Education For Adults

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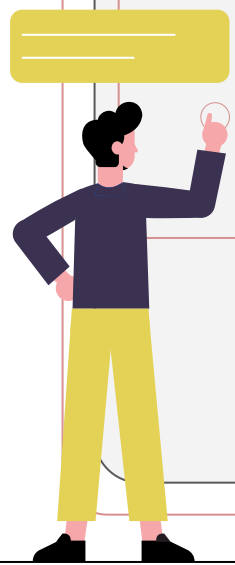
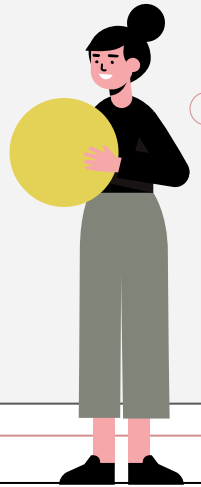
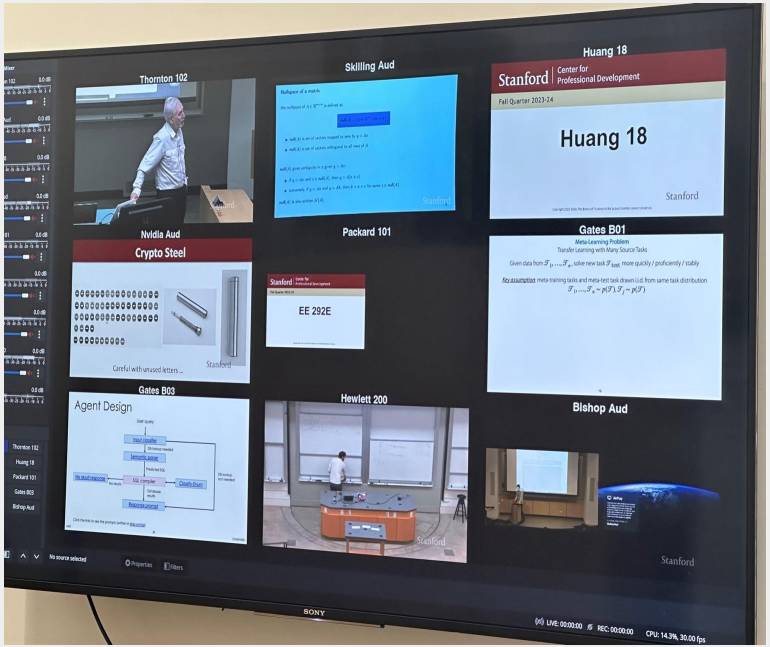




Recap

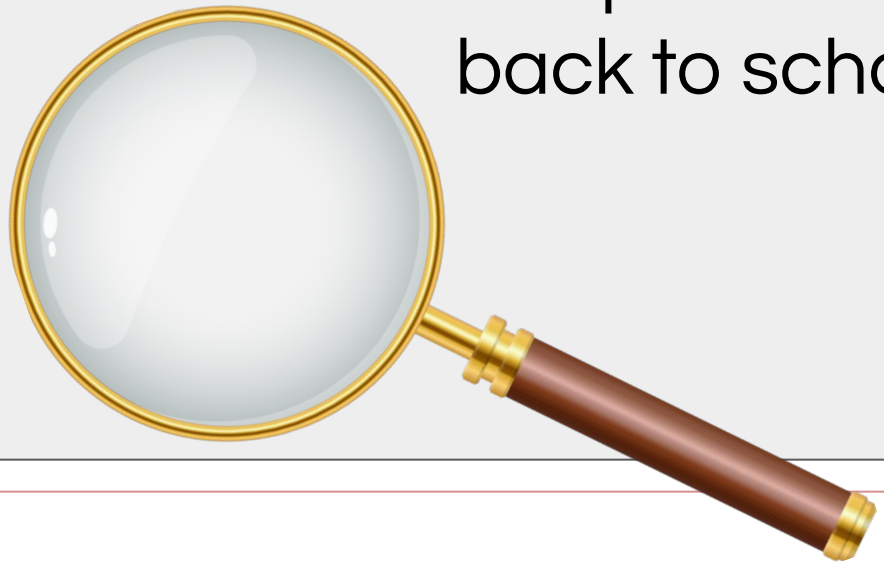
In our interviews last week, we learned that adult students enjoy their experience returning to school:

- When they feel **interconnected** with the wider community
- When they feel **supported** academically and socially.



