

# POVs and Experience Prototypes

## Assignment 2

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### **Introduction**

#### **Problem Domain**

Our problem domain is career path guidance. We found a need for resources to make better informed decisions about careers and what educational paths to take. We explore current guidance practices and examine the pros/cons to build more insight in this domain.

#### **Initial POV**

We met Orestis, a software engineer who grew up in Cyprus and went to university in France. We were amazed to learn that he had an interest in software engineering but did not pursue it until he took a Java class in university, which caused him to switch majors from chemical engineering. It would be game changing to give students the opportunity to learn about careers earlier on in their academic life.

#### **Additional Needfinding Results**

To gain more insight on our initial POV, we conducted four more interviews this week. We hoped to learn more about other experiences apart from Orestis'. Our key findings are as follows:

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We talked with Jess, the director of worship and creative arts for a ministry next to Palo Alto High School. She is 28 years old and loves working at the church with a passion. She mentioned that she did not feel comfortable giving advice to younger people out of fear of leading them astray. This seems interesting for someone of her age and position.



We spoke with Tiffany, a 35-year-old physician. She went to UCLA for undergraduate and medical school, and when speaking about her education, she made very clear decisions about her career path. Also, mentoring was built into the curriculum in medical school, so it gave her a good idea of what sort of job she was after. She did mention that her current job is more difficult than she had anticipated, but she is still very content and enjoys the challenge.

We met Xinyi, a master's student at the University of Washington. She is studying Linguistics and is currently doing NLP research. She also did a data science major at the University of Michigan as an undergraduate. Although she has interests in both computer science and linguistics, her university doesn't allow students outside of a specific major to

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attend career fairs for that major. This prevents her from attending the career fair for computer science, restricting her from speaking to companies she may be interested in.

Lastly, we talked with Josh, who is a sophomore in high school located in New York. When we asked him about career guidance in his school, he brings up that he has an academic counselor who was assigned to him by the school to discuss that kind of topic. However, he doesn't find much help speaking with her as he feels his career choices aren't traditional and prefers to speak with his friends instead.

## Revised POVs and HMWs

### Tiffany's POV

We met Tiffany, a 35-year-old physician. We were amazed to realize that although she recommends talking with a variety of people in a field of interest, she believes mentoring will only take you so far without personal experience. It would be game changing to improve mentorships through interactable and personal experiences closely related to a profession.

### Tiffany's HMWs

How might we...

- Teach lessons that come from personal experience through mentorship?
- Use mentorship to guide individuals who are clear about their career choice into specialities?
- Connect mentees with people both early on in their careers and more veterened professionals?
- Accurately prepare people for the intensity and difficulty of a career?
- Help people interested in careers where jobs are not readily available?
- Develop a small group environment for mentorship?
- More accurately depict the flexibility and skillset of different careers?
- Prepare and mentor students interested in careers that present diverse challenges?
- Give resources to students interested in fields which need to be chosen early on? (ex: medicine)
- Connect similar minded people for mentorship?

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- Incorporate mentorship into professions that don't have it built-in within their education?
  - Incentivize young people not yet thinking about careers to consider mentorship?
  - Find professionals who are eager to mentor students pursuing their career path?
  - Provide an incentive for professionals to mentor students?
  - Create new benefits that can come from mentoring?

### **Jess's POV**

We met Jess, who is 28 years old and a director of worship and creative arts for a ministry next to Palo Alto High School. We were amazed to realize that someone of her age who already had a profession still wanted to get mentored and did not feel comfortable being a mentor herself despite her prominent position as director. It would be game changing to help her gain the confidence to comfortably participate in mentorship.

### **Jess's HMWs**

How might we...

- Connect people in similar professions?
- Inform others to become interested in a profession?
- Make professionals more confident to mentor?
- Provide tools to make professionals be more confident?
- Organize career meetups for anyone to attend?
- Make mentorship less daunting?
- Make searching for a mentor easier?
- Help people become aware of career path options?
- Help answer people's questions about a profession?
- Gather answers to common questions people may have about a profession?
- Better inform people who are curious about a profession?
- Connect people who have similar questions?
- Better inform professionals so that they are more comfortable being mentors?
- Provide a comfortable environment for people to meet up?
- Provide answers to specific questions regarding a career?

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## Xinyi's POV

We met Xinyi, who is 24 years old and is currently a Master's student at the University of Washington. We were amazed to realize that her school did not support a way to learn about internships in different disciplines. It would be game changing to open opportunities for all students, regardless of major.

