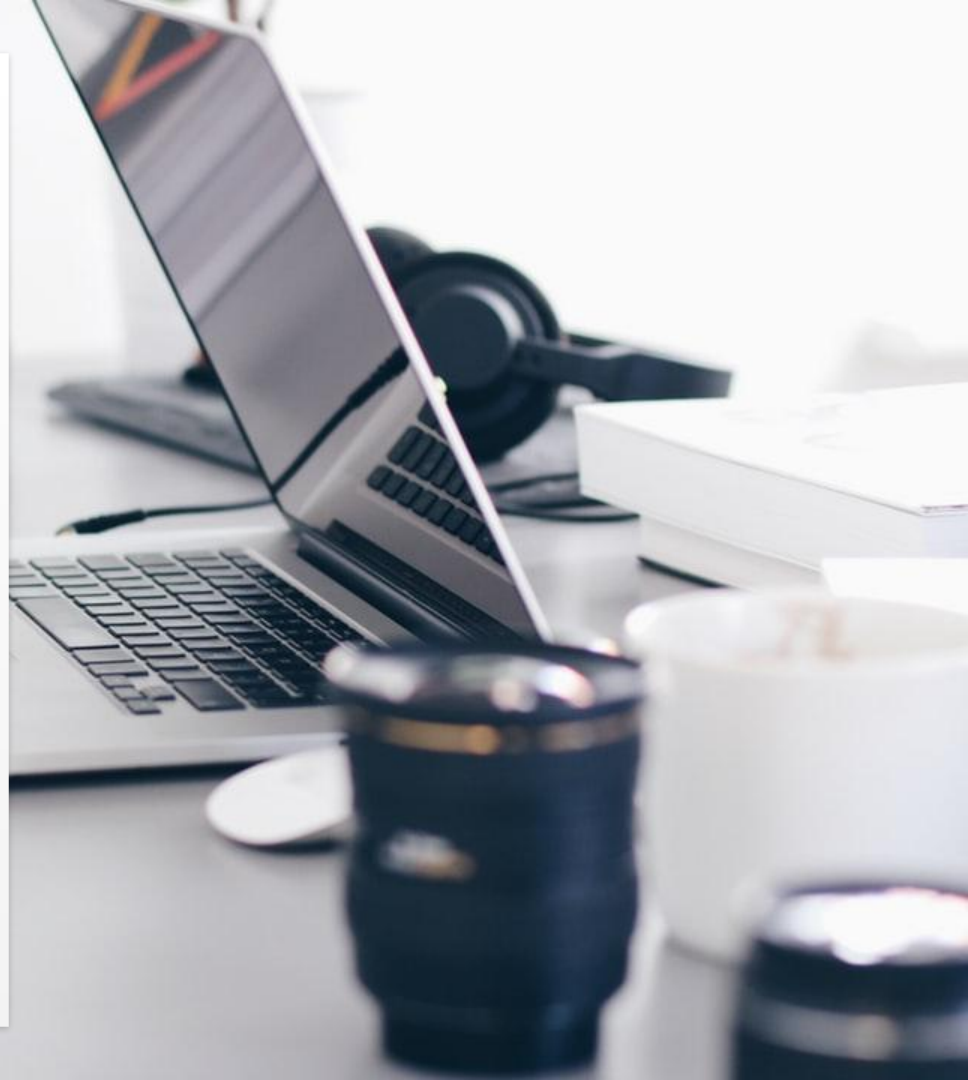


# Easing Life Transitions: Student Life



# Our Team



**Emily**

CS (2024)

Taipei, Taiwan



**Ekin**

CS (2024)

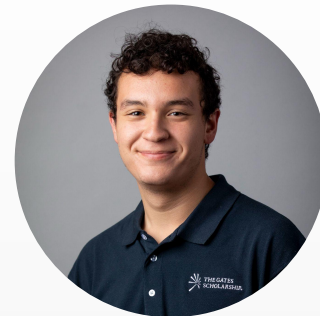
Houston, TX



**Enok**

CS (2023)

Leonia, NJ



**Christian**

CS (2023)

Wasco, CA

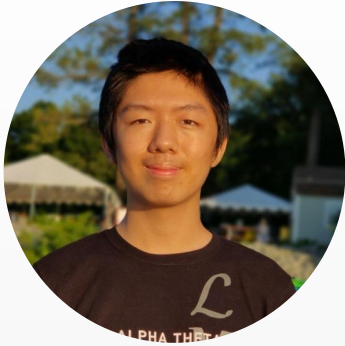


# Needfinding Methodology

User interviews

1

# Our Participants



**Jared**

he/him, 19

Northwestern



**Nicholas**

he/him, 21

UPenn



**Christine**

she/her, 21

Fresno State

# Extreme User



**Jacqueline**

she/her, 25

**Designlab**

UX Academy

**CUNY: Baruch College**

B.A. Business Administration

**Queensborough Community College**

A.S. Business Administration

**South Dakota State University**

# Interview Questions

Tell me about a big **transition** you had to go through as a student.

