story.](#)

What does this mean for students?
Choose a student below and find out.

BEN **CHARLES** **JOY** **MARIA**

BEN: Ben is one of six kids from a low-income household. He wants to be the first in his family to go to college.
[View Ben's Story.](#)

CHARLES: Charles is a single dad. He must balance going to school, working full-time and raising his young son.
[View Charles's Story.](#)

JOY: Joy comes from a middle-income household. She gets good grades and excels at math and science.
[View Joy's Story.](#)

MARIA: Maria spent four years in the armed forces right after high school. Now that she's out of the military, she wants to go back to school.
[View Maria's Story.](#)

What does this mean for students?
Choose a student below and find out.

JOY

Joy comes from a middle-income household. She gets good grades and excels at math and science. Ipsi quaeque repat et exanimum secundum hoc invenit. Quod est enim eum ad suos factos hinc in que qui deni in miles est qui ut que precepit emendat et dolupatque sua sententia.

BEN **MARIA**

BEN: Ben is one of six kids from a low-income household. He wants to be the first in his family to go to college.
[View Ben's Story.](#)

MARIA: Maria spent four years in the armed forces right after high school. Now that she's out of the military, she wants to go back to school.
[View Maria's Story.](#)



Joy has been accepted to four universities.

Where should Joy go?

UNIVERSITY ONE **UNIVERSITY TWO** **UNIVERSITY THREE** **UNIVERSITY FOUR**

UNIVERSITY ONE
NET COST: \$12,000
PUBLIC (IN-STATE)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY TWO
NET COST: \$18,150
PRIVATE (NON-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY THREE
NET COST: \$16,000
PRIVATE (NON-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY FOUR
NET COST: \$27,000
PRIVATE (FOR-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

[Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#)

Where should Joy go to school?

UNIVERSITY ONE **UNIVERSITY TWO** **UNIVERSITY THREE** **UNIVERSITY FOUR**

UNIVERSITY ONE
NET COST: \$12,000
PUBLIC (IN-STATE)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY TWO
NET COST: \$18,150
PRIVATE (NON-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY THREE
NET COST: \$16,000
PRIVATE (NON-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

UNIVERSITY FOUR
NET COST: \$27,000
PRIVATE (FOR-PROFIT)
PROS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit
CONS: Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit

[Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#) [Choose this school.](#)

Joy needs **\$18,150** for her first year.
How should she pay?

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [No Thanks.](#) **NET COST** **\$0** per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [No Thanks.](#) **NET COST** **\$0** per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [No Thanks.](#) **NET COST** **\$0** per year

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [\\$2,500](#) per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [\\$2,500](#) per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

WHERE WILL YOU WORK?
On Campus [Off Campus](#) **NET COST** **\$X.XX** per hour

HOW MANY HOURS?
10 hours per week [15 hours per week](#) [20 hours per week](#) **ENTER**

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

WHERE WILL YOU WORK?
On Campus [Off Campus](#) **NET COST** **\$X.XX** per hour

HOW MANY HOURS?
10 hours per week [15 hours per week](#) [20 hours per week](#) **ENTER**

UNIVERSITY TWO
Vivamus, ceteriorum in sentiumsum hills ellibus esolutus et vis Cat, corde consupit burbit collaudam.

EXPENSES & FINANCIAL AID	TUITION & FEES	GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	NET COST
\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150	\$18,150

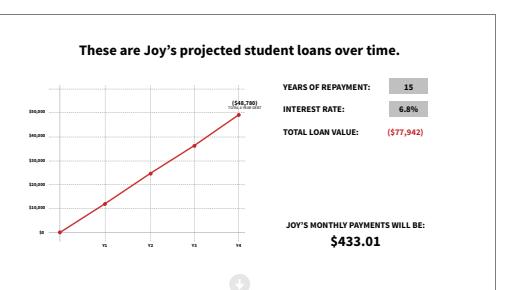
APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS.
Sure. [\\$2,500](#) per year

GET A JOB.
Sure. [\\$4,160](#) per year

LIVE AT HOME AND COMMUTE.
Sure. [\\$0](#) per year

Still short? It's time for Joy to take out loans.

CONTINUE



The Trough of Sorrow

Blogging My Pain

(26 Oct 2013) So here's a frustrated rant I wrote on 750words a couple of nights ago after listing out all the issues and problems and depressing statistics I've gathered on education:

It all comes down to money. Low-income schools struggle with lack of resources thanks to a financing strategy based on property taxes instead of need. Hard-working, motivated teachers can't make ends meet. College drop-outs are forced to leave university due to rising tuition costs and the huge financial burden of working to support oneself (and possibly one's family) and attending school. It isn't right and it's breaking my heart and I don't know what to do about it. Is there a trough of sorrow for thesis too?

I've been grappling with all these huge issues, trying to wrap my head around wicked problems and hone in on one that feels like the "right" one to try and solve. But take away the big issue and what am I after? Putting aside my futile desire to save the world with one project, what am I excited about doing and what kind of project will I be proud to put out into the world?

So here's my mini manifesto, my personal credo for thesis.

Create something meaningful.

Tell a compelling story.

Make something beautiful.

Address a real world problem.

Merge the digital and the tangible.

Enable young people to make.

What is nagging me is the last point, enabling young people to make. I've been cherishing this notion of the meta-designer ever since our cybernetics workshop with Paul Pangaro, so when David Sengeh spoke about empowering young people at IDC2013, I thought, "There's nothing better than that, than encouraging a young person to make something real and put it out into the world."

Yet here I am months into thesis, trying to create awareness but no actionable tools. As important as it is to understand the different issues going on in higher education, what I started out wanting to do is inspire kids and make learning fun, because I truly love to learn.

College Prep Day at DreamYard Prep

After my ‘Trough of Sorrow’ entry, I eventually quelled my inner instincts and forged ahead with the college debt prototype, but doubts resurfaced when I visited DreamYard Prep again in November to volunteer again.

(22 November 2013) It was DreamYard Prep’s College Prep Day, and an army of volunteers had been assembled to review college essay drafts and help the students practice interviewing. The day made me think about telling one’s own story and how important it is to write eloquently about our own experiences.

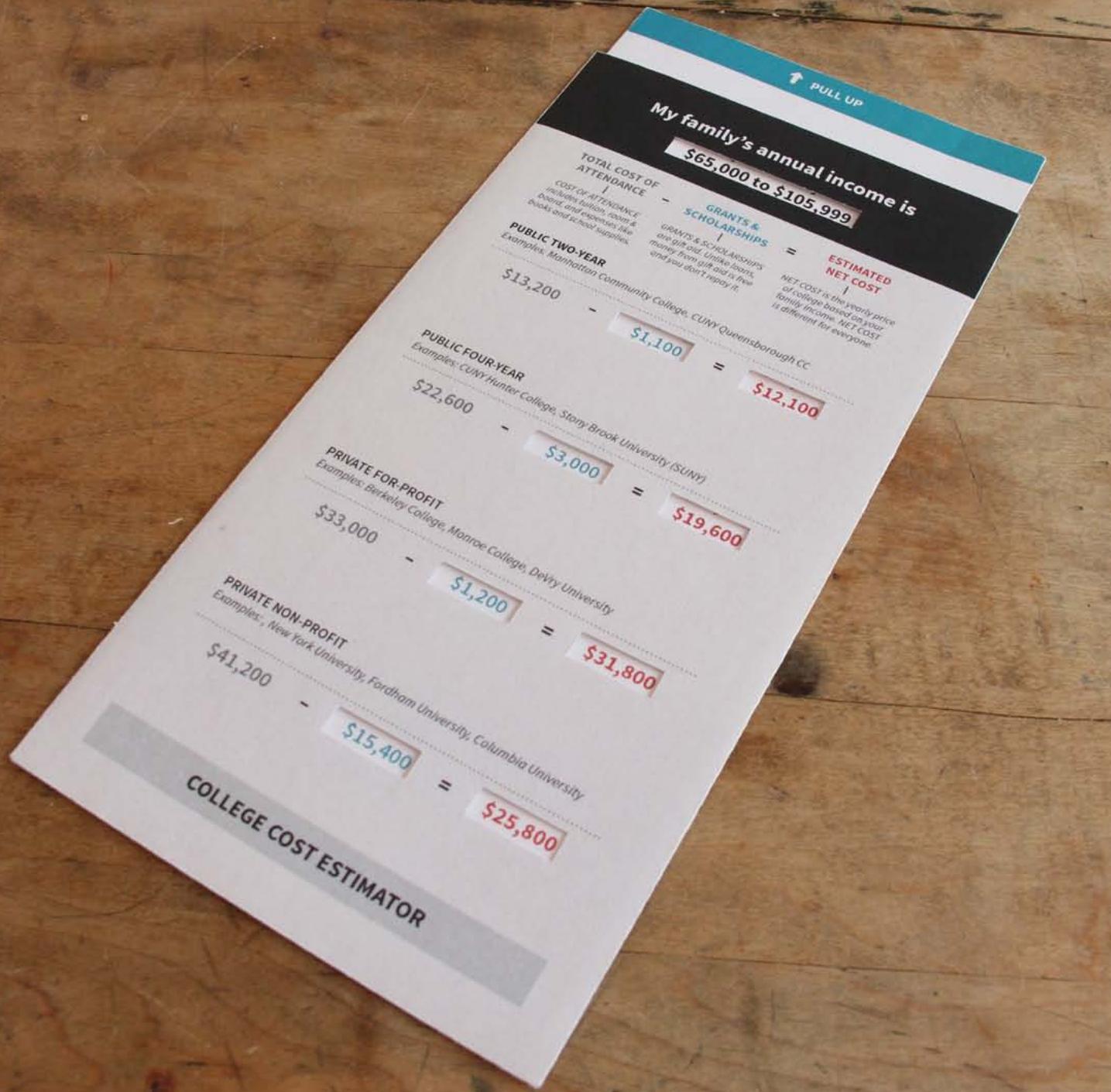
It struck me that the students were very self-aware. They could verbally express their strengths and goals with far more conviction than I had at that age. Where they needed help was in articulating this sense-of-self in written form. This was a particular challenge for many foreign students still learning English.

After helping out the students, I sat down with Jennifer Chicon, DreamYard’s college counselor, and a couple of other volunteers. We talked about how nearly all students aspire to college but not all of them are qualified to attend. Sometimes, their grades and SAT scores just aren’t up to snuff.

After the visit, I was torn. On the one hand, there was excitement and support for my college toolkit ideas. On the

other, I wondered if a college application guide would just be a bandaid for larger issues of college preparedness and socioeconomic disadvantage.

Again, I quieted my fears and chose to stay the course, but lessons from this day would surface in the third stage of my thesis journey.



LEFT: College Cost Estimator prototype

Final: College Savvy

College Savvy is a concept for an online and print-based platform that clarifies the complicated financial aid process for first time college students. Resources include a college cost estimator and an interactive narrative about prospective students, their college choices and their financial aid options.

Project Background

The US has the highest college dropout rate in the industrialized world. The majority of dropouts leave school due to financial reasons. It is often students who could most benefit from financial aid who, due to misinformation or confusion, don't submit the FAFSA. While numerous complex factors affect an individual's postsecondary opportunities, the prevailing lack of reliable college cost information and guidance for low-income students who wish to pursue higher education is one that we can readily address. While the federal government has recently made steps towards closing the information gap for prospective college students, the financial aid process remains complicated and overwhelming for many students.

Overview

The College Savvy platform would include a web-based financial aid information portal, including an interactive narrative and a series of data visualizations, to help high students navigate their education financing options

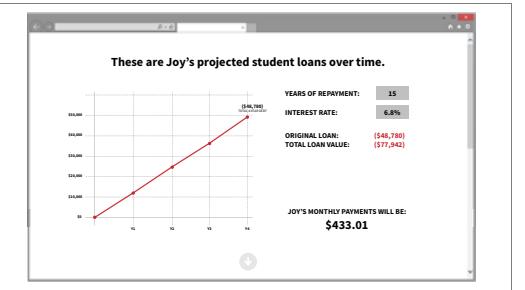
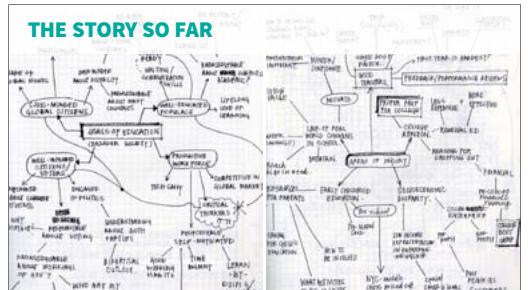
as well as understand their future student loan obligations. The narrative would follow the story of prospective students as they apply for financial aid and make college choices.

Other tools will include a college cost estimator that uses a student's annual family income to provide estimated college pricing. Because there are many families without computers at home, print versions of key information on the website would also be produced, including a financial aid guidebook and a printed college cost estimator. Initial prototypes of this cost estimator are in the form of a slide chart. The College Savvy financial aid guide is envisioned as the first part of a larger platform that provides easy-to-access college information to all students.

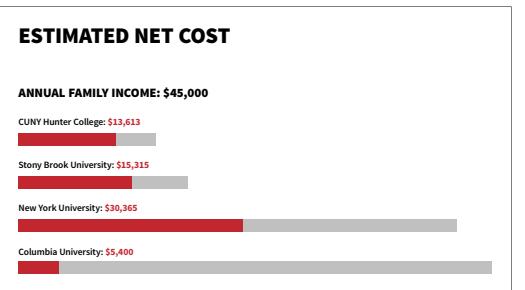
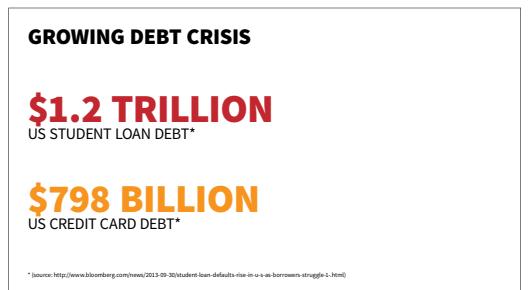
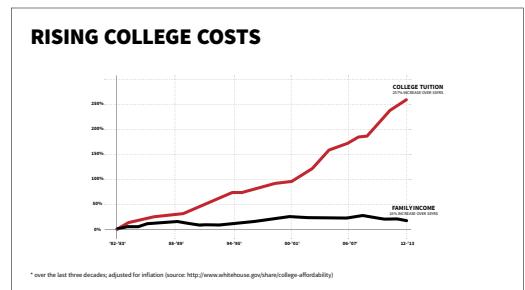
Initial Prototype

At the end of last semester, after mocking up the narrative aspect of College Savvy for the midterm, I concentrated on a prototype of a college cost estimator. Thanks to the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008, the federal government mandated that every college or university provide a net cost calculator on their website. Because there is a huge variety in terms of thoroughness and clarity, existing net cost calculators can often be cumbersome or overly complicated and are only accessible by the web.

I attempted to address these shortfalls by creating a simplified net cost calculator using average college costs. There was a single input: a rough estimate of one's family income. In addition to a digital version operated by a slider, I prototyped a paper slide chart that allowed a user to view average college costs for various income brackets.



TOTAL COST - GIFT AID = NET COST



Please provide the following information about the student. All questions are required. Any time a question says "you" or "your" it is referring to the student. Then click "Next".

HELPFUL INFORMATION

Education is expensive. In the section of pre-application, you will be asked to provide your grade and acknowledge the addressed. If you are currently in grade, give your last grade and current or previous, give your first grade and current or previous. If you have attended more than one school, list them all.

need help?

What is your first name?

What grade were you in? 1st grade

What grade are you in? 2nd grade

What grade will you be in when you begin attending this? Please Select Institution? 3rd grade

What is your state of legal residence? United States

What is your marital status? Single

Do you have any dependant children? Yes No

Where do you plan to live while you are in college? Own home

Are you an orphan or ward of the court? Yes No

What is your citizenship status? United States citizen

What is your high school GPA? Below your GPA

Or you expect to be the admissions or the Please Select

IDEA SYNOPSIS

Create an engaging platform or toolkit that helps young adults **bridge the gap** from high school to college and beyond.

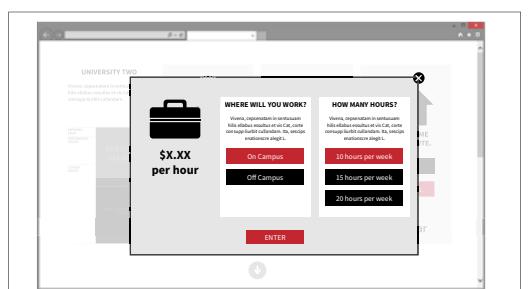
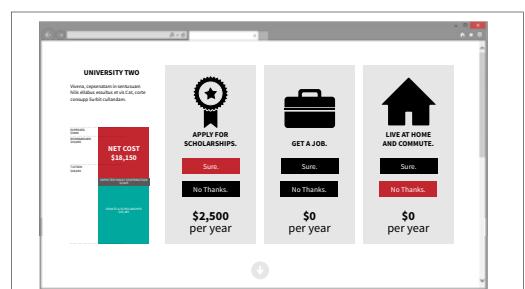
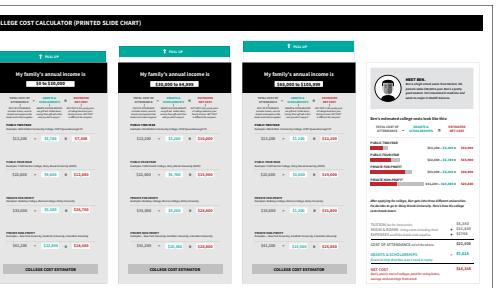
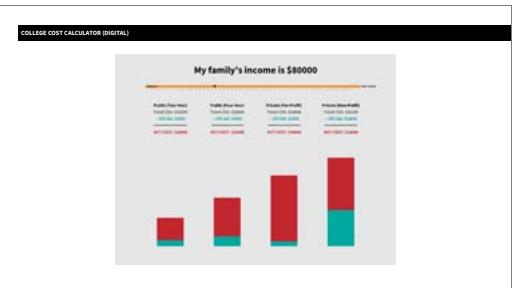
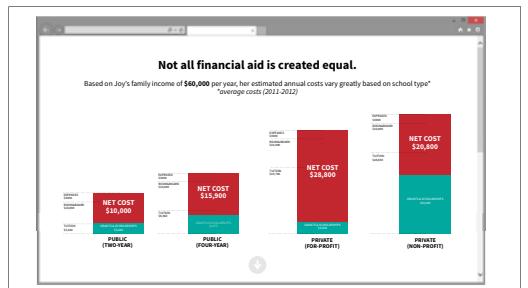
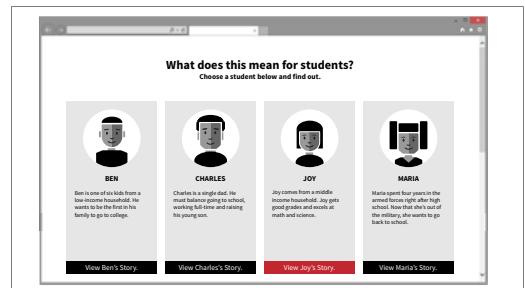
Increase **knowledge access** to information about **college costs**.

PREVIOUS PROTOTYPE

PROTOTYPE

GOAL

Create a simplified **college cost estimator** for prospective college students.



