

1. What did you learn through your experience completing observations?

A. One may think that they know the general problems that women face, but they never know the intensity of that problem. For instance, I knew that reproductive health is an issue which needs to be addressed, but never knew that how important it was in its entirety. Specific to observations, I was not particularly surprised that women cared about brand trust, awareness and accessibility as important factors when it comes to reproductive health, but I was startled that the same people who care about these parameters have to compromise on it because of the cost. One knows the importance of money, but having periods and dealing with it day to day is not an optional task, so these issues should be addressed as a basic human right. It was great to see that around 75 people responded to our survey, which gave a peek into woman's need and problems like a magnifying glass. As a guy, I learnt a lot actually. I was myself not aware about so many problems that a woman goes through with respect to periods. It was overwhelming to know so many things in a go, and I was surprised that I would have never got to know about all of this if I had never taken this course and chosen this topic. It still befuddles me that people don't talk about it, and some of them will live their entire life without even knowing or dealing with such things. It's literally crazy.

2. What did you learn through your experience interviewing and creating interview questions?

A. One can never know all the problems another one faces, until one gets into their shoes. We tried to get into their shoes by surveying and interviewing them. After interviewing I learnt the following things:

- Framing questions is a very important skill when interviewing people. For instance, rather than asking questions a very generic or close ended questions, ask them open-ended ones.
- Remember the wise advice someone gave you for a coffee date: Listen. Let the person answer, slowly and steadily. When I interviewed I would make sure that I talked like 1 sec compared to their 9 sec (1:9 ratio).
- Never interrupt their pause: If he/she takes a pause, let them. They'll start continuing to answer even after their pause. (one of the pro tips learnt in the class)
- Sometimes the person is little uncomfortable to answer few questions. If it's because they are uncomfortable, then it is your task to make them comfortable. You can maybe skip the question if they really don't want to answer. But sometimes it maybe because that they haven't ever talked about it before, and that's what holding them back, so it's the interviewer's task to help them break the stigma. I remember when I interviewed one guy, he was not particularly comfortable telling few terms, but I made him realise that it's okay to say it, and there is nothing to worry about it. Thus, giving them little security is enough to make the whole interview experience better.
- The setting of the interview matters a lot, so never do it in a dull place.

3. What did you learn through completing immersive research?

A. Even after doing an in detail research based on internet data, one may think that they have grasped the crux of the problem, but they are wrong. The immersive research is the key solver here. It allowed me to capture behaviours and emotions of individuals in context the individual's experiences. It helped me identified the target audience and also how they perceive reproductive health. It helped me come with the prospective idea of 'pinPad'. When you are divorced from the user's world (particularly

me, as a guy), it helped me understand the target audience's needs and the possible solutions which a user expects. It also helped identify what measures one needs to take to consider all aspect and convert it into a possible product/solution. It also helps in seconding and correcting the assumptions that we had about the problem at hand. Immersive research in a perspective shaper.

4. Things you found to be challenging?

A. Since this class revolved around the problems around women, it was little difficult for me, as a guy, to come up with concrete problems and solutions for them. Also, considering the stigma around periods specifically, I was not so sure to talk about it with my friends. I believe in the quote, "change starts with you", I knew that I myself had to break the stigma. Also, I would like to make a note that my group members, both girls, were so approachable and friendly that they never made conversations about periods awkward. Rather they were so happy to explain and clear few trivial doubts with enthusiasm that I never ever felt left out.

5. How you would like to improve if you went through this process again?

A. I think the path that my group and I took worked out pretty well, but one thing that we still feel is that we should have interviewed a homeless woman and tried to understand her perspective to all of this. We did try to reach the homeless shelters, but in vain. Also, since our solution was university specific, it would be fun to know different university student's perspective too. Overall, I am satisfied by the approach we took, but would have had learnt more if we interviewed more extremes.

6. Reflect on your experience working with your group.

A. I say this with immense happiness that this was THE BEST group I have ever worked with. I would definitely miss working with them. I think they made the whole course experience very fun. Specific appreciation time:

Cathy: She has an artistic and creative mind. I am surprised she is not an Arts major. She makes my bland content into something aesthetically appealing, not only to eyes, but also to one's mind.

Kavya: She is a great content writer. She converts the ideas or pointers into such beautiful wordings that one would be nothing but impressed.

Overall, both of them are hardworking and motivating people. I'm truly inspired (not exaggerating). It was my pleasure working with them in my first semester at UIUC.

7. Reflect on the work of your classmates, beyond your immediate teammates.

A. This is my first class where the majority of students are not CS grad students, so it was a great learning experience for me to talk to all of them, know their background and understand their perspective. The work done by all the other groups was really good and the topics they covered - eating disorders, prenatal care and beauty standards – were beautifully presented. I really liked the interview bits because it made me aware about the struggle that people have gone through in real. Sharing experiences is the key to being woke. I would like to make a special note here for the work that Nancy Qu and Raphael Sanjaya did, because since the start, their work has been nothing but applauding, and the game they made was really out of the box (I definitely clapped harder for them after they finished their final presentation).

Special thanks to the instructors who made the whole experience a wonderful one. I really hope I get to work with you all at some point of time in future. Again, thank you!