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**Amreetha:** [00:00:00] Perfect. Okay. So, uh, w why don't you tell us a bit about the last meeting that you had with the collaborator from your team? Um, that was a project leading, right where we were, I think, deciding on the study materials, I guess. Um, I think it's, it was just typical of any other, uh, collaborative meeting. We have, uh, we had it on this card, I guess, and I think you guys are in for like one hour, but it went on for two more hours.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:00:39] Um, we did make a lot of progress, so it was a good, it was a good meeting. Um, what else would you like to know? Uh, Oh, so it went on for three hours to us. It wasn't doctor to us. Yeah. Um, I think the maximum we ever had as a meeting time was to us not. Okay. So do you share, do these meetings for like two hours or an hour?

We thought that we would go with a specific schedule every week. But, um, everyone is available at a different time and it's just having one calendar invite every week. Seemed a little bit, uh, problematic. I mean, I would do that as a lead. I would do that if my team members were non-collaborative, then, uh, meetings can be the best way to bring everyone on the same page.

But luckily all my team members are, um, They really look forward to doing the work and they're very collaborative in nature. So I didn't feel the need to force a meeting on to them. And, um, so we just decided that on discard, we, the, before Debbie, we just are like, okay, when do we need on Saturday? They're like, So the first question I ask is when are you guys free?

Usually it's on weekends. And then we, the next question will be when exactly, uh, and everyone will say your time. And then I just say, how about TB? And it's a very, uh, odd between the time, like how about 3:00 PM? And everyone is like, yeah, yeah, we can make it. Yeah. Cool. That's that's all we talk about. And, and then, uh, we don't decide like it's, if it's one nod or two art, it's just as much as the work that needs to be done that particular day, uh, how long it takes me do it.

**Amreetha:** [00:02:34] Okay. So my next question. Oh, it would be a follow-up to your answer and that'll be, so do you decide, like, does everybody know, what are the objectives of this meeting or like what exact things you're planning to solve or like work on before this meeting is happening? Or like, do you just say that, okay. I am working on this and we'll be working on this installment and then you just figure it out when you start.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:03:03] No, we all look on the same thing. We don't divide and conquer at least. So what we do is we and prayer before meeting, I just tell them that. Okay. Hey, so we don't have our next meeting X on X date, and we will work on this. X XYZ activities. Do you guys agree with it? And they will say, yeah. Okay. Or they'll be like, you know what?

No, maybe we should work on this as well. And like, okay, let's work on that as well. On the day of the meeting, we just work on everything together. Uh, we are not, so our group meetings are the only time when we all work together or not project. Um, I don't think we work on it separately. Okay. I see. So you mentioned that you use discord for your meetings.

**Amreetha:** [00:03:56] Why would, why do you use discord? Like why this particular communication channel, like, do you usually use this for messaging also? Like if you need to interact with them really quickly, like you said, deciding on a time.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:04:11] Um, firstly, um, this card, I mean, I've been using this card for a very long time. I have a lot of other groups there as well, and having a Slack or teams or any other group would just meet and be that I have to shift to another platform.

Like some groups I use, some groups are there that it's just a hassle. And this seems like everyone has discarded in the group. I asked them, do you guys have this card? They said, yes. And they actually prefer using this card because. You know, um, most people use discard these days. Uh, it has become like a very popular platform.

Um, so yeah, and also it has this on zoom. Zoom is easy too, but you have to schedule the meeting. You have to invite everyone and all of that, but in this car you just have to hop onto the general channel. So it's, it's easy. Um, so yeah, that's why I think he meant, but this guard, um, mainly because it is kind of easy to use.

**Amreetha:** [00:05:13] Okay. Uh, so last day when we, me and Aaliyah were observing your working, we saw you would use the Google forms and Google docs. And then, so what are the tools, uh, that you usually use during these meetings? And we also show you, so you sharing a screen. How do you think that helps it a meeting?

**Vaishnavi:** [00:05:40] So, so as, uh, as you know, like, uh, I think I've mentioned this before, but anytime there is a group project, the first thing I do is start a Google drive.

Um, because I think having one place to put everything, we makes things easier for everyone in the team. So, uh, that would be the first step and. Google is farms because it is part of the Google drive. Everything is like, um, we have an EDU account, any reason team and accounts, it makes things easier. That's that's the main reason we use our Google products.