## Xinyi's HMWs

How might we...

- Connect college students to internships that do not line up with their major?
- Provide a space where students can approach varying companies during a career fair without restriction of the university?
- Encourage colleges to support students who pursue careers outside of their major?
- Help colleges publicize internships to their entire student body?
- Make looking for internships easier for students?
- Provide internship guidance to students seeking information?
- Help students gain information about specific fields explore other career options?
- Develop a safe and private platform for people to mentor each other?
- Help students meet people working in careers that they are interested in?
- Provide guidance and education regarding unique interdisciplinary fields?
- Leverage private messaging to connect professionals and students?
- Educate undergraduates about master's degrees and programs?
- Incorporate financial motivations and interests into searching for careers?
- Provide information surrounding time commitment of careers beyond what people have seen firsthand?
- Provide resources to students earlier in the job application cycle?

## Josh's POV

We met Josh, a 14-year-old sophomore in high school who lives in New York. We were amazed to realize that although his school provides him with a counselor and schedules sessions to discuss his academics in a one-on-one conversation, he doesn't feel comfortable talking with an adult about his career preferences and relies more on friends

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and friends of friends to help. It would be game changing to help him make informed choices on career paths in an environment he feels comfortable openly discussing his thoughts and interests.

### Josh's HMWs

How might we...

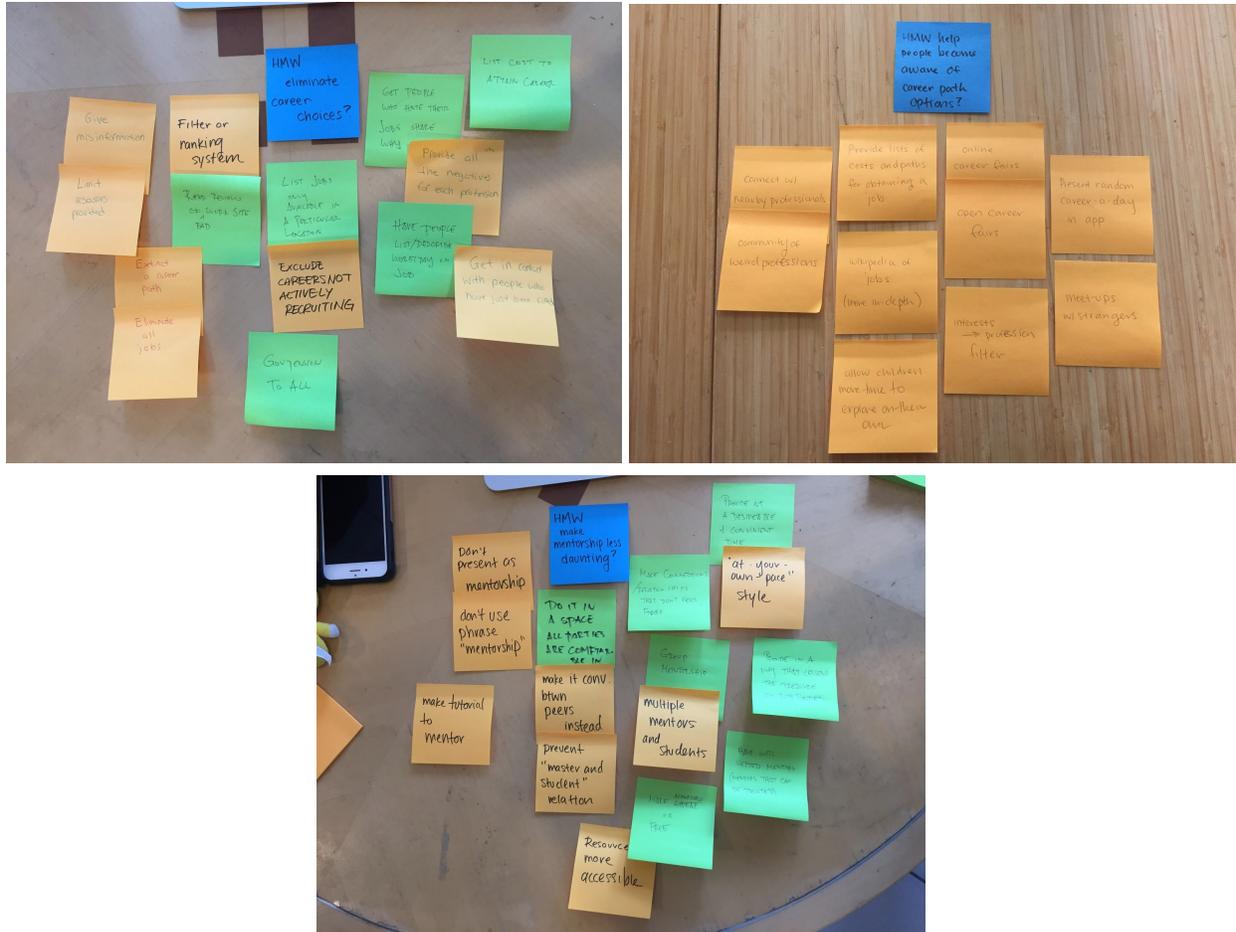
- Directly connect high school students to professions?
- Make the process of choosing a career path less stressful or uncomfortable?
- Eliminate career path choices?
- Utilize friends to help each other make career choices?
- Make high school students more open to talking with adults?
- Make school counseling more effective?
- Provide career answers to high schoolers in a convenient way?
- Present information to high school students in a non-intimidating way?
- Connect high schoolers with relatable mentors?
- Create an environment for students to connect with mentors?
- Lower a student's discomfort with meeting/talking to mentors?
- Provide resources for learning about less traditional career paths?

