Education For Adults

Blain, Nolawi, Yarency, Yasser

Project Name and Value Proposition

- Who we are: **connectEd**
  - Our app is based around connecting older adults together so we wanted to include the word *connect* somewhere in the name
  - Focusing not just on any older adult, but specifically connecting adult learners who are taking the same courses or attending the same schools
    - Thus, we are combining the social and educational benefits of learning into one –> connection + education –> connectEd
- Value Proposition
  - connecting **people** through learning

Problem Solution Overview

Primary User:

- Older adult learners looking to connect with classmates in-person

Problem:

- As discovered during our interviews, older adults want to form in-person connections, regardless of whether they are taking courses in-person or virtually. Older students have the pain points of feeling socially disconnected from their peers and lacking a strong sense of community, and don't have the resources to easily foster new connections

Solution:

- A platform that connects older adult students to classmates taking the same courses, giving suggestions of students based on interests, age, geographic location, and classes. Also allow students to form or attend larger group social events such as study groups or supports students to host their own event

Market Research: Slack

What's Slack?

Slack is a top-down chat organization - even within groups it can come off as administrative, rather than natural

What hasn't worked for Slack

- Information Overload: keeping up with numerous channels may be overwhelming
- Notification Fatigue: too many notifications can cause fatigue, cause users to miss important messages
- Work-life balance: can blur the boundaries between work, school, and personal life. May cause difficulty in disconnecting from the platform to relax
- Complexity: numerous feathers, integrations, and customization options can be overwhelming for non-tech savvy users
- Privacy Concerns: conversations are stored and accessed by administrators. Users may have concerts about the privacy security of their messages
- Misuse: may have irrelevant or excessive messages, off-topic conversations

Market Research: Slack

What has worked for them?

- Real time messaging: allows instant messaging and real-time communication
- Organization and Search: provides structured way to organize conversions into channels
- Customization: allows users to create channels, set notification preferences
- File sharing: simple to share files and work across devices
- Channel-Based Communication: provides structures way to organize conversations
- Mobile-Accessibility: ensures users can access messages and information wherever they are
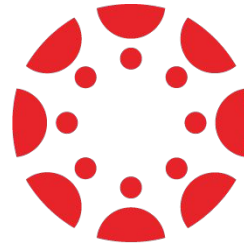
Market Research: Slack

What makes your solution concept unique?

Slack is a top-down chat organization - even within groups it can come off as administrative, rather than natural. Not many classes use Slack.
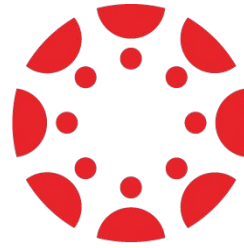
Market Research: Canvas

What's Canvas?

Central platform for teachers to assign homework, communicate with students, and manage their class

What hasn't worked for Canvas
- *User Interface: canvas user interface unintuitive or difficult to navigate for non-tech savvy older adults*
- *Lack of Customization: Canvas may limit the level of customization available to instructors and students, making a personalized and flexible learning experience more difficult*
- *Limited Mobile Experience: the mobile app version of Canvas might not be as user-friendly or feature-rich as the desktop version*
    - *can be a drawback for users who prefer mobile learning*
- *Instructor Practices: a students experience with Canvas is heavily influenced by the practices and choices of their instructors*
    - *Instructors who do not effectively utilize Canvas may lead to a negative perception of the platform*
- *Course Content: if the course content and materials are not well-organized or engaging, students may associate their dissatisfaction with the learning experience with the platform itself*

Market Research: Canvas

What's Canvas?