Um, mostly we use docs forms and, um, sheets. Very, I, I don't think we use any sheets and slides. Maybe if there are any presentations, but we don't have any right now. So that's that, um, Well, it was the chatting. The street is screened. Yeah. So this is something that I personally like to do as, when you're collaborating on something.

And I know Google docs has the, uh, you, you can see someone editing in the same document, but I don't like that. I don't prefer that because. Um, what happens is like, Oh, which page are you in? Page two. Okay. Which page are you in? Page five. Okay. Page three. It's it's, it's kind of, you spend a lot of time shifting between different pages and different causes.

You have to see which cause it is on which page is just, they didn't. Then when you're working on the same thing, you rather stream or share your screen and everyone works on the same thing. So most of the times I do the writing work and everyone is pitching their ideas. Um, and I keep making the changes in it.

**Amreetha:** [00:07:21] Okay. So another thing that we noticed was, so when you were using Google forms, you also mentioned that Qualtrics it's much easier. So are you using Google forms? Only because they want everything organized in the Google drive. Quality takes is maybe I guess, uh, first thing is not, everyone will be using Qualtrics.

Genderly Qualtrics is also kind of bulky gold funds is a lot more easier quality Qualtrics as more options than Google farms, but it. It heavily depends on the questions that we want to put in the Google form. Right. Um, I've been using quantics like for the past few weeks, that is the main reason I was like, Oh, maybe Quadrics might be easier.

Then I had an instant mental time that not everyone might have experienced dealing with Qualtrics and. You, you ha you will have links over there, right? So you have to add everyone Qualtrics as a very, very bad collaborative, uh, experience, but it's terrible. Like two people can work on the same thing with the same edits going on.

Right. Um, and by once you're done with the survey, you have a link, um, You have to have an Excel sheet to store the links, which is just so redundant. You rather have a Google form and have everything at the same place, then do this sort of adjustment. I see. Okay. Uh, all right. So now I will move on to, uh, meeting dynamics.

So. I would want to meet in dynamic or meeting them is okay. Yeah.

So the first question towards that we last week, or like last week, how much time did you spend on collaborative meetings overall?

**Vaishnavi:** [00:09:19] I am not sure.

We zone keep track of the time. Uh, you, yourself just collaborating with people. Like me overall, like all meetings, right?

Yes. Well, all collaborative meetings last, which just the project, right. It depends heavily on which week it is. And some weeks I have, um, close to eight to nine hours sometimes, but sometimes I just have like one night, it heavily depends on the week. Okay. How would, how would the next week, last week?

I would say four hours. Yeah. Four to five hours. Yeah. I think that's an overstatement, but I don't really remember. I can check my calendar maybe. Oh, alright. Uh, last week, um,

Yeah. Four to five minutes, four to five hours. Okay. So in that case, I would like you to identify two meetings, one in which the least number of people are involved in one, in which the maximum number of people that are involved. And then how do you think these meetings are different now that they are like on zoom or like over discord and then.

**Amreetha:** [00:10:53] Like how many projects do you discuss? Like what do you think about these meetings happening efficiently?

**Vaishnavi:** [00:11:01] So can you define me, define to me, what do you mean as a collaborating meeting? Is it audit, audit also mean me meeting someone over something, uh, like. Like, how do you define a collaborative working with laboratory would be a collaborating meetings.

**Amreetha:** [00:11:18] So like just even meeting for discussing a project or how we even like, that is something that I do. Like I just meet with people to see how to go forward. So I would call that as a collaborative meeting as well as when we're working together. Okay. Um, okay. I, I do have two meetings. And then maybe I would take the example of the last before week instead of last week, because that seemed more a property for me because last week was a little bit weird.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:11:55] Okay. Okay. Why was last year? Good with me here last week, it was weird because a lot of meetings were canceled and things didn't go according to the plan, which was, um, not usually as expected a typical week would be a lot more different than last week, so. Okay. I see. But what happened last week? Like, Was it snowing?

Asterik not really, I don't know maybe people who hadn't available and it was, it was kinda awkward. And last week I don't know what was happening. So, and last week is not how things usually happen. So what happened last week was most meetings that happen on a Thursday or a windows. They got pushed to a Saturday and a Sunday.