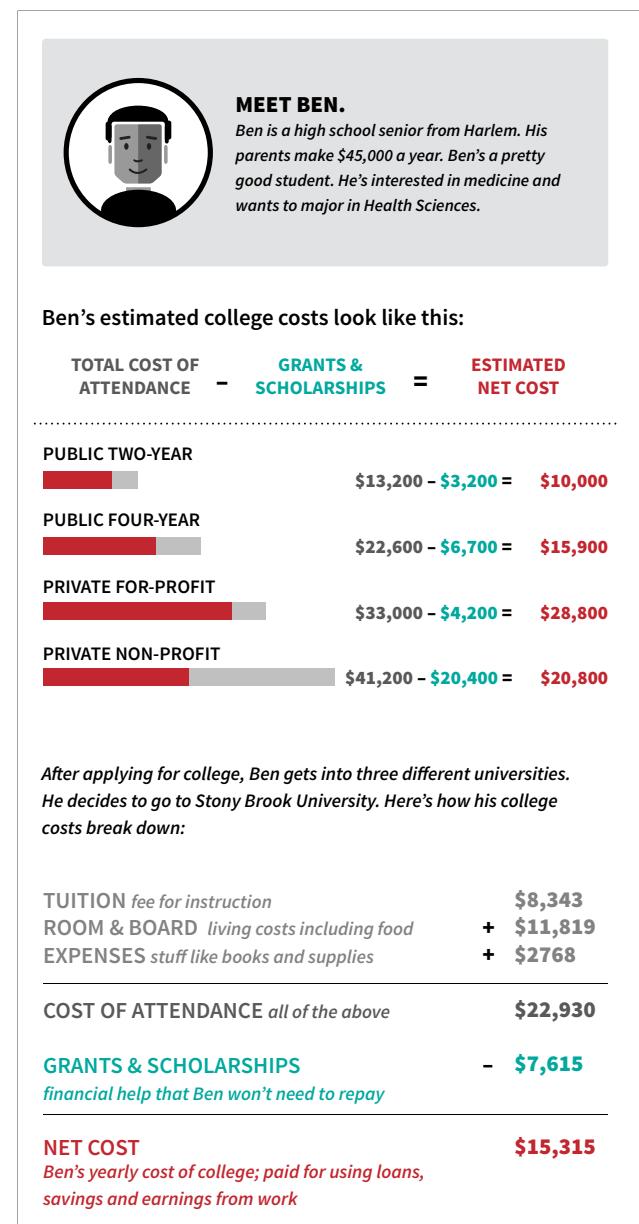
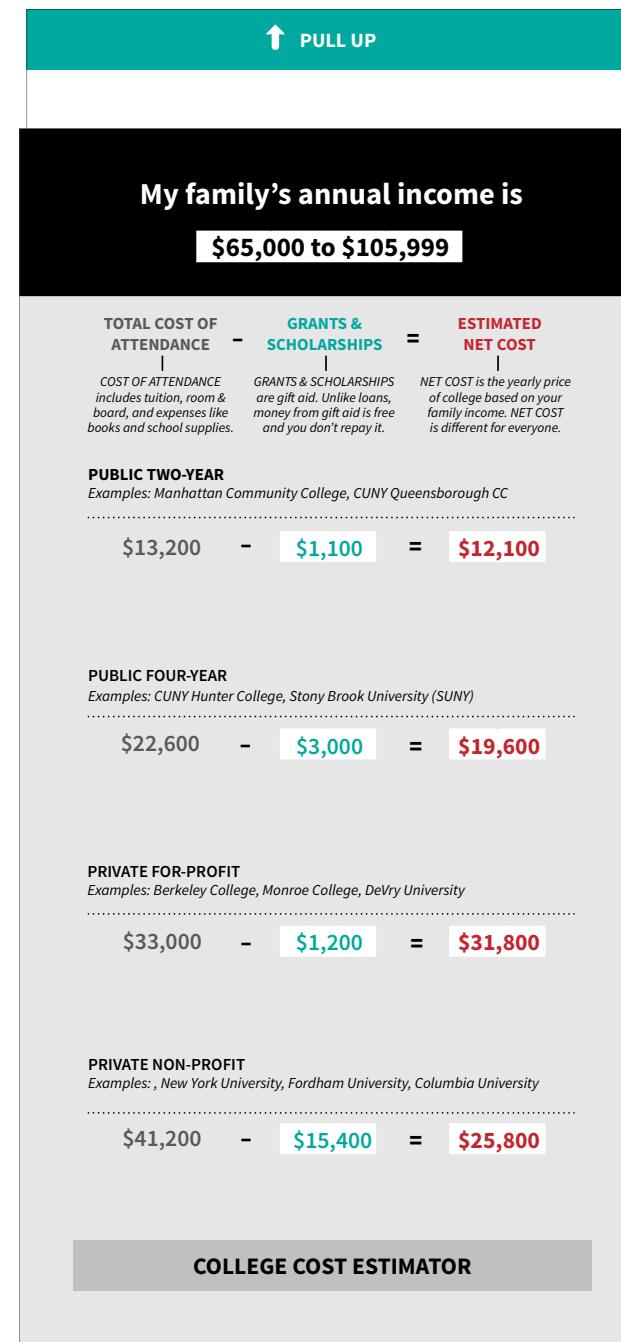
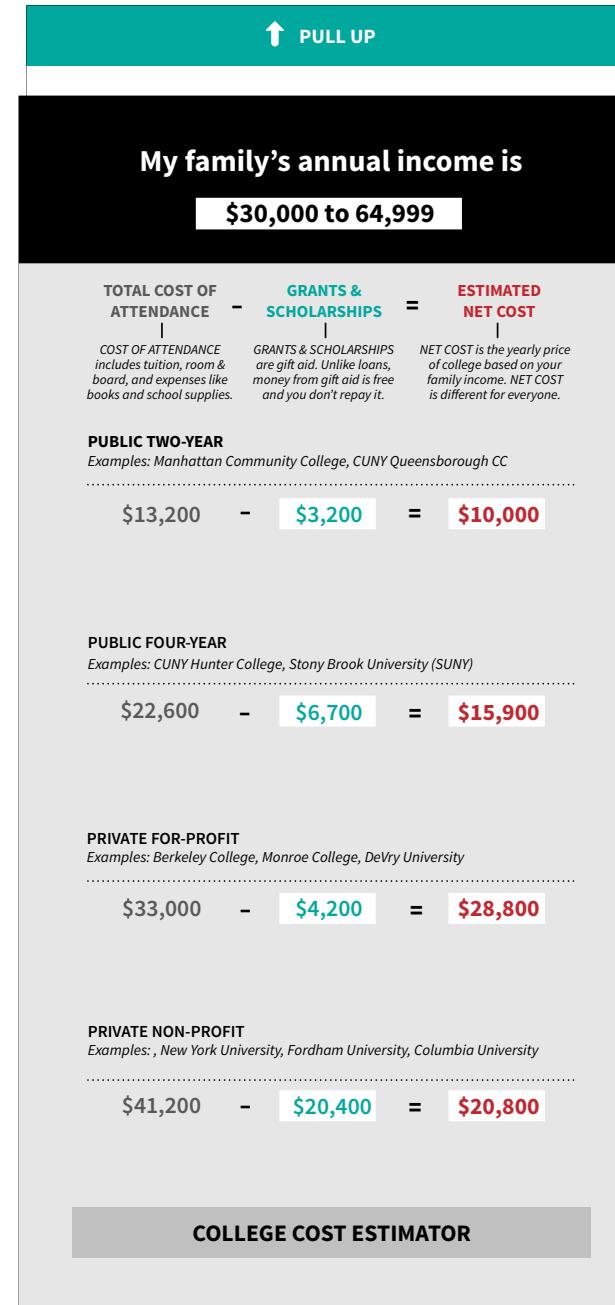
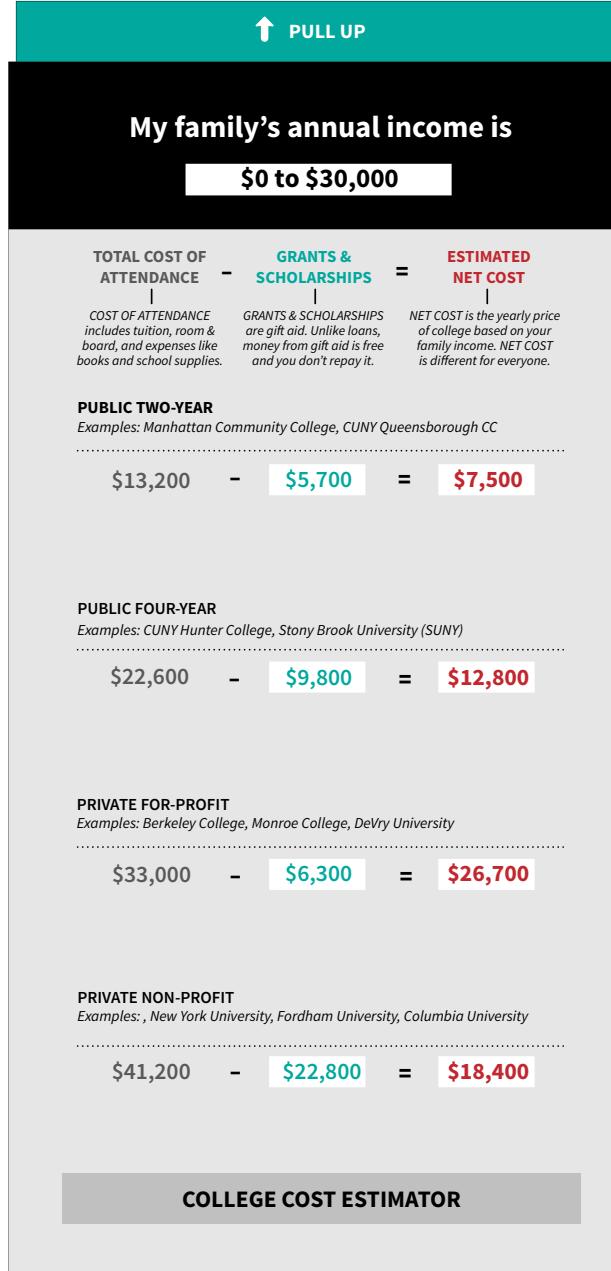
NEXT STEPS

TEST
Gather feedback from DreamYard

MAKE

- Prototype mobile calculator
- Firm up the financial model
- Scour the data and visualize
- Build out web narrative/toolkit

THANK YOU.



Interlude

Looking Back and Moving Forward

(20 January 2014) From my overview of my Semester 3 final prototype, College Savvy:

Reflecting on last term, the strength of College Savvy was that it addressed an immediate need and simplified an unnecessarily complicated process. Unfortunately, it looked at such a small, specific slice of the problem that it felt short-sighted.

The net cost calculator fails to address the underlying problems that higher education is becoming less and less affordable and that, even if a student is able to afford that education, they are not always prepared for the academic rigor of college.

Additionally, I prototyped a digital and print version of the college cost calculator without considering the more accessible medium of mobile. Should I continue on the financial aid track, I am interested in exploring mobile-based financial cost calculators as well as a mobile-friendly version of the FAFSA.

Other than fiddling around with the format, I haven't progressed that much farther with my thesis since the midterm. True, I've been strapped for time, but I know myself, and I know that when I'm passionate about something, I put in 110%. So, if I'm being completely honest with myself, the reason my progress has stagnated is because my heart just hasn't been it.

Here's the thing. Education is important to me. College access

is important to me. Unfortunately, looking at these problems systemically, any proposed solution is just a bandaid for much larger issues of inequality, rigid education policy, and an unnecessarily complex financial aid system.

Looking back at my trough of sorrow thesis entry, that rant is the most personal and genuine entry about thesis I've written so far. So. Even though I'm passionate about addressing these issues, I've beginning to realize that whatever I do for thesis, I should ENJOY myself. Making a difference CAN start with our own personal passions.

I spent winter break contemplating what it is I really love. Doodling lists, perusing other projects. I realized that if there is one thing I've done everyday since I was a child, and done with pleasure, it's read a book.

Books have been my lifelong friends. I can't even remember learning to read. I simply did it. I was four or five, and my mother was reading Madeline to me. She turned the page, and I cried out loud, "Madeline said 'Pooh-pooh!'"

"How do you know how to read that?" she asked me. I looked back at the page, and saw, clearly, that the letters formed words. "That's just what it says," I replied.

I love books, I love the books of my childhood especially. Growing up, I was the sort of shy, awkward kid, who never enjoyed playground games. I would spend recess huddling over a book on the lower level of a play structure tier. Oblivious to the world around me, characters like Anne Shirley inspired me to do well in school, to have bigger dreams, and to see myself as part of a larger world.

Last semester, I focused on access to traditional paths of education and providing specific information about financial aid. I do like the project, and staying the course felt like the right thing to do at the time, but now I know it was the cowardly thing to do. I've been playing it safe with thesis. My preoccupation with the immediate needs of my audience kept me from looking at the bigger picture.

This term, I plan to explore the self-directed learning that I reveled in as a child, starting with reading for pleasure, access to books, and literature. I'm excited about the contemporary discourse surrounding connected learning, as well as the opportunity for mobile technology to increase access to information.

A Plan of Action (The Second Act)

The following pages summarize major events and activities during Spring 2014, both thesis and non-thesis related.

I color-coded the calendar as follows:

Pink: Assigned tasks from Thesis II

Blue: Research and reading schedule

Yellow: Personal goals for thesis

Orange: Major non-thesis related events

GOALS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
SURVEY · READING · LITERACY			1		2	3	4
PROCESS BOOK (content)	6	EMAIL · Hsing · Karen · DreamYard	7	DREAMSEE DO WORK SESSION	9	CALENDAR ✓	11
2P MEET HSING	13	FIRST DAY OF CLASSES...	14	4PM MEET KAREN MCGRANE	16	DSD PROFILE, FAVORITING ✓	18
3.30P HIVE LEARNING NETWORK.	20	CRITERIA LIST (2) & SKETCHES FINAL ASSESS- MENT	21		23	12P DSD CHAT	26
AVENUES/ DSD	27	FINAL (SEM 3) DOCUMENTATION PROTOTYPES DUE	28	RELEASE STORY GENERATOR *	30	3pm HSING	31
		Check in w/ Dream Yard.				DSD : profile. x 2	
						BUILD and ISSUES in PROTOTYPE. ← series → LITERACY.	

Datum / Date:

FEBRUARY 2014

Datum / Date:

GOALS	MON	TUES	WEB	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
PROCESS BOOK - content.						1	2
•ALT PROTOTYPE RECAP •(5)E's ROADMAP •DESIGN CRITERIA	3	4	5				9
DO YOU NEED TECH ADVIS 5pm MEGAN. ✓ PROTOTYPE PLAN.	10	11	12				
USER TEST PLAN		18	19				16
PROTOTYPE DRAFT	24	25	26	MEET IxD cocktail hr.	MEET IxD.	SITE ARCH + WIREFRAMES	23
				27	28	3pm HSING	
						3pm HSING	

MARCH 2014

Datum / Date:

Datum / Date:

GOALS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	—SPRING BREAK!!						
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
CREATE ONE BOOK?	PROTOTYPE DUE [CONCEPT]	READING in a PARTICIPATORY CULTURE	1am DSD +onboard +(3)profiles	5pm 11:30 HSING	PROJECT REFINEMENT.	JULES VISITING. 8pm grape + grain	FINAL DESIGN
	27	18	19	20	21	22	23
USER TESTING RESULTS.				11am 4.30p HSING			
	28	29	30	21	22	23	24
PRESENTATION DRAFT				1pm HSING (@ SVA)			
	31						

Datum / Date:

APRIL 2014

Datum / Date:

GOALS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
		AMEX VISIT. John Maeda: Tour studio.	AVENUES/ SI Live @ 12.30pm		3	4	5
<u>in class</u> PUBLIC SPEAKING	7	11am Tom 12pm HSING	10.00am IBM Tour		10	11	13
	14	15	16		17	18	19
		1pm YANG				20	
	21	22	23		24	25	26
FINAL FUNCTIONAL PROTOTYPE		PROJECT BRANDING	content, Process Book PRES VISUAL OUTLINE	AVENUES Final Pres [10.45 - 12.30] + LUNCH	12pm EXIT INTVW	WORK ON PROCESS BOOK	
	28	29	30		GATHER ASSETS + ORGANIZE.		27
		VIDEO PRODUCT + EDITIN	* SUBMIT BOOK ORDER (?)		DREAMYARD [DSD Testing]		

MAY 2014

Datum / Date:

Datum / Date:

GOALS	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
			PUT TOGETHER PRESENTATION →				
	5 TAKEAWAYS DUE	6 PROCESS BOOK DUE (phys)	7 FINALIZE DETAILS	8	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	9 THESIS DEFENSE	10 FINALIZE PROCESS BOOK
	12	13 14 THESIS FESTIVAL		15 COMMENCEMENT.	16	17	18
Family in NYC!	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	

Storytelling

A Fresh Start

The year began with an idea reboot. I still had a lingering interest in financial aid, but my new concepts revolved around storytelling:

(22 January 2014) *Some ideas I plan to explore ...*

FAFSA. Considering the imperatives of mobile first, redo the FAFSA application but on a mobile device. Provide financial aid guide via mobile as well.

BOOK ACCESS / OPEN LIBRARY. Provide a simple, more user-friendly way for students to read classic books from the Gutenberg library online; try to think about cool search options and improving the mobile reading experience beyond existing ebook reader functions like built-in dictionaries and links to Wikipedia.

STORY REMIX. Take fan fiction to the next level, rewriting classic stories with a new spin. What if you switched the gender or race of the protagonist? Put them into a contemporary or futuristic location? Prototype using brainstorming cards or make it into a game.

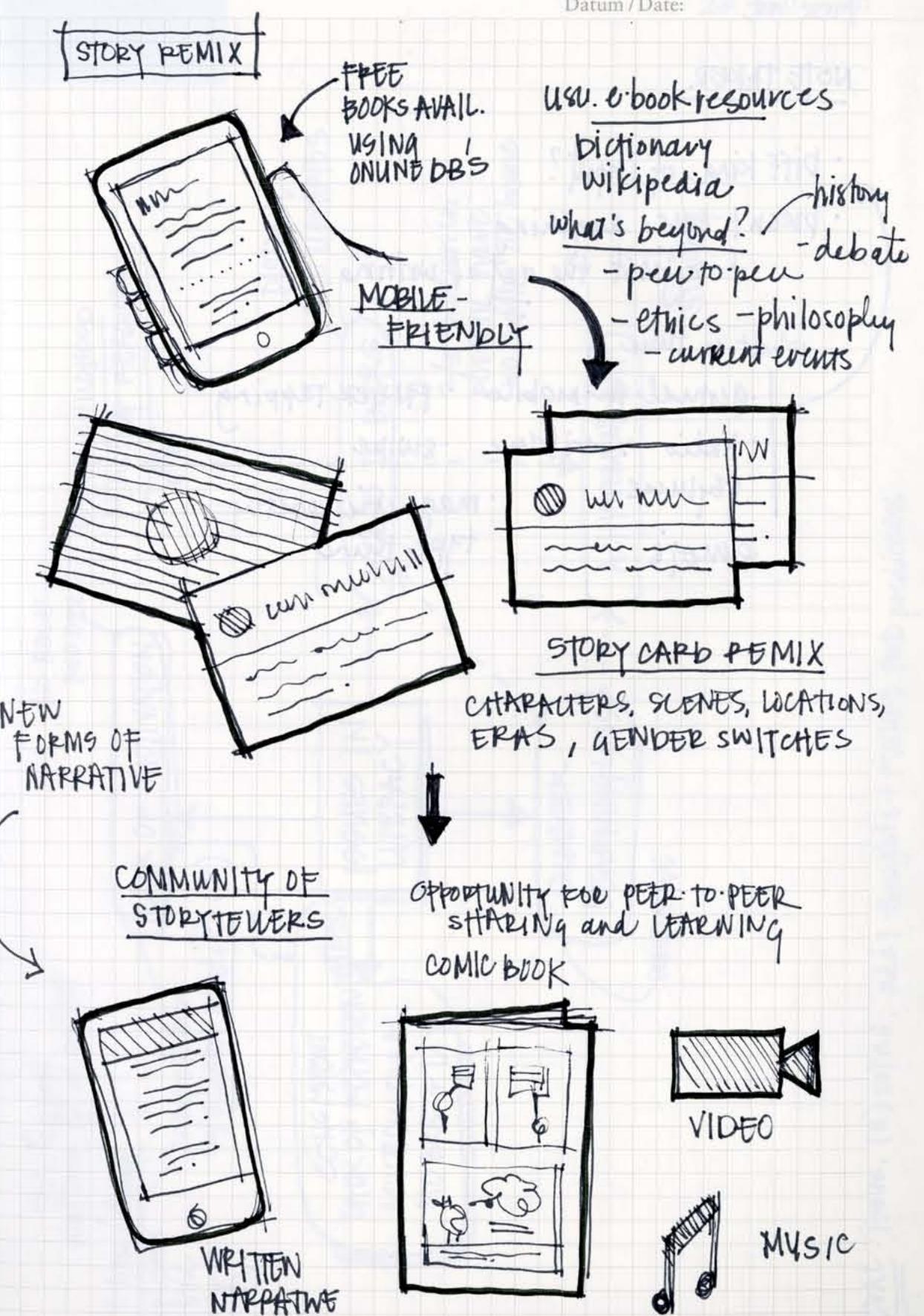
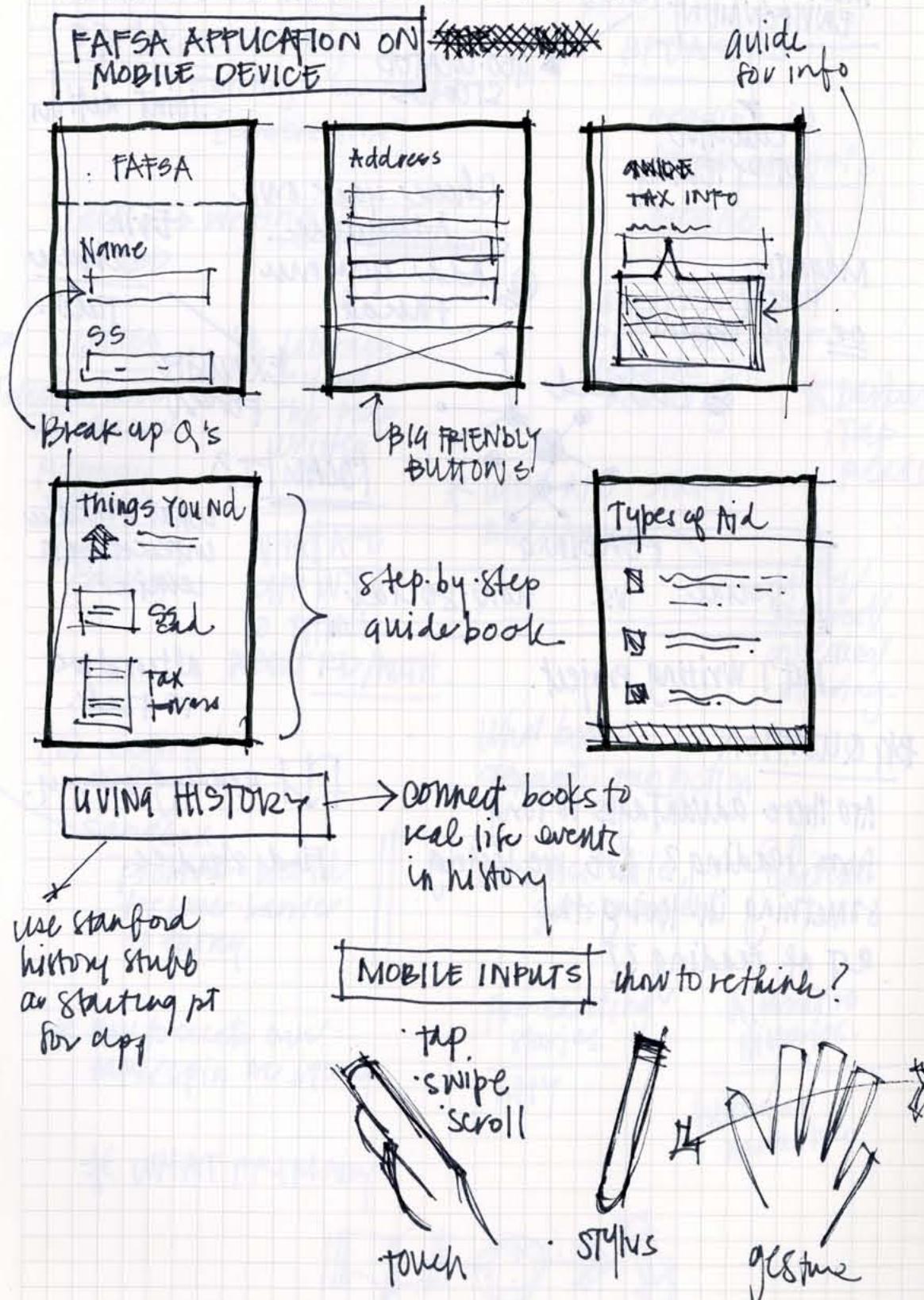
WRITING JOURNAL

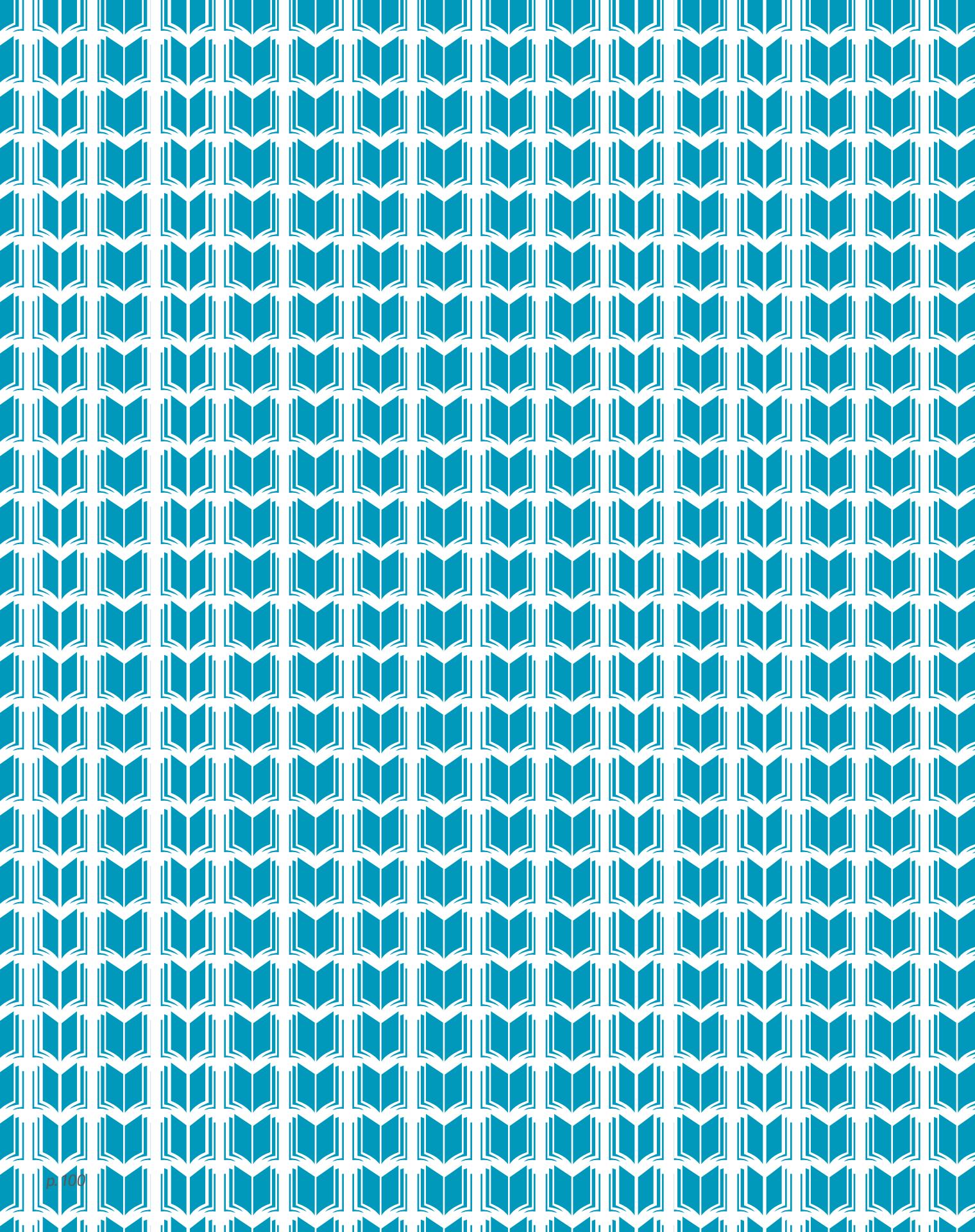
Think about new ways to input information into personal devices. Research existing mobile inputs; what are better and easier ways to write using a smartphone?

