

A close-up photograph of a bee pollinating a yellow flower with pink centers against a dark background. The bee is positioned on the left, facing right, with its wings partially visible. The flower is in the foreground, showing its intricate stamens and petals.

PRODUCTIVITY

Assignment 1

OUR TEAM



Gil S.



Bennie N.

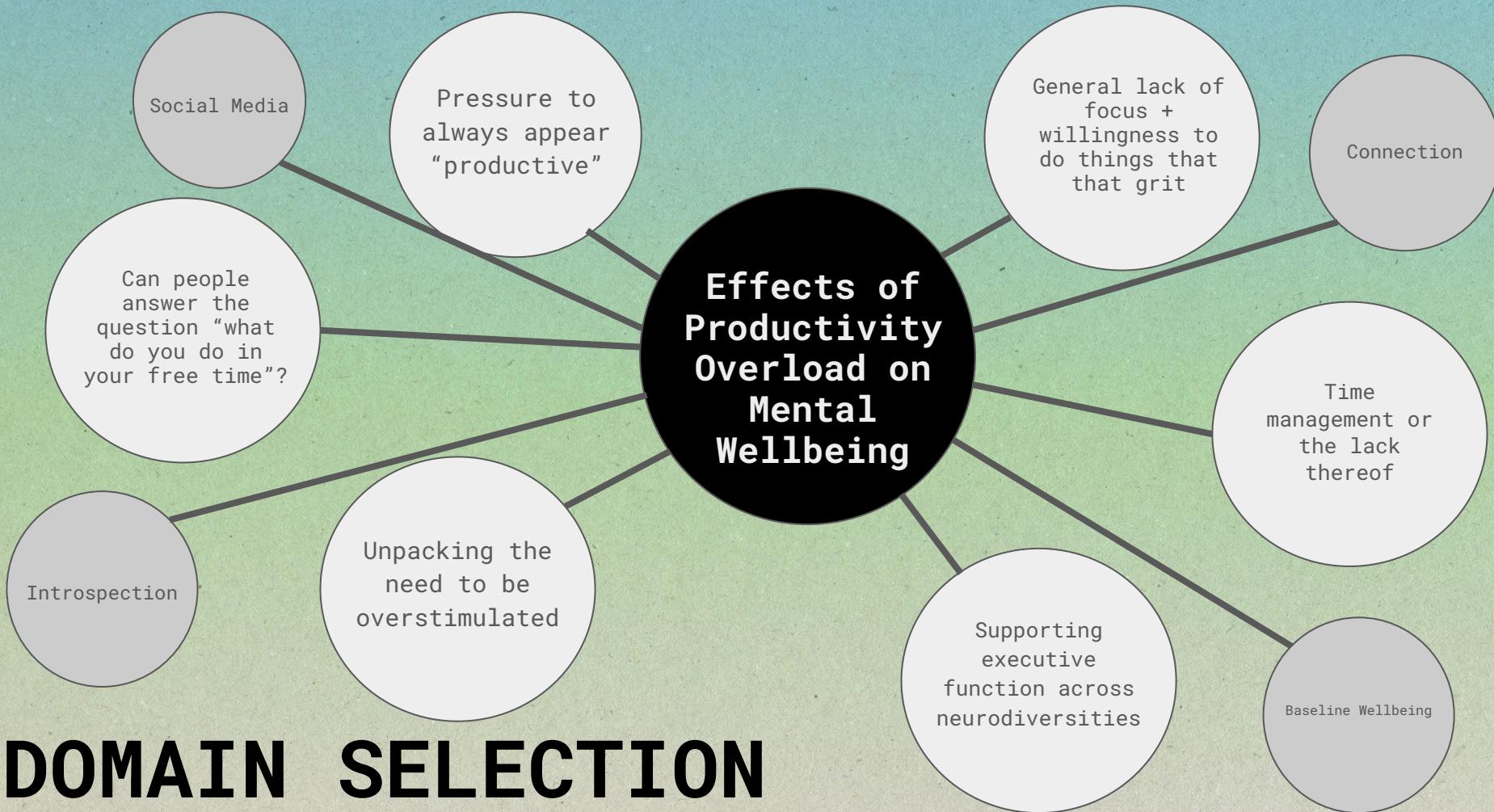


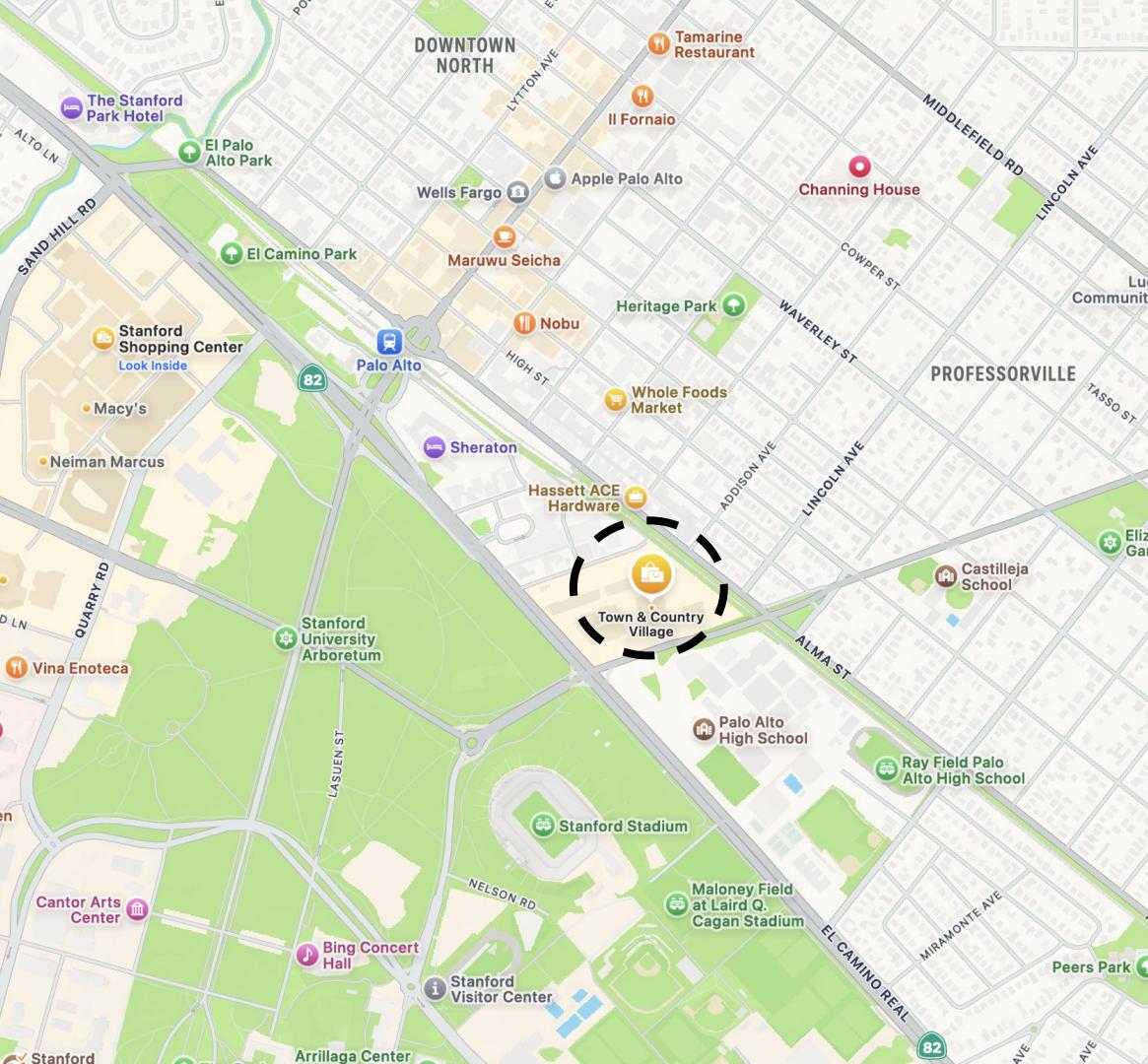
Gabriella U.



Amesha B.

DOMAIN SELECTION





FINDING PARTICIPANTS

We went to **Town & Country** on two separate sessions (**1 on Sunday** and **1 on Wednesday**). Appropriate location because:

- Next to Palo Alto High School, Stanford, and Tech Giants Headquarter (**Concentrated Ecosystem**)
- Community surrounded by tech resources, but still a **variety of access gaps**
- Urban-Suburban Blend

Sought out **any individual who appeared to be taking a break/had time to talk**, not just for our sake, but for the sake of evaluating that break against their context of productivity. **Productivity is not specific to one kind of person.**

WHO WE SPOKE TO



JC, 17
*Palo Alto HS Senior
Student-Athlete*



Darcy, 59
*Mother of
Neurodivergent
Children*



Gabby, 20
Stanford Sophomore



Omar, mid-50s
Cancer Researcher



Barry, 19
CSU Monterey Sophomore



Seth, 15
*Palo Alto HS Sophomore
Student-Athlete*



Jamie, 43
*Retired Colombian
Military, DoorDash*

Primary Languages:

- English
- Spanish

Primary Tasks:

- High school homework & athletics
- College schoolwork
- Family & Home Care
- Research
- 16 hour-a-day delivery work

Geographies of Origin:

- Bay Area
- Historical Palestine
- Colombia
- Michigan
- Ecuador/Lebanon

Neurotypes (Not discussed in all interviews):

- ADHD
- Neurotypical

No compensation was offered, but we promised to be brief (25-30 min)

Education Levels:

- Pre High school
- Diploma to doctoral graduate

Variety of socioeconomic class deduced from primary tasks and location

We looked for a variety of interviewees across race, age, profession, and gender.

Various Interview Methods

