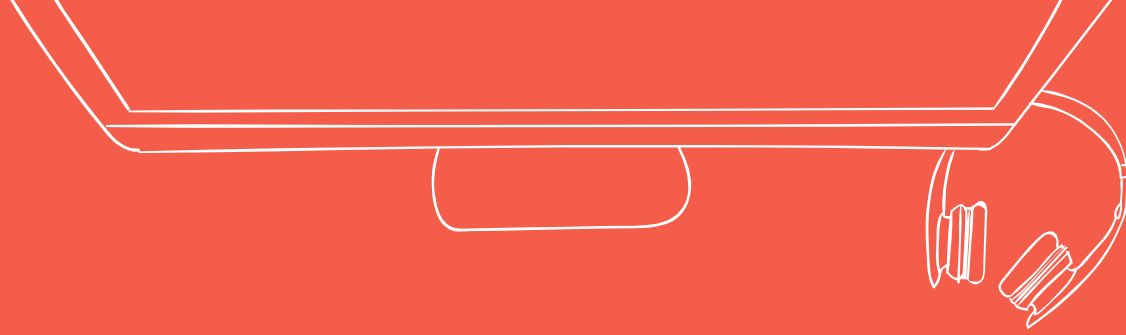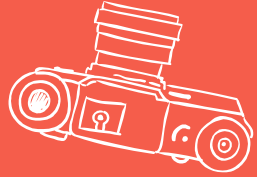# POVs & Experience Prototypes

Our Team: Connectors

Emily T.
CS (2024)

Taipei, Taiwan

Ekin T.
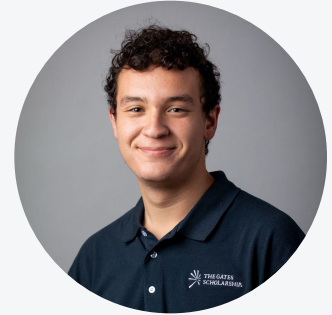CS (2024)

Houston, TX

Enok C.
CS (2023)

Leonia, NJ

Christian F.
CS (2023)

Wasco, CA

Studio Theme: Life Transitions

Problem Domain: Social Transition for College Students

Initial POV

We met Jacqueline, a Korean immigrant and a 25-year-old **extroverted college student** who goes to a commuting school in New York City.

We were surprised to notice that she **met her current best friends in line at a nightclub.**

We wonder if this means in an unstructured environment, she makes her **closest friends by chance.**
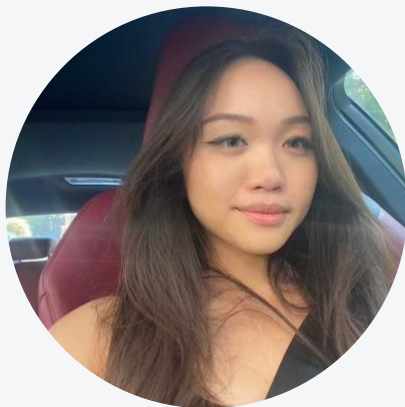
It would be game-changing to increase opportunities for Jacqueline to **meet more people** of her own age who she clicks with.

Additional Interviews

About Vy

- 21 year old, female
- Foothill college transfer to UC Berkeley
- First-generation college student
- International student from Vietnam

"As a transfer student, you're already like **feeling a little bit lost.** And I know some people don't feel that sense of belongingness. And I think being so far away from everybody just amplifies that. **Just because you're literally alone at home.**"

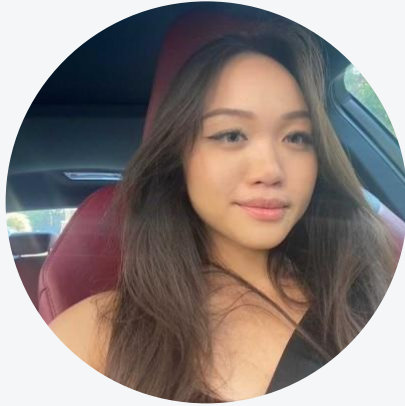**Vy**
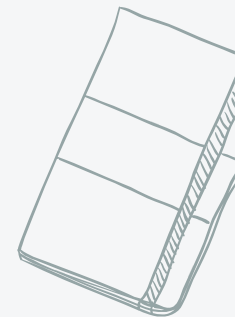
she/her, 21

