

Assignment 1 Pres Notes

Introduction Slide

- List and introduce team members
- There wasn't one specific problem domain that jumped out at us, so we decided to gather unique perspectives on focus from some fascinating people and look for commonalities
- We interviewed 4 people who each : an **accomplished Artist**, an **Olympic Athlete**, a **high school student ADHD**, and an **experienced Yoga instructor**.
- Each had interesting things to say about his or her experience with focus. Ultimately we were able to draw some insights and infer some of their needs.

Needfinding Methodology

1) Jenny O'Dell, a renowned Artist

Who

- her work, which centers on combining online images, has been exhibited all over the world
- she also teaches at Stanford, and is my ArtStudi160 professor

Why we chose her for two reasons:

1. her work requires intense, prolonged focus, and
2. because she spends so much time on the web looking for images, distraction is never more than a click away

How recruited / Where they were interviewed

- reached out to her via email
- I interviewed her at McMurtry Building, the new art building, where she spends her days working and teaching

Results

- When we met with her, we observed her working for about 10 minutes and then asked her to describe specific instances in which she needed to focus.
- As she talked, there were a few things that stood out.
- 1) value **separating work space and non-work space**, and noted how as an artist without a studio or permanent office this can be particularly challenging
 - “my office is in the living room ... I didn't leave work today”
- 2) surprising: **take breaks** or else you burn out and/or work suffers
 - “can't treat yourself like a machine”
- 3) **Reminder of current task**: would love some way to keep track of task at hand since she mentioned she often forgets what she's doing which feels to her like “walking into a room and forgetting why you came in”

2) Alexander Massialas, an Olympic Fencer

Who

- Fenced in the 2012 Olympics
- ranked 3 in the world

Why chosen

- Any sport requires focus but fencing in particular, a game that is as much a competition of the mind as it is the body, calls for an even greater amount of focus

How recruited

- Mutual friend, reached out to him on Facebook

Where they were interviewed

- Over Skype (he's training full time in SF)

Results (main takeaways)

"I try to practice the stuff I'm weaker at because I understand it's better to not win and learn something than win and practice habits you already have"

- **Motivated by specific goals:** in practice, getting better
 - why he doesn't mind getting yelled at by coaches
 - why he practices actions he's not as good at even if that means losing a practice bout
 - Meanwhile, in competition it's about winning, so will ask asks himself if a given behavior is furthering that goal or not

"then I'll talk to some friends and then start watching who I have next"

- **Breaks:** alert but not too hyped up (plans first action in bout, watches the guy he will fence next but also listens to quieter music and visual, stay engaged but give oneself breaks
- **Rhythm:** came back to this again and again -- how he gets ready to focus (listening to music before hand), how he describes the state of focus (moving in rhythm) and even refocusing (humming to himself when he gets lost)

3) Celia Malone

Who

- high school student has ADHD

Why chosen

- we know as students that one of our hardest jobs is focusing on our work when there is so much distracting us
- we were particularly excited to talk to Celia because she is diagnosed with ADHD

How recruited

- emailed the RF to establish contact, but ultimately texted Celia to set up the interview

Where they were interviewed

- in her living room: one of the places where she studies and does homework

Results (main takeaways)

- **physical space**
 - doesn't get distracted as much in her room where she's used to doing work
- **stress: how emotional state impacts focus**
 - before a math test she's too nervous to focus
- **one thing that I'm doing → single-tasking:**
 - doing a math problem kept jumping around

4) Lorraine Tam

Who

- Has been teaching Yoga since 2004 & meditates daily

Why chosen

- An expert in helping others helping others focus on positions, awareness and mindfulness

How recruited

- reached out to her via email

Where they were interviewed

- I went to her yin yoga class at Yoga Source and then talked with her

Results (main takeaways)

- **Focus comes from breath**
 - all about breathing regularly and not reacting to emotions
- **can be learned**
 - more of a skill
- **Surprising: Group focus**
 - when people are surrounded by others trying to focus they are better able to focus

Insights

- focus is analogous to finding your rhythm
 - Alex, Lorraine (breathing)
- can be hard to keep track of the task at hand
 - Jenny, Celia, Lorraine
- you cannot focus forever, need to take breaks
 - Alex, Jenny, Lorraine, Celia

Needs

- find personal rhythm
- keep track of task at hand
- take breaks

Summary

- 1) Interviewed award-winning Artist, Olympic athlete, high school student with ADHD and Yoga Instructor to gather enormously different perspectives by people who excel or struggle with focus in unique ways
- 2) Built out an Empathy Map
- 3) Delivered insights and identify needs

Questions