In the beginning, I viewed storytelling as a vehicle for getting kids excited about reading books. It was not until later in the semester, when I read *Reading in a Participatory Culture* and learned about the work of literary scholar Deborah Brandt that I began to appreciate the importance of writing itself. Through numerous and detailed interviews, Brandt has been studying changes in American literacy over generations.

While the first wave of mass literacy emphasized reading, we are entering a second wave, one in which writing dominates.

Q's FOR SEMESTER 4 EXPERIMENTS





Issues in Literacy Series

To kickoff my research around traditional literacy, I wrote a four-part blog series covering the following issues: Access to Books, Summer Learning Loss, Reading Motivation and Representation in Media. Below are a few excerpts from the series.

ACCESS TO BOOKS

Two thirds of children living in poverty have absolutely no books at home. In low income communities, there is a single book for every 300 children. Compare this to 13 books per child in an upper-middle income community ... Put another way, for every one book in a low income community, there are 3,900 books in an upper-middle income community.

...

Sometimes, the simple act of increasing a child's home library can have profound effects on their reading skills and enjoyment of reading, as Justin Minkel found in his 1,000 Books Project.

...

The sense of joy and autonomy that comes with owning a book of one's own simply cannot be substituted with borrowing opportunities. Programs like Reading is Fundamental recognize the power of choice and book ownership in motivating a child to read and love learning.

My own voracious love of books as a child was heavily supple-

mented by the local library, but it's the books I owned that I most cherished, that I read, and reread, and continue to reread into my adulthood.

SUMMER LEARNING LOSS

... Summer Learning Loss is the loss of academic skills and knowledge over summer vacation. As cited in an article by the New York Times,

Decades of research confirm that summer learning loss is real. According to a report released last month by the RAND Corporation, the average summer learning loss in math and reading for American students amounts to one month per year. More troubling is that it disproportionately affects low-income students: they lose two months of reading skills, while their higher-income peers whose parents can send them to enriching camps, take them on educational vacations and surround them with books during the summer make slight gains ...

READING MOTIVATION

Why don't kids read? What gets kids to read? Educators and employers throughout the US lament the decreasing literacy and reading comprehension skills of America's young people, closely tied to declining rates of reading for pleasure. In a 2010 article on the decline of reading, teacher Kelly Gallagher coins the term "readicide, meaning practices educators employ to raise reading scores that actually kill students' love of reading."

...

The Elon Academy, a college access and success program whose high school students, while technically proficient in reading, did little reading outside their academic requirements. To help motivate students to read more, they created Book Jam, "a book club style reading experience" that capitalizes on social engagement and personal interests.

Book Jams offered an informal setting for discussing and debating books, and exploring their historical contexts. College volunteers, acting as role models and discussion leaders, were able to encourage and motivate high schoolers to not only read but actively engage in their reading. Students also had a hand in curating the book club roster, allowing reading selections to be guided by their own interests. Students who were slow to finish their books were allowed to use Book Jam afternoons to finish reading. Book Jam created a culture of reading, and was met with overwhelming positive assessments from its students.

REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

...

When our movies, our television shows, and of course, our books, predominantly portray one race, they limit our world view of different identities, including our own. They encourage us to define ourselves and others by stereotypes of someone else's making, robbing us of the chance to understand not only our differences, but also our sameness.



Remixing the Classics

The Story of Ura is inspired by [Sleeping Beauty](#). Ura's story takes place in the moon colony of Tugidax in medieval times. Ura has honey brown skin, medium brown eyes, and curly copper hair. She eats marmalade toast and likes to swim.

ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a young woman named Ura. When Ura was just a baby, an evil moon goblin put a death curse on her. A good spirit counteracted the curse, and changed the sentence from death to a deep sleep that only magic could reverse. One day, while heading home, Ura met a mysterious old woman who offered her a beautiful platinum ring. When Ura reached for it, she pricked her finger, and fell into her predestined sleep. All around her, the citizens of Tugidax fell asleep too. They slept for days, weeks, months, years, until one day ...

What's next? Finish this story, start your own or mix another.

[**Mix me a story.**](#)

Learn More

Made by [Rae Milne](#) to generate fresh twists on classic heroines, heroes, and stories.

Get Inspired

See how people are reimagining traditional narratives on the [Story Remix blog](#).

Share Stories

Join me by sending your own ideas, illustrations, and stories to storyremix@gmail.com.

Experiment: Remixing the Classics

LEFT: Screenshot of my Remixing the Classics web prototype

(02 February 2014) This past week, I created a small idea generator, which encourages creators to remix classic fairy tales. My larger goal is to motivate kids to read more, fostering a love of story through authorship. An online platform would provide a story prompt, then allow kids to create and share their own narratives. It would encourage them to think about traditional stories in new ways, featuring a more diverse cast of characters with whom they could self-identify.

I used the idea generator as a starting point, and shared the experiment with friends with high hopes of gathering a collection of creative stories as inspiration. So far, I've received only a handful of submissions, but a lot of positive feedback and some great suggestions.

One friend had the excellent idea to suggest general time-frames in history (dynasties, eras) rather than years. Lessons learned include the fact that my audience didn't always recognize or remember the original fairy tale, so including a link to original text would be helpful. Also, some people were expecting or hoping for an actual story to be produced rather than just an idea for one. Most importantly, asking users to create their own fairy tale, even with a general plot to start from, was a high barrier to entry, particularly for busy friends.

Interestingly, I'd envisioned the story-making as an activity that lived outside the classroom; however, a few educators thought it could be a good starter for an in-class exercise for students. To that end, perhaps physical story cards or a printable template would be a better format. I wonder if it would be a good tool for nonprofit writing programs to use, as an activity between mentors and mentees?

That said, ideally, I'd like make the activity more appealing outside of a formal educational or institutional setting. How can I make reading and writing on your own activities that can compete with all of the other media choices kids have these days?

While the story generator is one tiny piece of a larger idea, I think the it served to start some conversations for me around new topics I'm exploring. It's forced me to consider what my ultimate goals are, and also sparked a host of other ideas, including new forms of transmedia storytelling to engage users.

User Testing

From my first round of testing storytelling ideas, I learned that including elements of classic tales, or prompting writers with story starters helped jumpstart fresh ideas.

Also, people enjoy writing together. Writing is often seen as a solo activity, but it doesn't have to be. Writers can learn from each other and like seeing their characters used in other writer's stories.

The Story of Ura is inspired by Sleeping Beauty. Ura's story takes place in the moon colony of Tugidax in the far future. Ura has cocoa brown skin, medium brown eyes, and curly copper hair. She reads poetry and owns a pet chicken.



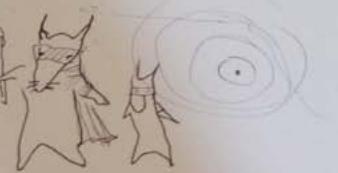
ONCE UPON A TIME, there lived a young woman named Ura. When Ura was just a baby, an evil moon goblin put a death curse on her. A good spirit counteracted the curse, and changed the sentence from death to a deep sleep that only magic could reverse. One day, while heading home, Ura met a mysterious old woman who offered her a beautiful diamond statuette. When Ura reached for it, she pricked her finger, and fell into her predestined sleep. All around her, the citizens of Tugidax fell asleep too. They slept for days, weeks, months, years, until one day ...

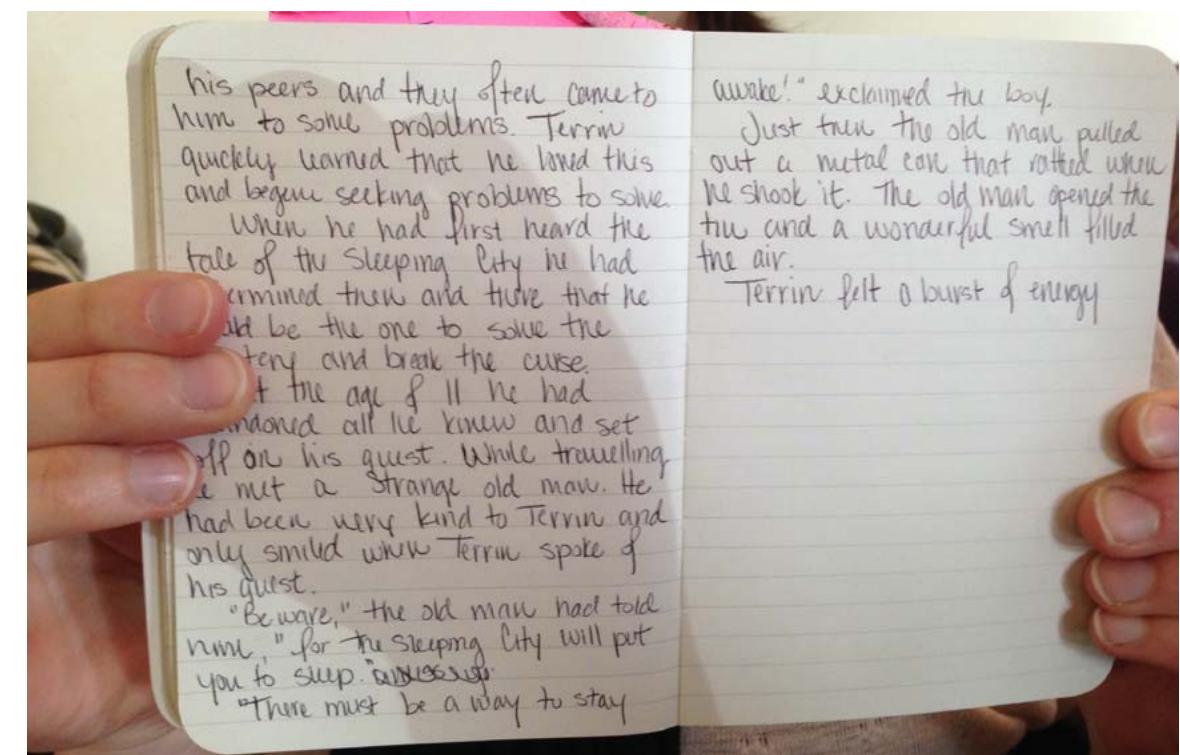
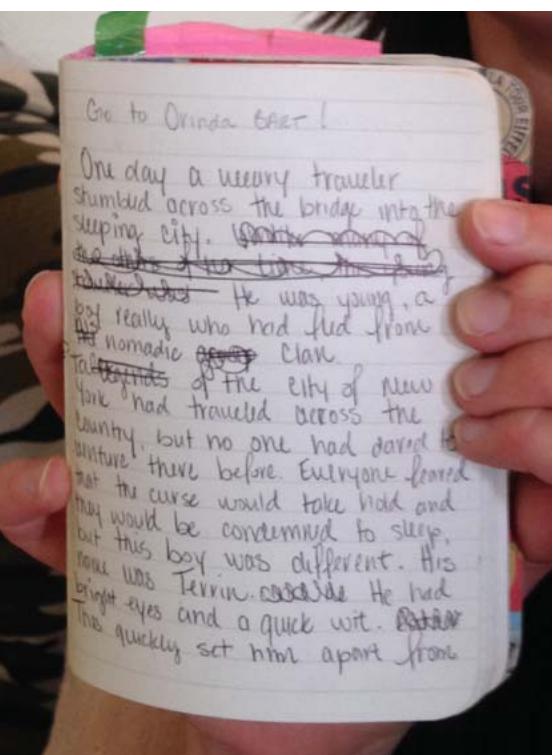
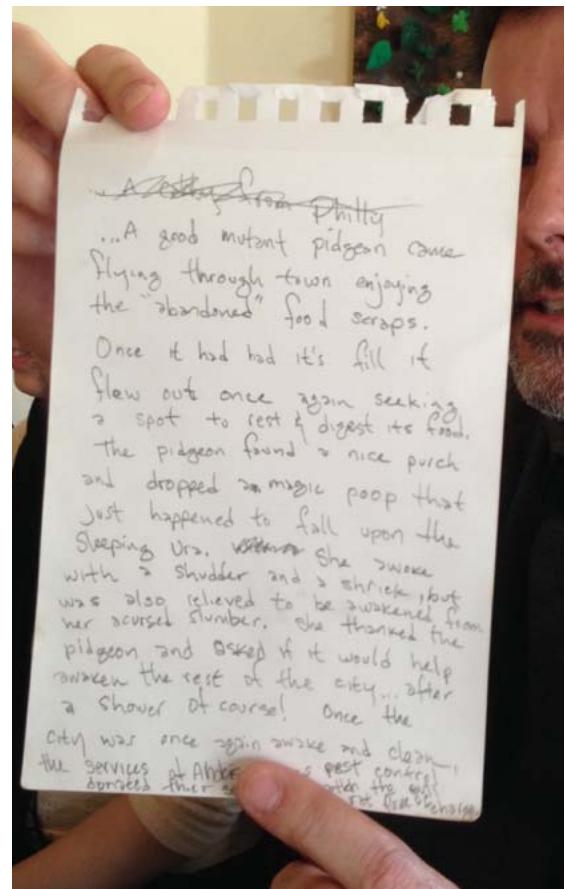
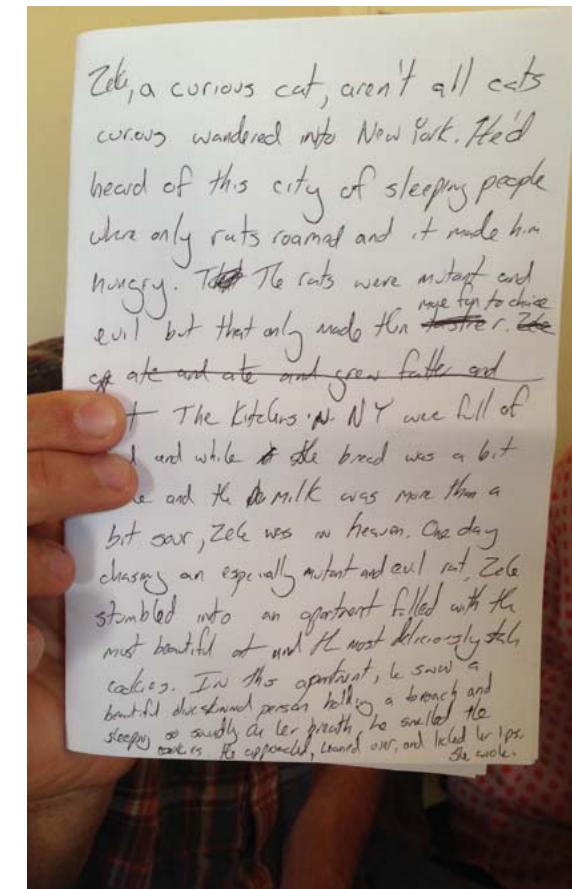
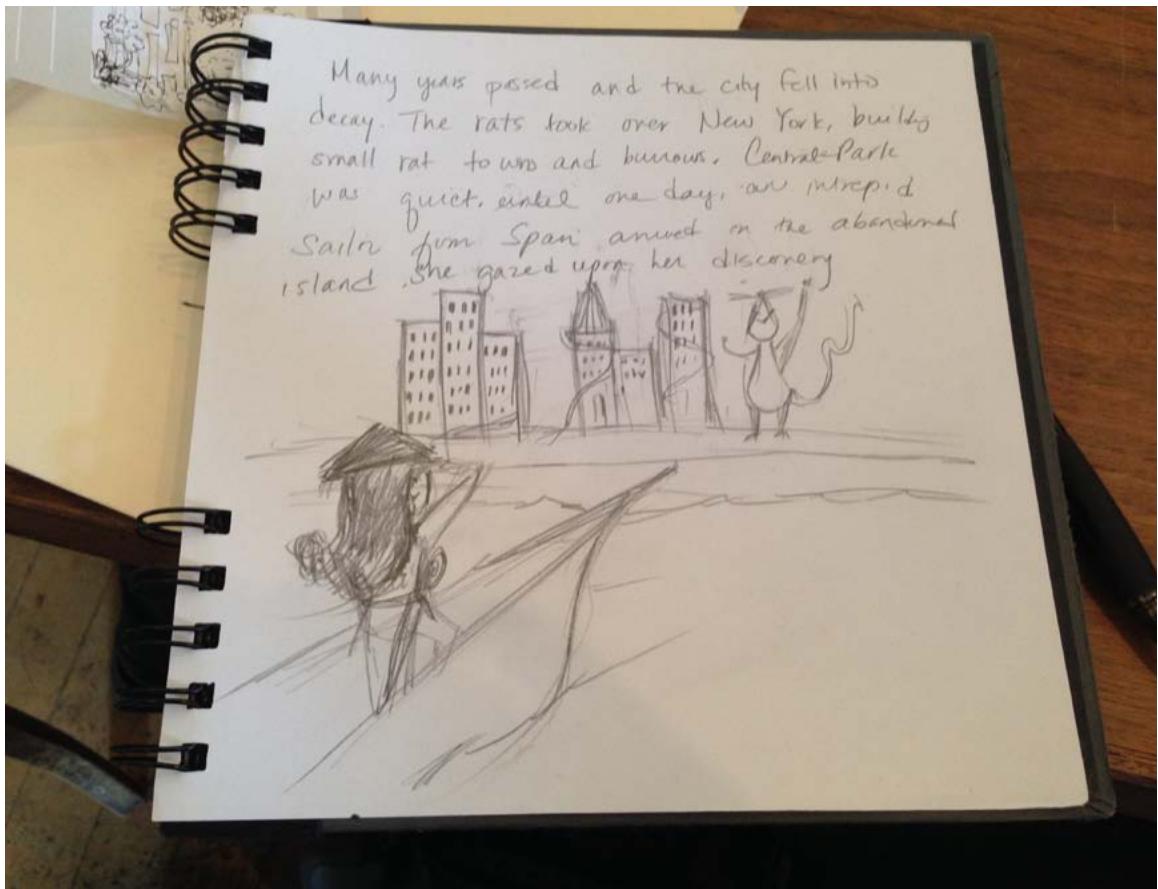
What's next?

Until one day the same fairy came with her sister to the kingdom. She and her sister tried to undo the spell on Ura. But the evil moon goblin did black magic so he could stop the fairies. Now, when good and dark magic collide in a Surfin way they creat disaster. That's what happened. There was an explosion, and then everybody in the world went to sleep (even the goblin and the fairys). Everybody except the little girl Ura, who eventually died of old age.

Until one day, a visitor from a distant land, named Saturn, landed on the desert plains of Texas. The Saturnians found many tired humans roaming about in the hot sun. The saturnians discovered that everybody there was tired. They haven't been sleeping for 3 years! It was because a curse on NYC was placed where anyone went to sleep. But in order to balance the energy between the country, Texas a constellation calculation was made and the entire state of Texas was to stay awake to offset the balance of waking energy. The saturnian found this very troubling as the tired souls of Texas would eventually lead to cosmic breakdown, reaching into the far ends of the galaxy, including Saturn.

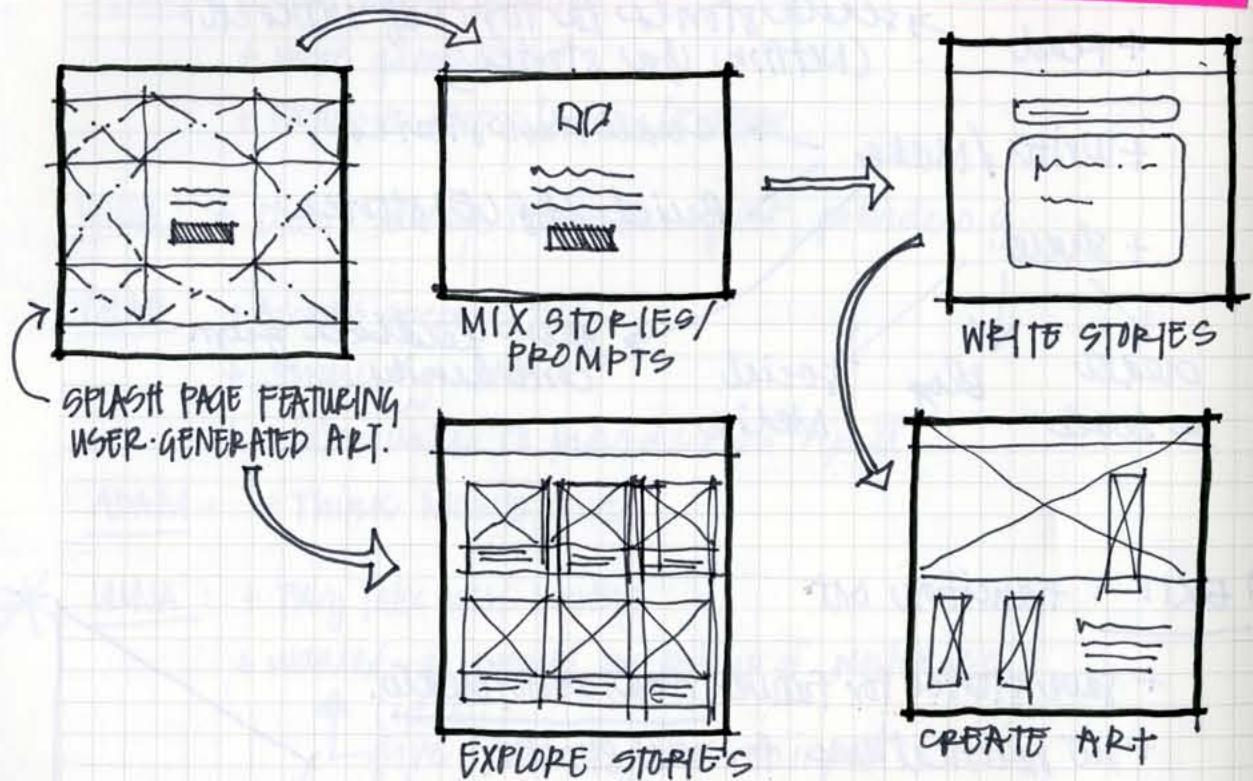
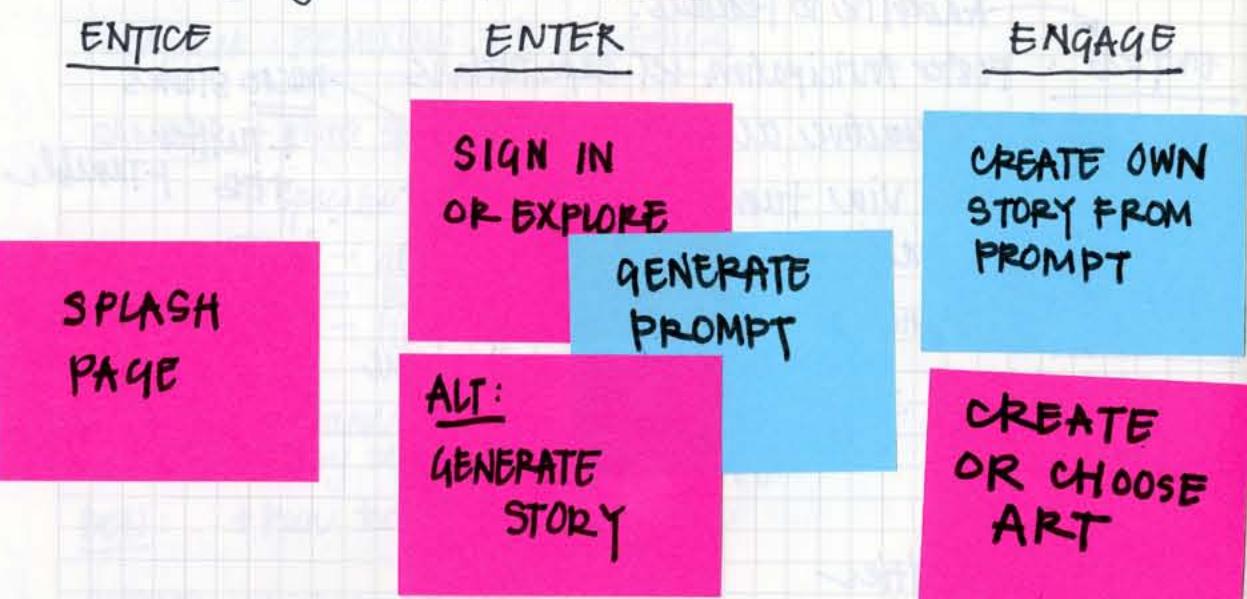
the saturnian was determined to wake up the city of New York. He took his crew of space invaders and up made it to New York City in 3 seconds. He found the used his energy laser beam pole and to detect the center of the sleeping territory.