UC Berkeley

Vy's Insights
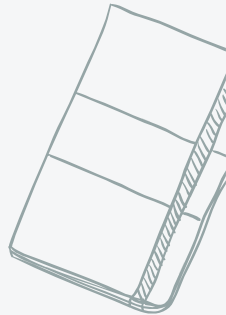
- Transfer students **lack sense of belonging,** difficult to engage in the community

- Most of her friends were other transfer students (first group of people she met and have similar experiences)

- **Closest group of friends were from study groups** because they "struggled together"

Vy

she/her, 21

UC Berkeley

About Benjamin

- 20 year old, male

- Junior at University of Pittsburgh

- From Leonia, NJ

"I know right off the bat if [a relationship with a new acquaintance] clicks, if things are going well, and if there's a [deeper] friendship here."

"[Attraction of close friends] is like intrinsic or something."

Benjamin

he/him, 21

University of Pittsburgh

Benjamin's Insights

- Finds that **friendship is a matter of having an immediate connection** with a person

- Finds that his closest friends are the ones who he reconnected with from high school

- Gravitates towards people that are like-minded and have the same goals

Benjamin

he/him, 21

University of Pittsburgh

About Dennis

- 20 year old, male

- Junior at Stanford

- From Saratoga, CA

Dennis

he/him, 20

Stanford

"Physical proximity has a heavy influence. When I'm at home, not at Stanford, I spend a lot of time with high school friends. [But] When I'm on campus, I would have less interaction with [those high school friends] and others at home."
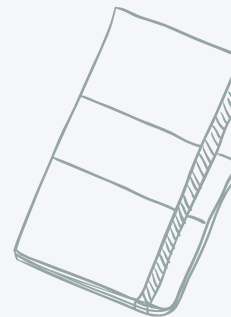
Dennis' Insights

- Physical proximity is a critical factor to who he interacts with at a given time

- "Trauma bonded" with his friends: spending hours a week studying together, going to office hours, and staying up very late

- Joining a small community was important to him, growing closer with fewer people

Dennis

he/him, 20

Stanford

Revised POVs

POV 1

We met Jared, an introverted sophomore at Northwestern University who has just spent his first quarter on campus.
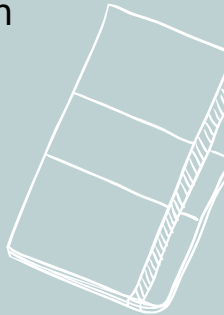
We were surprised to notice that although Jared was an introvert, he would try to strike up conversations with the people he runs into in his dorm bathroom.

We wonder if this means when he happens to be in the same environment with strangers and without something to be occupied with, he feels the urge to start a conversation.

It would be game-changing to use Jared's urge to help him engage with strangers to form meaningful relationships.

HMW create an environment that induces conversation?
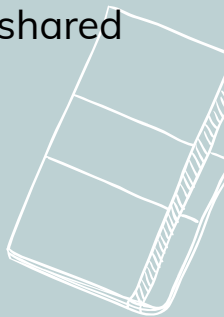**HMW** make it easier to develop a connection with a total stranger?

POV 2

We met Vy, a transfer student from UC Berkeley who identifies herself as an extrovert, and did her entire sophomore year online.

We were surprised to notice that she developed her closest relationships in study groups because they "struggled together".

We wonder if this means she can form stronger connections with people that go through similar experiences as her.

It would be game-changing to help Vy build a deeper connection with her friends through shared experiences.

HMW help friends sustain and create shared experiences?
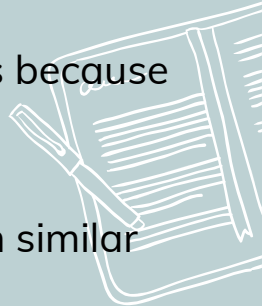
Brainstorming

HMW make it easier to develop a connection with a total stranger?

- Have a way to know what that stranger is interested in
- Sets of questions to ask to get to know what they're like
- **Matchmake (based on courses) to facilitate new connections (Solution 1)**
- Get a group of people share their deepest darkest secrets
- Hot seat but w only two people and you ask unlimited questions
- *Force four people to take CS147 together* 👀

    ...

