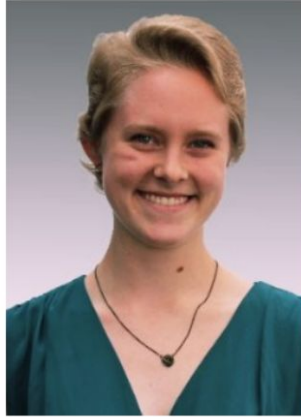


ASSIGNMENT 2: POVs, Experience Prototyping

Introduction



Po T.



Bonnie N.



Jenny K.



Grace H.

Problem Domain

We are interested in **educating empathy**.

Initial POV

This week, we pivoted to focus on empathy, using a key POV from a previous interview.

We met ... Sandy, mother, soccer coach.

We were amazed to realize ... her love for her daughter inspired her to become a soccer coach, despite never having played before.

It would be game changing to ... leverage the emotional and interpersonal connections we have with others to inspire us to venture outside our comfort zone and learn new things.

Needfinding Results

To expand our knowledge, we conducted more needfinding interviews.



Katie

Katie is a freshman at Stanford on the swim team. We asked her about her own identity, her friends' identities, and her experience having conversations about these topics.

We were struck that while she considered Stanford an open space for deep conversations, she immediately identified many questions (about gender non-conformity) she always wanted to ask but never did.



Han

Han is an international student from China whom we met at the Orlando airport. We talked about how his cultural identity created misunderstandings within his interpersonal relationships in America.

We were interested in learning how Han tried communicating cultural differences to his American friends, and the obstacles he encountered while attempting to do so.



Christian

Christian is a junior at LACES, a high school in inner-city Los Angeles. We discussed his strong ties to the Hispanic community and the racial dynamics among his school circles.

We were most struck by the instances of white supremacy, racism, and rigid gender conformity he witnesses among some of his classmates, and how he realized his own racist practices towards others and now strives to create more interracial and inclusive social environments.

Revised POVs

From our new needfinding interviews, we condensed our results into POVs and selected our best three.

POV 1

We met Christian, a high-school junior in inner-city Los Angeles. We were amazed to learn he would use the N-word in middle school because it was standard among his friend group but was eventually told off by an African American friend, and now he still feels regret for his cultural insensitivity. It would be game-changing to have a safe space for teens to ask questions and learn about taboo topics that are not otherwise addressed in their regular social groups.

How might we...

- Encourage cross-identity friend group formation in school settings?
- Help instructors facilitate conversations around these topics?

- Encourage more students to confront their peers about these issues without fear of judgment?

POV 2

We met Han, an Chinese international student. We were amazed to know that he smokes to hang out with his international friends' mainland Chinese culture, but is negatively judged by some American counterparts. It would be game-changing to communicate cultural differences that explain his behavior to people who don't understand.

How might we...

- Encourage people to question their assumptions about people who are different from them?
- Make it easier for people to respectfully engage others in conversation about behavior they don't understand?
- Make a safe space for international students, not necessarily fluent in English, to talk about their cultures and norms?

POV 3

We met Katie, a Catholic freshman at Stanford University on the swim team. We were amazed to learn that she didn't have a clear idea of what her close friends believed or their world views. It would be game-changing to make this a natural thing to know about your friends.

How might we...

- Allow friends who merely hang out together to enter more substantial conversation topics?
- Encourage friends to actively listen rather than judge or argue about positions they don't agree with?
- Let other parties know that we're open to them asking sensitive questions, and let other parties know that we would like to ask them sensitive questions?

Best HMWs and Solutions

From our HMWs, we selected what we believed to be the three most compelling, and then selected the best solution from our brainstorm for each.

HMW/Solution 1

How might we... Encourage cross-identity friend group formation in school settings?
(From POV 1, Christian)

Solution: A way to signal and see who in your dining hall is currently sitting alone and interested in having a conversation. This would be a subtle way to meet new people over meals.