What **challenges** did you face when you started school at \_\_\_\_\_?

What was the **hardest** thing to adjust to?

Tell me about a time you felt **unsure about yourself** during your transition.

During those transitions, what **helped you the most**?

Where did you turn to to find **resources** or help in facing [your challenge]?

What are ways you've met some of your closest **friends/mentors**?

How did [your transition] change **due to COVID**?

Could you tell me more about **how you felt** when facing [your challenge]?

A blurred background image of a desk with various papers, a pen, and a binder. The papers are scattered, some with text and some with diagrams. A pen is visible in the upper left, and a binder is in the center. The overall scene suggests a workspace or office environment.

# Interview Results

Key quotes

2

“

Time management [was a significant life transition] because classes don't take up much more of your time. There's a lot of extra time, and I have to manage it in a way that's more efficient.

8



**Jared**

he/him, 19

Northwestern



“

*I have to figure out how to work, but also go to school, but also give myself enough time to study, but also give myself enough time for self-care and to hang out with friends.*



**Christine**

she/her, 21

Fresno State

“

*Re-discovering who I am is a significant life transition going into college and/or moving to a different country because no one is there to hold your hands.*

10



**Nicholas**

he/him, 21

UPenn

“

*I realized my identities were clashing so badly, like, you know, what a lot of immigrant kids go through in their teenage years. Yeah, I felt it in my 20s.*

11



**Jacqueline**

she/her, 25

CUNY: Baruch College



# Analysis

Empathy maps, insights, and needs

3





# Social Life

## TENSIONS

- Difficulty making new friends
- Missed friends back at home

## CONTRADICTIONS

- Felt need to reach out and initiate, but gets anxious doing it
- Surrounded by people, but lacked strong, genuine relationships

## SURPRISES

- Wanted friends of same age
- Met people often by chance

- Jacqueline
- Christine
- Nicholas
- Jared

Say 🗣️  
What are some quotes and defining words your user said?

"I didn't know anyone on my floor but wanted to reach out. I ended up striking up conversation with people in the bathroom."

"I was initially setting expectations for everyone to be like friends from high school."

"A lot of people I've met were through same classes, living together, or an academic program."

"...I am at least like 3-4 years older than my peers."

"They literally went to the same middle school, and high school, so they already had their friends."

"It was strange because college was the first time where there was no set (pre-established) soccer team."

"They're my saviors. I literally can't imagine what I would do without them."

"I made like so many friends... But I didn't find any close, close friends."

It is hard to say that any of the friends he's made thus far at UPenn can be "extremely strong friends"

Think 🤔  
What might your user be thinking?  
What does this tell you about their beliefs?

wants to reach out to people but is intimidated to reach out

thinks it is his responsibility to reach out to people

Places high value in her friendships

Wants to find friends similar in age

She didn't feel very close to her classmates (most were in their 30s).

Finds it hard to break in to a new environment, especially with existing friend groups

Soccer is a magical way for him to connect with people.

It is hard to make many deep friendships, let alone just many friendships, quickly in college.

Do 🤝  
What actions and behaviors did you notice?

Having a hard time explaining exactly where and how he made friends in college

missed his friends and time in India very much

Had trouble coming up with a "brother-like" friendship in college

He's the one reaching out to people more than others reach out to him

sounded a bit distraught when describing situations where he reached out to people

Laughed when talking about how she met her best friends in line at a club

Feel 🥰  
What emotions might your user be feeling?

feels in flux socially, desires to find a close group of friends

Feels lonely even surrounded by a lot of "friends"

excited and rejuvenated when talking about when someone reached out to him

Feels disconnected from the student body

# Time/Focus

## TENSIONS

- Difficulty balancing time across academics, social life, work, and personal health

## CONTRADICTIONS

- Need pressure to get work done but didn't like the pressure of deadlines
- Both too little and too much time leads to time management concerns

## SURPRISES

- Harder to manage time when things went online due to COVID

- Jacqueline
- Christine
- Nicholas
- Jared

**Say** 🗣️  
What are some quotes and defining words your user said?

"One of the biggest challenges for me was time management and COVID made it worse."

"I have to figure out how to work, but also go to school, but also give myself enough time to study, but ALSO give myself enough time for self-care and to hang out with friends."

As much as I want to, and I schedule enough time for myself, I can never make it work."

"...for the first year in community college, I think I slept like four hours every day."

"There's a lot of extra time, and I have to manage it in a way that's more efficient."

"I don't have a sense of getting things done when I have a lot of time, so I need external pressure in some sense, but I don't like that feeling either."

"That semester I only went out 2-3 times to get my grade up."

"I think I'm more motivated when there are other people, because I can focus better."