It was very viewed. Um, that usually does not happen. So. All right. Was it peoples also. Oh, okay. Yeah. So we can go to the week before the last one. And then can you tell us a little bit about like communication? Like how do you have effective communication with like one person or two people, two other people versus like five other people.

So usually maximum, except this project meeting that I am part of. The maximum people. I regularly collaborate with us, one other person or two other people. That's all. Um, but now, recently my advisor has started a group meeting with everyone. So this is the start of something new that is like four people together working on something that has never happened before.

Um, So usually my meetings are with one other person or one. Yeah, mostly one other person. And what we do is, um, same thing. We share the Google docs. One of us keeps pitching ideas and we keep just adding things in and it, um, Uh, one of the meetings that I have with someone who is not at OSU or somewhere outside is like my friend.

So we work on something together. So she and I, we FaceTime, uh, rather than, um, working on zoom or discord on any other platforms. We initially schedule a zoom meeting, but we canceled it because, um, Zoom being didn't want to use zoom any more because it was like zoom fatigue. Like all the meetings are on zoom and we were like, ah, maybe we can choose something else.

That is lot better. Plus most of our meetings are just talking and brainstorming. So what is the need to use zoom on desktop? We could rather use lightweight, FaceTime or WhatsApp or something like that. Yeah, we do that phone. You don't use this stuff because we just wanted a break. She keeps she has a lunch or I do something.

So we are like, it's more like a friendly chat, but we also do like. Five or 10% work through that. And, uh, when we want to finalize something, we just like, um, we are like, okay, let, let me start. I'll go to my desktop. I will treat, we have a good vibe going on already. She had something in it. Then I copied that border where she has added.

She say which page number it is. I'll just copy that and I'll create whatever it is. So that's how it works. Mostly FaceTime and we'll talk. And the other meeting that I have with my research, uh, a group with, I collaborate with one other person on a project. We redo zoom. We only stick to zoom. Um, we do have a discord as well.

We just use the score to decide when to meet. Uh, I have a personal meeting ID. So the meeting ID does not change a dog and it's been to the discord bar. So, uh, that person knows my meeting ID. It's just five letters. So that's very easy for us to get started. Um, whenever we want to have a meeting, um, mostly I use the same meeting ID with everyone in my team.

So it's like five letters, everyone joins for whatever meeting it is. So that's kind of easier, I guess. And we work on zoom for. Uh, sometimes like, uh, the maximum time I've worked with that person on a day was about seven to eight hours because it was like to us to watch the two or something, six to seven, pretty long when we have a deadline or something like that.

But mostly it's like to waspy us. We, we actually lose track of time when we work together on something. Because we decided to meet at 4:00 PM and then we look at the, at 7:00 PM. We were like, what happens? I see. Uh, but yeah, that's really cool. You can read it to have like one meeting ID pizza. Yeah. I use my personal meeting ID for everything.

Uh, it's a lot more easier to do things for, um, anything very specific. I schedule a meeting, but I hardly schedule meetings. It's it's it's a pain.

**Amreetha:** [00:17:01] So. You usually do not use FaceTime on WhatsApp calls with anybody else other than a friend of yours. Right. So it's more like a formal versus informal, Oh, group collaboration.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:17:14] Yeah. Group, or even like, even with one person. But if that person let's say is in OSU, Yeah, you be dead.

Hell what? We did have a FaceTime group with one of my club members, but these shifted that to discard. Uh, I also had a WhatsApp group, but that also got shifted to yeah. That was a, got shifted to discard.

So it's, we did have groups, but, um, things moved to discard and more formal ways, I guess. Okay. I see. Um, do you know why that happened? Like why did it shift to more formal ways? I would say dumbs of mice. It's I would say it's more, um, visible, I guess like, um, you know, when someone's online, you can share files.

You can do, you can keep track of things. I message groups are kind of weird. Don't everyone has an iPhone. It's still is weird because it's sending out text messages and you're always in the back of your head. You're like, okay, I'm sending an SMS, but when it comes to a zoom or Slack or a discord, it's just a message.

It's just works like an email. I would say it is, um, less costly to do that. Not in terms of monetary, but in terms of the. If foot, like I will send more messages in a discord, then I send in a nine message. I'm not worried about the cost, but it's just how it is. I see. But you also have problems with this card because, uh, this is one of my top, top concerns with discard, but I'm a frustrating point.

