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## Individual Assignment 2

**Project Topic:** Our project focuses on the challenges of moving to a new place and having limited resources to meet people and become familiar with an area. We also want to learn what information people would like to have access to and what features would be useful to them if we were to design a product to address these issues.

### I. Participant and Interview Context

- A. *Participant:* The participant of this interview was a 21 year old female student at JMU. She is a senior and planning on graduating in May and attending graduate school in the Fall. She will be moving away from home for the first time to attend graduate school and also moved from her hometown in New York to Virginia to attend James Madison as a freshman in 2018.
- B. *Context:* We performed the interview in Rose Library at 12pm on February 16th, 2022. The interview took around 45 mins including the introduction, explanation of the informed consent form, questions and conclusion. We were on the first floor of the library and sat in lounge chairs around a side table during the interview. The library wasn't super busy today and there were only a couple people in the same area as us. Although we were hoping to do the interview in her home, the participant felt more comfortable meeting us on campus and it ended up working out well. Since she is going to grad school, it would be typical for her to

be in the library in the middle of the day doing work in between classes. This allowed us to gain contextual evidence of how she may act during the day in graduate school at her new school and in a new area.

## **II. Session Summary**

The participant was very engaged and extroverted from the moment we sat down with her. She was excited about the interview and was eager to answer all the questions in depth. As we went through the questions, there seemed to be 3 points that the participant continuously highlighted. The first was that she is very passionate about studying Communication Sciences and Disorders and is excited about graduate school. Each time it came up in conversation, she would sit up and smile before proceeding with what she had to say. It was really heartening to see someone so passionate about what they are studying and what they plan on doing as a career. During the interview when asked about her future plans, she even pulled out her phone to show us pictures of the schools she is looking at which denotes excitement. The second thing that stood out to me during the interview was how easily she made friends when coming to college. I think most people would agree that making friends in college can be a challenge and has a major impact on someone's college experience. As she stated in several questions regarding coming to JMU, she seemed to easily find people similar to her through organizations and clubs and is still extremely close with her freshman year roommate. She also alluded to being very social when asked about her weekly activities that included friends and being around others. This quality definitely makes her a good candidate to move to a new place since she states that she easily adapts to new environments and finds ways to meet people with similar interests. These two characteristics popped out at me because both can be used to

conceptualize features to address our project problem. The final point that caught my attention was how hard the transition from college to moving back home due to COVID in the Spring of 2020 was for her. She seems to be a very structured individual who thrives when following a routine. This sudden change really seemed to off kilter her life and it took a lot of effort for her to get into a new routine at home. This was the only time during the interview that the participants mood shifted and she became more somber and soft spoken. She also looked towards the ground when she talked rather than at Matt which is opposite from what she had been doing before. This definitely speaks to humans desire to have a schedule and a calculated next move at all times. When the world finally slowed down, no one knew what to do since we live in a constant state of motion. She did say that being home with her family helped her get through these difficult times and it seems like regardless of the situation, she does like having people around and being able to socialize. The participant did remain interested and friendly throughout the whole interview process. She even asked at the end if there was anything else we would like to know and told us to reach out without hesitation if we had more questions.

### **III. Takeaways**

Based on our observations, interpretations, and impressions of the participants, we learned a lot about individuals that are outgoing and put themselves in social positions to meet people. It was very interesting to hear about her time transitioning to JMU as she didn't struggle to meet people and instantly felt connections to the organizations she joined. This response would definitely have been different from someone who is more introverted. The interview gave us insight into considering different modes or features that can be used based on if you consider yourself an introvert or extrovert. I consider

myself to be an extroverted person and related to a lot of the participants' thoughts and experiences. With this being said, I would consider including features that relate to a more social person and might forget about incorporating features from the perspective of an introverted individual. Although we can't filter our participants based on their level of sociability, it will be interesting to see if any of our other participants with a more reserved personality give us a different perspective and allow us to make our product more inclusive.

#### IV. Raw Data

*We're first going to start out with some basic questions about yourself:*

→ very excited for the interview; very outgoing and talkative even before starting

1. What is your name?
  - a. *Mary Smith - Redacted for confidentiality*
2. Where are you from?
  - a. *New York - Vague for confidentiality*
3. How old are you?
  - a. 21
4. What is your major?
  - a. Communication Sciences and Disorders
5. When are you planning to graduate?
  - a. May 2022
6. Are you intending to pursue higher education or are you working after college?
  - a. Pursuing higher education - graduate school
7. Do you already have a job or are you just planning on moving and figuring it out once you get there?
  - a. She will be attending graduate school but hasn't decided where yet, she will be studying CSD
  - b. Wants to work with stroke patients to regain their verbal skills