HMW create an environment that induces conversation?

- Have like a wristband or something that says how open you are to meeting people
- Potential friends near you radar (people who would be open to conversation)
- Automatically schedule time and place to meet someone new
- **Deep conversation starters (make people vulnerable) (Solution 2)**
- Superlatives for friend groups
- Virtual group call rooms that people can join at any time

    ...

HMW help people create and sustain shared experiences?

- **Reminder to reach out to friends you haven't talked to in a while (Solution 3)**
  a. Based on photos and videos
  b. Import photos, Find faces
- Recommend nearby places/events
- Find mutual connections between friends

    ...

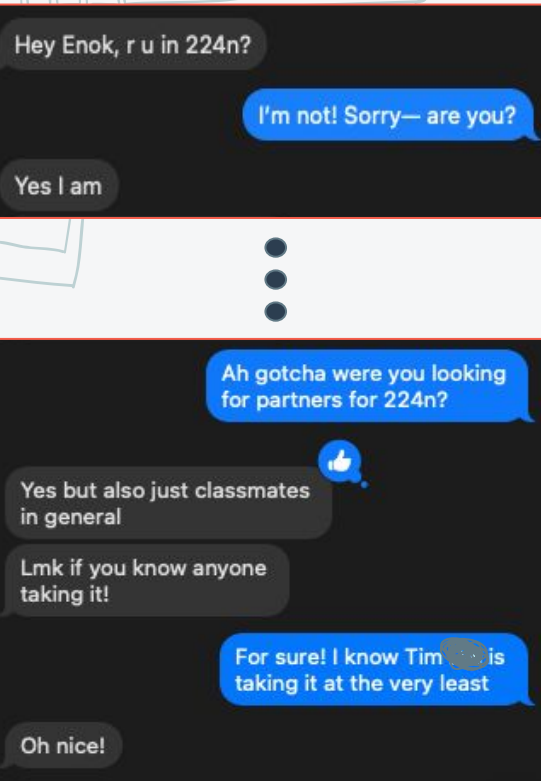**HMW** make it easier to develop a conversation with a total stranger?

Solution 1: Matchmaking based on shared courses, clubs, etc.

Assumption: People will put in the effort to meet up with someone with common attributes as them

Experience Prototype

*Brief initial conversation with Michelle +
Enok on common class

- Found two friends (Tim and Michelle) **taking the same class**

- Connected the two **by introducing Tim to Michelle,** and vice versa, and **observed whether they reach out to one another**

- Once they did, asked Tim about the overall experience

Tim

He/him, 21

Stanford

Result

Things that worked

- Having both Tim and Michelle reach out to us whether we have the same classes as them or not

- Tim had a "**very smooth and efficient" interaction** with Michelle from the start

Things that didn't work

- Getting to know one another deeper in personal contexts outside of the class material

Surprises

- Tim was **willing to interact actively with Michelle** (and vice versa) from the get-go

New Learnings

Become friends right away

E.g. shared with one another about how everything is going, and common friends

Way to know more people

"I think it's great to get to know more people on campus!"

More companionship

"It's very nice to have a friend taking a same class with me, so it doesn't feel like I'm all alone."

Validity + New Assumptions

Assumption: People will put in the effort to meet up with someone with common attributes as them

Valid? Yes!

Both Tim and Michelle was more than **willing to reach out** to one another due to their **shared class**

New Assumption:

People can develop **deeper relationships** beyond class material

HMW create an environment
that induces conversations?

Solution 2: Deep conversation starters

Assumption: People will be willing to open up to surface-level friends

Experience Prototype

Prepared a set of **personal questions** → Reached out to **an acquaintance** → asked questions on zoom → received feedback

Sriya

she/her, 19

UPenn

Result

Things that worked

Questions prompted a lot of conversation topics that we **would not have otherwise talked about**

Things that didn't work

Had already done something similar with friends (**wasn't new to her**)

Surprises

Opened up to us about her past including information about her family, relationships, and friends

New Learnings

Opportunity to open up

"It creates a **foundation that both groups can be really open with each other...** rather than just letting for fate control how well you know each other."

Deepen existing bonds

"I think I would **do this with my best friend** just because I feel like she knows so much about me but also we're constantly changing humans."