HMW/Solution 2

How might we... Create spaces for safe conversations--where people can ask questions about others without worrying about offending them, and without actually offending them?
(From POV 3, Katie)

Solution: A way to pick topics/identities you feel comfortable discussing and allow existing (Facebook) friends to anonymously submit questions for you to start a conversation.

HMW/Solution 3

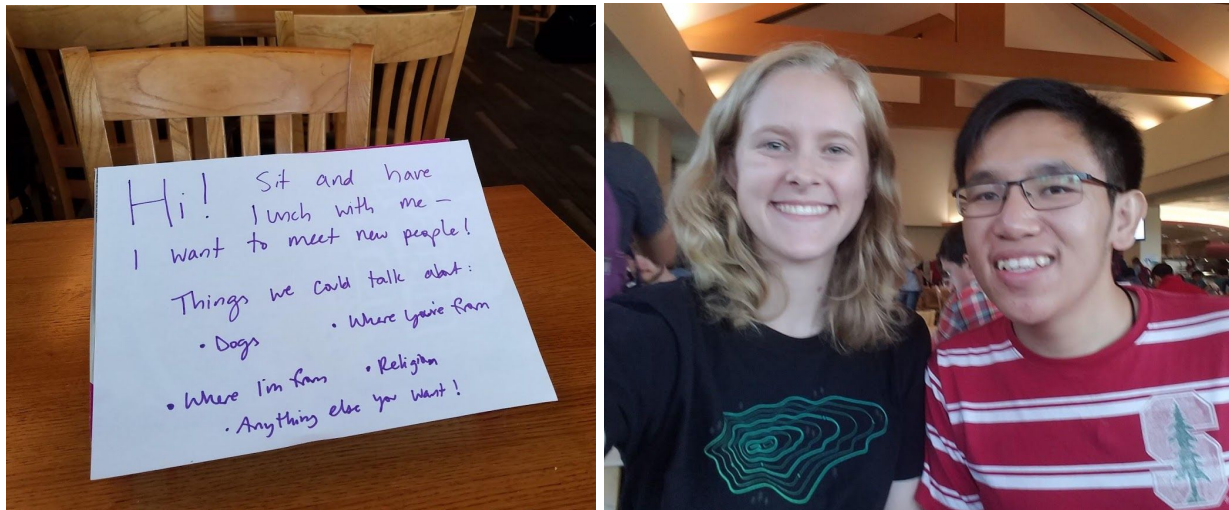
How might we... Allow friends who merely hang out together to enter more substantial and meaningful conversation topics?
(From POV 3, Katie)

Solution: Anonymous question voting party game: individually post questions, which others can then anonymously upvote and decide if it's something they want to talk about. Often, people feel like they're the only one who feels or thinks a certain way but this is a good way of breaking that silence.

Experience Prototypes

Experience Prototype 1: Meal Buddy Sign

Assumption tested: Students want to meet new people over a meal, and they are willing to approach strangers if the strangers are open to meeting them.



The Meal Buddy Sign, and Bonnie and James

Bonnie sat in Arrillaga Dining with a sign that said, “Hi! Sit and have lunch with me - I want to meet new people!”, with some conversation topics(left). After less than five minutes, James approached her(right). Before he approached, he had sat down a table away, seen the sign, seemed to consider going over, and finally decided to join her.

Bonnie learned about his experience growing up in a community of mostly Vietnamese immigrants and refugees, which she would not have learned from her normal friend group. Although it was slightly embarrassing to sit alone with this sign, the experience was enjoyable overall. From James’ feedback, we learned that putting suggested conversation topics was maybe too much to test for this prototype.

This test was somewhat successful in testing our assumptions. Although we didn’t have time to collect more data points, the ease of attracting James demonstrated that there are people willing to approach and meet a stranger when given an invitation. It was also easy to have an interesting and informative conversation about topics not typical to one’s friend group, but our prototype does not enforce this. New assumptions emerged that people are both willing to approach people different from them and to have more than simply shallow conversations.

Assumption tested: People want to learn about their friends' experiences/identities if they know their friends are open to talking about them, and anonymity helps facilitate those conversations.