- **Video Recorded Interviews In English** (2 w/ Gabriella as interviewer & Amesha as notetaker)
- **Video Recorded Interview in Spanish** (1 Gil as interviewer and Bennie as notetaker)
- **Audio Recorded Interviews in English** (1 Bennie as interviewer and Gil as notetaker)
- **Computer Written Interviews in English** (2 w/ Gabriella as interviewer & Amesha as notetaker)
- **Handwritten Interviews in English** (2 Bennie as interviewer and Gil as notetaker)

Describe the most productive/unproductive person you know

What tools or strategies do you use to stay on track?

What does "being productive" mean to you?

Walk me through your day

WE ASKED THEM:

Tell me about a time when you felt unproductive

General:

- Can you tell me a little about yourself?
- What does a typical day look like for you?
- How do you usually spend your free time?
- When do you feel most energized or motivated? Least?
- Are there any habits or routines you consider important in your life?

Productivity Specific:

- When you think about productivity, what comes to mind?
- Describe the most productive/unproductive person.
- What does productivity mean to you?
- When do you struggle to "be productive"?
- Pressure to be productive
 - How do you feel if you're not "productive"?
 - Can you describe a moment where you felt unproductive?
 - How do you define being unproductive vs. wasting time?
- Overstimulation / multitasking
 - What are things you usually do when trying to complete tasks?
 - Do you usually
 - What kind of work do you find yourself doing regularly? What does completing this work look like for you?
- Prioritization
 - Describe how you prioritize tasks?
- Executive function / tools
 - Do you use any tools (apps, journals, planners, habit trackers) to help you complete/keep track of tasks? How do they help or not help?
 - Have you ever tried to change your habits or routines? What worked and what didn't?
 - In which environments do you get the most done?
- Emotional layer
 - What emotions come up when you fall behind or don't meet your own expectations?

