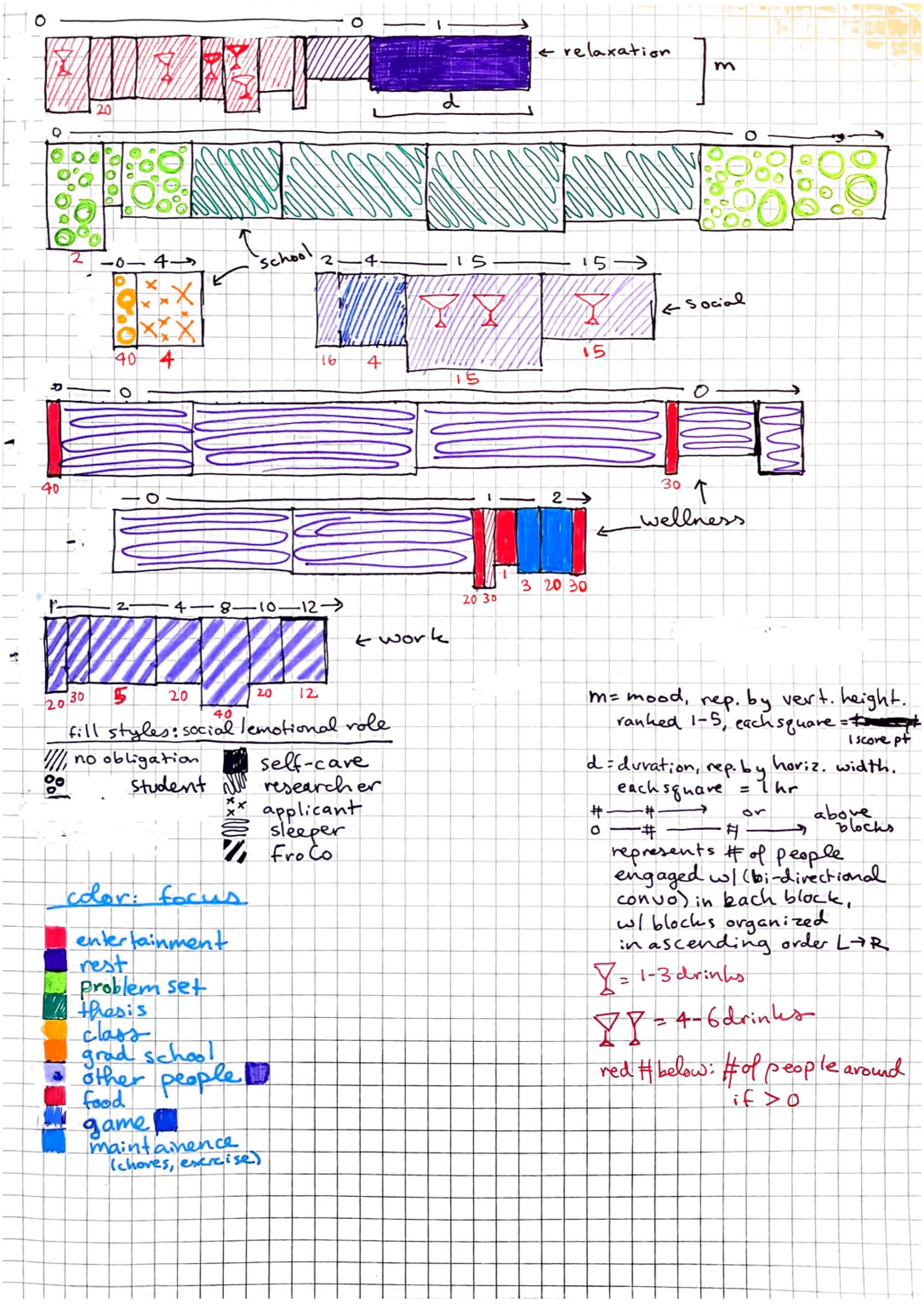
Dear Data:

For this, my partner and I decided to record how we spent our time this week, leaving it open for each of us to record things like, day of the week, timestamps, mood, engagement, etc. I chose to record my data in blocks of time which had the following features: duration of the block, mood during (rated from 1-5), the social/emotional role I feel I was fulfilling in that block of time, the object of my focus during the block, the general category of thing I was doing (school, work, socializing, etc.), if I consumed alcohol during the block (and roughly how much), how many people I directly spoke to and engaged with during the block, and how many people were generally around. I thought it would be interesting to visualize the dimensions of each block as mood x duration to see how I felt and for how long within larger, amalgamated blocks for each general category/life-domain. The categorical variables of focus and social/emotional role felt somewhat interchangeable, so I used them both to construct the fill for each block, with color representing focus and fill style representing role. Small numerical annotations filled in the information about the number of other people involved in each block of time, and in fact, I organized each compound block so that from left to right, I engaged directly with an increasing number of people. Alcohol usage I represented in little drawn symbols within each relevant block.



Redesign:

Unsurprisingly, the original was able to convey more information than I was in ggplot (though I was able to get close!). Ultimately, I lost the general category of an activity (work, life, or other) and wasn't able to convey secondary information about her company during an activity (in the original, she records doing an activity with, say, both her boyfriend and a friend, but I was only able to capture one category of company). I computationally calculated the percent of each activity comprised of each emotional state, something you could visually assess in the original, because I found that more interesting than trying to show all 247 datapoints as having an emotional dimension, a company dimension, and a weather dimension, which I probably could have done more easily by using a stacked and grouped bar chart, for instance. I think the heatmap is able to capture something of the visual interest of the original, and I believe it is (reasonably) comparably information dense!