Datum / Date: (30 JAN 2014) 5 E's

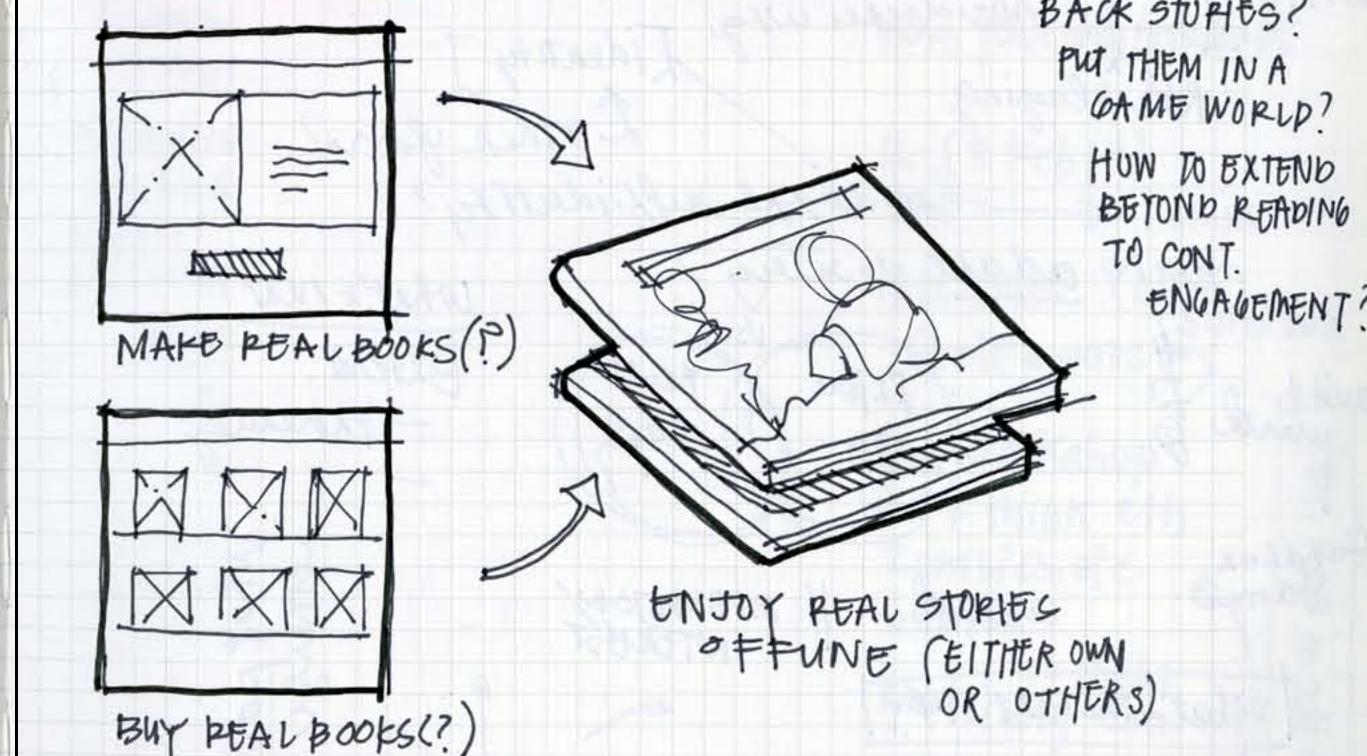
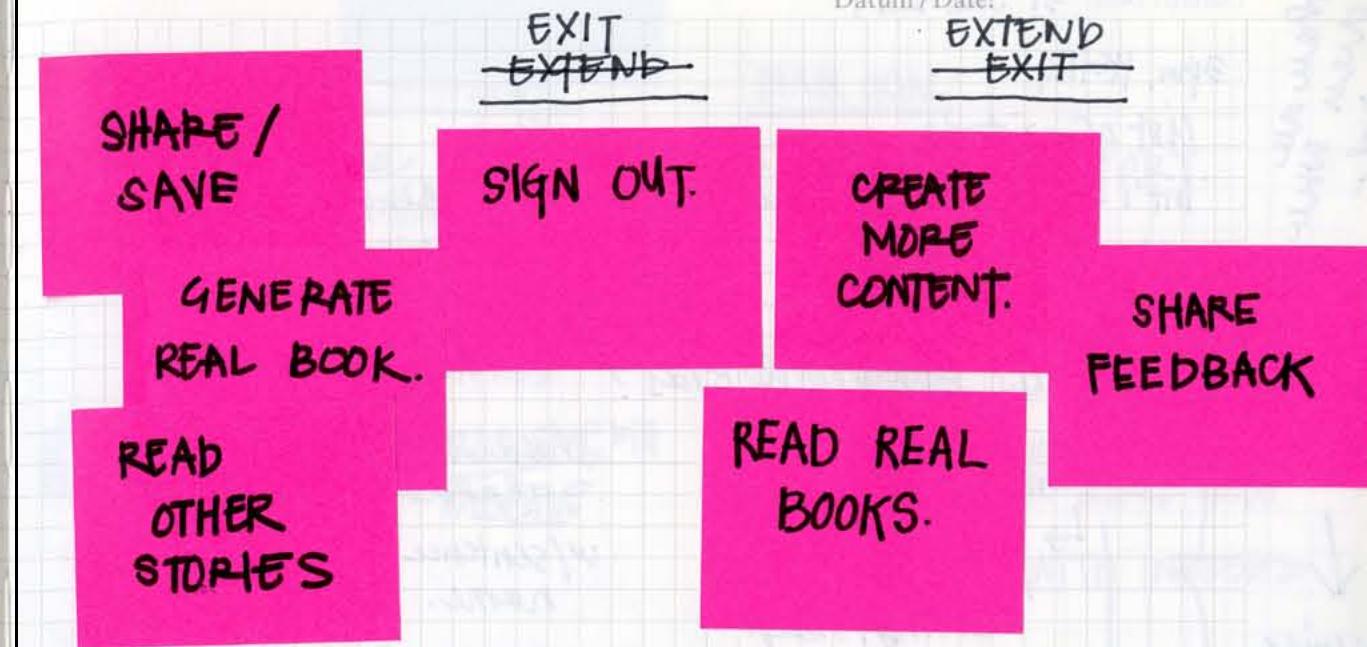
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CONTEMPORARY COVER ART

SOUND EFFECTS;
DIE DOWN TO AMBIENT 🎵

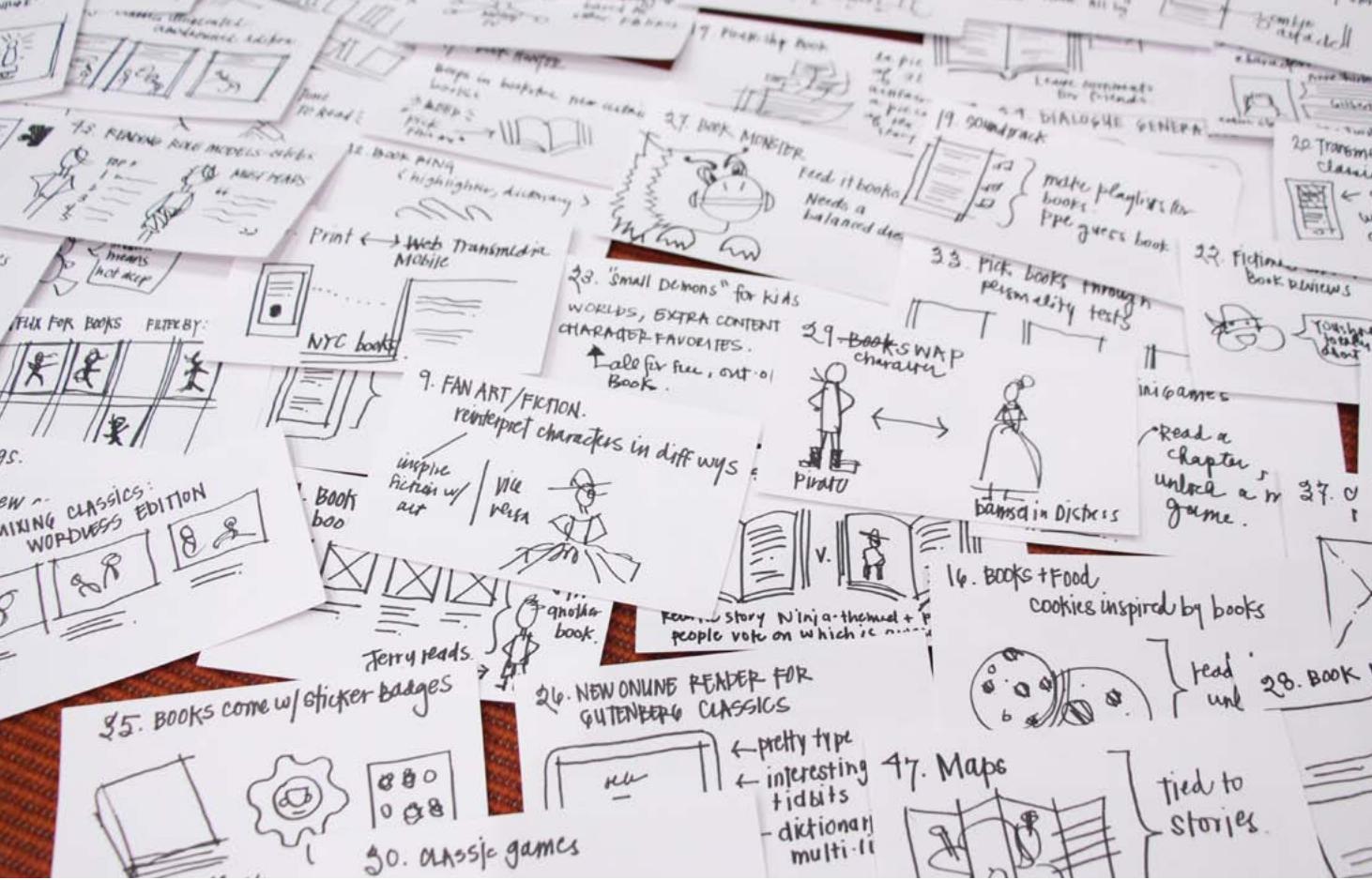
beg. OF CHAPTER
ILLUSTRATIONS
MAPS, DEEP READING
w/ SUBTLE INTERACTIONS



EXPLORE ADDED CONTENT (outside of text)

CLOSE E-BOOK

EXPLORE FAN? SIDE STORIES.



LEFT: Storytelling ideation exercises

Brainstorming

(10 February 2014) After releasing my Remixing the Classics experiment, I took a step back and started looking at the experience more holistically. I decided to generate 50 ideas about storytelling to help open up my thinking

INSIGHTS

- WORLDS YOU CAN EXPLORE = STICKY.
- KIDS LIKE TO PUT OWN STAMP ON THINGS.
- BUILD IN FRAMEWORK TO LOWER BARRIER TO ENTRY.

① ENTICE

- SPLASH PAGE w/ ART, STORY SNIPPETS

③ ENGAGE

- MAD LIB *
- VISUAL
- TEXT
- DETAIL / LIST

④ EXIT

SIGN OUT

② ENTER

- SIGN IN/EXPLORE STORIES
- ADD TO STORIES

⑤ EXTEND

- EXPLORE STORIES
- GENERATE PHYSICAL BOOKS
- DIY?
- FINISHED BOOKS?

QUESTIONS

- WHAT VARIABILITIES MAKE INTERESTING TWISTS?

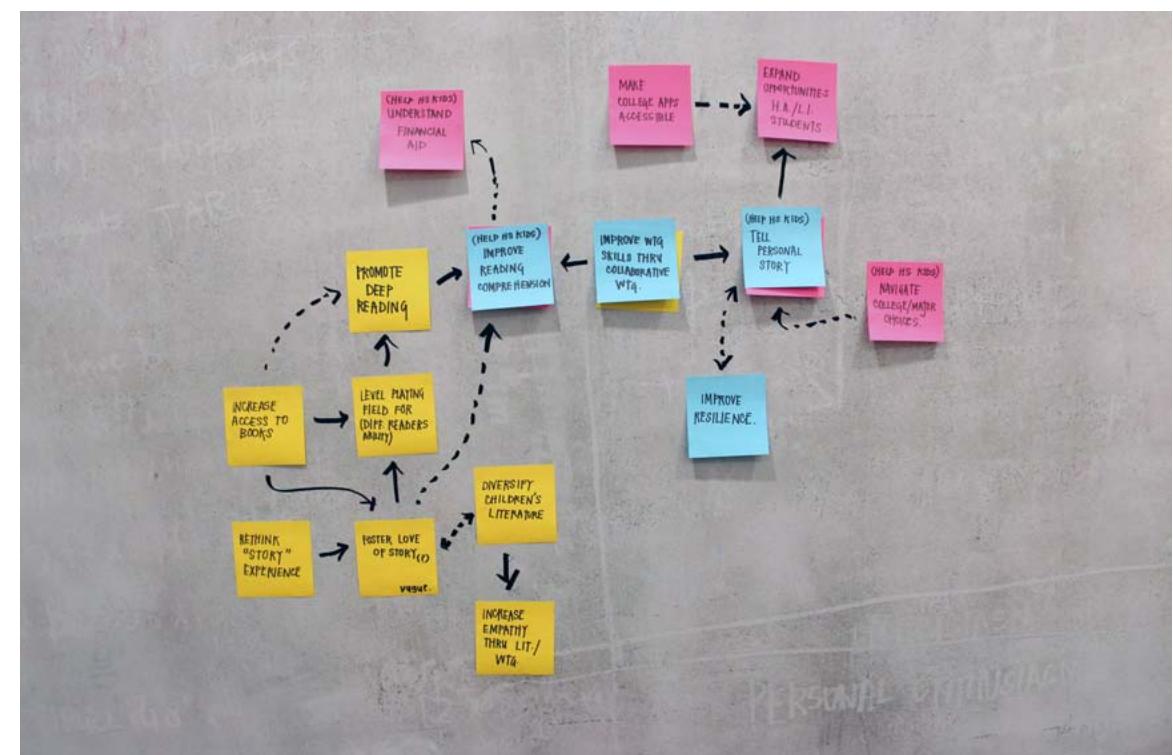
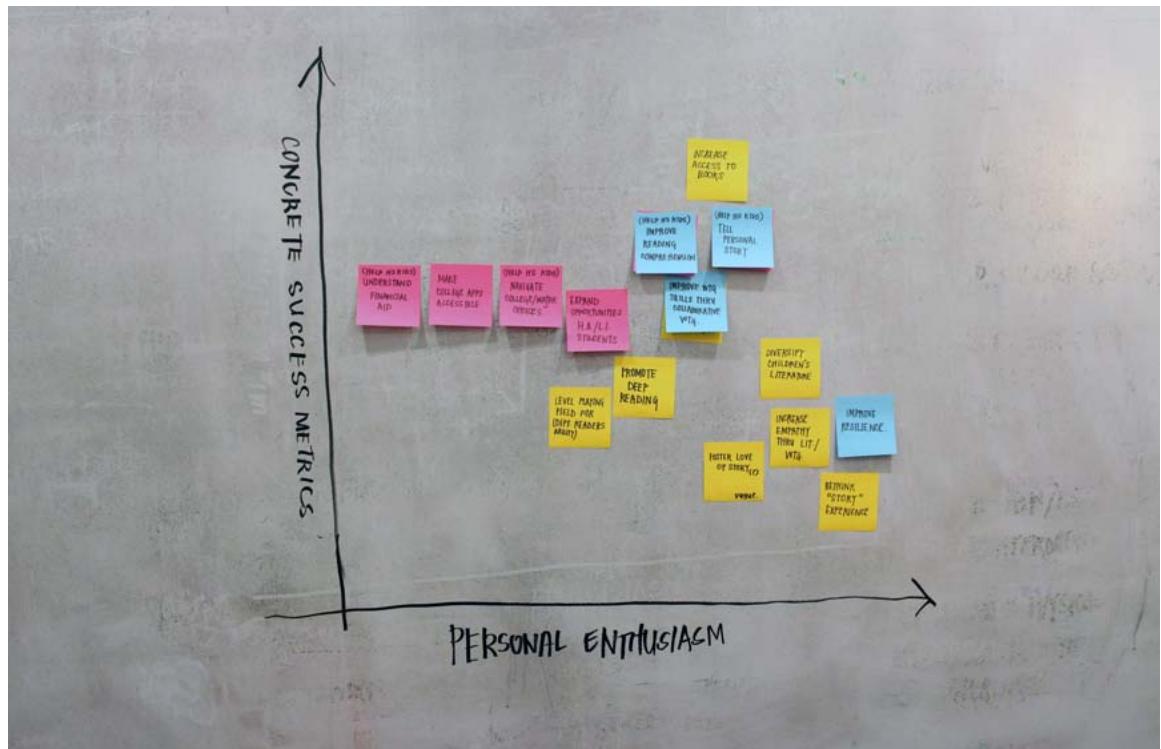
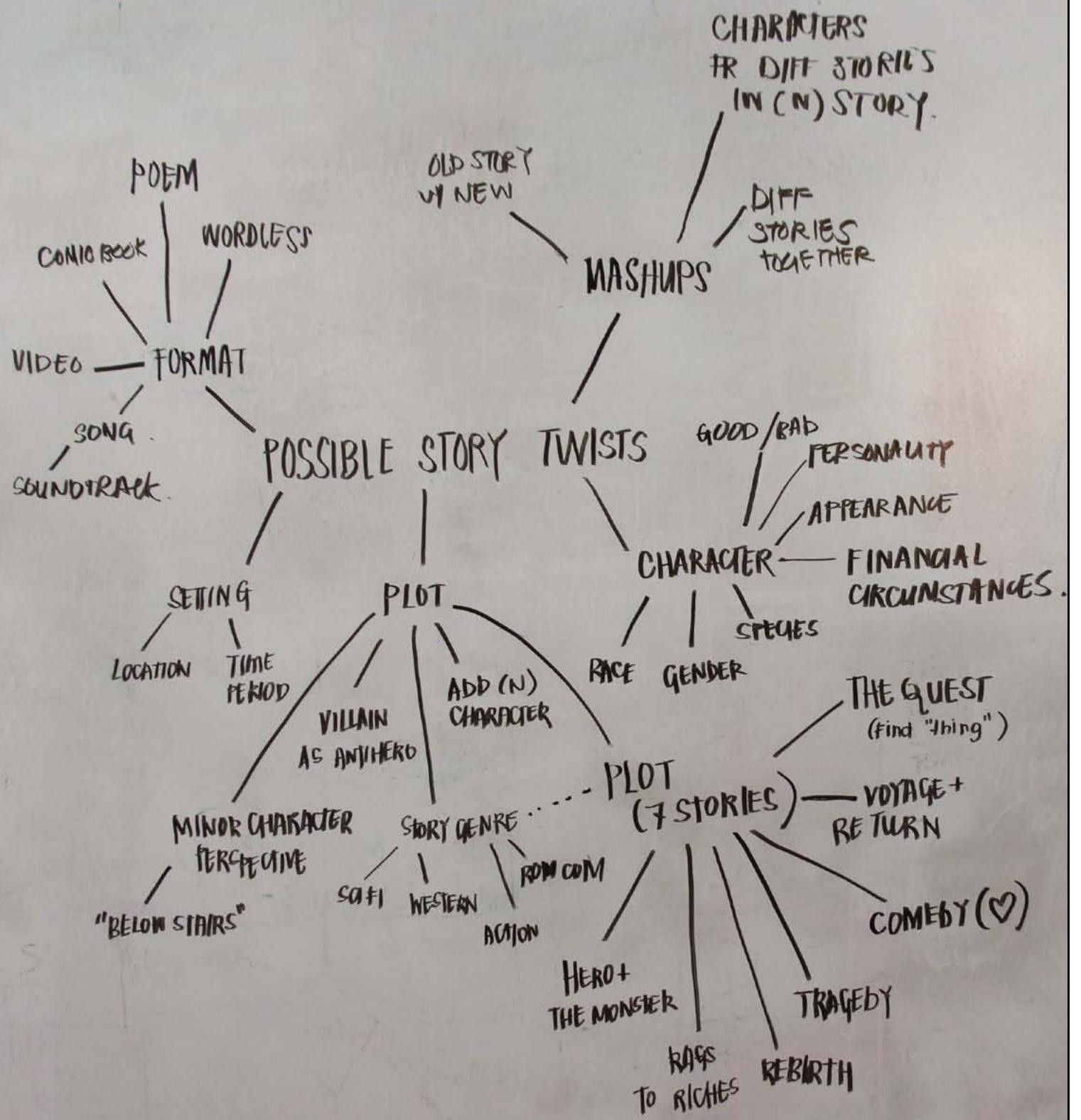
- HOW TO INCORP SCIFI?

- WHAT CONTENT DO I BUILD VS HOW MUCH DO I LEAVE TO THE USER?

- *WHAT IS NEW/DIFF ABOUT MY APPROACH?

- *WHAT COULD PHYSICAL OBJECT/IMAGE ADD TO THE EXPERIENCE?

- Can this be done over text?
→ If yes, what is my target age group?



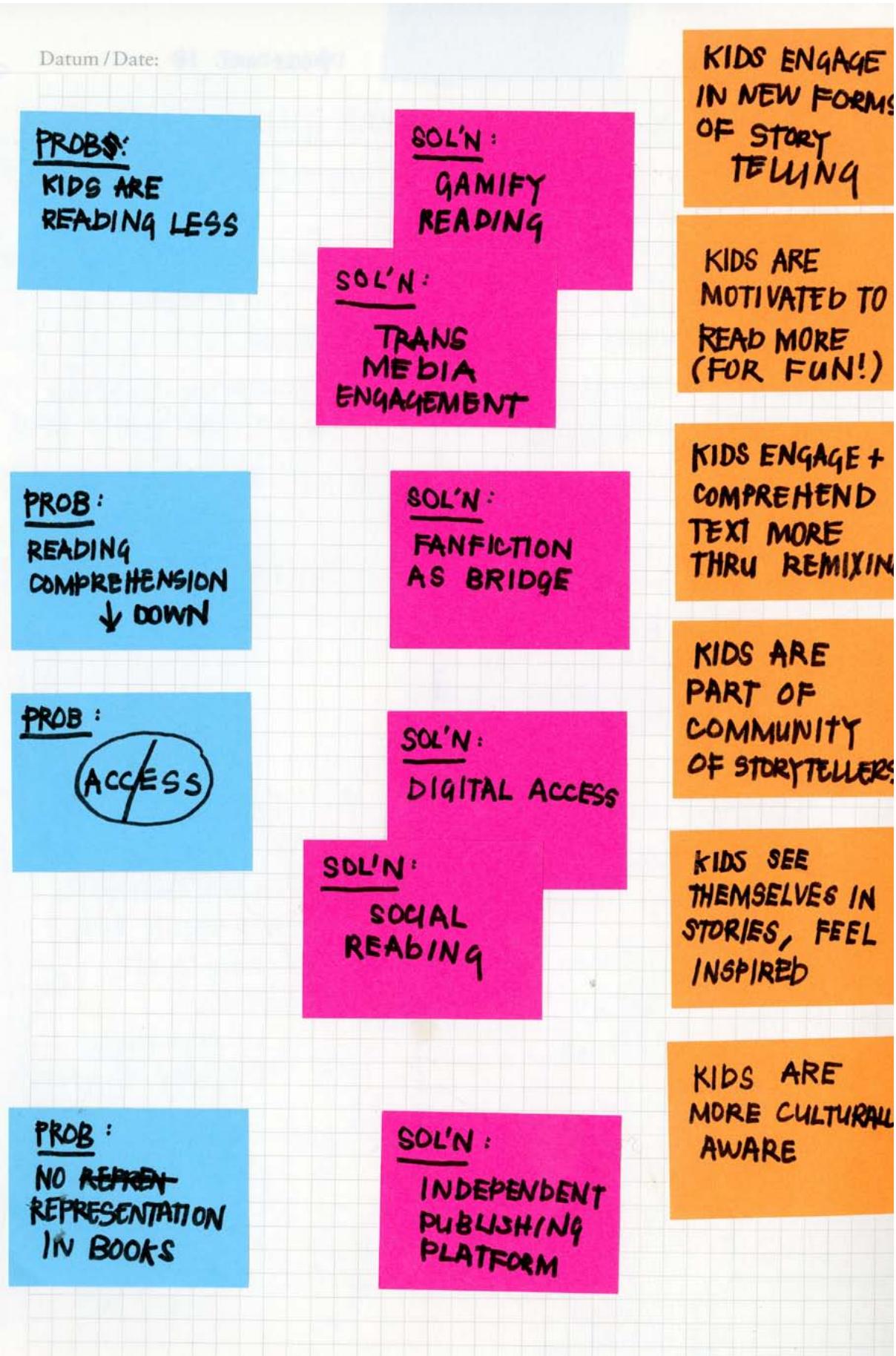
Adventures of Antimony

Adventures of Antimony is a book by Brian Mearns, an engineer and father. The book is an adventure novel about a young girl named Antimony who ventures into a magical land to save her parents.