Central platform for teachers to assign homework, communicate with students, and manage their class

What has worked for Canvas
- Collaboration Features: has features like discussion boards, group assignments, and peer reviews
- Accessibility: ensures that users with disabilities can use, provides screen reader and keyboard navigation
- Grading and Assessment: efficient grading features for instructors, provides valuable feedback for students
- Integration Capabilities: integrates third-party tools and services that can improve learning
- Institutional Integration: many educational institutions have adopted canvas, consistent platform for students

Market Research: Canvas
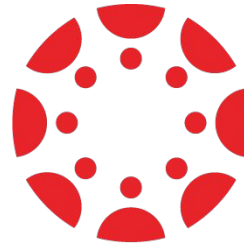
What makes connectED unique:

connectED aims to increase the engagement of students with their education by instilling confidence in olders students to create connections that will lead to opportunities in partnerships and group work, which enhance their learning journey. This solution aims to veer from having to work with class portals where with administration involved

Market Research: GroupMe
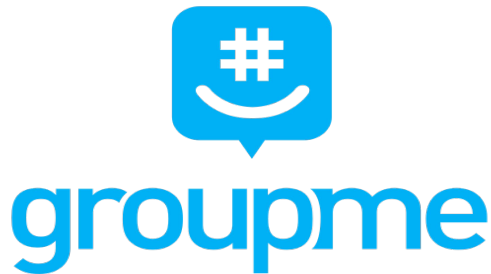
What is GroupMe?

Group messaging app that allows users to create and join groups with others, similar to whatsApp; Commonly used by students in educational institutions like Stanford.

What hasn't worked for GroupMe?

- Limited Features: primarily a messaging app, lacks advanced features found in other messaging platforms
- Spam and Unwanted Messages: large groups can create spam chats and cause fatigue in the user
- Intrusive Notifications: difficult to turn off notifications for really active groups
- Lack of End-to-End Encryption: messages could be potentially accessed by third parties
- Reliance on phone numbers: inconvenient for adult students who don't want to reveal their phone number
- Overcrowded Public Groups: large groups can be overcrowded and catholic, making it difficult to have meaningful discussions or interactions

Market Research: GroupMe
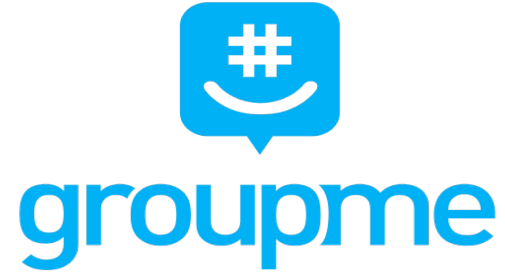
What has worked for GroupMe?

- Cross-Platform Compatibility: available on various platforms, IOS, Android, and the Web
- Simplicity: straightforward and easy-to-use interface, even for those who aren't tech savvy
- Accessibility: accessible without requiring students to create account or remember another username and password and can join using their phone number
- Media Sharing: students can share text messages, images, and videos
- Search Functionality: enables users to find past messages and content within groups
- Free to Use: free of cost, accessible to broad audience

Market Research: GroupMe
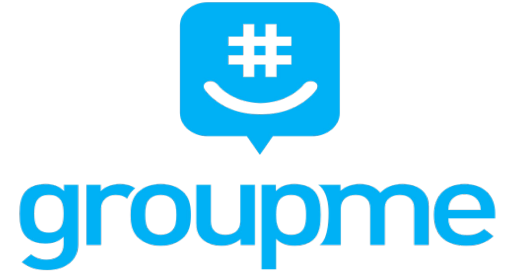
What makes your solution concept unique?

GroupMe is user-led, meaning that a student wanting to create a group chat with their classmates needs to go through the effort of manually adding every student, and continuing to moderate the groupchat. Our solution solves this by removing the effort needed to create these chats as the user will automatically be added to groups containing all their classmates for each class

What are the implications on your solution?
Encourages students to meet face to face, rather than just through messages.
Implications involve changing the norms of socializing, empowering connections and group work.
Some implications that may compromise is user safety, depending if users abuse the platform for exploitive behavior. We will have a report button to combat this in order to incentivize users to report any strange or inappropriate behavior.

Market Research: EdStem

What's EdStem?
Ed Discussion is an online threaded discussion platform that allows instructors and students to interact asynchronously by posting text comments and questions, files, and more to discussion forums.

What hasn't worked for them?
- Limited Features: capabilities may not meet the specific needs of some education or institutions
- Limited Content or Resources: availability of educational content, resources, or support materials within EdStem may not be as extensive as some students would like
- User Support: students who face difficulties or have questions may not receive timely or adequate support from Administrators
- Data Privacy and Security Concerns: concerns about privacy and security if EdStem handles sensitive student or institutional data

Market Research: EdStem

What has worked for EdStem?