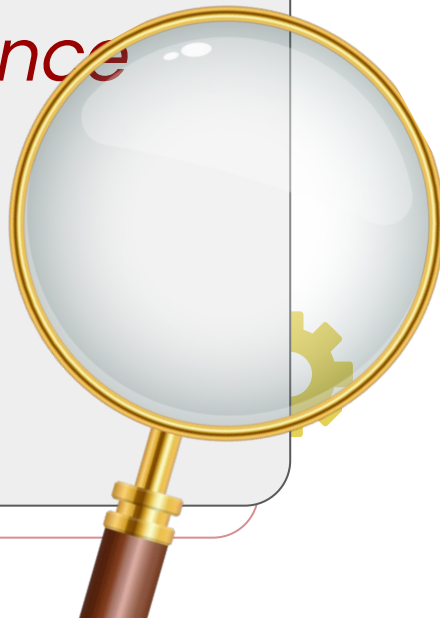
Original Domain

What can we find about older students' experience with going back to school?



NEW ~~Original~~ Domain

*How can we **alleviate** older students' **lack of support** and **connection** once returning to school?*



Additional Inter

Rachel
Current SWE at Intuit
Considering returning to school full-time to aid in career shift

Monica
Considering returning to school part-time to explore career in accounting or teaching

Previous Key Findings

Additional Key Findings

Uncertainty

Monica

Monica, a middle aged woman who works as a paraeducator assistant, and is interested in returning to school for two different degrees

SAYS

Observations: What did this person SAY that surprised you?

- I had the support of my spouse when I first took classes at community college
- didnt work with classmates because I didnt see them
- "One seems to think they're the only one feeling this way but it is nice to know that there are many others in the same situation"
- stopped pursuing education in accounting because I didn't know english well
- didnt go to tutoring as often
- taking classes helped her learn english, in reading writing and communicating
- She thinks it might be too late for her to start a career in accounting but it's always something she wanted to do

THINKS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be THINKING?

- considered taking Early Child Edu. and Accounting at the same time
- the homeworks were hard because I had to write essays in english
- researching into elementary schools to see if there are job openings to work with kids
- Found one that requires her to take a few more (or one more) course in early child education in order to work as a teacher
- Finds accounting much more interesting, but it could be too late
- Likely to use school resource if necessary, but prefers to do work on her own time at her own pace
- it could be too hard to take both disciplines concurrently
- won't go back to school if the support is just not there

DOES

Observations: What did this you?

- takes a long pause when I asked her about her experience with tutoring
- shakes her head when asked about wanting to do two degrees at the same time
- at times, their tone of voice sounded unsure of herself
- her mood changed to when she heard that other interviewees shared similar feelings about returning back to school
- smiled when I asked her what her support system was like during school
- her if she has considered working in accounting
- smiles and nodes when she shares that taking classes increased her confidence in speaking/understanding english

FEELS

Inferences: Based on what they SAY and DO, what might they be FEELING?

- even if she prefers to do her stuff alone, hearing similar stuff from others helps her feel validated
- confused as to what career path to take
- nervous to feel out of place in her college courses
- not confident in her ability to learn accounting
- conflicted in decided what career courses to take
- worried about being one of the oldest students
- curious about future opportunities

OBSERVATIONS | INFERENCES

Empathy Map originally created by a team at XPLANE: https://medium.com/the-xplane-collection/updated-empathy-map-canvas-46df22df3c8a

Initial POVs

We met Sam who was very easy going and passionate about discussing his experience with taking classes at a nearby University as a retired 60 year old man, and also open to sharing his struggles and uncertainty about his future after his program. We Were Surprised to notice Sam takes classes in an attempt to not only further his education but to build a community for himself. We Wonder If This Means if he wants to use education as a fulfilling activity and motive to help him connect him with others. It Would Be Game Changing to have a social aspect to the students' learning journey so that they feel more comfortable returning back to school.

POV: We met Sam, a current matriculated Masters student. We were surprised that Sam finally feels at home and like a graduate student now that it's his third year at school. We wonder if the increase in time spent physically on campus during the day directly correlates to his enjoyment of campus. It would be game changing to provide resources for students to allow them to build/foster long-standing connections outside the classroom. **Y.A**

We met Sam, an adult student who decided to return to school at age 55. We were surprised to learn that he attends school full time and wants to get his PhD. It would be game changing to make his return to school easier

We met Sam, a retired engineer and sales associate who is currently studying to complete his Masters at a nearby university. We were surprised to notice that this year he genuinely felt as if he was connected to his school once he started interacting with the student body more by coming to classes in the daytime.We wonder if this means that older students want to feel connected in some sense to the institution that they're learning from, not just that they want a degree.
It would be game-changing to create an environment where older students don't have to literally be on campus during school hours to feel like they are part of a learning community. **NA., B.E YJ.**

More POVs

We met Layla, a full-time Bank of America employee and part-time student enrolled in a nursing program. We were surprised to learn that she much prefers attending classes in-person despite having family at home and plentiful online resources. We wonder if having a strong support system at home helps her manage the stress of the nursing program, leading to her enjoyment of in-person classes more. It would be game changing to provide adults, particularly those who are single parents or have young children, with adequate support systems, both online and in-person. **YA**

We met Layla, a middle aged woman who works full time at Bank Of America and takes nursing classes part time. We were surprised to learn that Layla isn't afraid to make a career change to purse her passions. It would be game changing to help her manage multiple roles.