**Think** 🧠  
What might your user be thinking? What does this tell you about their beliefs?

Transitioning to college was very hard since time management wasn't as important in high school.

Thinks academic and social life are polar opposites

Wants to work with others in a space conducive to productivity

**Do** 🤖  
What actions and behaviors did you notice?

Rarely went out with friends to focus on studying

Slept for 4 hours each night to get good enough grades to transfer to Baruch college

Went to the library in the past to do work

**Feel** ❤️  
What emotions might your user be feeling?

Accomplished when able to stay on schedule

Feels motivated by other people to do work

Pride when she was able to stick to her time management.

Anxiety when she had to transition to online classes and lost in-person accountability.



# Mental Health

## TENSIONS

- Cultural anxiety and homesickness when moving to a new country

## CONTRADICTIONS

- Felt proud when able to juggle so many things, but also didn't feel supported

## SURPRISES

- Willing to put work over mental health ● Jacqueline
- No one there for them except counselor ● Christine ● Nicholas ● Jared

**Say** 🗣️  
What are some quotes and defining words your user said?

"I couldn't focus on studying because of drama with Korean international students and racism, so my GPA was really, really bad."	"I was going through so many struggles in my life. I was thinking about committing suicide."	"my identities were clashing so bad, like you know what a lot of immigrant kids go through in their teenagers. Yeah, I felt it in my 20s."
"My counselor helped me a lot to just be there, because I really needed anyone to listen to my story."	"As much as I want to, and I schedule enough time for myself, I can never make it work."	"I thought New York would be more similar to Seoul in terms of being in the city."

**Think** 🧠  
What might your user be thinking?  
What does this tell you about their beliefs?

doesn't regret putting her work and academic life before her personal time even though it negatively affected her mental health.	Exposure to new traditions, cultures, and financial environments is his most impactful and daunting life transition
Wants to live in a place that reminds her of home (New York vs Seoul comparison)	

**Do** 🏃  
What actions and behaviors did you notice?

Voice was strained when talking about her dark time in South Dakota.	Went back to Korea, which she sees as home, to reset	Sought out help on her own at the counseling center because her friends weren't helping her
Was very immediate in pointing out that his most impactful life transition to be his move to India	Prioritized her work over her personal health	

**Feel** ❤️  
What emotions might your user be feeling?

Felt hopeless when she had no one to turn to with her problems at SDSU	Feels more comfortable in a place that reminds her of home	felt unsure about making it through college her first semester because she was first-gen and also facing depression.
Feels uncertain about her cultural identity given her international background	Feels the need to fit in with each new environment	Sentimental about his previous homes (India, Virginia, St. Andrew's School)

# Mentorship

## TENSIONS

- Difficulty finding role models / mentors for career and academic planning
- Feel a lot of uncertainty about the future

- Jacqueline
- Christine
- Nicholas
- Jared

Say 🗨️  
What are some quotes and defining words your user said?

I generally try to take classes that friends are taking for a support network.

"I feel like I'm surrounded by a bunch of finance bros and I never really had a role model to look up too."

"I felt unsure of myself... when I was exploring my majors."

"But there's also visa issues, I kind of just had to figure that out on my own, you know, do research and teach myself."

"My major is relatively new and there aren't very many alumni with similar interest or background as me."

She was unsure about making it through college her first semester because she was first-gen and also facing depression.

Think 🤔  
What might your user be thinking?  
What does this tell you about their beliefs?

I wish there is a way to choose classes with more direction and easier access to detailed past experiences.

Thinks that there is no one like her at her school

Do 🤖  
What actions and behaviors did you notice?

Asks upperclassmen for advice when choosing classes

Asked me for a virtual coffee chat about my UX journey

Feel 🥰  
What emotions might your user be feeling?

Feels lost because she doesn't have mentors or alumni who act as role models for her.

Feels uncertain about his major and career path

## Insight

In a unstructured environment, people often make friends by chance.

## Need

Increase opportunities to meet others of similar age.

## Insight

Even existing friendships lacked depth and authenticity.

## Need

Overcome the superficiality of fleeting relationships.

## Insight

People need pressure to get work done but don't like the pressure of deadlines.

## Need

Create positive pressure without the stress.

## Insight

Students are constantly worried about their future academic and career journey.

## Need

Provide reassurance and guidance on next steps.

## Insight

Students like the feeling of being busy, but get overwhelmed when too busy.

## Need

Help students have a balance of busyness.

## Insight

Leaving home creates uncertainty, fear, and inclination to replicate their previous home environment.

## Need

Create experiences that make people feel at home.

# Summary

- Increase opportunities to meet others of similar age.
- Overcome the superficiality of fleeting relationships.
- Create positive pressure without the stress.
- Provide reassurance and guidance on next steps.
- Help students have a balance of busyness.
- Create experiences that make people feel at home.

**Thank you!**

Feedback and Q&A