Validity + New Assumptions

Assumption: People will be willing to open up to *surface-level friends*

Valid? No

- Sriya was very open to answering all of our "deep" questions

- BUT she mentioned that she would do this with her **best friend**

HMW help friends sustain and create shared experiences?

Solution 3: Photo reminder to reconnect with old friends

Assumption: A photo is able to reignite past connections

Experience Prototype
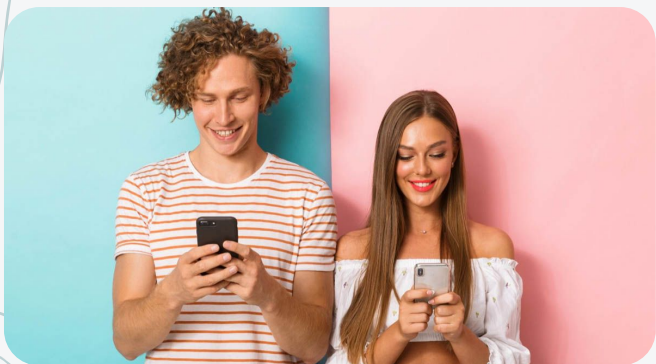
*Did not have permission to share her photo / texting content

- Reached out to Karen with a photo of **Karen and a friend of hers**

- Asked her if she would feel inclined to **reach out** to that friend

- Observed how how she and her friend would **react**

Karen

she/her, 21

First Generation Student

Result

Things that worked

Felt **encouraged to reach out to her** friend that she hadn't thought about in a few months.

Things that didn't work

The friend she reached out to **did not respond,** so it ended up unfortunately being a one-way interaction

Surprises

Karen **reached out** to her friend **very quickly** *(within a day!!)*

New Learnings

- Someone reaching out to you doesn't necessarily make you feel inclined to reach back
  - Photos may or may not ignite emotions for different people

- People prefer just texting to reach out, rather than photo + text

Validity of Initial Assumption + New Assumptions

> **Assumption:** A photo is able to reignite past connections

- **Valid? Both Yes & No**

  - Karen **reached out to her friend** that she **otherwise would not have**

    - **But her friend didn't reach back**

- **New Assumptions:**

  - Seeing an old photo with a friend creates a **sense of nostalgia** for most.

  - Reaching out to person X means that person X will reach out back to you

Summary

- **Solution 1:** People are willing to put the effort to reach out to someone with shared courses

- **Solution 2:** Worked but was not new to the person (had already done something similar with her friends)

- **Solution 3:** Some may be willing to reach out, but others not

Thank you!

What questions do you have?

Appendix I

HMWs based on POV1:
1. HMW introduce him to random people to interact with?
2. HMW make it easier to develop a connection with a total stranger?
3. HMW help humans become more sociable creatures?
4. HMW leverage common spaces to increase the chance of meeting people?
5. HMW encourage people to engage with their community?
6. HMW remove the stigma of talking to unacquainted others in a shared setting?
7. HMW create an environment that induces conversation?
8. HMW make it safer to approach strangers?
9. HMW find people nearby that have similar interests?
10. HMW simplify the process of reaching out to strangers?
11. HMW remove the sense of awkwardness that comes with being in the same environment with strangers without something to be occupied with?
12. HMW increase urges to strike up conversation?
13. HMW give people something to talk about?
14. HMW leverage awkward silences to increase social interaction?
15. HMW introduce people to strangers that they vibe with?
16. HMW help people discover if they vibe with another person?
17. HMW help people quickly develop meaningful conversations?

Appendix II

HMWs based on POV2:
1. HMW increase the number of study groups people are involved with?
2. HMW induce more meaningful shared experiences between people?
3. HMW divvy the burden of struggles between friends?
4. HMW make studying more personal?
5. HMW make it more likely that you'll run into the same people (your friends) by chance?
6. HMW make common struggles the best part of friends' lives?
7. HMW make common struggles refreshing instead of painful?
8. HMW help friends sustain and create shared experiences?
9. HMW remove the need to have shared experiences to build a deeper connection?
10. HMW artificially create non-artificial experiences?
11. HMW make it easier to share real experiences online instead of in person?
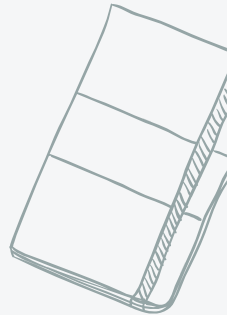
Appendix III

New POV3:

We met Dennis, a junior at Stanford who enjoys fostering community in his dorm and wishes to interact with friends who are far away from him more easily. **We were surprised to notice** physical proximity plays a big role in the relationships he both purposefully and inadvertently decides to engage with. **We wonder if this means** he has a hard time maintaining online interaction, and thus, prefers in-person interaction. **It would be game-changing to** use the concept of proximity to help online interaction more engaging.