- Asynchronous: students can ask non-urgent questions to administrators
- Cross-platform compatibility: works with the Web, IOS, and Android
- Communication: allows students to communicate with each other through commenting under each others threads
- Option for anonymity: students can post questions to the entire thread and choose to remain anonymous

Market Research: EdStem

What makes your solution concept unique?

- We encourage face to face interaction
- Students can rely more on in-person interactions to get their questions answered
- Instills confidence in students when it comes to making connections

Values in Design - Stakeholders & Ethics

THE BFFS - Ethical Implication

- If two friends use your product, how could it enhance or detract from their relationship?
    - Enhance: provide a way to connect with other students along with themselves if they're in a class together
    - Detract: If they're in a class together, maybe involving other people could hurt their individual relationship
        - Note: This does not seem like a likely occurrence, but it's worth thinking about
    - An interesting way to look at this is through the lens of current friends

THE BFFS - Q1

- How does your product change or create new ways for people to interact?
  - Provides a platform for students to find their classmates
  - Platform for students to attend and host larger group socials and events, leading to community building
  - Allows students to meet others in their class at individual and group level
  - Moves connections from online to in-person, even for virtual students, through using location to find nearby classmates

The BFFs - Q2

- Does your product fill or change a role previously filled by a person?
  - Sometimes you need a mutual friend to introduce two strangers, but this app helps breaks that barrier and allows you introduce yourself to a stranger
  - Like-minded people using the app, wanting to connect with other older students

Values in Design - Stakeholders & Ethics

BIG BAD WOLF - Ethical Implication

- What could a bad actor do with your product?
  - With the right information, a bad actor could cause damage
    - Having the location of users could lead to safety risks for users
    - Identifying information could also allow some form of identity threat
  - Really makes us consider the risk-reward of geolocation
    - If we go through with that feature, it needs to be especially secure
    - Maybe it's worth just having users input their own location information and completely bypass using any tracking location features.

BIG BAD WOLF: Q1

What does predatory and exploitative behavior look like with your product?

- Stalking and tracking the location of users
- Getting familiar with their schedule and whereabouts
- Hacking the accounts of users and potentially scamming classmates
    - Phishing

BIG BAD WOLF: Q2

What product features are most vulnerable to manipulation?

- Geolocation feature
  - We need geolocation so people can find study groups nearby
  - If geolocation is hacked, someone can know your whereabouts and put the safety of the user at risk.
- Identifying Information
  - Knowing someone's name, email, and phone number could lead to risk taken on by the user

BIG BAD WOLF: Q3

Who could be targeted by your product?

- Middle Aged Older Students (less tech savvy)
  - These are the main users of our product
  - Their locations and identifying info could be accessed, putting them at risk
- Families of these students
  - Indirectly affected
  - What if the bad actor decides to come to their house?

Stakeholders

Direct:

- Older adult learners
- Educators / professors
- Colleges & universities
- Us (creators/developers of app)

Indirect

- Families of adults using app
- Competitors/sites in same space (Canvas, GroupMe, etc)

Simple Tasks

1. User **wants** to be able to see other users also taking the same courses
2. User **wants** to make a connection and message another user taking the same course

Moderate Tasks

1. User **wants** to edit their profile information about themselves to get ready to connect with other users in the school
   a. Edit age/ DOB, current career, phone number, city of location, interests
2. User now has connections with 5 other users. User **wants** to get to know their connections better and host larger group socials or events

Complex Tasks

1. User **wants** to pin their favorite personal and group chats to make it easier to access for future reference. User finds that they are getting many messages so they **want** to mute group chats.