## Best HMWs and Solutions

From all the HMWs mentioned above, we decided upon the following three:

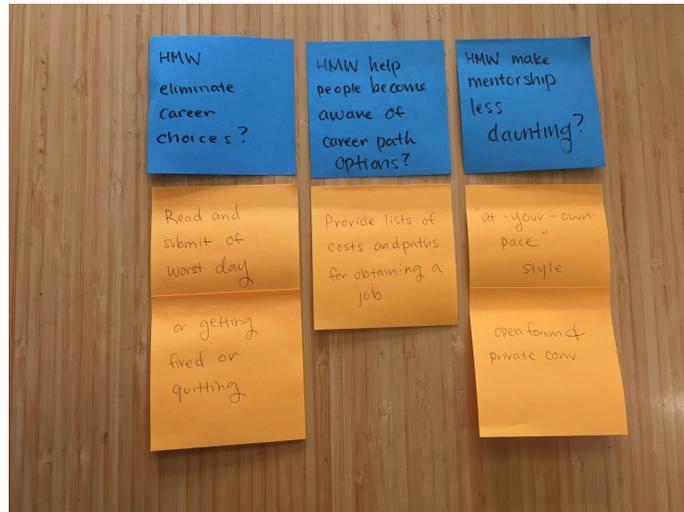
How might we...

- Eliminate career choices?
- Help people become aware of career path options?
- Make mentorship less daunting?



After brainstorming solutions for our best HMWs, we came to the following solutions:

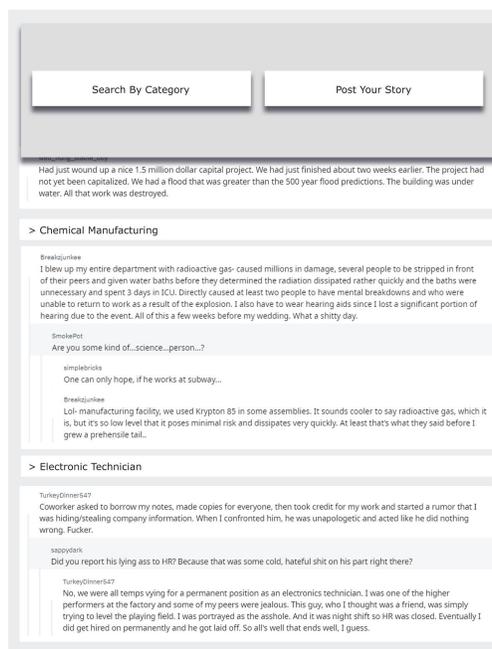
- Read and submit stories of the worst day at work, getting fired or quitting from a job, or general stories about people hating their jobs
- Provide lists of costs (monetary, time, etc.) and educational path for obtaining a job
- Create a at-your-own-pace scheduling that includes one-on-one conversations as well as an open forum for mentors and mentees



## Experience Prototypes

### Prototype 1: Bad Day

This prototype tests the assumption that people gain insight to make choices from listening to others talk about negative stories.