INTERVIEW RESULTS



- Synthesizing the data
- Creating findings from observations
- Analyzing findings to create insights
- Using insights to create needs

IDENTIFYING EXTREMES

Scale: How reliant users are on organizational tools/systems for productivity



JC



Gabby



Barry



Darcy



Seth



Jamie



Omar

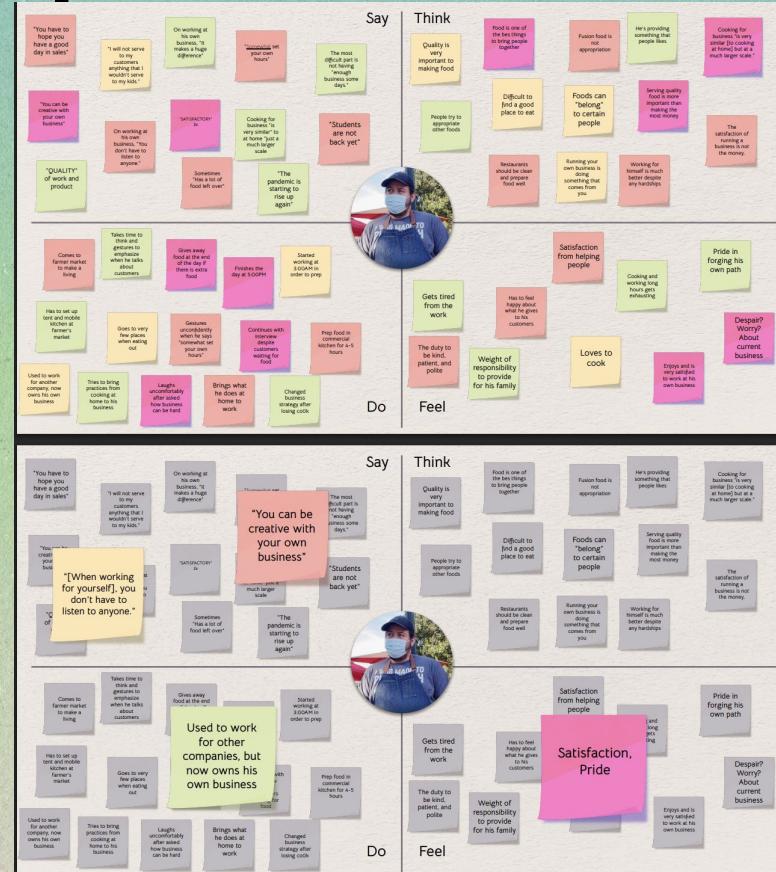
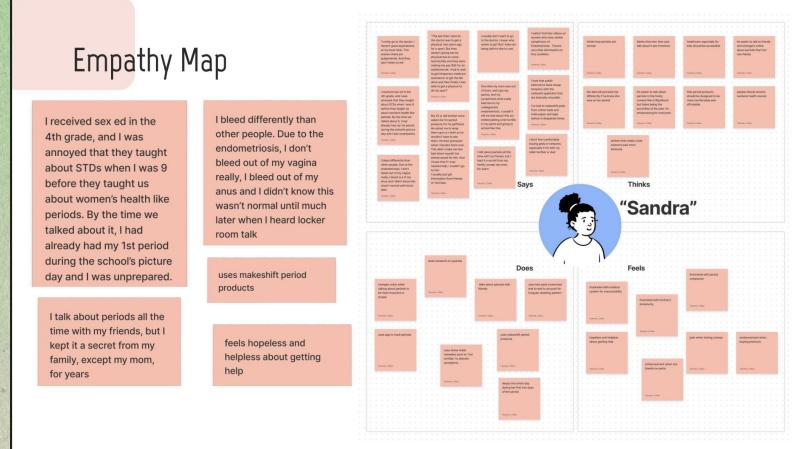
HIGH: Extreme reliance on tools/routine, and other forms of predetermined structure

AVERAGE: Utilizes tools/systems, but tends to rely on intuition/feel

LOW: Relies on habit/discipline over structure

EMPATHY MAP (template slide)

Map + standout notes





"You are not always going to be working, so things like playing video games is not unproductive because that's something that brings you joy."

JC

17, Senior @ Palo Alto HS, Student Athlete

EMPATHY MAP

"If you're not gonna be efficient, then [your time] should be time that you do things that bring you joy and happiness."

Gil Silva

sighs and kind of winces when he talks about how he spends his free time on tiktok

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"[My dad] has failed 1000 times why should I fail too?"

Productivity is about maximizing time that betters you. (emphasis on work but including time for joy)

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Casey

SAY

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"If you're not gonna be efficient, then [your time] should be time that you do things that bring you joy and happiness."

Gil Silva

"I got half off on my Lit presentation because I didn't include a summary which was just in the instructions and I couldn't read it"

amembaajara

"If I were to sit down and play video games I wouldn't consider that unproductive... because I'm kind of in my own world and it's something I enjoy to do"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"When you have a goal and you can see the end of that goal, it makes it possible...otherwise you don't know what you're running for"

amembaajara

"I don't use my phone an hour before bed and an hour after I wake up. I sleep better and those 8 hours help me have better practices" (brooke started by her father)

amembaajara

"I talked to it [AI] about AP Lit and I have it to the side of me and I ask it simple questions in live responses instead of having to look it up"

amembaajara

"My dad has failed 1000 times why should I fail too?"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"You are not always going to be working so things like playing video games is not unproductive because that's something that brings you joy"

amembaajara

"Stressing out for 20 minutes is unproductive because you're not relaxing or working."