Tasks Displayed in Concept Video (in-order)

1. User **wants** to form a connection with another student taking the same course
2. User **wants** to meet more people and form a larger community -> find group events like study group
3. User **wants** to update their location to expand their network and meet new people taking the same courses as them while in a new location

Concept Video Boards
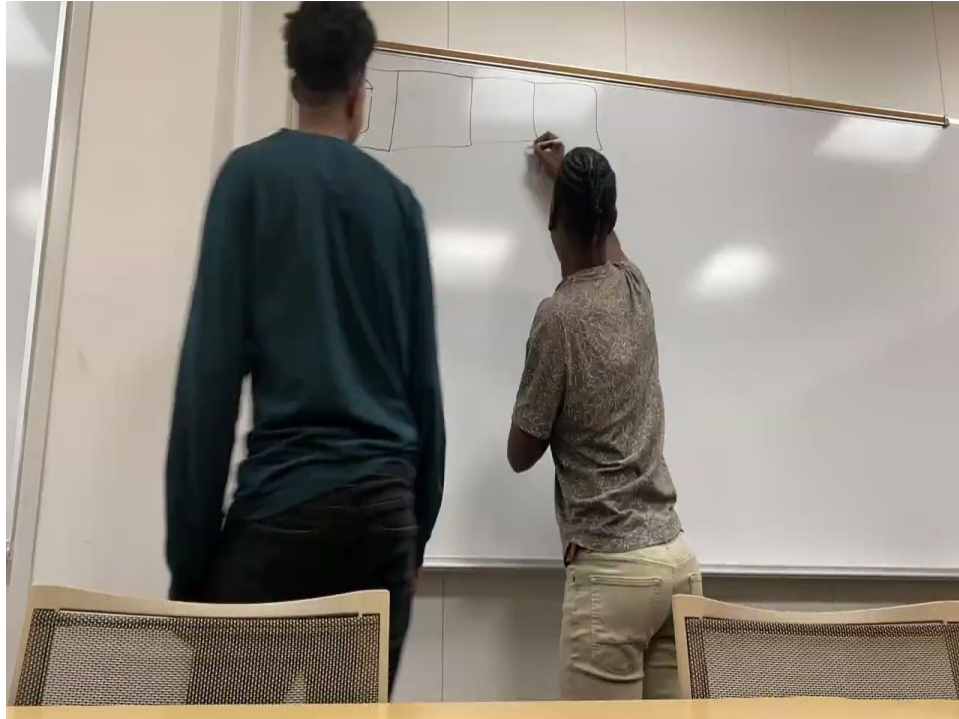
Final Storyboard
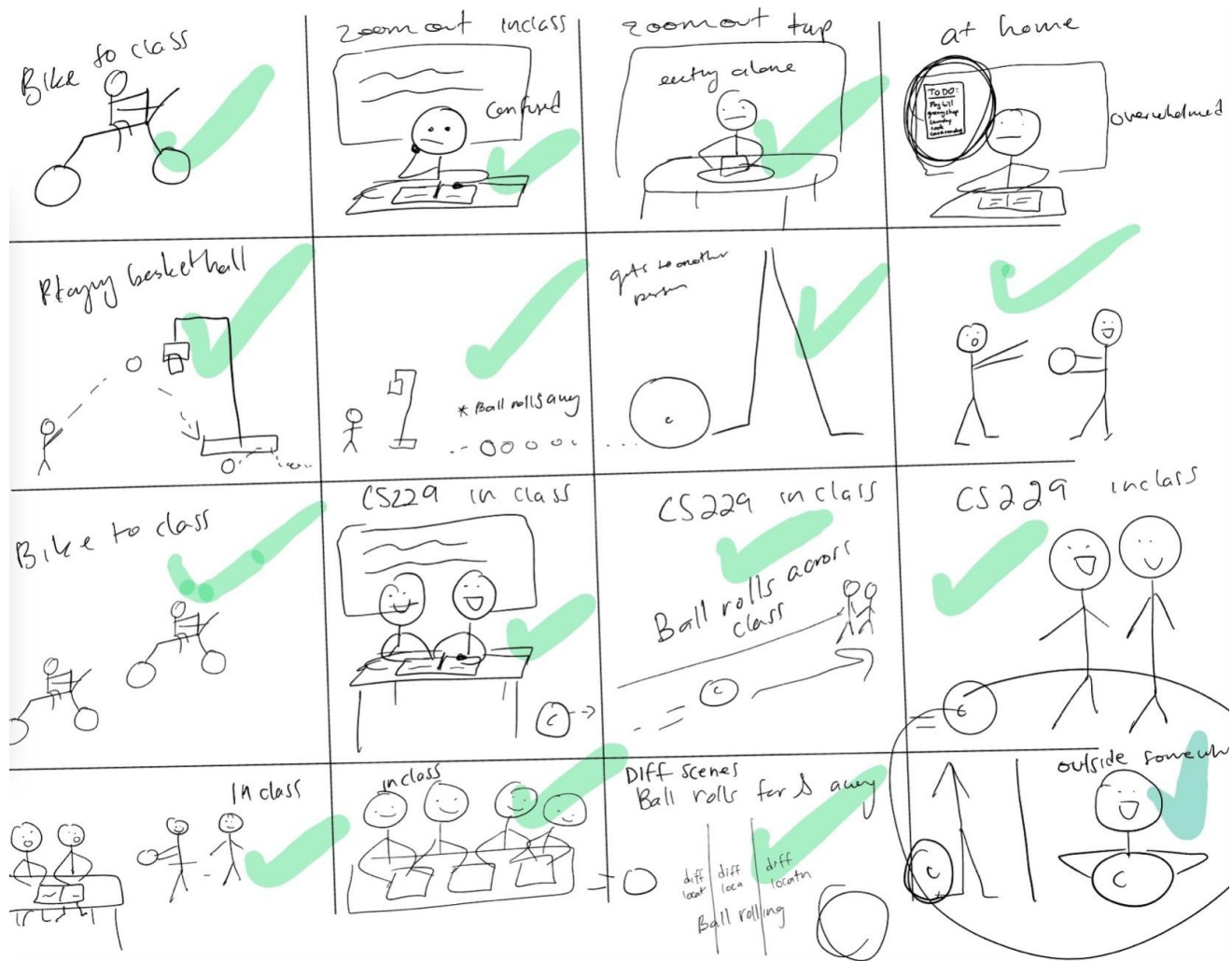
Concept Video