Mr. Mearns self-published and released *Adventures of Antimony* under a Creative Commons remix license. While the license allows for free reign editing of the text, I wrote to Mr. Mearns and asked permission to modify his story, which he kindly gave.

I mocked up a version of the first chapter of Antimony as an interactive novel with puzzles built in.



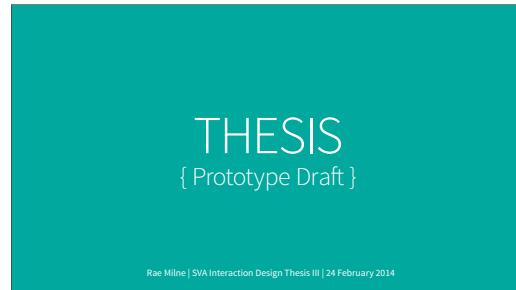


Prototype Iterations

After going broad, I narrowed my focus again, looking at storytelling and remix.

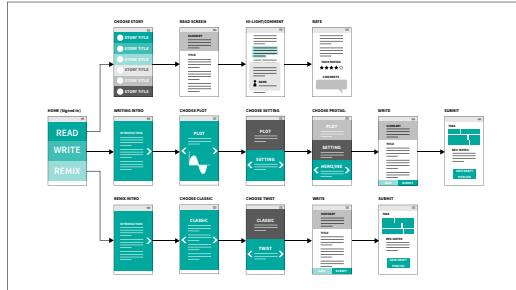
DRAFT: REPRESENT

Represent was a mobile storytelling app that focused on character development. Represent had a lofty goal of diversifying literature through self-publishing.



"The combined effect on children's progress of reading books often, going to the library regularly and reading newspapers at 16 was four times greater than the advantage children gained from having a parent with a degree."

VERSION ONE offers writing space for original stories and another for remixing classic stories. Writing is done individually but work is open to comments from the community.



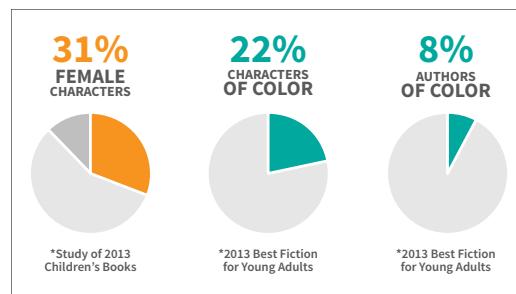
"... individuals who often read fiction appear to be better able to understand other people, empathize with them and view the world from their perspective."

PLOTS

Overcoming the Monster	Rags to Riches
Tragedy	Comedy
The Quest	Voyage and Return
Rebirth	Choose Your Own

SETTINGS

The faraway galaxy Montmartreau	The moon colony Tugidax
The underground kingdom Bhumigata	The small village Dorp
The bustling city of New York	Postapocalyptic New Brazil
The tropical island Kaulana	Choose Your Own



HERO/INES

Wacky Genius	Antihero
Secret Blue Blood	Action Star
Super Kid	Inconspicuous Bookworm
Plucky Go Getter	Choose Your Own

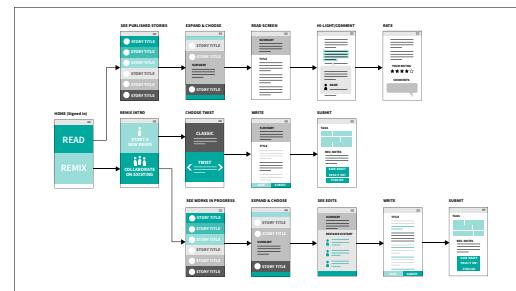
VERSION TWO offers writing space for remixing classic stories, with the original text as an editable base. Writing is done individually or collaboratively in a GIT-inspired environment.

REPRESENT

{ Prototype Draft }

Keeping Lit Real

A community of storytellers crafting and sharing stories that reflect the diverse world we live in.



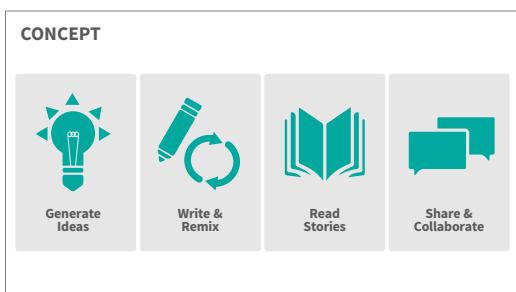
CLASSICS

Pride & Prejudice	Treasure Island
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea	Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
Alice in Wonderland	Moby Dick
Around the World in Eighty Days	Choose Your Own

TARGET AUDIENCE

MS/HS students who are aliterate*, especially young women and students of color

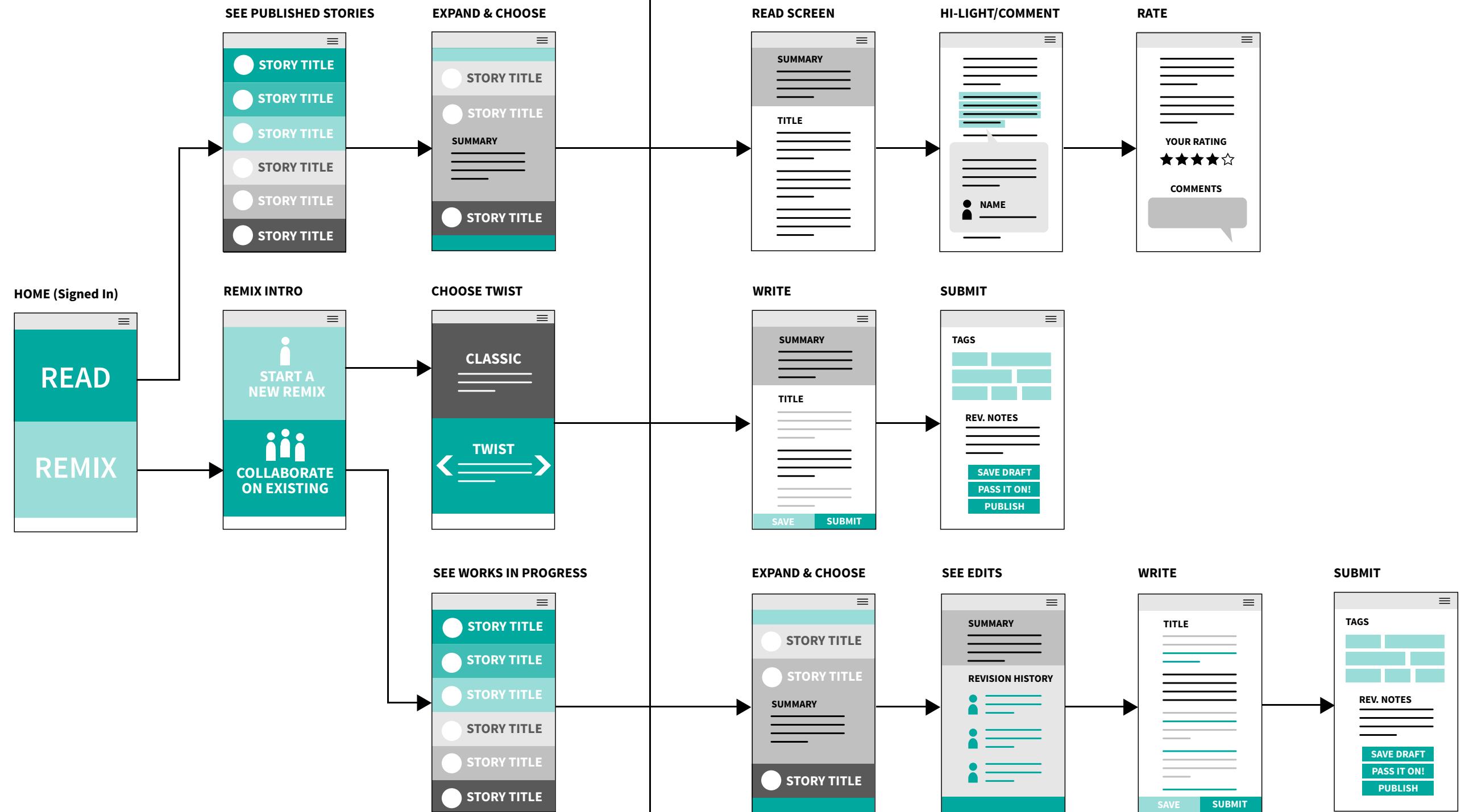
*those who are functionally literate but choose not to read for pleasure



TWISTS

Gender swap the story	Race swap the story
Write a mashup with your favorite TV show or movie	Zombify the story
Mix two classics together	Write the story as a play
Add a surprise plot twist like an unexpected death	Choose Your Own

THANK YOU.



BADGUY (Antagonist)

team of Mentors
v.
Guest Writers each month?
how to structure Regular challenges?
TO DO!
• EDITS to W/REFRAMES.
• PUT n/z in VISION.

PROFILE

① Choose a role
② Pick cast
③ Differentiate
④ APPROVE CHAR FOR CAST.
⑤ Add your own

STORY

STORY
CONTRIBS
SWIPE OR SCROLL

SUMMARY

entire story in one screen

Datum / Date: 20 MAR 2014

OPTION A

Menu to choose lengths/types
SNIPPET, SCENE, STORY, SCRIPT(?)
SUGGESTIONS FOR LENGTH

OPTION B

SNIPPET: Write 2-3 sentences a juicy? line?

SCENE: write think of a scene in the story act

STORY: Entire story w/ beg, mid, end.

SCRIPT: write a dialogue/ conversation bt (2)+ characters

OTHER SCREENS TO WORK OUT:

NAME

NAME
CONTRIBS
BADGES?
CHARS ON TOP.
TOP RATED STORIES
S/A CONTRIBS?
FAVE STORIES
TRACK BK, MOVIE, STAGE...

ABOUT

ABOUT
More Info / Learn More

VISUALIZE

Visualize connections bt stories

PROFILE

Tiny changes
• Way bigger text

FEATURED STORIES

FEATURED STORIES

SIGNIN / SIGNUP

SIGNIN / SIGNUP

BROWSE STORIES

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

FIRST PERSON

One Story, Multiple Perspectives.

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

THIS MONTH'S STORY is a Rags to Riches tale set in Metropolis, a bustling modern city.

Popular Tags

FUNNY ROMANCE
FAN FICTION GEEK LOVE

[Join the Party](#)
[Learn More...](#)

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

Pick a Perspective:

THE PROTAGONIST
Hero or heroine; the traditional main subject of the story's plotline. Is there more to their story than meets the eye?

THE SIDEKICK
A companion or best friend to the protagonist. Do they have an intriguing story of their own?

THE BAD GUY
The antagonist or foil to the protagonist. Are they really evil or just misunderstood?

THE LOVE INTEREST
The romantic interest of the protagonist. Just a pretty face or a hero/heroin themselves?

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

EDIT NAME

CHARACTER TYPE: Sidekick

GENDER: Select

HISTORY
Where is your character from? What was their childhood like? Edit history here.

PERSONALITY
What is your character like? What are their unique characteristics or qualities? Edit personality here.

INTERESTS
What does your character like to do? What are their hobbies? Edit interests here.

SUBMIT

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

THIS MONTH'S STORY is a Rags to Riches tale set in Metropolis, a bustling modern city.

The protagonist is poor and has a tough life. Through various trials and tribulations, he or she grows into a mature person and is rewarded with riches and the perfect mate.

FUNNY ROMANCE
FAN FICTION GEEK LOVE

[Join the Party](#)
[Learn More...](#)

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

ROLEPLAY
Create a character and see them come to life in your own stories and the stories of others.

WRITE
Choose a cast of characters and create snippets, scenes or entire stories about their lives.

REMIX
Read what others are writing, provide feedback and snatch content to stitch together one epic narrative.

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

GIGI

CHARACTER TYPE: Sidekick

GENDER: Female

HISTORY
Gigi was raised by her mom. She's an only child which has made her very independent.

PERSONALITY
Gigi loves to laugh. She's always breaking the ice with a corny joke.

INTERESTS
Gigi likes reading books and riding her bicycle.

SUBMIT

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

Choose Your Cast:

NINA, THE PROTAGONIST
AUTHOR: Poet137
"Nina likes to skateboard and bake cakes . . ."
6 Appearances

GIGI, THE SIDEKICK
AUTHOR: You!
"Gigi loves to laugh. She's always breaking . . ."
0 Appearances

DARTAGNAN, THE BAD GUY
AUTHOR: ILuvBks
"Everyone thinks Dartagnan is cold, but . . ."
2 Appearances

BOB, THE LOVE INTEREST
AUTHOR: LisaKGJoe
"Bob is a prince who hates his royal life . . ."
4 Appearances

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

Choose Your Cast:

NINA, THE PROTAGONIST
AUTHOR: Poet137
“Nina likes to read poetry and bake cookies.”
6 Appearances

HISTORY
Nina’s parents were welders and so is she.
Nina is now an orphan. She takes care of eight brothers and sisters.

PERSONALITY
Nina is a pretty chill girl. She doesn’t like to see people get hurt and stands up for them.

INTERESTS
Nina likes to skateboard and bake cakes.

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

Choose Your Cast:

NINA, THE PROTAGONIST
AUTHOR: Poet137
“Nina likes to skateboard and bake cakes . . .”
6 Appearances

GIGI, THE SIDEKICK
AUTHOR: You!
“Gigi loves to laugh. She’s always breaking . . .”
0 Appearances

DARTAGNAN, THE BAD GUY
AUTHOR: ILuvBks
“Everyone thinks Dartagnan is cold, but . . .”
2 Appearances

BOB, THE LOVE INTEREST
AUTHOR: LisaKGJoe
“Bob is a prince who hates his royal life . . .”
4 Appearances

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

SNIPPET: MAKING MAGIC
You!
4 Contributors

STORY: BEYOND THE WALLS
BadooWadoo
7 Contributors provided 4 characters, 5 snippets, and 2 entire scenes to this story.

GEEK LOVE **ROMANCE**

DRAMA **MONEY**

STORY: THE GIANT BUG EATER
ILuvBks
2 Contributors

SNIPPET: THE MET BALL
MsSaigon
1 Contributor

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

STORY

BEYOND THE WALLS

BadooWadoo

CONTRIBUTIONS
4 characters, 5 snippets and 2 entire scenes

BadooWadoo	Xavier (Love Interest)
LilMissMo	Jordan (Sidekick)
	Mischief (scene)
	Mayhem (snippet)
Marcy Darcy	Linh Mei (Heroine)
	The Ball (scene)
ILuvBks	Joolie (Bad Guy)
	Because I Said So (snippet)
MiniMe	Purple Rain (snippet)
Jamie1	Great Day (snippet)
FrankaP	The End (snippet)

126 READS

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

SUMMARY
A Rags to Riches story told by Gigi. Gigi’s friend Nina falls in love with Bob but their love is thwarted by Dartagnan. The story is set in the bustling city of Metropolis.

WRITING LENGTH: Choose length

EDIT TITLE
Write your story here.

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

SUMMARY
A Rags to Riches story told by Gigi. Gigi’s friend Nina falls in love with Bob but their love is thwarted by Dartagnan. The story is set in the bustling city of Metropolis.

WRITING LENGTH: SNIPPET

Making Magic

As much as I love my best friend, Nina, sometimes she can be a pushover. She’s too nice for her own good! Anyway, I knew she wanted to go to the prince’s annual birthday ball but she wasn’t taking any initiative to make it happen. I decided I had to take matters into my own hands.

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

THIS IS THE STORY of how I met my best friend, Linh Mei and how she changed my life forever.

Linh Mei and I grew up in very different households. My father was the head of a huge corporation making billions of dollars a year. When both of my parents passed away in a freak helicopter accident, I was left holding the reins of my father’s company and raising my little sister, Jordan. Jordan and I lived on the 150th floor of an apartment building owned by my family on the Upper East Side. I had everything money could buy but I was terribly unhappy COMMENT my parents everyday.

HIGHLIGHT Linh Mei is the daughter of two hardworking middle-class parents who immigrated to Queens to make a better life for themselves. Her parents owned a dry cleaning store and raised their three daughters in the upstairs

COPY TO DRAFT

FIRST PERSON
164 Active Stories

TAGS

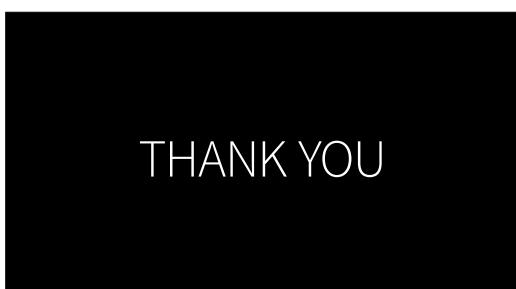
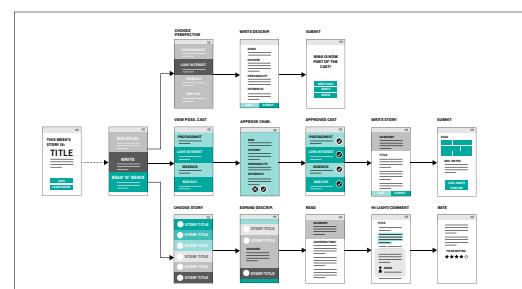
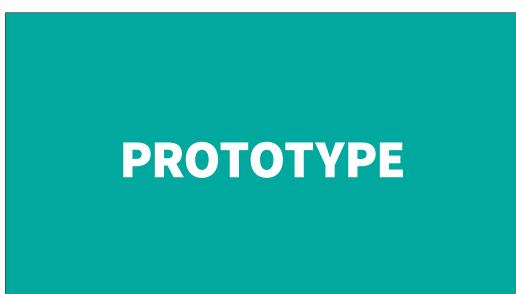
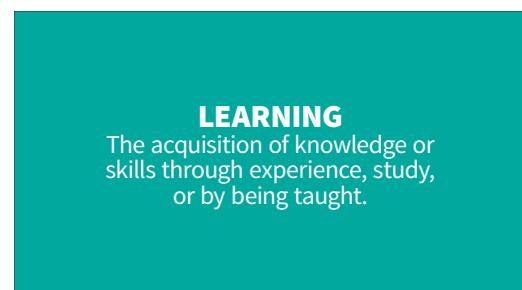
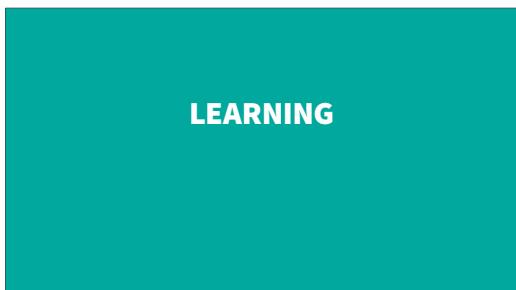
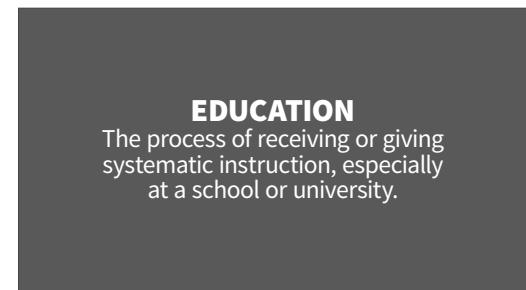
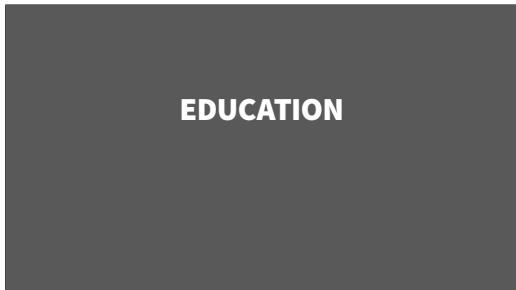
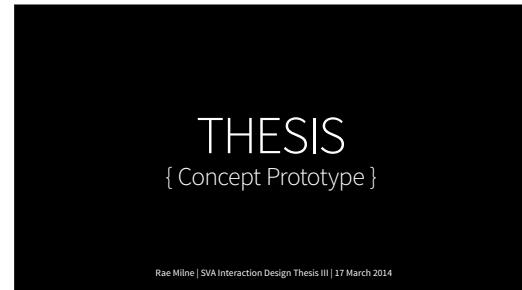
GEEK LOVE **ROMANCE**

DRAMA **MONEY**

YOUR RATING

COMMENTS

NAME Something Else
This is a comment about the story.



CONCEPT: FIRST PERSON

With First Person, I took the overall ideas from Represent, narrowed the focus and features, and expanded on the learning outcomes..

User Interviews

I had the opportunity to interview several educators and gain their feedback on my prototypes and ideas. Here are some of the insights shared by the educators I interviewed:

Rudy Blanco is the Digital Learning Coordinator at DreamYard Prep. He and his colleagues are especially passionate about preparing their students for college and career opportunities and instilling them with important real world skills.

Ivan Cestero is an educator at Avenues World School. Visiting his classes centered on Social Innovation were very inspiring. While Ivan doesn't teach language arts, he thought some of the scaffolding techniques used in Wordplay could be useful for other types of writing, including nonfiction social studies essays.

Charlotte Cheng is a Resource Specialist Aid and curriculum designer. Charlotte works with elementary school kids and finds that storytelling activities are a great way to engage students. Many of Charlotte's students are still struggling with the basic mechanics of reading and writing. Storytelling makes learning fun for them; they love writing stories and sharing their work with each other.

Gabrielle Gayagoy is an English Language Arts teacher at the Academy of Software Engineers. Because she teaches at a tech-focused high school, Gab's students are drawn to interacting with digital platforms.

Sam Saltz teaches at an international school for young adults whose native language is not English. Like Gab, Sam asked to see more teacher control over the Wordplay interface, and an ability to create private groups, characters and stories.

User Testing

In addition to the user testing I did with the Remixing the Classics prototype, I created a set of story cards to test the mechanics of the site using the cards and paper worksheets. I also released a rough, low-fidelity digital prototype using a simple Google survey form.

RIGHT: Testing storytelling mechanics with friends





STORYTELLING EXPERIMENT: FIRST PERSON

Name of Character: GRU

Role of Character: SIDEKICK

HISTORY (Where is your character from? What are their circumstances? What is their family like?)



GRU IS THE FIRST MATE OF A RAGTAG PIRATE SHIP. HE WAS ADOPTED BY THE SHIP STEWARD WHEN HE WAS JUST A KIT, FOUND ON THE DOORSTEP DURING A STOP OVER IN THE WEST INDIES. HE LOST VISION IN ONE EYE WHILE TRYING TO NAVIGATE THE SHIP IN A BAD STORM. HE IS A WEASEL.