Gil Silva

"Being unproductive is "having meaningless time"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"kitchen"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"Being unproductive is having things like skipping practices is also important because those are things that bring joy"

amembaajara

"Being friends with people and families that have similar ambitions allows you to stay motivated and accountable."

amembaajara

"Tools like AI assistants help you feel more organized but also can't do deeper work just surface level help."

amembaajara

"less conscious of prioritization of tasks outside of main work (his academics)"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"Believes in incremental progress: breaking big goals into smaller tasks."

Gil Silva

DO

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

sighs and kind of winces when he talks about how he spends his free time on tiktok

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Chuckles when thinking about his unproductive friend that always says "it's all going to work out", but doesn't take actionable steps.

amembaajara

physically gestures to the side when talking about AI Assistant

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Physically gestures to parts of the table when talking about breaking up tasks.

amembaajara

Says a lot of "um" and "uh" when asked about prioritizing tasks outside of his academics.

amembaajara

Smiles sheepishly when talking about how he uses AI to help him refocus his thoughts and says "it's kind of weird, but I just talk to it..."

amembaajara

Immediately grabs phone and puts in earpod after the interview concludes.

amembaajara

FEEL

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

sighs when he talks about his least motivated day

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

when he talks about being "unproductive" that he does while listening to audiobooks he uses a lot of hand gestures.

amembaajara

pushes out when talking about stopping using his phone to focus

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Encouraged and inspired when he sees friends succeed, making his own goals (like pursuing law) feel possible.

amembaajara

Connected to peers through shared accountability, but also competitive in Palo Alto's intense environment.

amembaajara

Reminiscent when talking about his middle school years when he would work at his dad's office and could focus on tasks without background noise.

amembaajara

Feels guilty when mentioning that he skips sports practices sometimes to make time for his friends.

amembaajara

Casey

THINK

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Productivity is about maximizing time that betters you. (emphasis on work but including time for joy)

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Being around others that have achieved goals that you are interested in pursuing makes them feel more attainable.

amembaajara

Learning from others, like your parents, and accepting their guidance allows you to avoid failures that they have already undergone.

amembaajara

Believes in incremental progress: breaking big goals into smaller tasks.

Gil Silva

Scheduling free time to hang out with friends or skipping things like sports practices is also important because those are things that bring joy

amembaajara

Building momentum for tasks by starting when its assigned allows you to feel less stressed and makes the task more approachable.

amembaajara

It is easier to focus when you are listening to an audiobook or podcast because it is easy to zone out in silence.

amembaajara

Working in spaces with people nearby but not people next to you helps with productivity.

amembaajara





*"In American culture,
[output] is a big deal,
and I don't like how it
affects my boys. Love
yourself for who you are
without pressure of
production."*

Darci

*59, Mother of three neurodivergent sons,
Burlingame, Michigan*



EMPATHY MAP

"You're born as an infant and you are just loved for just being, not for producing"

ameshabanjara

"Change your mindset from I have to do this to I get to do this"

ameshabanjara

Only now at the age of 59 is positive self-talk coming more naturally. Start early.

ameshabanjara

paused a lot when reflecting on consoling her son when he is struggling managing tasks, anxieties, due to his ADD (weight in her voice)

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali



“In American culture, I find that everything is much faster. Everything is so fast-paced.”

Gabby

*20, Stanford sophomore, Lebanon,
Ecuador*

EMPATHY MAP

“Oftentimes, productivity is hyper-focused on just work and trying to cram as much as possible in a very short amount of time.”