Youtube Link to Concept Video

Appendix

1. Task Process
2. Storyboard Process
3. Tasks generation
4. Storyline Brainstorm
5. StoryBoard version 1
6. Further ethical implications

Task Process

- Each member wrote 3 tasks
  - Simple
  - Moderate
  - Complex
- We put tasks together in a document
  - Together we analyzed tasks and discussed how they tied into our solution
- Selected tasks
  - As a team, we selected task that made most sense with our solution and the experience of the user

Storyboard Process

- Set a timer for 30 minutes and brainstormed context for our storyline
  - Picked out the actors
  - Used the "yes and…" method to generate multitude of ideas
  - Selected ideas that had strong ties with our mission to increase community within older students and reduce stress
  - Tied in three tasks
- White board and dry-erase marker
  - We began drafting our storyboard!
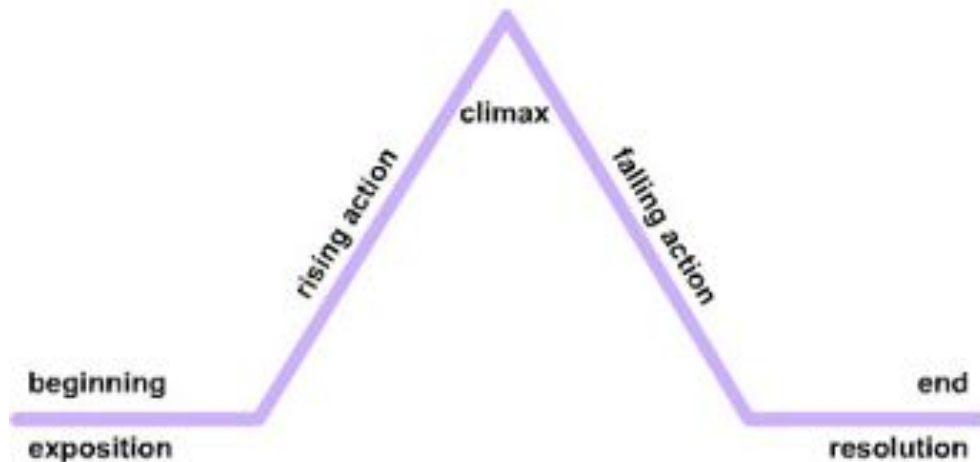
Example of Task Generation