Is that. Oftentimes, at least with this group, I don't observe this, but I've seen this happen with other groups. I see people online, they don't respond. Uh, I see people playing games, but they don't respond to assignment juice. Or I see people listening to Spotify music, but not respond to the text messages.

That is frustrating as hell because you're like, You clearly are seeing play your game. And I can see that, but you're not responding to me sort of that that typically happens. But, um, I guess it's, it's, it depends heavily on the kind of team member they are. That's happened a lot with me for one of the classes that I've taken.

So this person, all of this was playing a game, but never was responding to assignment. Jews did not collaborate on any of the projects. And finally in week seven dropped out of the course. So it was, yeah, it was very frustrating, but that's how it is, I guess. Seems I see. So having, since following up on that, so having people even not turn their videos on during a collaborative meeting, does that also make you feel like people might be distracted or like.

**Amreetha:** [00:20:14] If like, does it ever happen that you're in a collaborative meeting and like people's meters at off, and then you ask a question and nobody answering, honestly. So here's the thing, right? Um, most meetings that I do, I don't switch on the camera or we don't like the one that I'm talking about eight hours or six hours.

**Vaishnavi:** [00:20:32] We don't, because I don't want to see someone's face for six to seven hours. It's kind of it's. No, it would be nice. But at the same time, when you're working on a Google doc together, you're looking at the Google doc. No, you're not looking at the camera, right. You're not talking to someone face to face for like six hours or five hours.

So that's not really a problem. But I remember when we have meetings with our advisor, we all get switch on the camera because it's a lot more, um, I'll call them, like, he, you prefer us to do that. And we preferred the same thing as well. So do you have any depends on the kind of meeting it is? Um, I don't mind not seeing someone's fees in collaboration.

Um, yes, I do agree that sometimes the silence is an awkward silence and you have to be like, hello, is anyone there sort of thingy, but, um, it's never, if it's a good team, it all was down to what kind of team it is. If they're all working on something and they're all transparent and accountable, I don't think it should be a problem.

Plus, um, most, uh, quality of the video call also depends on the camera being turned on. So I. I mean, I would rather have a good quality call rather than have that other than having deceived ones, because this is in terms of collaborative work. But if I have to do a personal check, I would prefer to have a video on it because I would like to see someone's face.

I see. So when, for example, if we were in person. Then you would sit in a room for a meeting, right? So you draw exactly. Try to recreate that scene in on that meeting. Am I right? Why do you have to recreate the scene? I mean, it is something that has been done in person and this is online. Personally, I think collaboration works a lot better when you do it online.

Because in my previous classes, when I have to do in-person meetings, people don't turn up or people come lead or people are like, they give excuse of saying that, Oh, I have this other commitment. I have to walk down like three kilometers to reach this hall. Now it's just one button a week. So, you know, when you're available, you know, when you can join the call, You can't give, um, the reasons like, Oh, I'm running down lead or something like that.

That's an advantage. And also at the center one day, if you'd ask, but, um, I don't, I don't think every meeting needs to be in-person and definitely meetings would benefit having an in-person, um, collaboration, because it makes a lot of sense, but most meetings are fun. Okay.

**Amreetha:** [00:23:12] Uh, and do you feel like individuals contribute as much as they would have, if this would have been an in-person meeting, did you think zoom or any of these tools make it more difficult for people to speak up?

**Vaishnavi:** [00:23:34] I would say online people who contribute more rather than doing offline. This is just based on what I've seen so far or based on my previous experience. And it's. Um, so here's the thing, right? It all depends walls down to work kind of team member. They are who's a leader or who is trying to guide the conversation on discussions and stuff like that.

Let's say if I am in an in-person room and you're all my team members, and I just like, I'm ready to do this. Uh, Um, they, I do this, uh, sweet. I do this and I forget about the fourth member. And I just keep talking to you three people. Then the fourth person would feel dejected. I will probably not contribute as much as if it's the same with online too.

Right. It, it harness, it does not. Make a difference still pool will contribute more online and offline. It was under the kind of person they are and the kind of theme, um, and vitamin D added. Right. Um, but I will say being online or help people collaborate better for some certain tasks, because there is, um, the, what do you call the, the execution time has shocked end.