→ passionate about studying CSD, was very excited to tell us about what she wants to do

8. Where are you moving to?
  - a. *Options redacted for confidentiality* → still unsure of where she will be attending grad school but has gotten in to several as of today (Feb 16)
9. What are some activities you enjoy doing on weekdays/ weekends?
  - a. Week: Tanning, online shopping, reading, watching tv, and hanging out with friends
  - b. Weekend: Going out with friends to dinner / bars, self-care, going to the movies
10. How frequently do you do these things?
  - a. Every week / weekend → consistent routine
11. How far/close are you moving post grad?
  - a. Will not be living at home regardless of where she ends up going to school
  - b. Excited to continue to live on her own → likes the independence

*Next, we are going to be asking questions regarding your experiences coming to JMU and your time here:*

1. Tell me about your experience with picking a college?
  - a. Originally she wanted a big school → JMU was the smallest school
  - b. Didn't get into the bigger schools she wanted
  - c. First college she got into to
  - d. Visited with her two best friends from home → made the campus feel special

→ was very confident in her decision
2. Tell me about your experience picking a freshman year roommate?
  - a. From the same area as her
  - b. Met on facebook through a mutual friend
2. How was your relationship with this roommate?
  - a. Really good, they are still best friends now
  - b. Spends time with her weekly

3. Can you describe your experience making your initial friends at JMU?
  - a. Fairly easy, went through recruitment to meet people
  - b. She is very outgoing and personable
  - c. She felt connected to the girls in her pledge class instantly
4. What emotions do you associate with this experience?
  - a. She was excited during the process
  - b. Wanted to make new friends and fully immerse herself in the college experience
5. Did you come to JMU as a freshman or transfer student from another university?
  - a. Came as a freshman
6. What groups or organizations have you been a part of during your time at JMU?
  - a. NYSSLA → speech club at jmu for her major
  - b. Sigma Kappa → social sorority
  - c. Spanish Club → spanish minor (bilingual)
7. How did you come about joining these organizations?
  - a. Through advertising on campus
  - b. People in her major / teachers advising her to join things

*Next, we will be asking questions regarding your experiences moving:*

1. How many times have you moved in your life?
  - a. Once
2. Where have you moved to/from?
  - a. Moved within the same town just to a new house
3. Did you move alone or with people such as your family or significant other?
  - a. Moved with her family to a new house
4. What information would you want to know before deciding to move to a given place?
  - a. If the area is safe, clean, easy to get around and how the people are
5. Have you used resources (broad) when moving to a new place before?
  - a. Used facebook to find a roommate for college but other than that, no
6. Could you describe how useful this resource was?

- a. Used messenger to talk to a couple different girls as well as JMU Class of 2022 girls group to find people with similar interests to talk to about potentially being a roommate
- 7. How did you find out about the places you now enjoy in the area?
  - a. Through family and friends
- 8. Do you feel you could've been better prepared with more resources with your previous relocation?
  - a. No, she felt ready to come and had everything she needed
- 9. Previously, how have you determined where you will be living?
  - a. Lives with her parents so wherever her parents lived, she lived there

*Lastly, we are going to ask you a couple reflective questions about your personality and how it may affect your experiences moving to new places:*

- 1. What were your biggest concerns before moving to 'new place'?
  - a. Not having friends → really good friend group at home
  - b. Not being with her family → also close with her family
- 2. Did they end up continuing once you arrived or were they quickly alleviated?
  - a. Quickly alleviated → found friends and a roommate easily
- 3. Were you ready and eager to relocate prior to moving to 'new place'?
  - a. Yes, she was excited about her move to college and wasn't very nervous
- 4. How long do you feel like it takes you to adjust to a new place?
  - a. A month or two of consistent immersion
- 5. Will you describe moments that stand out to you as important looking back at your first few days at 'new place'?
  - a. Moving into her dorm
  - b. Philanthropy round during recruitment → connected with SK because her grandmother had alzheimers
- 6. Can you tell me about a time that you felt overwhelmed from a big change (moving, going to college, etc.)
  - a. Transitioning from living in her sorority house to moving home because of covid; big shift in lifestyle

- b. Was very overwhelmed in trying to restructure her life at home
- 7. What were some of the things that alleviated this feeling?
  - a. Being home with her family and being safe at home made her feel better
  - b. Good support system at home to finish the semester

***Photos:***

Below are photos of the space where the interview was conducted including the seating arrangement as well as the surrounding areas to show what her surroundings may be like on a typical day in the library during graduate school. I also included the two photos she showed us during the interview of the schools she may be attending which highlights her excitement to continue her higher education.