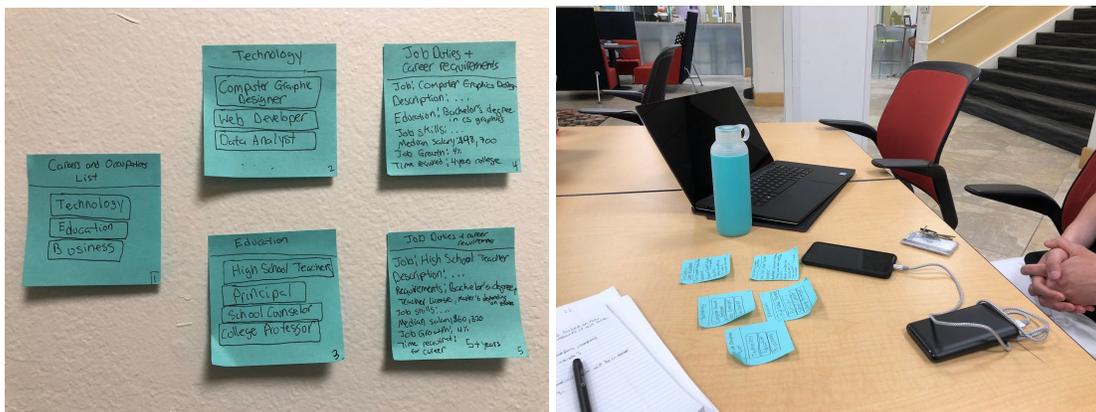
The prototype provides the user details of a bad day people have experienced in a given career. We spoke with Kate to test this prototype and asked her to talk about her thought

process and explain her overall experience reading the stories. She told us that she would find such an application helpful and informative but would be concerned posting stories herself. Though she questions the validity of stories, she sees use in finding careers and companies to work for. “Not knowing the downsides of roles is definitely an issue” Kate mentions and explains that she mostly gets these types of stories from friends and those around her.

From this prototype, we learned about the concern of anonymity skewing with the validity of stories, but despite that, the stories presented do help the readers gain insight about specific types of careers.

### Prototype 2: Career Resources

To test the assumption that people will make choices about careers based on how long it is to obtain and how many resources it will take we made a prototype. The prototype was made out of post it notes that lists potential occupational fields that can be selected to ultimately reach information about a specific occupation. Specifically we provided two examples, one for a job description for a computer graphics career and another for a highschool teacher.

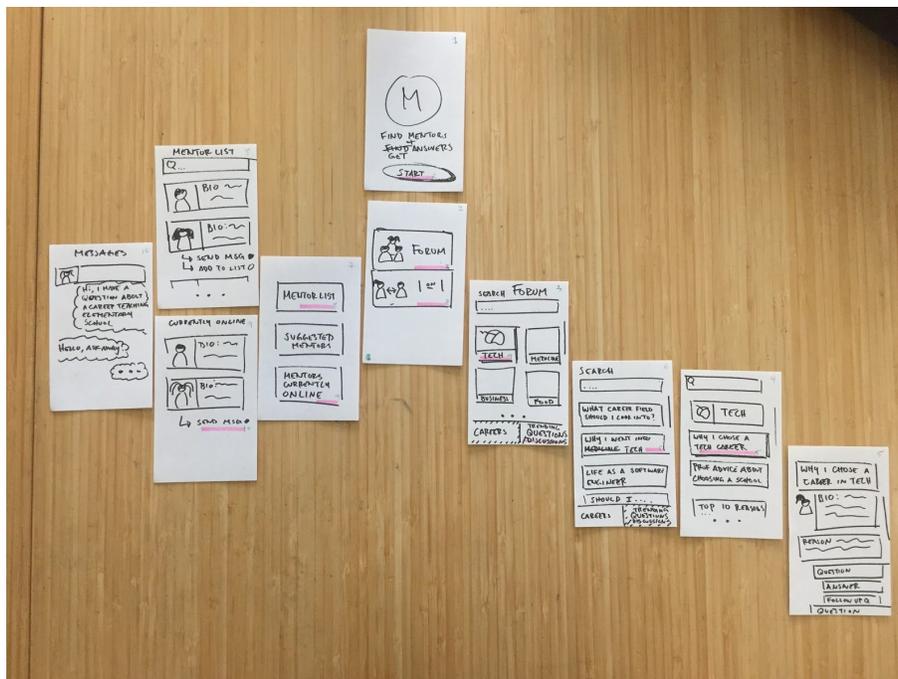


To test the prototype, we interviewed a Stanford freshman at Old Union and had her explain her thought process while interacting with the prototype. We then asked her what information she cared the most about in the process and said that average salaries for the professions was the main thing that stuck out, but amended her answer to include that she felt that she cared about other qualities that were not in the prototype such as the impact of the career on society and specifically which companies have careers that provide this