HMWs based on POV3:
1. HMW make virtual spaces like a dorm?
2. HMW reframe what proximity means in a virtual world?
3. HMW decrease friction in online interactions?
4. HMW make online interactions more like in person?
5. HMW normalize online friendships?
6. HMW build a physical connection online?
7. HMW create shared online spaces?
8. HMW make online interactions more engaging?
9. HMW remind people to engage with long-distance friends?
10. HMW give people an incentive reconnect with long-distance friends
11. HMW make virtual spaces more like physical spaces?
12. HMW decrease the sense of distance between two people?

Appendix IV

Potential Solutions based on (HMW help people create and sustain shared experiences?)

1. Give media recommendations (e.g. TV shows, movies, books, podcasts, news articles, etc.) to groups of friends
2. Recommend nearby places/events (e.g. restaurants, raves, concerts, etc.) for groups of friends to go to
3. Gamepigeon but with a random person on campus
4. Shared memories album for friend groups
5. Games/competitions you can play with your friends
6. Write down experiences you had with friends to reminisce on later (like photos but textual)
7. Reminder to reach out to friends you haven't talked to in a while
   a. Based on photos and videos –
   b. Import photos, Find faces,
8. Hobby matching (e.g. sports, shows)
9. Photos/Videos-Places Association App
   a. Mapping of photos/videos with places (on a world map), and you can filter by friend name as to where you took the photo
   b. Gives you like a facebook memories
10. Share entire life history with friends
11. Get friends' families to reach out to each other
12. Find mutual connections between friends
13. Superlatives for friend groups – random generator; games for friend groups
14. Create a library, work ambiance with friends

Appendix V

Potential Solutions based on (HMW create an environment that induces conversation?)
1. Organize and advertise events (kinda like on calls tho)
2. Have ice breaker ideas on the wall
3. Have like a wristband or something that says how open you are to meeting people
4. Potential friends near you radar (people who would be open to conversation)
5. Automatically schedule time and place to meet someone new
6. Set up a group chat
7. Deep conversation starters (make people vulnerable)
8. Superlatives for friend groups – random generator; games for friend groups
    a. Get people to know each other better, how to get closer to one another
9. Game where a topic comes up, and people are supposed to talk about it
10. Game where you do charades but for other people in a group and people try to guess who you're imitating
11. Virtual group call rooms that people can join at any time
12. Transport people to social environment
13. People are provided with Icebreaker questions
14. Platform that provides an anonymous Q&A for groups that one would normally feel uncomfortable reaching out to

Appendix VI

Potential Solutions based on (HMW make it easier to develop a connection with a total stranger?)
1. Matchmake (sophmates style) – friend tinder idea – facilitate new connections
2. Give a pair or a group of strangers a set of challenges/tasks to complete
3. Have pre-packaged conversation topics
4. Have a way to know what that stranger is interested in
5. Sets of questions to ask to get to know what they're like
6. Icebreaker app, add people to your contacts directory, and there's some sort of preliminary question
7. Group matchmaking app
8. Games/competitions you can play with random people to meet them
9. Matchmaking based on shared classes, clubs, etc.
10. See strangers' past
11. Access to all strangers' photos
12. Force two people to stay in a room with each other for 20 hours straight
13. Fly people to an island for one month
14. Put people in a game show
15. Force two people to get to know each other and then quiz them (like the newlywed game)
16. Get a group of people share their deepest darkest secrets
17. Hot seat but w only two people and you ask unlimited questions
18. Force two people to build a start-up together
19. Force four people to take CS147 (any class) together
20. Speed dating for strangers
21. Force four strangers to take a class together
    a. Recommends people who share the same courses and matches them