And you have easy access to materials. You had the same Google doc that you're working on. It's not. And then people, so one person has a board that it wasn't this not habit. It's not like that everyone has equal resources. It's, it's kind of inclusive. You know, you, you can all pitch in and do the same thing.

It's no one has different tools compared to the other person. And if that is not the best environment for collaboration, I don't know what else is. Okay. So for an in-person meeting, what.

**Amreetha:** [00:25:30] What do you mean by everybody might not have equal resources?

Like sometimes, like, I don't know, like when you are, uh, taking a library, uh, room, right? Like library, conference rooms. And there's one by both. There's one marker. And there's one that has a marker. They're drawing something and other person is waiting and they're like, Oh, You know what the people who are, who always wrote with a marker and just like, they don't like to give the opportunity to other people to contribute.

Right. They keep talking continuously. Sometimes you see that quality in me as well, but that's, that's, I've learned to not do that. So. Uh, but there are people who do this very intentionally. Uh, they will, I feel being in an online presence, like for example, if someone has an idea and you are continuously talking on a zoom call and the other person does not have an opportunity to pitch it, they will leave a text message right there, multiple ways of your presentation right now.

And that's what I meant as inclusive. If you can't talk, you can text now in in-person. If you can't talk, will you write it in a board and show it to me? No. Right. It's all good. So there are a lot of things that, um, That kinda makes a lot of sense doing it online. Plus if someone is very frustrated with something and they just say something over online, in-person saying, Oh, your idea is completely wrong.

Don't do this. This is crap. This is bullshit happens in teams. Um, I have seen people say that. Um, but when it comes to online and you've observed that people mute themselves or they just like moved the camps, they just. They just take the time to process things, right? Those things don't happen in person.

And I, I think it's a good step for some of the activities. Not all, obviously I would rather prefer some activities to be done in person.

Okay. I see. Oh, so we are almost done. There's like one last question I have for you. Oh. Is there anything specific or a specific incident that you encountered during remote collaboration that you'd like to share with us?

Or any question you think we could have asked you?

During COVID Precoa during COVID,

like what kind of experience?

**Vaishnavi:** [00:28:01] Uh, a collaborative experience. There are a lot, like, are you looking for like positive or negative or like one, anything specific that you might want to share with us? That's all up to you.

I can't think, I mean, there's so many it's, I don't know how to pick the ones that you like would be useful to you. Maybe something where you faced challenges would be useful. Okay. Um, my, you can take the, I can take the example of a class that I took class stone master class before time. I don't remember.

Um, it was the one when I said that one of the team members kind of dropped out, uh, week seven week eight. He was kind of non-responsive for the, from week two because he only attended one meeting of ours. And, uh, the second meeting we kind of folds into at then, uh, then he kind of dropped out, um, The collaboration was like it's most member, most teams had four members and we had three members and one person was on the spot.

So it's the, it's the unequal amount of workload that was there. Like four was a still, yeah, that was kind of hard because I and my teammates had to do a lot of things, um, um, together. And also, uh, that was one of the classes where I felt the collaboration was. Like it, it felt like I was dragging things along, you know, um, people are just stationed at ease.

They were not coming with me. And they were sitting on a slip on a sledge board and I was dragging it. That's, that's how I felt. Um, I had to pick them up and say, Hey, we have an assignment due tomorrow. Let's work on it. Let's work on it. This is how it went. And.

Tell about that. Um, and, um, that was the same time and I saw people being online and not responding thing. And most of the, and also being six or seven things that we need back. So many teammates, her roommate got tested positive for COVID. So she was like, I I'm stressed. And I'm like, you know what? I'll take it off.

And so now it was like four people was, this one person in the team was really cute. Leslie crazy. Yeah. And all the tape was with undergrads. So. Collaboration with grad undergrads always doesn't work out great because they have different priorities in life. Um, you might think your assignment is important as a graduate student or the concept is important, but for them it will be more like, uh, they have a lot of other things going on in their life that many others, and they don't want to put the same level of work.

So that's something that I struggled with. This one.

**Amreetha:** [00:31:05] I see. All right. That brings us to the end of our interview. I am definitely can't hear you. You're saying, uh, that brings us to the end of our interview. I will stop recording.