We met Layla, a full-time Bank of America employee who returned to school in the Bay Area to study nursing. We were surprised to notice that while she appreciated the usefulness that technology provided, she thought it didn't completely provide an adequate replacement to in-person college education. We wonder if this means older students learn better with something resembling an in-person education in some capacity. It would be game-changing to give older students some form of an in-person education system even within the online options that so many prefer. **NA, B.E. YJ**

We met Layla, a Full-time credit analyst at BoA, enrolled in a nursing program and who attends classes during the evenings. We Were Surprised to notice that despite her having so many responsibilities, she is still very dedicated to pursuing nursing because it is something she is passionate about.We Wonder If This Means if she feels really supported at school or if she wants a stronger support system to continue her studies? It Would Be Game Changing to have a stronger support system that will keep her motivated and inspired to stay on top of her studies.

Search Overview

Chose participants by going to the following locations...

- Graduate Student areas and speaking with middle aged students
- Main Quad around 4pm to speak to crowds there
- Green / Coupa area

Participants

- Older, middle aged students who've taken online classes / in-person
- Mix of introverted / extroverted participants
- Relevant to our domain of older adult education!

REVISED POVs

POV 1

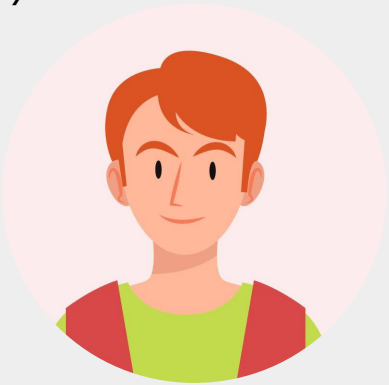
We met Sam, *a retired engineer and sales associate who is currently studying to complete his Masters in Liberal Arts at Stanford University*

Stanford University

Sam

POV 1

We were surprised to learn that *this year he genuinely felt as if he was connected to his school's once he started interacting with the student body more by coming to classes in the daytime.*



Sam

POV 1

We wonder if this means *that older students want to feel connected in some sense to the institution that they're learning from, not just that they want a degree.*

Sam

POV 1

It would be game changing to *create an environment where older students don't have to literally be on campus during school hours to feel like they are part of a learning community.*

Sam

HMW 1

HMW leverage classmates located in nearby areas to ***reduce*** stress and ***improve*** academic success?

Solution + Assumption

Key Assumption

Older students feel motivated and supported when they can share their goals and progress with others.

Solution

What if we institute a platform where students can find and create local support groups to stay on top of work, share their experiences and inspirations, and find community within school?

Experience Prototype

Task: Show students photos of progress bars and…

- *Ask them **how they would feel** about it, knowing it was a classmate of theirs*
- *How **comfortable do you feeling sharing** your goals and progress with others*
- *Do you like sharing your goals with others as a form of **motivation**?*
- *Do you find it motivating to work towards a goal **with others**?*
- *What effects does **seeing others' progress bars** have on you?*

Results

Adult students generally...

- Find it motivating to work towards their goals with others
- Enjoy having the progress bar to see their progress but not the progress of their peers
- Like to share their progress/goals as a form of motivation

Experience Prototype # 1

Results

Students liked:

- Flexibility
- Go at own pace
- Organized content
- Organized videos and high quality imaging

Students disliked:

- Lack of space for discussions
- Easily distracted
- Feels boring
- Struggle to convey concepts
- Content was tough and the interface of asking follow up questions was tough
- Setting up meetings with professors was difficult

Interactions with Professors:

- None
- Email
- Zoom
- 20 minutes of office hours

Nearby School With Resources:

- Would attend the discussions
- Prefers in-person lectures
- Would benefit from additional support

HMW 2

HMW ***empower*** adults returning to school from the workforce to build and ***sustain*** lifelong connections with their classmates?

Solution + Assumption

Key Assumption

Older students see value in connecting with other students regardless of if they are taking the same courses

Solution

Interactive game with the goal to connect with as many different people as possible. Students receive weekly challenges to connect with specific people each week, and every new connection gets added to the user's list of friends for future communication

Experience Prototype

Task students with going up to someone new, introducing themselves, and finding things they have in common.

Find two graduate students who do not know each other

Ask them to get to know each other and find two similarities

4LifeLong Learning

Observe behaviors and debrief, participants filling out form

Results

People were open and willing to go up to a stranger!

- Generally **found it interesting** to meet someone new
- Some participants looked **more excited** than others
- No participant felt that the experience worsened their day

POV 2

We met Layla, a full-time Bank of America employee who returned to school in the Bay Area to study nursing.