form of impact. We learned that this user found the layout of this prototype to be serviceable, but wished that there was a way to look at specific companies for a given profession and what companies impact on society were, which we want to test further. Overall, our assumption was not completely valid in that time did not seem to be an important factor for the user, since she is already a college student, and while the user found the average salary to be the most important quality in the prototype, in actuality she actually valued other qualities, as described above. A new assumption we can learn from this prototype is that people care about the impact of their career on society in addition to the impact on themselves.

### Prototype 3: Mentors & Answers

This prototype is based on the assumption that an uncomfortable component of mentorship is not having control of when the mentoring occurs.



To test this prototype we interviewed two college students (Berkeley, Barcelona) that we met on the Stanford campus. We asked them about their current mentor-mentee experience and then asked them to walk through our paper prototype. In the process, we asked them about their preferences regarding their comfort with forum style question and answer mentoring and 1-on-1 mentoring. Both students were very receptive to the help

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that the prototype aims to provide. The student from Barcelona voice that he preferred face-to-face interaction but the 1-on-1 aspect of the prototype would be useful and convenient. The student from Berkeley voice great excitement about the prototype and exclaimed that many of his fellow students who stress about connecting would professionals would find great comfort in using the final product of such a prototype.



## Conclusion

The prototype that we found to be the most successful was our “Mentors & Answers” prototype which focused on the assumption that an uncomfortable component of mentorship is not having control of when the mentoring occurs. We saw enthusiastic feedback regarding this prototype and also believe that it can add the most value towards our initial goal.

Overall, our 4 new interviews this week gave us more insights into pain points that people have, both in search of mentorship and capability of mentoring others. We learned that even successful professionals may be nervous about mentoring others. In addition, we saw the difficulty of learning about and entering creative fields. Our findings remain consistent with our previous hypothesized HMWs revolving around giving young people more exposure into career fields: both the positives and negatives.

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# Appendix

## Empathy Maps

### Tiffany's Empathy Map

#### Feel

- Felt content with her career choice and job path
- Was very clear about going into medicine
- Was happy about the built-in mentorship within medicine

#### Think

- Big forums aren't effective
- People new to fields and more experienced in fields offer a variety of different advice
- Personal experience is more important than what one could report about their career

#### Do

- Was taking care of her baby while talking to us
- Was waiting in line and kept checking to see how her child was doing and where the line was
- Seemed to be relatively private about her path

#### Say

- Both of her parents were engineers
- They encouraged her to go into science and a role with jobs readily available
- When thinking of a job, she wanted it to be flexible, to teach and test different skills, and to be in constantly changing situations
- She chose to go into medicine during high school, it was a very clear cut choice for her
- Advice: talk to people who have been doing their job for a while as well as new hires. Both beginning and end of careers are very different in terms of lifestyles, families, etc. Figure out what you want
- Thoughts on 1v1 vs forum: depends on the student/situation, how big the forum is
- 1v1 and smaller groups are best
- She thinks mentoring was cool but feels like "there's only so much you can train" - you need your own personal experience. In medical school, mentoring is built into the curriculum
- She took a while to figure out her speciality
- "When is school and training, you think you study and pass a test and that's it. But in reality, every case is different" -> which she also enjoys this push/pull that is challenging yet exciting

### Jess's Empathy Map

#### Feel

- Was very enthusiastic
- Seemed worried about the future of her career

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- Insecure about her ability to be a mentor
  - Fortunate to have been offered her current position
  - Confident about Stanford lingo
  - Passionate about her faith
  - She is drawn to the bigger purpose of the job (connection to morals)
  - Grateful for the other volunteers/workers helping her
  - Wants mentorship
  - Unsure about what challenges might come from her current career
  - Worried about not knowing what advice to give