STORYTELLING EXPERIMENT: FIRST PERSON

Name of Character: HAROLD MEYER

Role of Character: THE BISCUITER

HISTORY (Where is your character from? What are their circumstances? What is their family like?)

HAROLD IS A BANK TELLER AT THE COMMUNITY BANK, WHERE HE'S WORKED FOR 20 YEARS. EVER SINCE LEAVING HIGH SCHOOL, HE HAS A WIFE + 2 BOYS. THE OLDEST, JOHN, IS IN THE MARINES & HAS JUST LEFT FOR BASIC TRAINING. THE YOUNGER ONE, TIM, HAS BEEN TROUBLE, SKIPPING SCHOOL, ALWAYS SULLEN OR COMBATIVE. HAROLD & HIS WIFE ARE GOING THROUGH A ROUGH PATCH. THEY BARELY SPEAK ANYMORE, EXCEPT TO FIGHT.

PERSONALITY (What is your character like? What are their unique qualities?)

- A BIT MEEEK AND UNCONFRONTATIONAL. BULLIED BY HIS BOSS @ THE BANK.

TENDS TO SHUT DOWN WHEN HIS WIFE GETS ANGRY WITH HIM - JUST GOES SILENT.

PEOPLE IN TOWN KNOW HIM AS A GOOD MAN - THOUGH THEY MOSTLY DON'T THINK OF HIM AT ALL.

PLOT
The Quest
SETTING
Montmartre
Paraway galaxy in distant future

Choose a Length: SNIPPET (1-2 LINES) SCRIPT (DIALOGUE) SCENE STORY

WRITE HERE
(Read the character description on the back. Using the story cards, write a plot.)
Today Harold at work. Harold is experiencing another especially difficult day. He's fed up with the way his boss treats him at work. He left the house this morning with his wife, screaming at him for something minor. He gets up from his desk to go to the bathroom, but finds himself walking to the elevator. He exits out of his office and finds himself outside his building. Across the street he can see the bullet train will arrive in 2 minutes. Without thinking, he walks to the stop and arrives first as the bullet train arrives. But he sees this particular train is stopping on Mars. This is the opposite direction of his home, but he decides to get on it. He has no idea where he's going or what he's going to do when he gets there. All he knows is that's something else waiting for him.

p.1

PERSONALITY (What is your character like? What are their unique qualities?)

A fast talker quick with a joke doesn't often show his private feelings

No one knows it, but he likes navigating b/c he likes watching the sunset from the crows nest.

He's got a mind for figures. He can persuade anyone into doing anything.

He's bad at thinking about the future - long-term planning. He has never met another weasel, in all his sea travels.

INTERESTS (What does your character like to do? What are their hobbies?)

Play dice
Balance on things

Eat the sour core of apples
no one else likes

He always loses games of chess to the 2nd mate, but plays every other day during breaks.

He never starts fights or bar brawls but is always the 2nd one to join in.

He is terrible at dancing
He's a great fiddle player p.1
He likes collecting old postcards/ letters

p.1

CAPAJennifer
chicon

Shelly

WHAT IS
VALUE
PROP
4 USERS?USER TESTING:

Form

Slides,
STORYARC (print)

MOBILE / WEB

walk thru
wireframe↓
where nat'lly
stop?

where are they in the process?

what tasks are remaining?

- Mobile/web. Don't
overwhelm
w/ process.STARTER TEXT w/in each box.

sharing

level of complexity of prompts

how does that affect complexity of

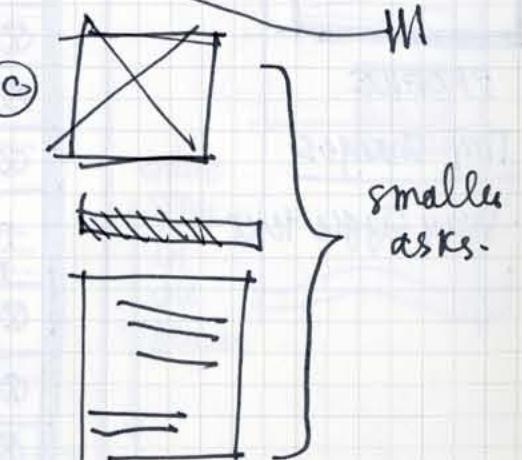
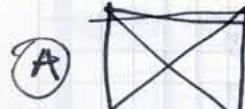
Before you sit down w/ them,

ask them resp. → ask to recruit a friend
who invites into it.Project Handout:Pass on to
students?

choose one

bias - Don't show
them the design
off the bat (oops.)

(1)

USER TESTING : GOOGLE FORM (LOW-FI PROTOTYPE)CHOOSE ACTIVITY

p. 1

#1 (BOOK MASHUP) - mix w/ fav story p. 2

#2 FREE WRITE or PROMPT (?) (REMIXING THE CLASSICS) p. 5

#3 CHARACTER (FIRST PERSON) p. 4

ORIGINAL STORY

p. 2

DESCRIBE
FAVE BOOK

PLOT

SETTING

CHARS

p. 3

give them
a PLOT
ORSETTING
CHARACTERRemix into
a story.
p. 6

p. 6

p. 6

choose a
writing length

SNIPPET (p. 7)

SCENE (p. 8)

STORY (p. 9)

SCRIPT (p. 10)

p. 7 snippet

p. 8 scene

p. 9 story

p. 10 script

scr
page.scr
page.scr
page.scr
page.scr
page.scr
page.scr
page.alt: keep
options on
one page?

Let's Tell A Story

Share your story thoughts and ideas! This is an experiment in storytelling for a grad school project. I'm interested in fostering connections between writers, illustrators and students.

With your permission, you'll see your content published on my blog at storyremix.tumblr.com. Also, a few select stories and characters will be illustrated or remixed with other narratives.

Choose A Storytelling Activity

- BOOK MASHUP: Choose your favorite book and remix it with a fresh twist.
- CHARACTER CREATOR: Make up a character and an original story.
- STORY STARTER: Decide on a plot, setting, and main character to craft your story.

[Continue >](#)



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Let's Tell A Story

CHARACTER CREATOR

Create a character who will be your narrator. When you write your story, write in the first person from the point of view of the character you've created. Include any other characters you choose below.

Character Role

Choose a role for your character. This character will be the voice of your story.

- The Protagonist: The hero/heroin or traditional main subject of the plot.
- The Sidekick: A companion or best friend of the protagonist.
- The Love Interest: The romantic interest of the protagonist.
- The Antagonist: The foil to the protagonist (usually a bad guy but doesn't have to be).
- Other:

Character Name

What's your character's name?

Character Name

What's your character's name?

Character Gender

What's your character's gender?

Female

Male

Character's History

Where is your character from? What was their childhood like? Do they have any brothers or sisters?

Character's Personality and Interests

What is your character like? What are their unique characteristics or qualities? What are their hobbies?

Character's Appearance

What does your character look like? Do they have any distinguishing features? How do they dress?

Secondary Characters

Choose at least one other character to include in your story.

- Gigi, a girl who loves to laugh and tell stories.
- Dartagnan, a boy who comes off as cold and reserved but is really just shy.
- Christofer, a royal prince who hates his boring, perfect life.
- Nina, a skateboarder who always says what's on her mind.
- Elisabeth, a soft spoken doctor who loves dogs.
- George, the typical boy next door, friendly and reliable.
- Miriam, a grandmother who loves to bake cookies.
- Dona, a fierce warrior.
- Other:

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Let's Tell A Story

WRITE: CHOOSE ONE OPTION

It's time to create your story!

Choose one option below (snippet, scene, story or script).

Title

Option 1: Snippet

Write the first or last few sentences of your story or a few lines of juicy dialogue.

Option 2: Scene

Think of one important scene in your character's story and write it out.

Option 3: Story

Write an entire story: introduce us to the characters, develop a conflict, and have your characters overcome that conflict.

Option 4: Script

Write a dialogue between one (or more) characters.

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Let's Tell A Story

* Required

FEEDBACK

Thank you for trying out this activity! This is an experiment on storytelling by Rae Milne, an interaction design grad student at School of Visual Arts in New York, NY. Learn more about Rae or see her other work at [raemilne.com](#)

If you're willing to answer more questions about this experiment, please provide your email info.

Your Name

Your Email

Your Age *

Your Gender *

 Female
 Male
 Prefer not to say

Creative Remix Permission *

Would you like to see your story posted to my blog, illustrated, or remixed with others? These remixes will be published at [storyremix.tumblr.com](#). I promise none of your content will be used for commercial purposes.

- Sure!
- No thanks.

Credit *

If your writing is posted to my blog, would you like me to credit you?

- Yes, please, tell the world who I am!
- No thanks, I'd like to remain anonymous.

[« Back](#) [Submit](#)

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100%: You made it

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*S: ‘Nindoji, never
sneer at a black
knight.’*

*N: ‘Never fight a
moonwalker.’*

Luna, Age 9

*Chandria is bubbly and
friendly. Giving up is not
in her dictionary.*

Anonymous, Age 16

*Esperonto was born on a
small rural farm on the
border town of Colorado.*

Chris, Age 35

Final Concept

DESIGN GOALS

Communication

Encourage different points-of-view

Critical Thinking

Guide the writing process

Creativity

Foster creative remix

Collaboration

Share work & attribute co-authors

Executive Summary

As mass literacy shifts from an emphasis on reading to writing, young people need ways to learn about the rights and responsibilities of authorship. Wordplay is a place for young people to make, share and remix stories. The site targets young people ages 13 to 18, and can be used both inside and outside the classroom.

Un-met Needs and User Benefits

An online community of peers is an ideal place to share writing. Unfortunately, existing online communities give young people a voice but provide limited guidance for young writers. Furthermore, they don't deal well with sticky issues of appropriation and fair use.

Tweens and teens need to express themselves creatively. They also need to practice and improve writing and communication skills. They gain additional benefits of being part of a participatory culture, becoming published authors, gaining empathy and perspective, and engaging more deeply with traditional literary practices.

Audience

Wordplay can be used both inside and outside the classroom. Wordplay's primary audience consists of tweens and teens. Wordplay is also geared towards the educators who use Wordplay in a formal educational setting. Some of the key users of Wordplay include:

The Budding Author. The Budding Author loves to read and write. Writing is a self-driven activity often done solo. Budding Authors tend to create original worlds and characters. Despite this, stories are often influenced by favorite books. Budding Authors love seeing their work published and read by a wide audience.

The Casual Scribe. The Casual Scribe enjoys crafting the occasional story. Casual writers like writing but need a boost to get started. Because of this, they're often drawn to fan fiction where they're able to extend worlds and characters in existing books or movies. Some Casual Scribes also enjoy making up scenarios about their favorite celebrities. The Casual Scribe often writes socially with friends or family members.

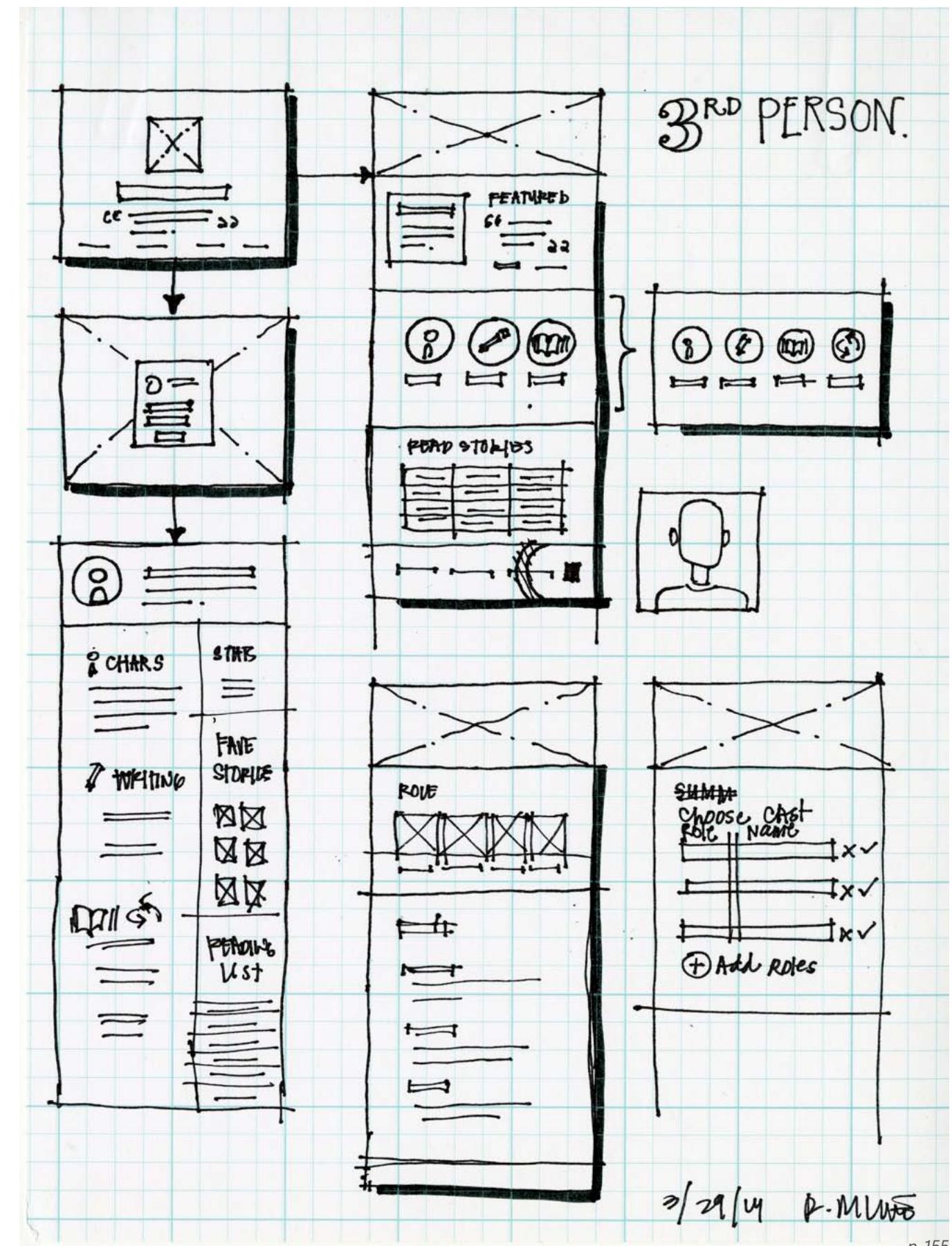
The Tech-Savvy Teacher. The Tech-Savvy Teacher wants to introduce digital literacies into more traditional lessons about literature and writing. She prefers online platforms that she can control, one with a closed community and options to personalize activities and assignments.

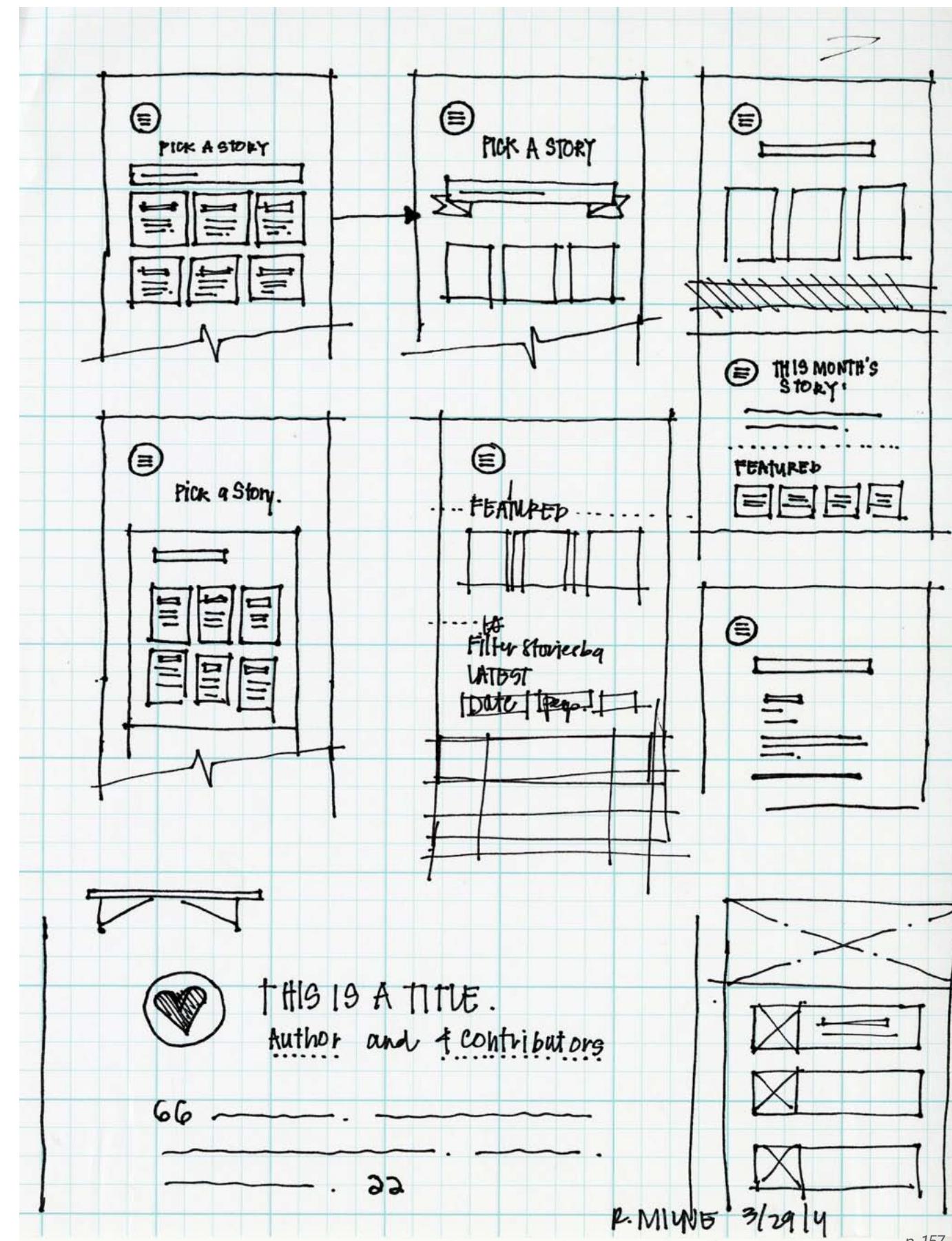
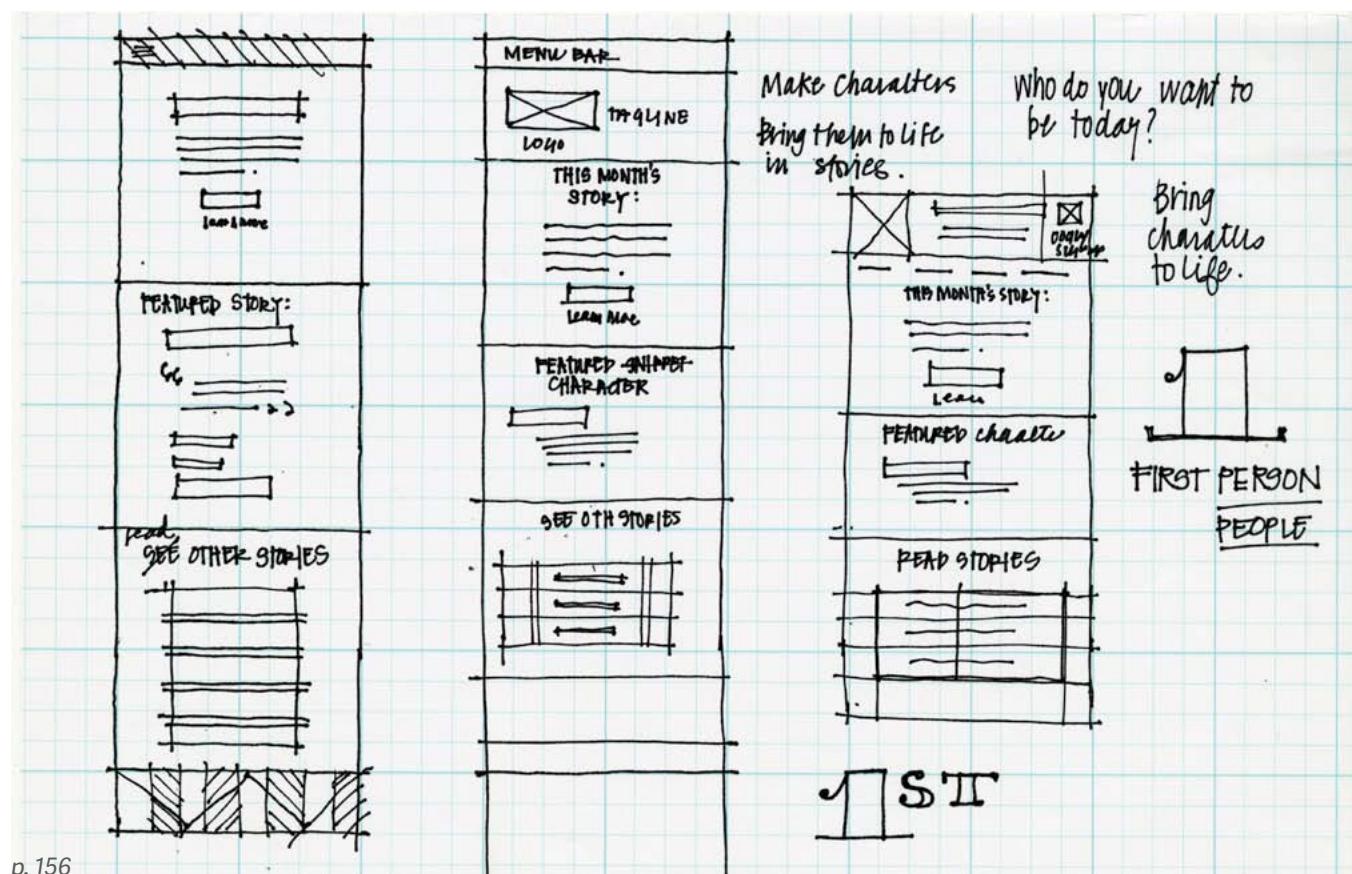
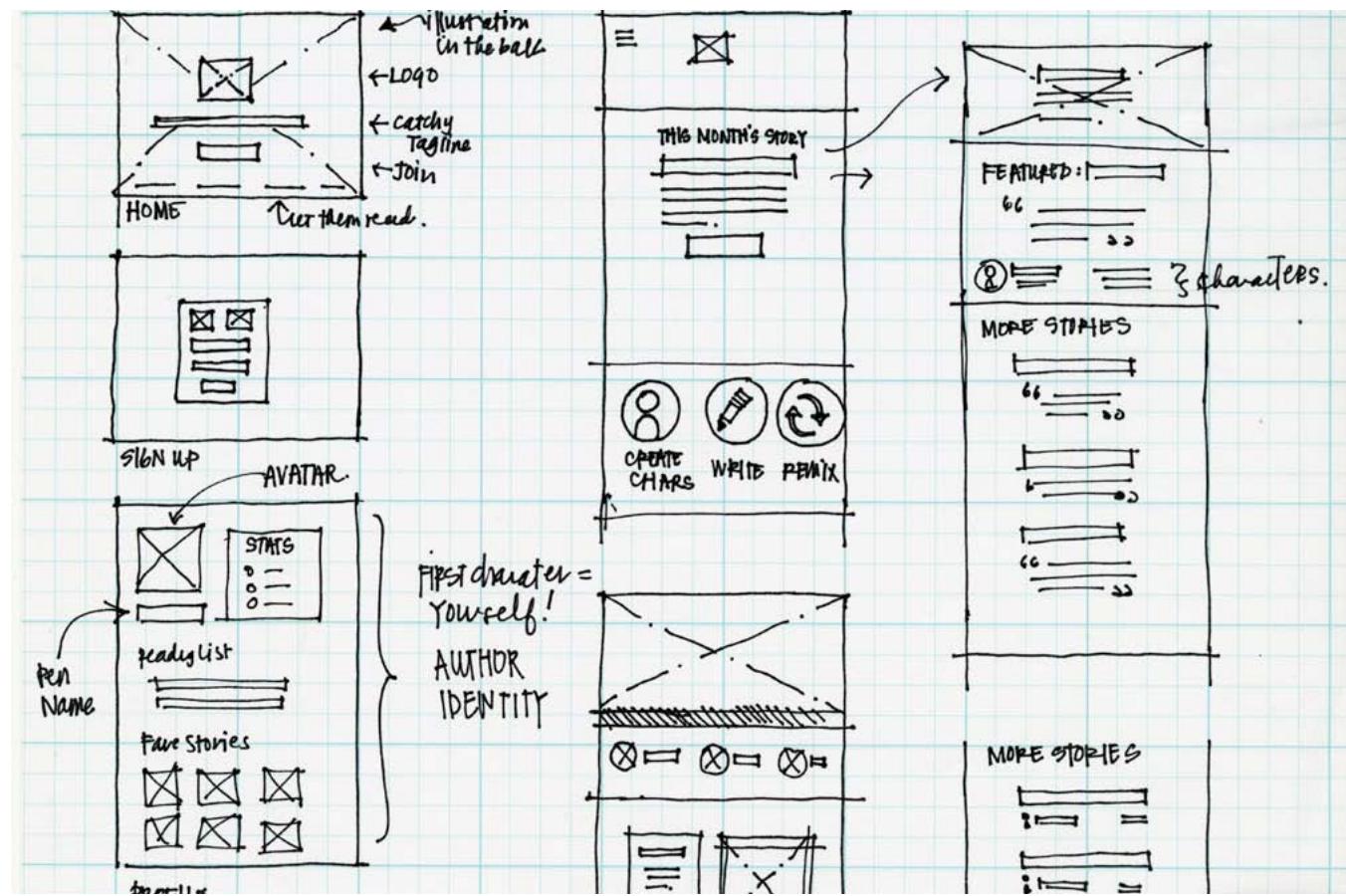
Competitive Audit

I looked at several major competitors, the primary ones being Figment, Wattpad, and Protagonize. Open writing sites do a lot of things right. They create community, and promote self-publishing. They provide a place for reading and sharing fan fiction. What they don't do is deal with sticky issues of attribution and fair use. Collaboration is limited to commenting or back-and-forth exchanges. Finally, existing sites are big, blank slates. This can be freeing but also intimidating, especially to young writers.