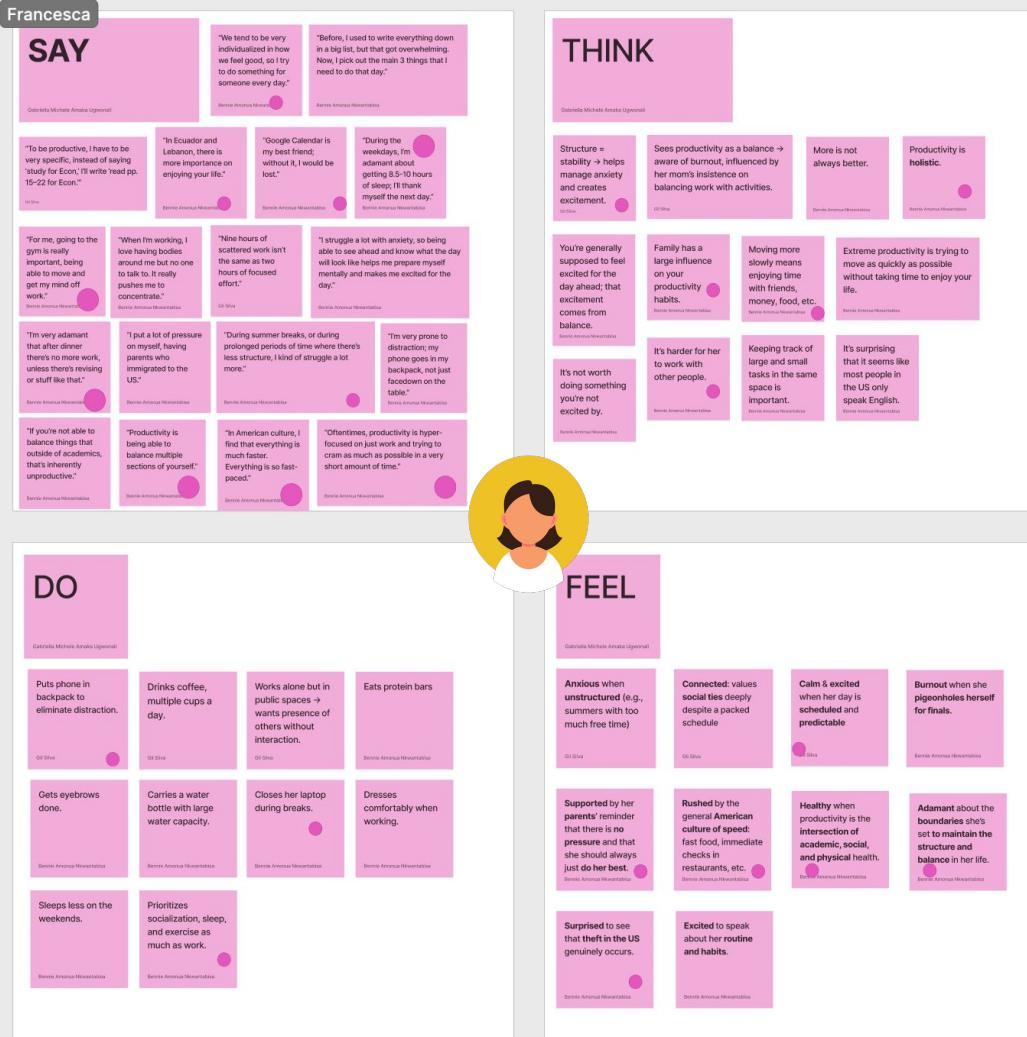
Bennie Amonua Nkwantabisa

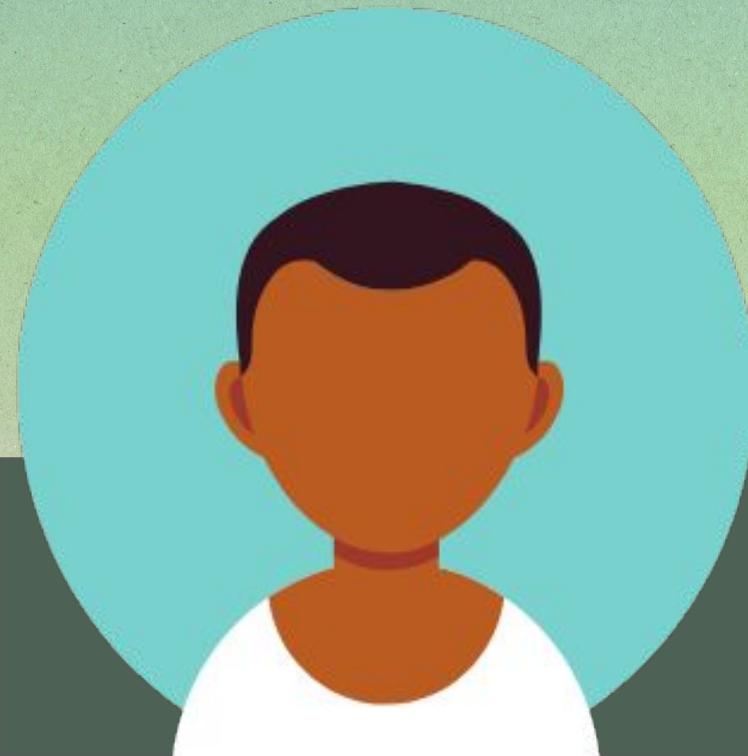
Moving more slowly means enjoying time with friends, money, food, etc.

Bennie Amonua Nkwantabisa

“Productivity is being able to balance multiple sections of yourself.”

Bennie Amonua Nkwantabisa





“Humans are inherently collectivist; individualism goes against our nature.”

Omar

*Mid-50s, Drug Discovery Scientist,
Manager, Historic Palestine*

SAY

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

"Productivity is setting goals and delivering on them"

Gil Silva

"When I do use technology, I use OneNote"

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

"Interests are part of human nature"

Gil Silva

"There is something in the material world of just writing on paper... flipping through pages, smelling the book makes learning better and more effective"

Gil Silva

"Humans are more than biology and chemistry, philosophy and tradition still matter"

Gil Silva

"Students and bright minds often chase money instead of curiosity"

Gil Silva

"Break down the huge task into smaller, manageable steps"

Gil Silva

"I recommend pursuing a doctoral degree to explore methods of thinking"

Gil Silva

"The function of education is to learn how to think."

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

"I wanted to learn about a specific historical era, so I am."

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

"My friends and I are learning a different dialect of Arabic."

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

THINK

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

Productivity = goal-setting + consistent delivery (applies equally to life and career)

Gil Silva

Old-school methods (paper, books) create deeper understanding than digital shortcuts

Gil Silva

Productivity can be counterproductive if it makes people conform instead of think freely.

Gil Silva

American productivity is uniformity, producing sameness.

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Learning is best done when as many senses possible are used

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

What we generally deem as productivity is actually distraction

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Curiosity and exploration are as important as efficiency

Gil Silva

Collective thinking and community matter more than individual success

Gil Silva

Important questions to ask are those surrounding "objective good".

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

FEEL

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

DO

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

Leans back in his chair and looks up when he finds a topic intriguing (traditional philosophy)

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Points towards car/high school when he says he has to pick up his son

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Very still when he told us that we couldn't record him (no head shake, hand wave, etc)

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Refused to be recorded (audio or video), insisted on physical note-taking

Gil Silva

Nods at the end of his answers

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Became more expressive in his body (arms, legs, etc.) and face as time passed

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Uses Google Calendar/OneNote minimally, keeps tech in a supportive but not central role.

Gil Silva

Became animated when critiquing technology/AI

Gil Silva

Extended the interview longer than he planned once he got engaged

Gil Silva

Gestured broadly when discussing capitalism and philosophy

Gil Silva

Uses structured frameworks for self-learning

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Applies strategy across personal/professional life

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

FEEL

Gabrielle Michelle Amaka Ugwosieall

Skeptical of over-reliance on digital tools/AI

Gil Silva

Concerned about society's growing individualism and fragmentation

Gil Silva

Extreme discomfort from the idea of being recorded by strangers

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Interested in speaking to us further whenever possible

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Frustration with modern culture's obsession with speed and output.