#### Think

- Loves the church and cares about religion in her life
- You can pursue career not related to your major
- It is important to volunteer
- It is fun to talk to and help students working on a project
- She had enough time to invest in other people seeking answers
- She did not need to rush to complete her current responsibility
- Interviewers might be interested in volunteering
- Volunteering is fun
- A career involving music is wonderful
- A job that has varying responsibilities is more enjoyable
- Moving cross-country to pursue your career is okay
- Fun to coordinate events that many people will enjoy

#### Do

- Was wrapping up a fair that they had at high school
- Speaking to other workers
- Paid attention to the band playing in the background
- Folding table and collecting papers
- Instructing others on where to put materials
- Took time to think before answering many of the questions
- Invited us to volunteer with her
- Initiated conversation with us
- Packed very slowly

#### Say

- Online forum feels impersonal
- She has not officially mentored but working with college students meant a lot of informal mentorship
- She wants a mentor, ideally in person (her role is spread across the nation so this may be difficult) or also would appreciate phone calls
- She said that her field is a small community yet she feels like she cannot find mentors
- Had considered teaching
- She doesn't think that Facebook is a great platform
- Wanted to go into working at the church because she loves church, loves Jesus, and wants people to feel connected with both Jesus and with each other
- Loves music but did not want a career that only consisted of music related tasks

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## Xinyi's Empathy Map

### Feel

- Felt very unsure about her career plans even with having somewhat of an idea
- Felt excited by her major choice after an internship experience

### Think

- Thought that the way that less common majors were treated seemed unfair
- Thought that sharing personal information online could be unsafe

### Do

- We were waiting with her in the Boba line so she often looked around to see how the line was moving
- Talked relatively quietly

## Josh's Empathy Map

### Feel

- Relaxed after I said the interview wasn't going to be recorded
- Hesitant to talk about his career goal, but eventually opened up
- Uncomfortable opening up to counselor about his actual career choices
- Hopeful about his career path after receiving advice from professionals in that field
- Motivated to be successful in his career choice
- Respect towards older and more experienced people in general
- Wary about pursuing something that isn't very typical
- Confident that his youthfulness will help him stay motivated and become successful
- Wants to help out his parents financially if possible

### Think

- Speaking to adults not related to his field of interest about career advice isn't helpful
- It feels better to talk to people you know who would understand, even if they are not a professional in the related field
- The internet allows people to hide behind an invisible wall and not take responsibility for their actions to a certain extent
- No matter the circumstance, having a backup plan is a must
- People with more experience are worth listening to, even if they say things you don't want to hear
- Friends are more understanding than adults
- A career should be something you enjoy and love in the end
- Planning far into the future will only go so far; sometimes time will tell
- The key to good communication is to open up yourself
- You can make a topic interesting for others if you present yourself as being interested in it

### Do

- Agreed to a voice call
- Asked if I had to record his voice during the interview
- Declined a picture
- Opened up to speaking about actual career path as conversation continued

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- Warned me that I may hear his mother's voice in the background when she came back home
  - Got off-track speaking about a video game (shows his passion)
  - After the conclusion of the interview, he went to play a game (could hear rapid tapping on keyboard through his mic)

#### Say

- "I don't like to talk to people if I don't know them at all. I normally just become friends of friends."
- "There were forced times where we have to talk to our guidance counselor. Three times a year we have to go and talk about grades and that sort of thing."
- "I don't think its my counselor, I think it's just me. I don't talk much to them, and I don't think she quite knows what I want, which makes sense since I'm not giving her a lot to go off of"
- "Gaming (as a career) really isn't socially acceptable" (didn't feel comfortable discussing it with his academic counselor)
- "I know a lot of the time they say it's not always guaranteed to happen, but since I'm relatively young, I think I'd be able to build myself and start that type of career at an earlier age since I still have a bit more time left. As long as I dedicate myself into something I love, I think I can make it"
- "If it's something generally pretty important, I would rather just have a private conversation with a specialized person or a friend rather than an open forum"
- "Things like reddit is really good. And there's multiple forums. If you don't agree with that person's opinions, you can avoid that article or block or whatever. People can just share their opinions, I don't see much wrong with it"
- "I've watched a lot of streamers who talk about getting a career in this field and how they've grown into gaming and became successful. It's not necessarily one-on-one talk, but it's still open on stream for everyone to see"
- "There are times where things don't work out, but I have time to explore. You know these streamers are trying to help you, and you know what they're saying is for the better. They're older. They have more experience"
- "Gaming is just something I enjoy. That's all I want to do, and I want to give it a shot as a career"