POV 2

We were surprised to notice that *while she appreciated the usefulness that technology provided, she thought it didn't completely provide an adequate replacement to in-person college education.*

POV 2

We wonder if this means *older students learn better with something resembling an in-person education in some capacity.*

POV 2

It would be game-changing to *give older students some form of an in-person education system even within the online options that so many prefer.*

HMW 3

HMW provide middle-aged hybrid students with the benefits of in-person learning whilst at home?

Solution + Assumption

Key Assumption

Older students who are *taking classes **virtually** still **value access to in-person support*** resources like tutoring, constant feedback from instructors, group work.

Solution

What if we institute a cross-university program that uses partnerships to give students access to more resources across degree programs?

Experience Prototype

Surveyed older students about their experiences taking online courses and asked the following questions:

- *What was the **most difficult online class** you've taken?*
- *What did you **like** about taking that class online?*
- *What did you **dislike** about taking that class online?*
- *What kind of **interactions** did you have with your professor & office hours?*
- *Imagine there was a nearby school that offered resources specific to that course. Would that have helped you? Explain why or why not.*
- *Would you utilize services like **in-person tutoring** and group work sessions at a nearby school for that class?*

Experience Prototype

Questions

Answers

Likes/dislikes about online Classes:

Interactions with professors

Nearby school that offered resources specific to that course

Experience Prototype

Questions

Likes/dislikes about online Classes:

Interactions with professors

Nearby school that offered resources specific to that course

Answers

"Flexibility", "Organized videos
"High-quality images""
" Not having live interaction"

Experience Prototype

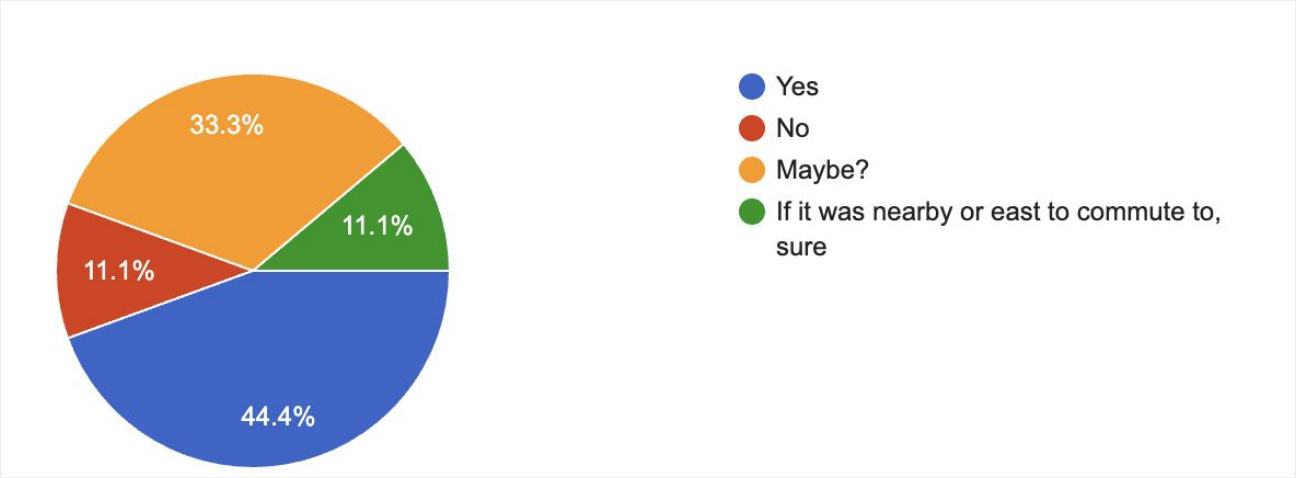
Questions	Answers
Likes/dislikes about online Classes:	*"Flexibility", "Organized videos "High-quality images"" " Not having live interaction"*
Interactions with professors	*"Via Zoom + setting up another meeting was hard" " No space for discussions" "Not easy to connect"*
Nearby school that offered resources specific to that course	

Experience Prototype

Questions		Answers
Likes/dislikes about online Classes:	→	*"Flexibility", "Organized videos "High-quality images"" " Not having live interaction"*
Interactions with professors	→	*"Via Zoom + setting up another meeting was hard" " No space for discussions" "Not easy to connect"*
Nearby school that offered resources specific to that course	→	"Yes, I think I would have gone to participate in person discussions and conversations."

Results

Would you utilize services like in-person tutoring and group work sessions at a nearby school for that class?



Top 3 Solutions

What if we institute a platform where students can find and create local support groups to stay on top of work, share their experiences and inspirations, and find community within school?

Interactive game with the goal to connect with as many different people as possible and receive weekly challenges to connect with specific people each week, and every new connection gets added to the user's list of friends for future communication

What if we institute a cross-university program that uses partnerships to give students access to more resources across degree programs?