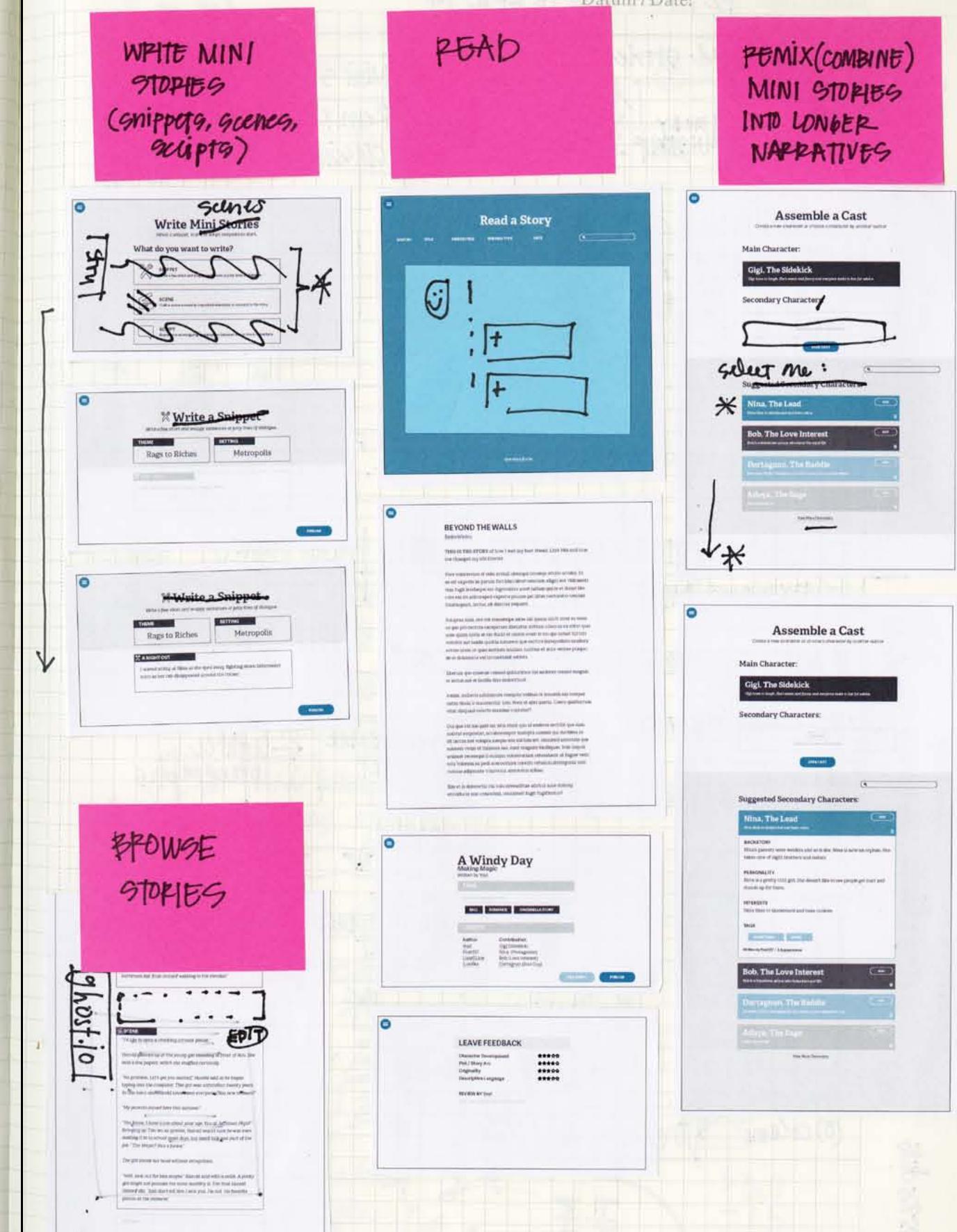
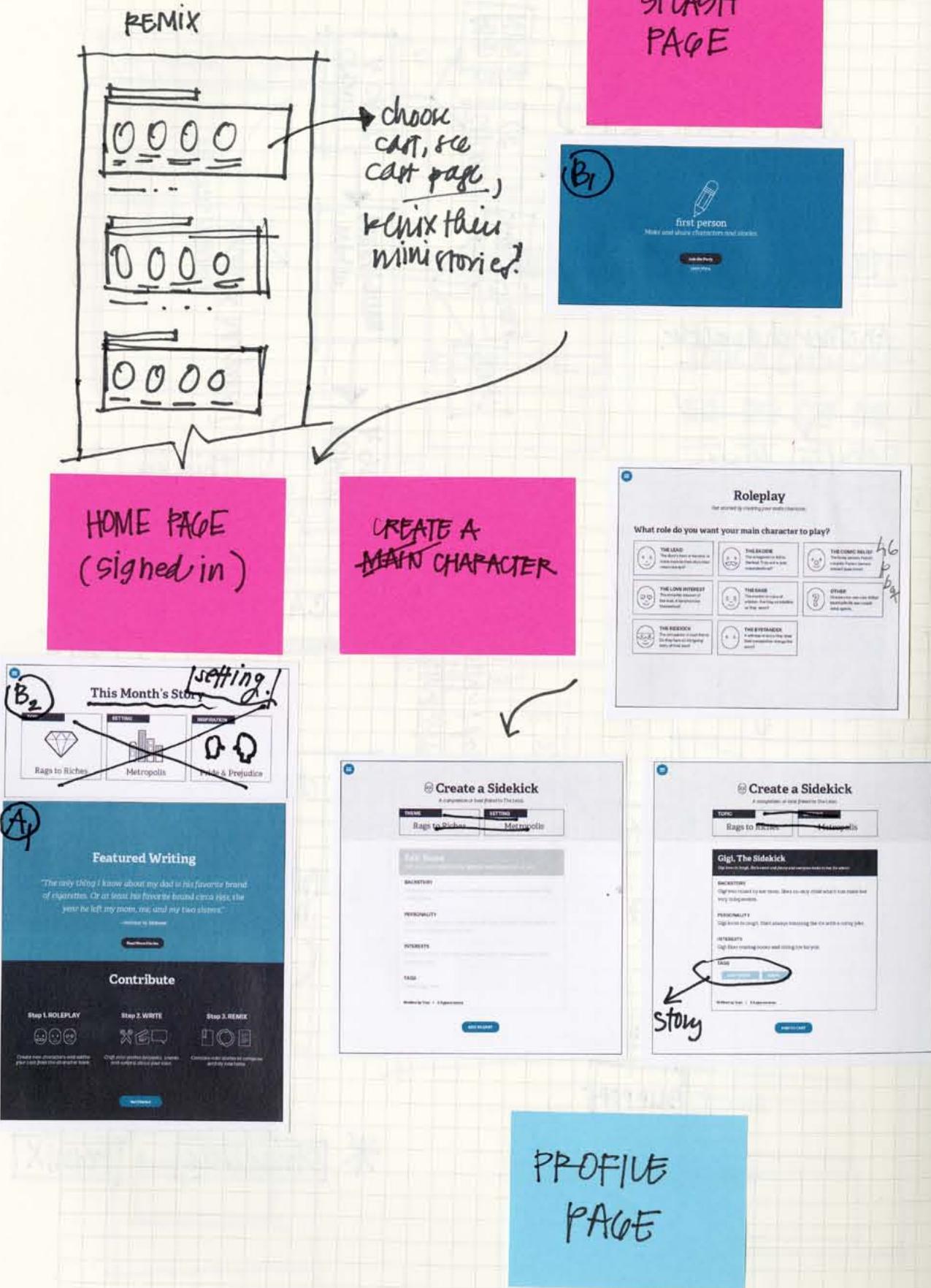
Design Development

Wherein I refine the user interface of my final concept through a series of sketches, wireframes, and design iterations.





Datum / Date: .. 10 Apr 2014 ..



Sample Code

With the help of my awesome technical advisor, Yang Yang, I prototyped an interactive prototype using HTML, CSS, JavaScript, jQuery, and jQuery UI. The following is sample code for a Character Profile page.

This code queries a link that has been clicked. Based on the character ID indicated in the query, it brings up a character profile from a JSON database.

```
<!--char_profile.html-->

<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
    <script type="text/javascript" src="//use.typekit.net/ogj3tif.js"></script>
    <script type="text/javascript">try{Typekit.load();}catch(e){}</script>

    <!-- Basic Page Needs -->
    <meta charset="utf-8">
    <title>First Person</title>
    <meta name="description" content="">
    <meta name="author" content="">

    <!-- Mobile Specific Metas -->
    <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width, initial-scale=1, maximum-scale=1">

    <!-- CSS-->
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="stylesheets/base.css">
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="stylesheets/skeleton.css">
    <link rel="stylesheet" href="stylesheets/layout.css">

</head>

<body>
    <div id="wrapper">

        <section class="explore_head">
            <div class="container">
                <h1>Character Profile</h1>
            </div>
        </section>

        <section class="char_profile">
            <div class="container">
                <div id="char_profile_box"></div>
            </div>
        </section>

        <div id="slide_menu"></div>

    </div>
    <script src=".js/vendor/jquery-1.11.0.min.js"></script>
    <script src=".js/char_profile.js"></script>
    <script src=".js/menu.js"></script>

</body>
</html>
```

```

/* char_profile.js */

(function ($) {
    function getFile(filename, callback) {
        $.getJSON(filename, function (data) {
            var results = data.results;
            callback(results);
        });
    }

    function getQueryVariable(variable) {
        var query = window.location.search.substring(1);
        var vars = query.split("&");
        for (var i=0;i<vars.length;++i) {
            var pair = vars[i].split("=");
            if(pair[0] == variable){return pair[1];}
        }
        return(false);
    }

    function displayProfile(results) {
        var charID = getQueryVariable("id");
        var numResults = results.characters.length;

        var charNum;
        var htmlString;

        for (var i = 0; i < numResults; i++) {
            if (results.characters[i].char_id === charID) {
                charNum = i;
            } else {
            }
        }

        var profile =
            "<div class='titles'><h2>" + results.characters[charNum].char_name
            + "</h2></div>"
            +"<h5>CURRENT LOCATION</h5>"
            +"<p>" + results.characters[charNum].setting_place + " "
            + results.characters[charNum].setting_time + "</p>"
            +"<p></p>"
            +"<h5>BACKSTORY</h5>"
            +"<p>" + results.characters[charNum].backstory + "</p>"
            +"<p></p>"
            +"<h5>PERSONALITY</h5>"

            + "<p>" + results.characters[charNum].personality + "</p>"
            + "<p></p>"
            + "<h5>INTERESTS</h5>"
            + "<p>" + results.characters[charNum].interests + "</p>";

        htmlString = profile;
        $('#char_profile_box').html(htmlString);
    }

    getFile("data/master_file.json", displayProfile);
})(window.jQuery);

```

Final Design

Wordplay is a place for young people to make, share and remix stories. The site targets young people ages 13 to 18. Wordplay can be used both inside and outside the classroom.

Wordplay introduces a new theme and setting every month. Writers use the common theme and setting to sketch stories in 3 different ways: roleplay, write, and remix. The activities take varying levels of time and effort.

Authors track accomplished activities on their profile. All activity over time is visible. Authors can see how much writing they've done for the current month. They can also revisit a history of published characters, stories, and recommended reading.

ROLEPLAY. Young writers begin with character development. They can create characters from a range of different perspectives. Their character could be the standard hero or heroine, or they could be the villain, the love interest, or even a mere bystander. What happens when a nefarious villain falls in love, or when an unassuming extra becomes the main attraction?

Using the chosen role as inspiration, writers create a profile for their character. They describe their backstory, personality and interests.

WRITE. Once they've created a character, authors write story sketches from their character's unique point-of-view. These sketches break down the storytelling experience into manageable chunks. Writers can choose to create a snippet, script or scene.

A *Snippet* is a short and snappy sentence or two, limited to 140 characters. The brevity of a snippet forces writers to be conscious of every word chosen.

A *Script* is a conversation between two characters. By freeing the dialogue from its supporting text, writers can focus on the conversation.

A *Scene* is a paragraph or two of a pivotal moment or event in the storyline. This gets writers thinking about the entire story and into writing a meatier piece of text.

Once a reader has written at least three story sketches, they unlock *Build Mode*, which allows them to create an entire narrative.

REMIX. Writers can continue to create characters or write story sketches. They can also choose to remix existing work, when they add to, subtract from, and edit this existing work, building on different pieces of writing to create fresh narratives.

In the remix stage, writers draw from several sources. They can use their own work, the work of their peers, work licensed under Creative Commons, and the public domain. This creates a unique model of collaboration.

Storytellers start by selecting existing story sketches by other authors. Once they've chosen a passage or two, they can rearrange these passages, edit them, and add new passages to create a new story.

Wordplay tracks all contributions to a remixed story. Like version control in code, a history of changes and collaborators is generated over time.

The stories are curated into a monthly digital magazine. Readers can explore characters and stories created within the Wordplay community. They can also read stories from the public domain, or view previous issues.

Every published story begins with a history of its authors and contributions. After they finish a story, a reader is invited to leave feedback. The feedback is structured into categories to help guide young writers in the development of their work.

THIS MONTH'S STORY THEME IS

Transformation

Our story is set in Montmartreau, a faraway galaxy in the distant future

[Learn More](#)

Featured Writing

"The only thing I know about my dad is his favorite brand of cigarettes. Or at least his favorite brand circa 1951, the year he left my mom, me, and my two sisters."

- Untitled by MsKnee

[Read More Stories](#)

Contribute



ROLEPLAY

Create a character with a unique point-of-view.



WRITE

Craft story sketches about your character.



REMIX

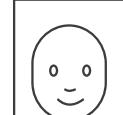
Combine and revise stories to compose entirely new tales.

[Get Started](#)



Roleplay

Get started by creating the narrator or voice of your story. What role do you want them to play?



THE HERO

Is there more to their story than meets the eye?



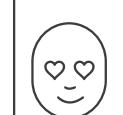
THE BADDIE

Truly evil or just misunderstood?



THE COMIC RELIEF

How do they keep things light?



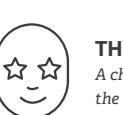
THE LOVE INTEREST

Are they heroes themselves?



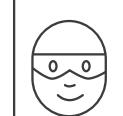
THE SAGE

The voice of wisdom. Are they really indestructible?



THE SUPERSTAR

A character who basks in the limelight.



THE SIDEKICK

Do they have an intriguing story of their own?



THE BYSTANDER

How does their perspective change the story?



OTHER

Choose your own role. Who do you want to imagine?

LEFT: Home page featuring a cycle of writing and a brief introduction on how to participate

ABOVE: Kids begin by creating a character, firstly selecting a specific role

The image shows a character creation interface titled "Create Character". At the top, there is a dark header with the title and a note: "Keep in mind this month's theme (Transformation) and setting (Metropolis)". Below the header are two buttons: "SAVE DRAFT" and "PUBLISH". A large white input box contains the following fields:

- THE SIDEKICK**
Edit Name
Edit summary! Describe the sidekick in 65 characters or less.
- CURRENT LOCATION**
Metropolis, a bustling modern city in the near future.
- BACKSTORY**
Where is your character from? What was their childhood like? Edit history here.
- PERSONALITY**
What is your character like? What are their unique characteristics or qualities?
Edit personality here.
- INTERESTS**
What does your character like to do? What are their hobbies? Edit interests here.

The image shows a character creation interface titled "Create Character". At the top, there is a dark header with the title and a note: "Keep in mind this month's theme (Transformation) and setting (Metropolis)". Below the header are two buttons: "SAVE DRAFT" and "PUBLISH". A large white input box contains the following fields:

- THE SIDEKICK**
Gigi
Gigi loves to laugh. Everyone looks to her for advice.
- CURRENT LOCATION**
Metropolis, a bustling modern city in the near future.
- BACKSTORY**
Gigi was raised by her mom. She's an only child which has made her very independent. When she was little, she met her best friend, Nina. Nina isn't always kind to Gigi but somehow, Gigi can't stop being there for her.
- PERSONALITY**
Gigi is very funny and sweet. She's always breaking the ice with a corny joke.
- INTERESTS**
Gigi likes reading books and riding her bicycle.

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT:
Character profile

Write Story Sketches

Select a snippet, scene, script or structure template to start.



SNIPPET

Write a few short and snappy sentences. [3-5 minutes]



SCRIPT

Brainstorm an intriguing conversation between two or more characters. [5-10 minutes]



SCENE

Craft a scene around an important milestone or moment in the story. [10-15 minutes]



STORY

Combine story sketches into an entire narrative. [25-30 minutes]

X Write a Snippet

Write a few short and snappy sentences or juicy lines of dialogue.

SAVE DRAFT

PUBLISH

Edit Title

Edit your short and snappy snippet here.

CHARACTER: Gigi (The Sidekick)

TAGS: #add hashtags

#TRANSFORMATION #METROPOLIS

ABOVE LEFT: Kids can pick from story sketches of varying lengths and focuses

RIGHT: The shortest story sketch is a snippet

X Write a Snippet

Write a few short and snappy sentences or juicy lines of dialogue.

SAVE DRAFT

PUBLISH

A Night Out

I waved wildly at Nina as she sped away, fighting down bittersweet tears as her cab disappeared around the corner.

CHARACTER: Gigi (The Sidekick)

TAGS: #add hashtags

#TRANSFORMATION #METROPOLIS

Write a Scene

Craft a scene around an important event or milestone in the story.

SAVE DRAFT

PUBLISH

Edit Title

Craft a scene around an important milestone or moment in the story. Perhaps you can describe the setting in detail, or a dig a little deeper into your character's backstory.

CHARACTER: Nindoji LeStrange (The Hero)

TAGS: #add hashtags

#TRANSFORMATION #MONTMARTREAU

+ ADD MORE CHARACTERS

Write a Scene

Craft a scene around an important event or milestone in the story.

SAVE DRAFT

PUBLISH

Untitled

The only thing I know about my dad is his favorite brand of cigarettes. Or, at least, his favorite brand circa 1951, the year he left my mom, me, and my two sisters.

I found all of the packs he never got to smoke in a neat cardboard box in a drawer in the garage. The one with all of the nails, assorted hammers, and one nested pair of shears. A little box with the word "November 24" scrawled on top in black marker in unrecognizable handwriting. Writing that's nothing like my mom's careful cursive, Vivian's efficient capitals, Annie's loops and curls. I've started smoking them.

They taste heavy and to the point—like his handwriting.

CHARACTER: Cynthia Wong (The Baddie)

TAGS: #add hashtags

#TRANSFORMATION #METROPOLIS

ABOVE LEFT AND RIGHT:

A scene is meatier than a snippet and lets kids dive more deeply into a story

Build a Story

Drag and drop passages to rearrange. Add new passages as needed.

SAVE DRAFT **PUBLISH**

Edit Title

Act 1: INTRODUCTION
Who is your character? Introduce them, tell us about what they do and where they're from.
.....

Act 2: CONFLICT
What happens to your character? Tell us how they get into trouble ...

EDIT

Today, Harold is at work. Harold is experiencing an especially difficult day. He's fed up with the way he's let people treat him at work. He left the house this morning.
.....

This girl was unfamiliar; she'd been in town for twenty years in this town and Harold knew most everyone. "You new in town?"
.....

Act 3: RESOLUTION
Tell us how they get out of trouble and why it happened.

ADD A NEW PASSAGE TO THIS REMIX

CHARACTERS
Harold Meyer, Brooklyn

TAGS
#hashtags
#TRANSFORMATION #METROPOLIS #BANK HEIST

ADD STORY SKETCH **ADD A CHARACTER**

The Glove
by Author123

AVERAGE RATING ★★★☆☆
126 READS

STORY HISTORY
2 characters, 5 snippets and 2 entire scenes

Date	Author	Contributions
03.02.2015	DubbTrac	Harold (Bystander)
03.07.2015	PamJoo	Brooklyn (The Baddie)
03.07.2015	PamJoo	Untitled (Scene)
04.09.2015	BeeDubb	Untitled (Script)
04.12.2015	Author123	The Glove (Remix)

HAROLD WALKED SULLENLY out of his home. It was a modest home on a modest street in Midwesternia, a small town on the outskirts of Metropolis. Harold was pensive. He'd forgotten to take the train out the night before and his train Angie had gotten him to the station. Harold had to walk home because he had no money for a taxi. Harold was thinking about how he could get a job. He had been looking for one for weeks now. He had applied to several companies but had not heard back from any of them. Harold was feeling down and out. He was considering giving up and moving to a bigger city where there would be more opportunities. But he didn't want to leave his home town. He loved living here and didn't want to leave. He was just trying to figure out what he was going to do with his life. He was a bit lost and confused. He was thinking about what he could do to make things better for himself. He was considering getting a part-time job or finding a volunteer position to help him earn some extra money. He was also thinking about getting a hobby or pursuing a passion he had一直以來都沒有時間去發展。他想試著找點時間來做些自己喜歡的事情，比如閱讀、運動或者旅行。他希望這樣能夠讓他忘掉煩惱，讓自己更開心。他還在考慮要不要去上大學或者技職院校，以便未來有更穩定的工作機會。但這一切都是後續的打算，目前他最需要的是找到一份工作，改善自己的生活條件。

REMIX **FAVORITE** **LEAVE FEEDBACK**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Author123's favorite book is **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**. Her favorite character is Hermione Granger. She likes to read, write and ride her bike.

CONTRIBUTORS
DubbTrac, BeeDubb, PamJoo

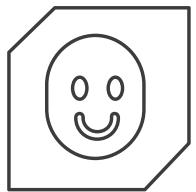
ABOVE LEFT: After enough story snippets are written, a story can be built

ABOVE: A finished story

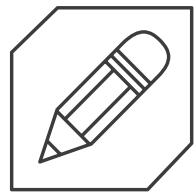


Author123

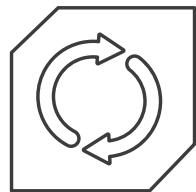
Author123's favorite book is **Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire**. Her favorite character is Hermione Granger. She likes to read, write and ride her bike.