Gil Silva

Respect for tradition and older ways of learning

Gil Silva

Pride in his team's capabilities

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Fulfillment in guiding others' thinking

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Guarded but respectful, skeptical and cautious yet hopeful and receptive.

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Scared about curiosity's diminishing role as part of human nature

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

EMPATHY MAP

"There is something in the material world of just writing on paper... flipping through pages, smelling the book makes learning better and more effective"

Gil Silva

"Students and bright minds often chase money instead of curiosity"

Gil Silva

What we generally deem as productivity is actually distraction

Bennie Anmonua Nkwantabisa

Frustration with modern culture's obsession with speed and output.

Gil Silva



"I should be doing something but I'm just on my phone. I'm just taking a nap and I missed my assignment again."

Barry

*19, Sophomore @ Cal State University
Monterey Bay*

EMPATHY MAP

"This was my freshman year... I failed a class because I was so behind I didn't feel like going."

ameshabanjara

conflicted, cynical when saying he admires his sister's discipline but also mentions how she will probably burn out

ameshabanjara

sheepishly looks at us when admitting that all he does is go to school, go to the gym, and nap

ameshabanjara

superiority over his roommates due to their tendency to multitask/ "not focus".

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Harrison

SAY

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"Staying focused, sitting down and doing what I got to do."

ameshabanjara

"This was my freshman year... I failed a class because I was so behind I didn't feel like going."

ameshabanjara

"I should be doing something but I'm just on my phone. I'm just taking a nap and I missed my assignment again."

ameshabanjara

"Otherwise I feel like a bum" (about going to the gym three times a week).

ameshabanjara

"Getting what needs to be done done."

ameshabanjara

"As long as you find the correct sources to back it up, it's a good opener to what you're trying to do." (research on chatgpt)

ameshabanjara

"If I'm gonna focus I'm gonna bring people that are gonna study with me or do their own thing silently."

ameshabanjara

"My sister is the most productive person...she is just so motivated"

ameshabanjara

"I spend sunday planning out my week as much as I can"

ameshabanjara

"If it's a long deadline and it's hard to do, I would have to prioritize getting the easy things done first to start making progress that are closer to the deadline while having some progress into the [far away goal]"

ameshabanjara

DO

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

goes to the gym at least three times a week (non-negotiable habit)

ameshabanjara

laughs when talking about his unproductive roommates

ameshabanjara

sits up straighter when talking about his military club

ameshabanjara

leans back in awe when speaking about his sister whose productivity he admires

ameshabanjara

uses Sundays to plan his weekly schedule even if he doesn't end up sticking to it

ameshabanjara

uses ChatGPT for almost everything including time management and research

ameshabanjara

very passionately says "oh yes" and sits up when asked if he has tried to change habits in the past

ameshabanjara

shrugs when saying that his sister will probably burn out

ameshabanjara

sheepishly looks at us when admitting that all he does is go to school, go to the gym, and nap

ameshabanjara

goes running in the mornings

ameshabanjara

manages schedules and holds people accountable for his pre-military club

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

THINK

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

His sister is the model of productivity; focused, disciplined, no distractions, but risks burnout.

ameshabanjara

Noise or music is necessary for him to stay concentrated; silence is distracting.

ameshabanjara

Responsible people are role models worth following.

ameshabanjara

Prioritizing fun over work is unproductive.

ameshabanjara

Planning ahead with tools like Google Calendar helps, even if plans don't always work out.

ameshabanjara

Productivity requires discipline, but environment and people around him strongly shape outcomes.

ameshabanjara

Fixing his sleep schedule has a big impact on how much he gets done.

ameshabanjara

Productivity is tied to self-control because limiting his phone and social media is necessary to focus.

ameshabanjara

The military club he's in is good for seeing accountability.

ameshabanjara

Shifting his sleep schedule from staying up all night to being awake during the work helped him a lot.

ameshabanjara

FEEL

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

regretful when remembering how he would skip freshman year classes and then watch lecture but not pay attention

ameshabanjara

lazy and "bummy" when he would sleep at 7 am and wake up at 7 pm

ameshabanjara

inspired by his sister's ability to focus on one task without distraction

ameshabanjara

motivated when working around other responsible or driven people

ameshabanjara

relieved that he fixed his sleep schedule habits

ameshabanjara

energized with bursts of energy at night

ameshabanjara

conflicted when saying he admires his sister's discipline but also mentions how she will probably burn out

ameshabanjara

important and purposeful when describing how he holds people accountable

ameshabanjara

superiority over his roommates due to their tendency to multitask/ "not focus".

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali



*“It feels good to
be lazy, I’m gonna
be honest.”*

Seth

*15, Sophomore @ Palo Alto HS,
Student-Athlete*

SAY

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"Oh productivity? I'm a bad example right now"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

productivity is "getting things done"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"It feels good to be lazy, I'm gonna be honest"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"If one person's working hard it inspires others... it inspires me to try more too."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"Phone is a major distraction"

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

wasting time is "when you're supposed to be doing something but you're not doing it".

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

20-30 minute workday for 30 minutes, taking a 10-minute break, then working another 30 minutes, then taking another 10-minute break. "comfortable and steady."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

Google Calendar to visualize his schedule. "I create a picture of what you want every day. Makes planning easier."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"I usually keep track of my tasks in my head."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

"I was being lazy and my mom came and she was right. She was in the background hearing me."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali



DO

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

fidgets

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

when we arrived he moved his phone to under the table

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

spends most of his work time in his room but says he should work in a library

ameshabanjara

takes phone away when working on something

ameshabanjara

works for 30 min then takes a 10 min break then works again to be able to work longer

ameshabanjara

admires brother's phone's ability to turn off access for him when he needs to work

ameshabanjara

recharges by lying in bed and doing whatever he wants

ameshabanjara

frames productivity for both sports and school lenses

ameshabanjara

looked around when talking about the efficacy of his method

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

manages most of his tasks in his head.