POV 3

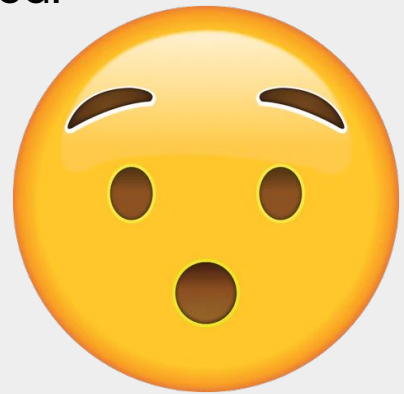
Peter

We met Peter, an administrator in academic programs at Stanford.

Stanford University

POV 3

We were surprised to learn that the biggest challenges he noticed had more-so to do with the various types of adult learners rather than the types of technology being used.



POV 3

We wonder if he believes that improving adults' individual skill sets should be prioritized over improving technology. It would be game changing to tailor academic programs to the specific skills and needs of each adult learner.

POV 3

It would be game changing to tailor academic programs to the specific skills and needs of each adult learner.

Summary

- It is difficult to replicate the in person experience of learning
- The social aspect of learning matters

ETHICS

Final solution

- Combines our Progress bar (targets accountability and study groups) with Social aspect (which targets connections)
- Main idea is to increase community / focus on social aspect
    - Smaller feature would be to allow students to share their study goals with their connections

Who This solution serves:

- Older students who are in school (primarily targets in person students)
    - We hope to expand solution to virtual students
- Part time students who find it hard to make connections with students
    - This solution will help them connect virtually through digital app and help connection blossom from there
- Does not really serve virtual students mainly because our solution is aiming to target social aspect to increase the sense of community

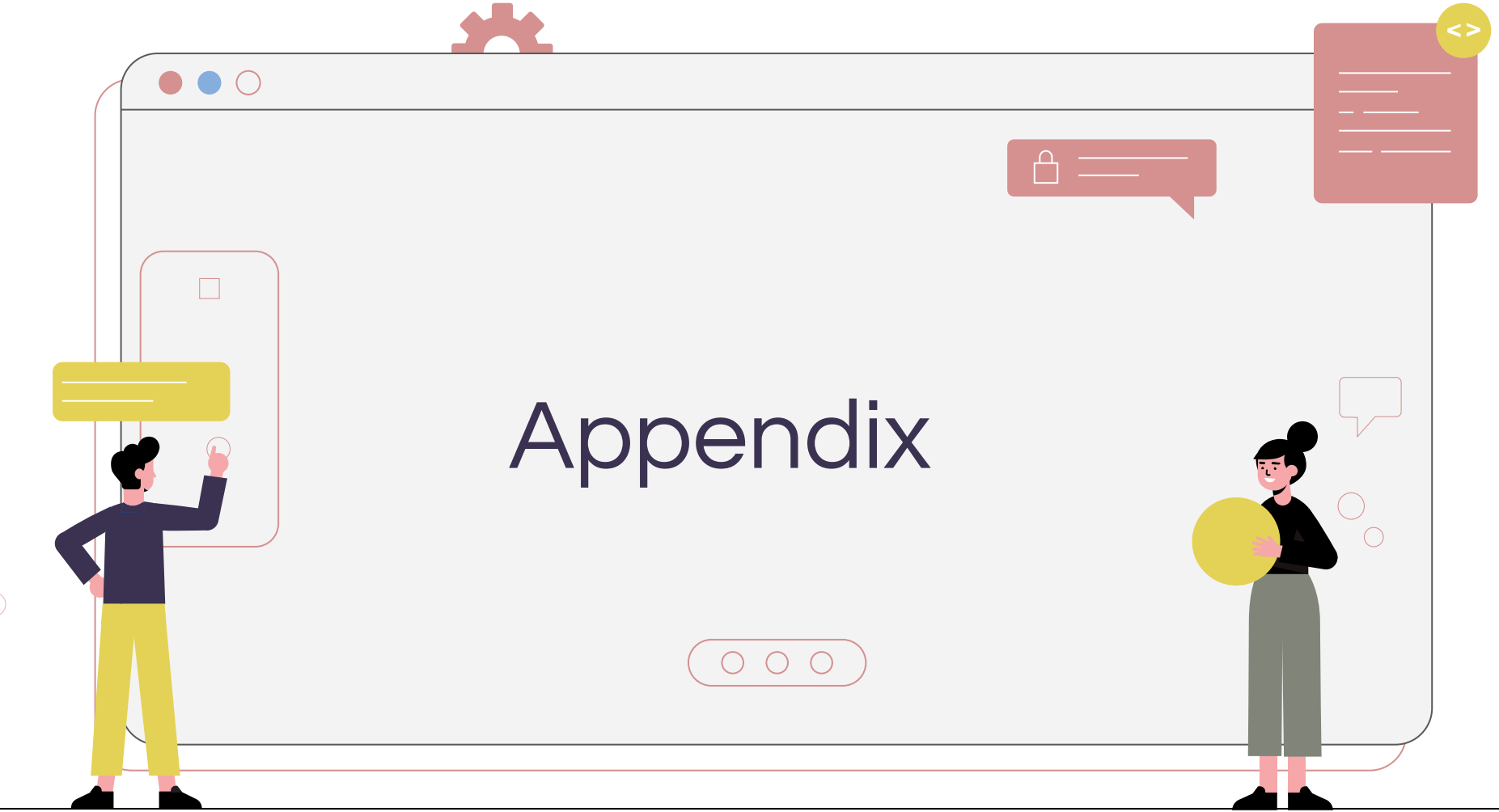
- Ethics
    - Can help students to feel like they are not alone on campus,
        - See others going through the same assignments, making progress, etc.
    - But… also can have the opposite effect
        - Think impostor syndrome - seeing others doing well or speeding through, even if it's not real, can make you feel less smart.
        - Have to find a way to deal with this