1. Simple:
   a. The user can discover other older students taking similar classes or are in the same location.
   b. The user can add their courses, location, and other basic information
   c. User has received other user profiles as suggestions for connecting. User **wants** to view the other user's profile. They do so to determine if they are taking same classes and if they want to connect with other user
   d. they send a connection request to another user (kind of like linkedIn) to be friends. They are now friends and have each other on contact list within platform and can message each other
   e. User can find classmates taking the same courses as them, and reach out/message them
2. Moderate
   a. The user can connect with other older students or join a groupchat of other students taking the same classes or are in the same location
   b. The user can request/not select to connect with other older students. The user can also add class/general resources to the groupchats they're apart of.
   c. User is new to taking a course and does not know anyone. After class, User **wants** to create a basic profile about themselves to get ready to connect with other users in the school
      i. Age/ DOB, current career, phone number, City of location, interests
   d. User can create a study group based on their location
      i. Find classmates who are in the same school and living on campus, but also virtual students can find classmates living in the same city as them
3. Complex
   a. The user can create group chat(s), and upload documents.
   b. User now has connections with 5 other users. Users want to get to know their connections better. User **wants** to create a group social for connections to have a meal together before their next class.
   c. Users can host group socials to build a bigger community
      i. Dinner social
      ii. Attend on campus events
   d. User wants to block classmates that they do not want to message/receive messages from
   e. User wants to restrict location to only be viewable by certain classmates?

10:35

Context: Day to day older student struggling with
work. Lonely AF. Meets connector
Connects with another student
Finds out connected
New Connection connects
Student with a Support
group.

Actors: The student, connector, student #2
+ extras

Conflict: Lonely ⇒ connects ⇒ HAPPY
Community of older students

Key tasks:

- simple: make connection w/ another
older student

- moderate: user joins study group
& has more connections

- complex: Expanding location preferences
to make more connections.

A storyboard drawn on a whiteboard, titled "CONNECTED" (written vertically on the right side). The panels are numbered 1–20:

1. Scene 1 — MID SHOT — BIKING TO CLASS
2. CS 229 — In class confused & no one to ask / close up shot of confusion
3. Cooking alone in kitchen
4. DOING work @ home
5. Playing alone
6. Ball (connector) rolls away
7. Other student comes across the ball
8. P1, P2 — (connector) introduces persons 1 & 2 to each other
9. They connect & now bike together — Ball (connector)
10. CS 229 — Found community in class
11. Kicks ball
12. CS 229
13. TALKING!
14. STUDYING IN EVGR
15. Group is studying but ball (connector) falls out of bag — rolls away from floor
16. Diff location still rollin' — Down
17. rollin' — Elevator — Diff texture — Ball rolls thru diff locations B4 it reaches new person
18. Person picks up ball — closeup shot
19. focus on ball
20. Blurred background — CUT — FIN

Further Ethical Implications

Ethical Implications Pt. 1

Negative Ethical Implications:

1. Exclusivity and Cliques: There is a risk that this approach might inadvertently lead to exclusivity and cliques, leaving some students feeling left out or marginalized. Ensuring that the approach is inclusive and doesn't foster discrimination/exclusion is essential
2. Privacy Concerns: Facilitating connections between students should be done with consideration for privacy and consent. Sharing students' personal information without their consent can raise ethical concerns
3. Pressure to Conform: Encouraging students to connect might inadvertently pressure some students to conform to specific norms or groups, which may not align with their values or interests
4. Safety: Bad actors may take advantage of geolocations and target students, putting their safety at risk

Ethical Implications Pt. 2

Positive Ethical Implications:

1. Promoting Inclusivity: Encouraging students to connect and collaborate can create a more inclusive and diverse learning environment, where students from various backgrounds and experiences can work together

2. Building Confidence: Boosting the confidence of older students can be empowering and foster a positive self-image, which is ethically commendable

3. Fostering Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration and group work can prepare students for real-world teamwork, an essential skill for many professions

4. Reducing Administrative Burden: If the solution reduces the need for excessive administration and class portals, it may free up teachers and administrators to focus more on teaching and supporting students