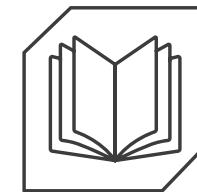
4 CHARACTERS



7 STORY SKETCHES



2 REMIXES



4 REVIEWS

This Month's Activity

April's theme is TRANSFORMATION. The story is set in METROPOLIS, a bustling city in the near future.

1



CHARACTER

2



STORY SKETCHES

0



REMIXES

0



REVIEWS

Published Characters



**THE BADDIE
Dartagnan**

Dartagnan seems cold, but he's just misunderstood.



**THE SAGE
Adoya**

Adoya knows all.

Adoya knows all.



**THE LOVE INTEREST
Esperonto**

Bob is a handsome prince who hates his royal life.

[View More Characters by Author 123](#)

Published Stories

The Quest by Author123

Together with her merry band of companions, Judith has set out in search of a mysterious, magic amulet.

Tuesday Morning by Author123

Dora: Esperonto! Where are you going so suddenly?

Esperonto: Dora, I shall miss you, but there is something I must do for my family.

Untitled by Author123

The rain poured down in a steady, relentless rhythm. John sighed, clutching at his already soaking coat. It was going to be a long night.

[View More Writing by Author 123](#)

Recommended Reading

Minefield by Rei

Jordan knew something was wrong as soon as she stepped through the door.

First Day by Anonoo1

It was the first day of school and Chandria was really excited. She hopped out of the car.

Untitled by MKhan

The crew was winding down from a joyful night of drinking, dancing, and feasting. Gru, of course, had been leading the musical efforts ...



WORDPLAY: THE APRIL 2015 ISSUE

Transformation

[VIEW CHARACTERS](#)

[EXPLORE STORIES](#)

[READ CLASSICS](#)

[BROWSE ARCHIVE](#)

View Characters

Check out the latest creations from the Wordplay community.



THE BADDIE
Dartagnan by [Author123](#)

Dartagnan seems cold, but he's just misunderstood.



THE SAGE
Mrs. Miller by [JudyB](#)

Mrs. Miller teaches chemistry by day and solves crime by night.



THE LOVE INTEREST
Donatella by [Marissa](#)

Donatella doesn't know what she wants out of life.

[View More Characters by Author 123](#)

Explore Stories

Check out the latest creations from the Wordplay community and provide feedback.



Minefield by [Rei](#)

Jordan knew something was wrong as soon as she stepped through the door. Her mother stood gripping the back of a chair, staring coldly at a mysterious ...

CONTRIBUTIONS BY [PamJoo](#), [MegKhan](#)



The Glove by [Author123](#)

Explore Classics

Get inspired by reading classic short stories, plays and novels about transformation.



Pride & Prejudice by [Jane Austen](#)

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.



The Picture of Dorian Gray by [Oscar Wilde](#)

The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.



Cindirilla by [Charles Perrault](#)

Once there was a gentleman who married, for his second wife, the proudest and most haughty woman that was ever seen.

[View More Stories](#)

Browse Archive

Check out previous issues of Wordplay.

MARCH: Revenge

FEBRUARY: Lost and Found

JANUARY: Rivalry

[View More Issues](#)

Related Projects

careerdaydotcom

For our business pitch at the end of our Strategic Innovation class with John Zapolski, Adam Norbury and I dreamed up a startup called careerdaydotcom.

Careerdaydotcom was a place for students to explore career opportunities. It featured videos by working professionals and an opportunity to connect to mentors outside the classroom. Careerdaydotcom was the seed of an idea that would influence my later design work on the project Dream See Do.

RIGHT: A couple of pages from the careerdaydotcom pitch deck

careerday.com

CAREER MOTIVATION FOR KIDS



Adam Norbury . Rachelle Milne
Strategic Innovation . Prof John Zapolski
SVA IXD . 18 December 2012

Problem



The Classroom

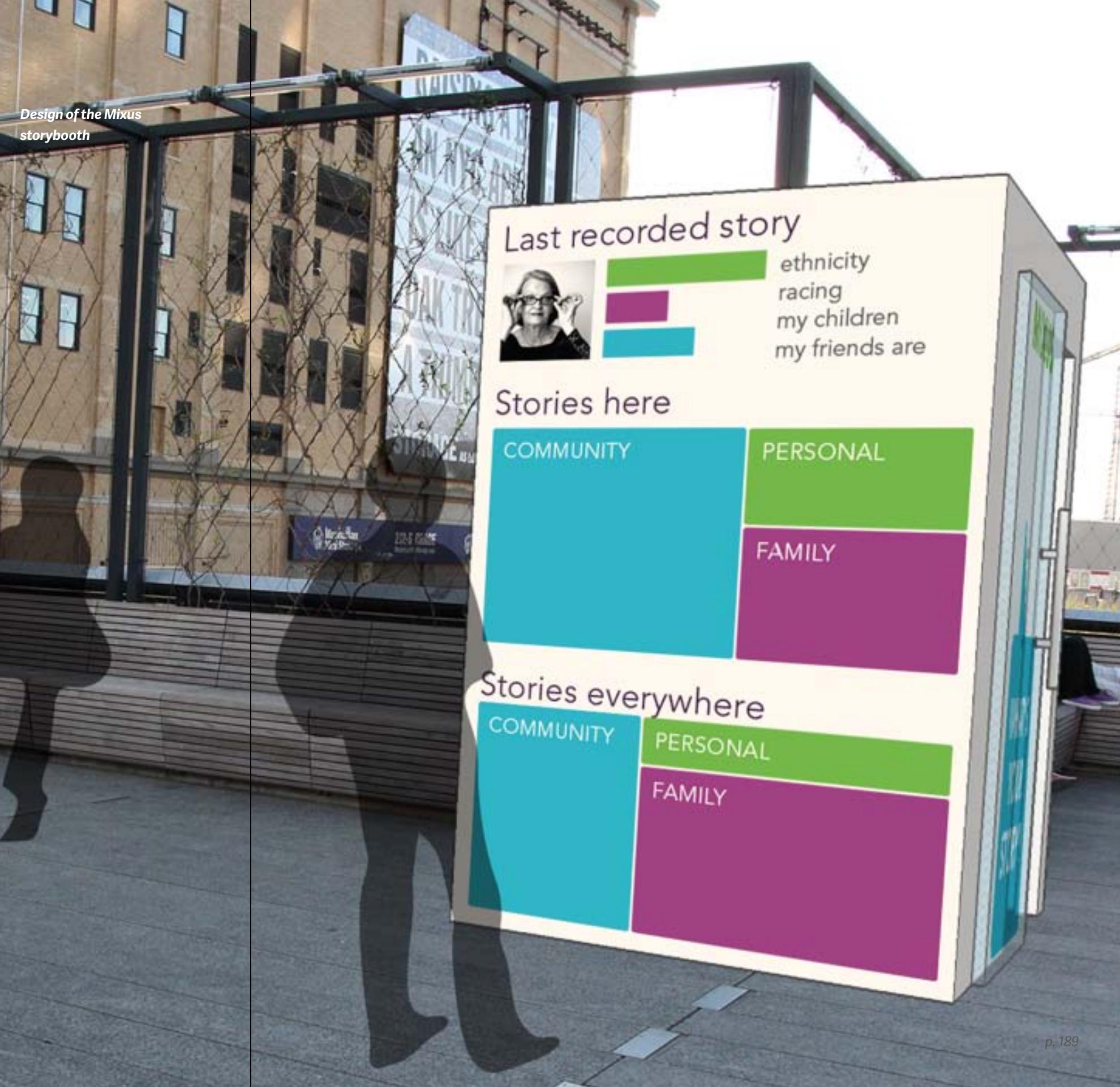


The Real World

Mixus

In a globalized world, identity has become increasingly complex, and people are self-identifying in multiple ways. MIXUS is an exploration of this complexity. We want to question people's assumptions and open their eyes to thinking about identity in new ways.

MIXUS gathers audio stories from around the world and visualizes these stories based on the words spoken in the story. Aggregated visualizations pooled together with audience responses tell a larger story about how people see themselves and their place in the world, and how the world views them back.



Mini Stories

A creative writing and storytelling application designed and developed over one weekend for the EDesignLab's K-12 Open Source Hackathon [see page xx for more information]. Mini Stories won the Youth Choice Award. Like Wordplay, Mini Stories began with character creation.

RIGHT: Screenshot from the Mini Stories app



DREAMSEEDO. Tagline here.

EXPLORE

SEARCH

ABOUT

LOGIN / SIGNUP

YOU CHOSE PROGRAMMING, TRAVEL AND BOARD GAMES.

Here are some career paths you may be interested in.

VIDEO GAME DESIGN

GAME DESIGNER

HEAD WRITER

PROGRAMMER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

RELATED INTERESTS

CARL'S PATH

CREATIVE DIRECTOR at Electronic Arts

MFA English Literature at Vassar College

LISAS PATH

CREATIVE DIRECTOR at Electronic Arts

MFA English Literature at Vassar College

JUDY'S PATH

CREATIVE DIRECTOR at Electronic Arts

MFA English Literature at Vassar College

MACY'S PATH

CREATIVE DIRECTOR at Electronic Arts

MFA English Literature at Vassar College

Expand to see full paths.

DIGITAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

WEB DESIGNER

CONTENT STRATEGIST

PROGRAMMER

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Dream See Do

LEFT: Mockup of the career exploration page

Dream See Do began its life as a weekend project for The Feast Hackathon. It's a college exploration and inspiration platform for young adults.

After winning in the Learning Category, three team members, Jeremy Berman, Josh Schwartzman and myself, continued developing Dream See Do as a side project. Jeremy and Josh have been leading the project while I've been chipping in with design as much as possible in between classes and thesis.

It's been exciting to see one of my digital designs come to life in the real world. At one point, I started to ask myself: is Dream See Do my thesis? Other classmates, my DSD partners, and friends asked the same thing. Ultimately, however, I decided to continue pursuing other interests for thesis.



Learning Circles

ABOVE LEFT: Learning Circles homepage

BELOW LEFT: Frame from the Learning Circles user journey

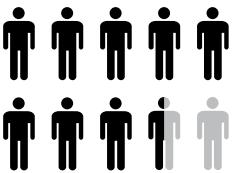
Learning Circles was the final project for our Design and the Service Experience class. Learning Circles is a framework that allows new teachers to reach out—across school and district lines—and share their experience, knowledge, and advice with one another.

RESEARCH

Working on another ed-based project in conjunction with my personal thesis allowed me to dive into more topics and do additional research.

Research Finding and Insights
in the education space: teacher retention

Design and the Service Experience
School of Visual Arts, Interaction Design
Stere Falets
Monica Wurdakar
Irene Mazzoni
Anja Stohmann
October 21, 2013



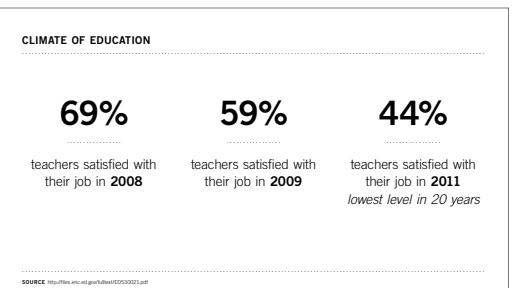
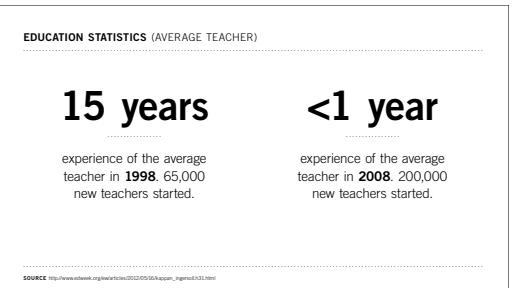
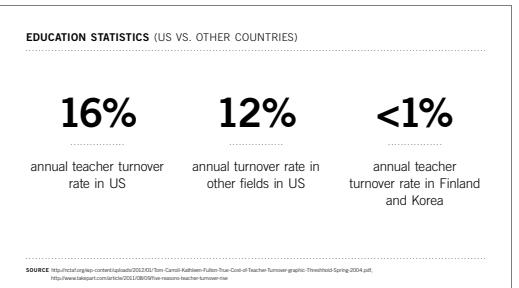
16% of teachers leave the profession each year.

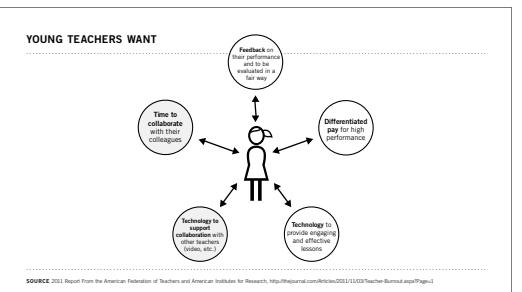
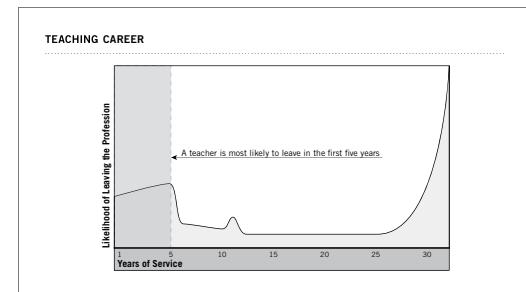
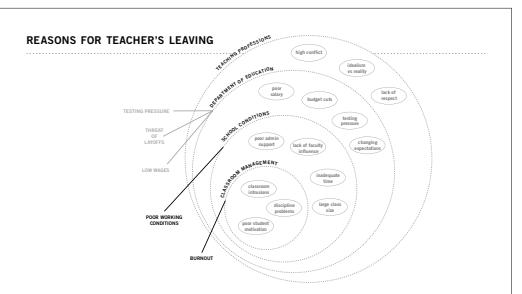
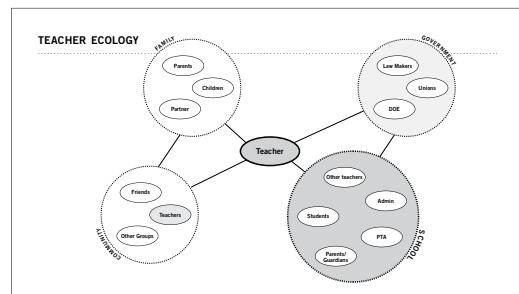


RESEARCH METHODS USED	
Primary	Secondary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with principals and teachers Survey on teacher experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Books, documentaries, and talks on education Review of existing education-related services

Education Statistics

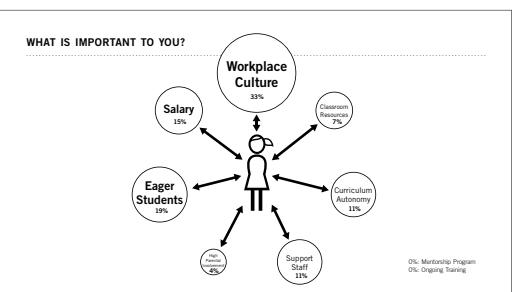
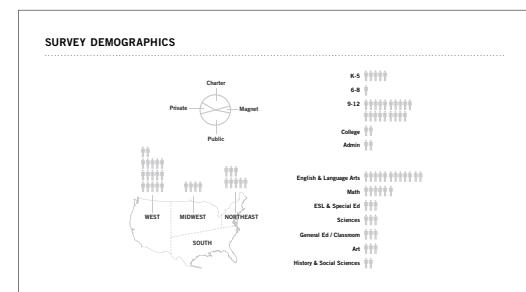
200,000	28,000	92,000
new teachers hired in 2010	left in 2011	will leave in the first 5 years
<small>SOURCE: http://www.edutopia.org/sites/edutopia.org/files/pdf/schools-out.pdf</small>		



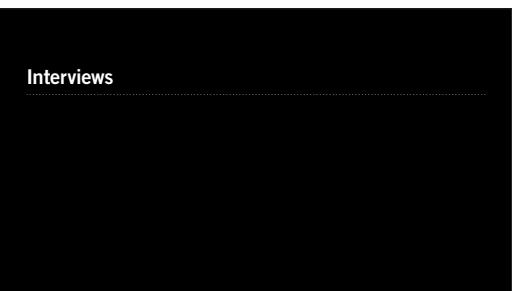


"I adore teaching, I adore the students . . . but teaching is just getting too hard to do as well as I'd like to."

- High School English Teacher on: potentially transitioning to counselling



- OTHER SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS**
- Good feedback is important
 - Poor feedback leads to unhappy teachers
 - Mentorship programs exist but implementation varies
 - Collaboration efforts are inconsistent school to school
 - Inter-school collaboration is not common



"Teaching is a high-conflict job. But unlike social workers, teachers don't have a support structure for conflict resolutions."

- Elementary School Principal on: teacher burnout

- INTERVIEWEES (PRINCIPAL)**
-
- There is little support from DOE
 - Not enough time: the school day and year are too short
 - Year 1-5 are the hardest: lack of classroom management skills + support,
 - Burn-out: clash of idealism and reality — it's never perfect
 - High-conflict job: unlike social workers, no emotional support structures
 - Stress

"One obstacle was that there was so much teacher turnover, we felt like we started from scratch each time."

- 9th Grade English Teacher on: difficulties of maintaining a collaborative teacher support group

- INTERVIEWEES (OTHER)**
-
- Mentorship is needed at beginning of teacher's career, but budget cuts cut program
 - More communication, collaboration & "weave of strengths" needed between schools
 - Principals are always putting out fires, so if you don't have a fire to put out, you're not a priority
 - When fellow teachers are equally engaged and motivated, it creates a teamwork mentality; the opposite can be isolating
 - Classroom management is not talked about enough, there's not enough training for this
 - Until you can grapple handling 30 kids, you can't do your job as a teacher

Insights and Opportunities

- INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**
- Insight:** Teaching is a high-conflict job; new teachers lack experience in classroom management
- Opportunity:** Ways to support classroom management **training** and social work

INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Insight: Teachers are stressed and burnout

Opportunity: Ways to **reduce stress** and burnout

INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Insight: New teachers lack collaboration and often feel isolated

Opportunity: Ways to support teachers and administrations to create/foster a **collaborative** work culture

INSIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Insight: Administrative support can be ineffective or lacking

Opportunity: Ways to create effective support structures for teachers

- MOVING FORWARD**
- Examine present techniques for dealing with **conflict management**
 - Explore **burnout patterns** among teaching disciplines, in localities, and over time
 - Research **analogous** collaboration solutions in other industries and countries

Collective Story

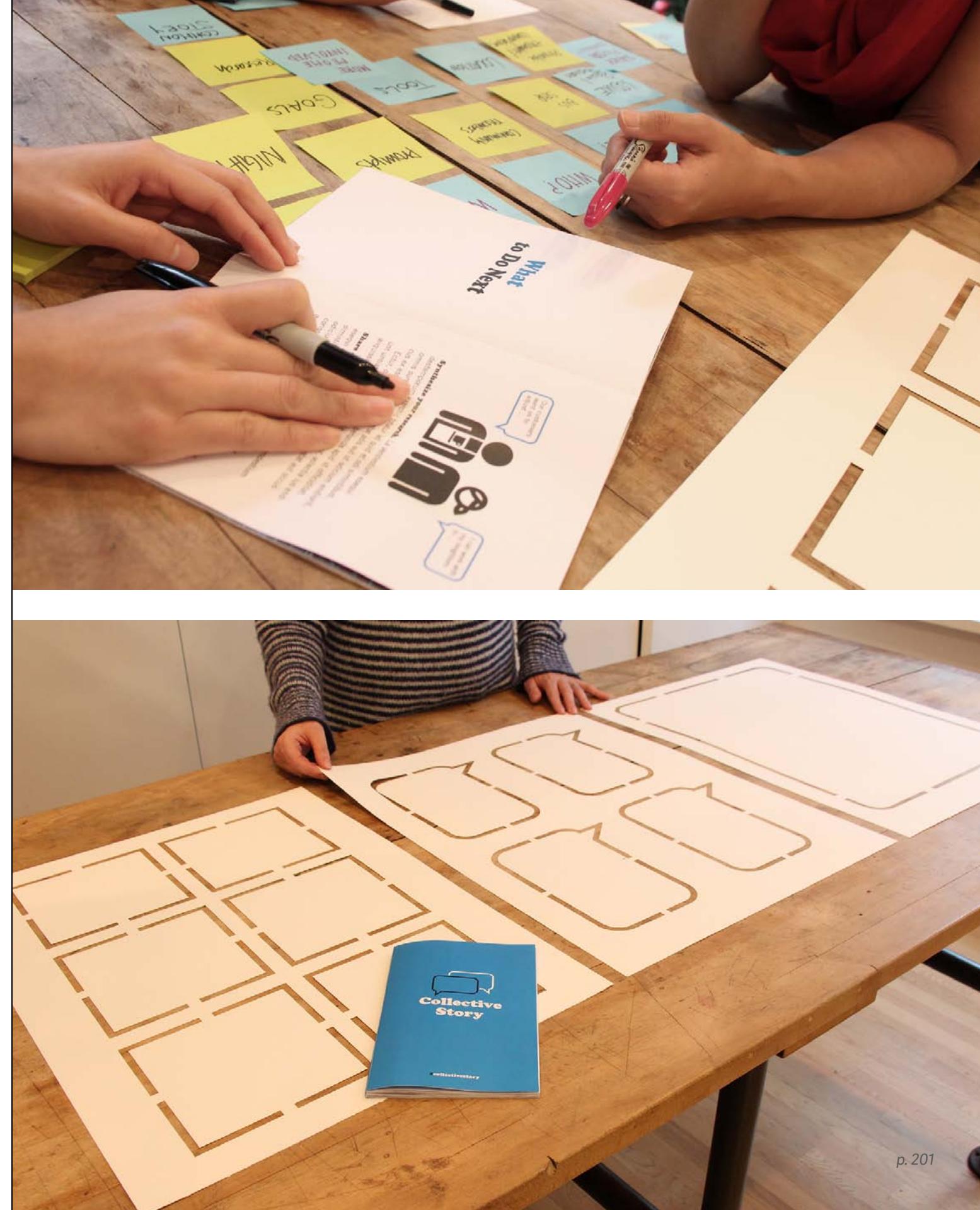
Collective Story, a Public Interfaces project strengthened my belief in the power of story to bring people together and give them a voice.

Collective Story connects people through stories with low-fidelity public space interventions. It's a toolkit for creating simple, low-fidelity public space interventions that promote civic engagement, critical thinking and intergenerational storytelling in public spaces, queues or waiting areas. The toolkit includes a how-to guidebook and stencils for easy poster-making. We piloted the project with a series of storytelling prompts distributed across New York City, garnering a strong response through social media channels like Twitter and Instagram.

Anke, Meghana, Pam and I are continuing to work on Collective Story. We recently designed an installation for Border Crossers, a nonprofit focused on race education.

ABOVE RIGHT: Collective Story toolkit guide

BELOW RIGHT: Stencils



Appendix

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[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RElUmGI5gLc>]

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the advisors, colleagues, friends, family, user testers, and organizations whose contributions to this project have been invaluable.

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Frank Bonomo	Shelly Ni
Ivan Cestero	Stephen Nickson
Charlotte Cheng	Sam Saltz
Jennifer Chicon	Josh Schwartzman
Liz Danzico, <i>Department Chair</i>	R'Jane Soria & Family
Megan Fath, <i>Thesis Faculty</i>	Anke Stohlmann
The Fernandez Family	SVA Alumni Society
Eric Forman, <i>Thesis Faculty</i>	SVA IxDers, Past & Present
Gabrielle Gayagoy	Hsing Wei, <i>Thesis Advisor</i>
Tom Harman	Beth Wernet
Willa Tracosas Hughes	Yang Yang, <i>Technical Advisor</i>
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Minsun Mini Kim	

fin.