What's Next

- Solution: Combination of social aspect and progress bar/accountability
    - Give students the opportunity to meet others on campus, and then provide a chance from there to study together, share study goals, etc.
- Ethics:
    - Can help students to feel like they are not alone on campus,
        - See others going through the same assignments, making progress, etc.
    - But... also can have the opposite effect
        - Think impostor syndrome - seeing others doing well or speeding through, even if it's not real, can make you feel less smart.
- Concept + Prototype Videos!

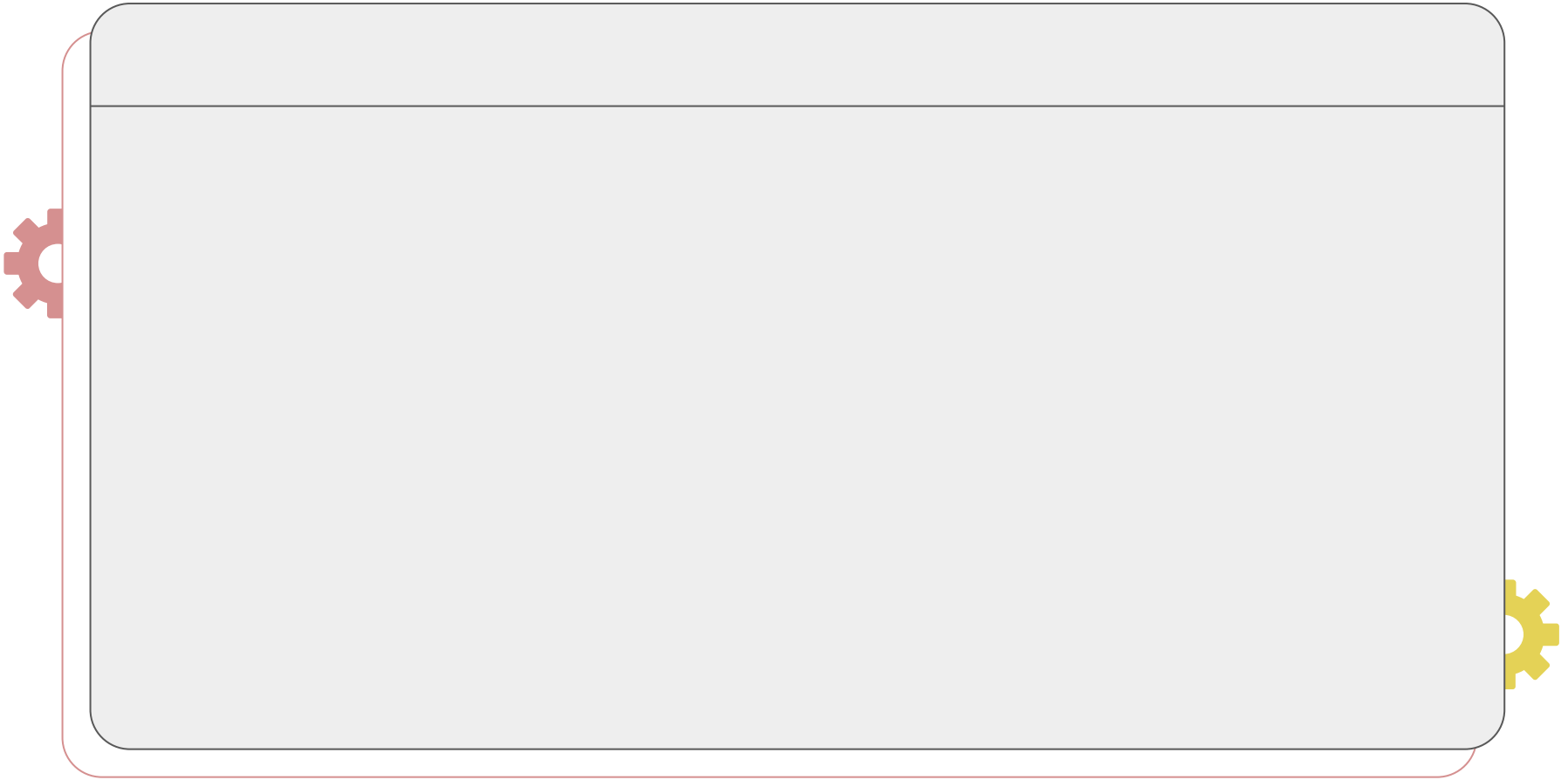
THANK YOU

Appendix



A's Empathy Map

All HMWs

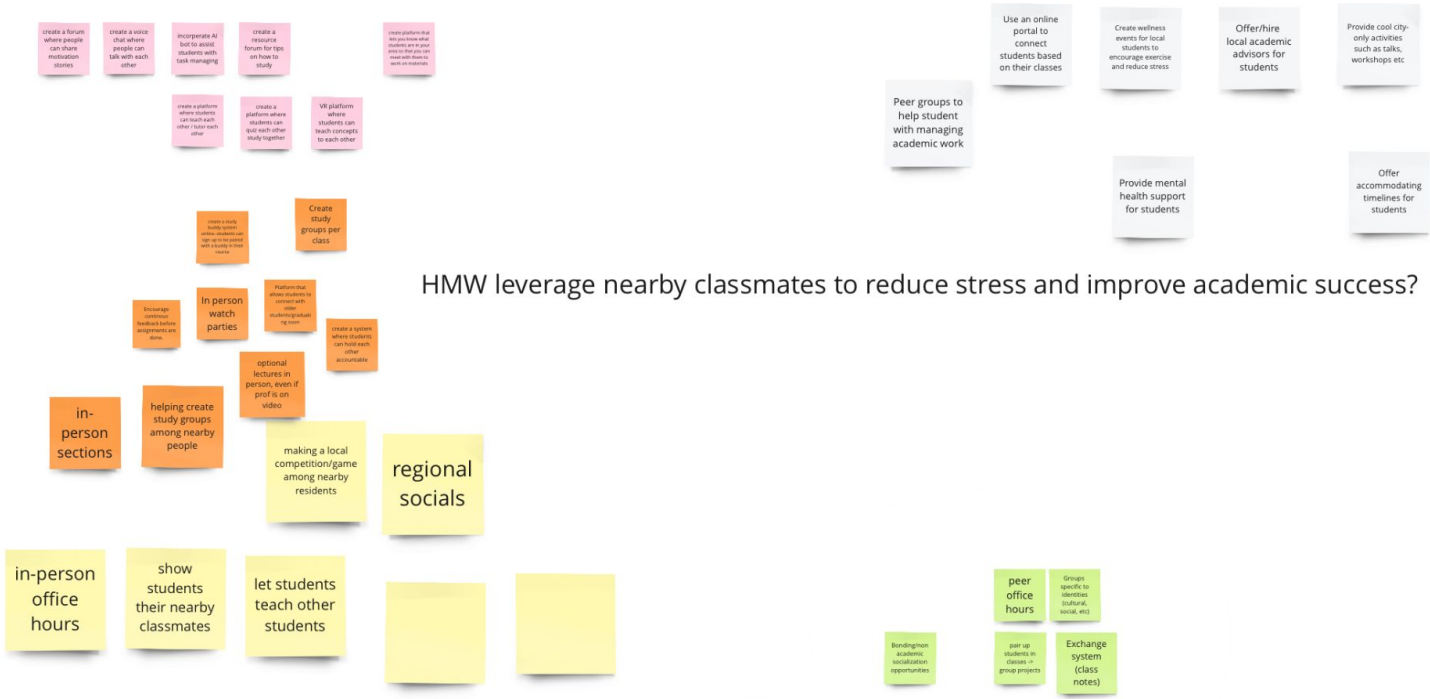


Appendix

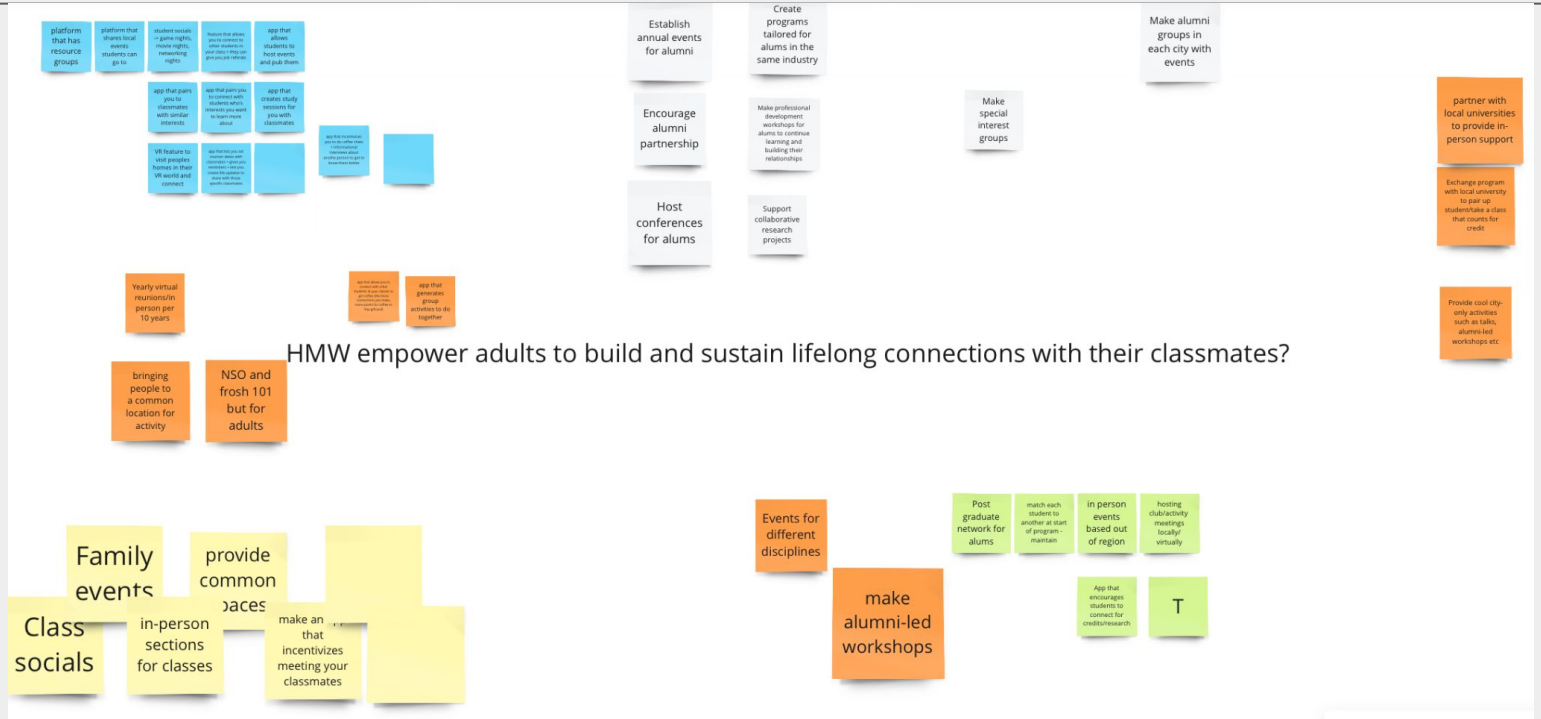
HMW 1

HMW provide students with the benefits of in-person learning whilst at home?

HMW 2


create a forum where people can share motivation stories
create a voice chat where people can talk with each other
incorporate AI bot to assist students with task managing
create a resource forum for tips on how to study
create platform that lets you know what students are in your area so that you can meet with them to work on materials
create a platform where students can teach each other / tutor each other
create a platform where students can quiz each other study together
VR platform where students can teach concepts to each other