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

he was sitting alone outside of a restaurant eating mike and ikes in the middle of school day playing video games on his phone

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

THINK

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

intimidated by two Stanford students (power dynamic from age)

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

productivity is linked to busyness

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

consistency is the most important habit

ameshabanjara

rest and family time matter, but doing what has to be done for school/sports feels better in the long term

ameshabanjara

consistency is the most important habit

ameshabanjara

seeing good role models or being a good role model affects everyone on the team

ameshabanjara

his routine is good right and working for him

ameshabanjara

his mom checking on him is good for accountability

ameshabanjara

If a friend asks to hang out but it will jeopardize the finishing of your assignment, don't go

ameshabanjara

working in a library makes you more productive

ameshabanjara

thinks less about prioritization of tasks outside of school

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

does not really think about life outside of school and sports

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

FEEL

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

guilty about his productivity and phone usage

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

most motivated when riding the high of finishing an assignment

ameshabanjara

disappointed when letting down a lot of people by not being productive

ameshabanjara

motivated to do better when he sees his teammates doing better

ameshabanjara

stressed when he falls behind especially because he doesn't get anxious usually

ameshabanjara

conflicted when given the choice between family events and necessary school assignments

ameshabanjara

comfortable working when he takes frequent breaks

ameshabanjara

ashamed when admitting that his phone is really distracting to him

ameshabanjara

uncomfortable talking about the shortcomings of his productivity

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

academics > sports > everything else?

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

EMPATHY MAP

"I usually keep track of my tasks in my head."

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

he was sitting alone outside of a restaurant eating mike and ikes in the middle of school day playing video games on his phone

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali

rest and family time matter, but doing what has to be done for school/sports feels better in the long term

ameshabanjara

uncomfortable talking about the shortcomings of his productivity

Gabriella Michele Amaka Ugwonali



"I work 15 or 16 hours daily. You only come home to rest from the day's effort."

Jamie

43, DoorDash Delivery, Ex-Colombian military

EMPATHY MAP

"Wasting time is when you do nothing. But sometimes you make an effort and still don't get results. That isn't productive either, but it's not the same as wasting time."

Bennie Amonua Nkwantabisa

The U.S. economy is both an opportunity (higher income) and a burden (high costs, taxes, rent)

Gil Silva

"We immigrants don't have quality time now, all the time is for work"

Gil Silva

"This system absorbs you... you forget your personal life, gym, and family"

Gil Silva

Jairo

SAY

Gabriela Michelle Amaka Ugwonal

- "Productivity is making money. In this moment, that's what it means for me"
- "This job is discipline. If you want more income, you have to work harder (wake up early) and stay on top of the app"
- "We immigrants don't have quality time now, all the time is for work"
- "I project myself each week, \$1,500, so I set a daily quota of \$200"
- "This effort now will be reflected later; when I can share more with my family"
- "This system absorbs you... you forget your personal life, gym, and family"
- "In this country, the economic system makes you focus on daily income"
- "You end up forgetting personal life—going home, spending time with family—because the economy demands constant income to survive here"
- "Heres, one doesn't care buy much. That's why we immigrants come here, for a better economic future. The American dream is good, but it's absolute."
- "I always entrust myself to God. I pray for protection and guidance."
- "With apps, you're your own boss. You don't depend on anyone. If you want more income, you need discipline"
- "You have to pay taxes, utilities, rent, and other expenses which are super expensive. Still, some money remains to change your life and build long-term security."
- "Wasting time is when you do nothing. But if you make an effort and still don't get results, that's not the same as wasting time."
- "And if apps don't provide enough, I would look for another job or another option or something else—to maintain stability."
- "If you go out to work bored, right, reluctantly, everything is going to go wrong for you."
- "Discipline makes you succeed in work, personal life, finances, and social life."
- "I work 15 or 10 hours daily. We only come home to rest from the day's effort"
- "So, besides earning money, he's providing a service to people who need food delivered while they're at work, benefits them and me."

DO

Gabriela Michelle Amaka Ugwonal

- Tried to be helpful and advisory, often giving tips as if teaching newcomers
- Frequently checked his phone for delivery app notifications while talking
- Smiled occasionally, but mostly kept a serious, professional demeanor
- Balanced between answering questions directly and going off into reflective commentary (e.g., comparisons between Colombia and the U.S.)
- Seemed eager to explain and make sure the we understood his point of view
- Tracks and shares his delivery ratings proudly (4.99/5).
- Compared U.S. and Colombian economies multiple times
- Stressed discipline repeatedly ("this job is discipline")
- Works extremely long days (15-16 hours)
- Sets daily/weekly financial quotas
- Puts his faith in God before starting work
- Uses ratings as a performance metric

THINK

Gabriela Michelle Amaka Ugwonal

- Productivity = income generation + survival + future investment
- Discipline and consistency are the keys to success
- The U.S. economy is both an opportunity (higher income) and a burden (high costs, taxes, rent)
- Being unproductive isn't just idleness, it's also effort without results, which means you must adapt
- Working legally and transparently (paying taxes, complying with rules) is essential to avoid risks
- Hard work now = stability, family support, and better opportunities later
- Adaptability is essential: if apps don't bring orders, switch to construction or other jobs
- Customers' ratings = not just income, but dignity and respect
- Daily prayer and entrusting himself to God are essential before starting work for guidance and resilience.
- As an immigrant, one mistake could jeopardize everything; you have to move carefully.