Bonnie's Facebook Post and Survey Results

(Since there were many similar questions, if you don't see your specific question's wording here, I probably grouped it with another one!)

If there's no God, what happened before the big bang?

Po, Jenny, and Bonnie created anonymous AMA surveys on certain topics with Google Forms and posted them on Facebook. Within 18 hours, everyone got a range of responses.

For Bonnie, the test worked well because many people responded with great questions. Five friends reached out to start deeper conversations, two of whom she never

would have had this conversation with. For Po, not only did she receive a range of open-ended and thought-provoking questions, but she also received some anonymously submitted words of love and support. For Jenny, it did not work as well because she got more random questions that were not necessarily as meaningful. From this we learned that language in the survey introduction is very important - Bonnie and Po had specific topics and got impactful questions, while Jenny's had multiple focus points, so the questions were not as interesting.

The number of responses in this short time showed that people are interested in learning more about their friends' unique experiences, once they overcome the uncertainty of a friend's openness in talking about their experiences. Since not everyone who asked questions began chatting publicly, anonymity did play a role. In the survey, users could also tell us any additional thoughts they had, and one person had a comment that heavily signaled they would not have been comfortable asking their question non-anonymously.

A new assumption we did not have time to test is that users would be comfortable answering questions, since the three people who answered questions are on this development team. Also, we realize that anonymity on the internet opens up other issues that we would mitigate with future design choices.

Experience Prototype 3: Hidden Questions

Assumption tested: This kind of game is fun as well as impactful. Also, the baseline of yes/no questions actually encourages deeper discussion.



The group of Freshman play the Hidden Questions game

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Have you ever told racial / cultural / sexual jokes?2. Have you ever tried to lose your weight?3. Do you feel confident about your major?4. Have you cried this month?5. Have you ever truly been in love?6. Have you ever lived in another state or country?

The questions we used for Hidden Questions

We generated yes/no questions similar to those asked in a dorm-building activity called “Crossing the Line”, where students can honestly discuss sensitive topics. With those written on paper, the players voted on which questions they wanted to discuss. We provided players with post-it notes to mark with an “O” to answer “yes”, and an “X” to answer “no”, so the answers would be anonymous. Then they could discuss the topic further.

We approached a group of freshmen, who were eager to play our game. We explained the rules, and let them play. They picked the question “Have you ever lived in another state or country?” They voted with the post-its, and began talking about their experiences.

Our participants (and another student passing by) were definitely interested in the game and engaged by the questions. Although they picked the least contentious question, they began discussing the merits of other questions afterwards, leading to some jokes and newfound insights about their views on love, majors, etc. However, they did not start any substantially deep conversations. They said they knew each other pretty well before the game, so they did not think they became closer by discussing the questions. They explained they had purposely picked the least sensitive question.

The assumption that the game is fun was valid. We were able to get attention from students instantly. However, the game did not initiate deeper conversation. Rather than using friends who already know each other, it may be more useful to use the game among strangers.

In Conclusion...

Our Facebook AMA prototype was the most successful in achieving our desired solution. For the other two prototypes and tests we did not have as much time as we wanted to plan and prepare, and we think that was a big factor in the level of their success. But we learned a lot from the experience of testing them out!

Appendix

Further interviews

We collected two more interviews during our needfinding process, and while we didn't use the results directly, we found them very interesting and they helped inform some of our thinking, and we hope to use the insights we gained from them moving forward.



Alice

Alice is a senior at the University of Pennsylvania. When we interviewed her, we entered into an open and honest discussion of how ethnic and racial identity influenced her social interactions and environment.

We were surprised by her honesty regarding how her friend groups tended to be formed with people similar to her, as well as her experiences with how social groups were formed along ethnic lines during her internship.



Dean Jane Shaw

Dean Jane Shaw is the dean of religious life, and a professor of religious studies here at Stanford. She currently teaches the Thinking Matters class on Empathy, and in the past has worked on various projects connecting empathy and the arts.

We gained a valuable perspective from Dean Shaw regarding her views on how empathy factored in the human experience, and the different exercises she conducted in her Empathy thinking matters.