Use an online portal to connect students based on their classes
Create wellness events for local students to encourage exercise and reduce stress
Offer/hire local academic advisors for students
Provide cool city-only activities such as talks, workshops etc
Peer groups to help student with managing academic work
Provide mental health support for students
Offer accommodating timelines for students
create a study buddy system where students can sign up to be paired with a buddy in their course
Create study groups per class
Encourage continous feedback before assignments are done.
In person watch parties
Platform that allows students to connect with older students/graduating soon
create a system where students can hold each other accountable
optional lectures in person, even if prof is on video
in-person sections
helping create study groups among nearby people
making a local competition/game among nearby residents
regional socials
HMW leverage nearby classmates to reduce stress and improve academic success?
in-person office hours
show students their nearby classmates
let students teach other students
peer office hours
Groups specific to identities (cultural, social, etc)
Bonding/non academic socialization opportunities
pair up students in classes -> group projects
Exchange system (class notes)

HMW 3


platform that has resource groups
app that pairs you to classmates with similar interests
VR feature to visit peoples homes in their VR world and connect
Yearly virtual reunions/in person per 10 years
bringing people to a common location for activity
NSO and frosh 101 but for adults
Establish annual events for alumni
Encourage alumni partnership
Host conferences for alums
Create programs tailored for alums in the same industry
Make professional development workshops for alums to continue learning and building their relationships
Support collaborative research projects
app that generates group activities to do together
Make alumni groups in each city with events
Make special interest groups
partner with local universities to provide in-person support
Exchange program with local university to pair up student/take a class that counts for credit
Provide cool city-only activities such as talks, alumni-led workshops etc
HMW empower adults to build and sustain lifelong connections with their classmates?
Family events
provide common spaces
Class socials
in-person sections for classes
make an that incentivizes meeting your classmates
Events for different disciplines
make alumni-led workshops
Post graduate network for alums
match each student to another at start of program - maintain
in person events based out of region
hosting club/activity meetings locally/ virtually
App that encourages students to connect for credits/research
T

Final Product of Deliberations

Artifacts