FEEL

Gabriela Michelle Amaka Ugwonal

- Pride in discipline, hard work, and supporting family
- Frustration and exhaustion from long days and little personal life
- Resigned to sacrificing present enjoyment for future benefits
- Motivated by family remittances
- Grounded by spirituality (daily prayer)
- Encouraged by friendship with other delivery workers and positive customer ratings
- Frustrated at how expensive U.S. life is compared to Colombia
- Hopeful that current effort will "pay off" with family happiness later
- Anxiety about legality
- Sense of dignity from being his own boss
- Respect for competition
- Wary of wasted effort/effort without results

TENSIONS

EXAMPLES

Joy vs Guilt

JC views games as productive joy, Darci feels guilty when not producing

Structure as Freedom vs Structure as Pressure

Gabby uses routine to reduce anxiety, Jamie uses quotas that trap him into 16-hour days

Productivity as Survival vs Self-expression

Jamie needs it for money, Omar ties it to philosophy, Gabby to stability, JC to balance

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

1. There are shared charges of emotionality when describing the role productivity plays in their lives.

- Anxiety, shame, pride, dignity, guilt; there was **no neutrality**.

2. Structure and ritual are not just used to manage time + tasks; they also regulate mood + identity.

- Calendars, lists, quotas, prayer, exercise routines all fulfilled a deeper purpose of providing regulation.

3. Interviewees felt that productivity is supported by ambient accountability.

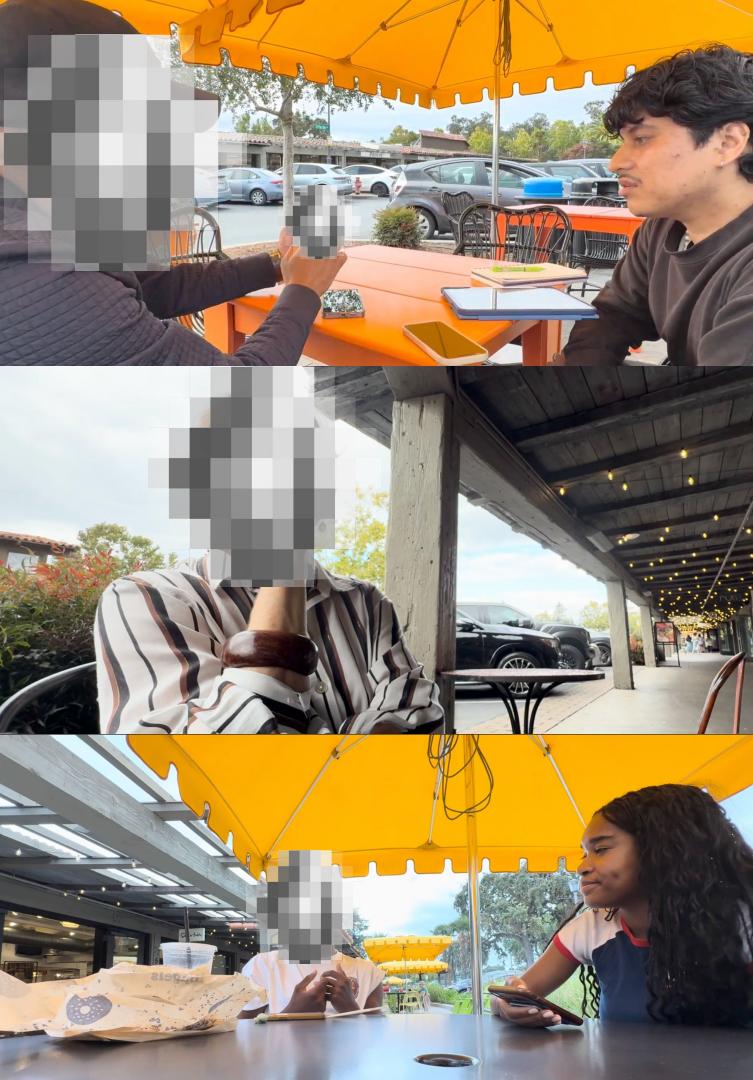
- From body doubling to healthy competition to caregiving, productivity thrives as a result of being around others/social presence.

4. Interests are seen as a necessity to some and a luxury to others.

- Some felt that exploring interests and hobbies was an integral part of being human, while others felt it was time only some can afford.

5. Each person's perception of "wasted time" is the negative image of how they perceive productivity overall.

- What counted as 'wasting time' perfectly mirrored each person's values: for students it was weakness, for workers survival risk, for caregivers misunderstood rest, and for thinkers loss of depth.



INSIGHTS + NEEDS

FINDING

Each person's perception of "wasted time" is the negative image of how they perceive productivity overall.

INSIGHT

People's deepest fears about wasted time reveal what they hold sacred; wasting time is powerful because it directly threatens identity.

NEED

People need ways to reframe and protect their time so it feels aligned with their values instead of threatening their sense of identity.

INSIGHTS + NEEDS

FINDING

People don't just use structure and ritual are not just used to manage time + tasks; they also utilize them to regulate mood + identity.

INSIGHT

Structural tools provide psychological safety. They give people a sense of control in uncertain environments, turning productivity into a stabilizer for both mood and identity.

NEED

People need rituals and systems that adapt to their emotional state, not just their task list.

INSIGHTS + NEEDS

FINDING

Productivity is supported by ambient accountability and is best under the influence of varying levels of presence.

INSIGHT

Being around others transforms productivity from an individual struggle into a social contract. Presence, whether through body doubling or shared labor, externalizes discipline and validates effort.

NEED

People need accessible forms of social presence that make accountability feel natural, supportive, and motivating without judgment.

SUMMARY / NEXT STEPS

- We spoke with **7 people** – high schoolers, a Stanford student, a scientist, a gig worker, a mom, and more – to understand **what productivity really means in their lives**.
- **Productivity is strongly tied to identity.** It is shaped by **emotions** (anxiety, guilt, pride), **values** (family, meaning, joy), and **culture** (American individualism vs. collectivism traditions).

Next Steps:

Turn these needs into POV statements,
HMW questions, and prototypes for A2!

THANK YOU!



Appendix

We could put consent forms, anonymized screen grabs of recordings, things li