Part 1: Need Finding

Event: *Violence and Free Speech*

Subject 1

Q: Could you tell us a little bit about your background?
A: I am a faculty teaching public speaking for FPF (Fall Program for Freshmen)

Q: What motivated you to come to this event?
A: I was actually here throughout the whole day. I asked my students to come to one of the morning sessions. I wanted to expose them to different opinions and I wanted them to understand the importance of speaking freely.

Q: Was there anything during today's event that was different from your original opinion? How you to view these opposed opinions?
A: I agree with most of the things said today, but I love to hear about different opinions. I think "Preaching to the choir" is a bad thing since your view become narrower and narrower. I believe in the importance in having a dialogue with people and in understanding why people feel different. From my own experience, I personally support abortion rights, but after talking to other people who disagree, I understand more about how they feel towards abortion. Some people sees it as murder and thus they believe abortion rights should not be allowed. I still hold my opinion, but at least I understand them more. How could you say you disagree with something if you don't even know about them.

Q: How effective do you think free speech is? Do you think it is a way for people to be exposed to different views or do you think this event acts more as a symbol of freedom in speech?
A: I think it is quite effective. I think it is very important to have discussions in small groups. I held a discussion in my class after the presidential election. One of my students worked for Trump's camp and another worked for Clinton's. You could image how different their ideas are. But they told me that they continued to have political discussions even after that class. That shows people are more willing to take opinions from the other side than you might think. There was another activity that I held in class: we have to write down our own political views in a couple of sentences and put it all in a box. Each person randomly picks one and he/ she has to read it out loud as if that is their own view. Surprisingly, most of them did a very good job even though their political views might be very different. I think this was quite meaningful in the sense that we ask people to really try to understand other people's opinion.

Subject 2

Q: What's your background?
A: I am an international student from OSU with MIS (Management Information System) and Psychology degree.

Q: What motivates you to come to this event?
A: I came to Berkeley to visit a friend and she invited me to join the event. I also heard that free speech is a important culture in UC Berkeley.

Q: Did you hear anything/ opinions that is different from what you believe before?
A: I think a lot of the ideas are identical to what I thought. Online violence is an emotional practice that people do the insult comments or open privacy information of a person (doxxing). It brings a lot negative effects on people's life. In the event, the lecture introduces some real-world example that happened around us, which impressed me a lot (I believe she tried to say "shocked"). Words can become weapons. Though there are more attention on online abuse, there are few effective ways to control the bully. The speaker recommend to cut funds for free speech and improve regulation system and I strongly agree with that.

Q: if yes, does this event make you more willing to accept the ideas?
A: Based on the information I remember, I think I strongly agree on the ideas with the speakers. I think we need to take more actions to control word abuse or online violence.

Q: Do you think free speech is a way to advocate the variety of ideas?
A: I definitely think free speech is a good way to express different ideas. With free speech, people can use their rights to assail what they disagree. But it also engender a lot of problems. Sometimes people's viewpoints or the words they use can hurt others' feeling. Or in some countries, it is hard to make free speech and some sensitive remarks would be effaced before the public see it.

Q: Are you more likely to concentrate on a event that expresses the same ideas than yours or vice versa? Why?
A: I prefer the event which create more different ideas from mine. People can explain why they got such an idea. If you stand on their position to see why they have such sensation and perception, I can more understand how the ideas come. I would introspect whether I am still insist on the original side.

Observations + Sketch
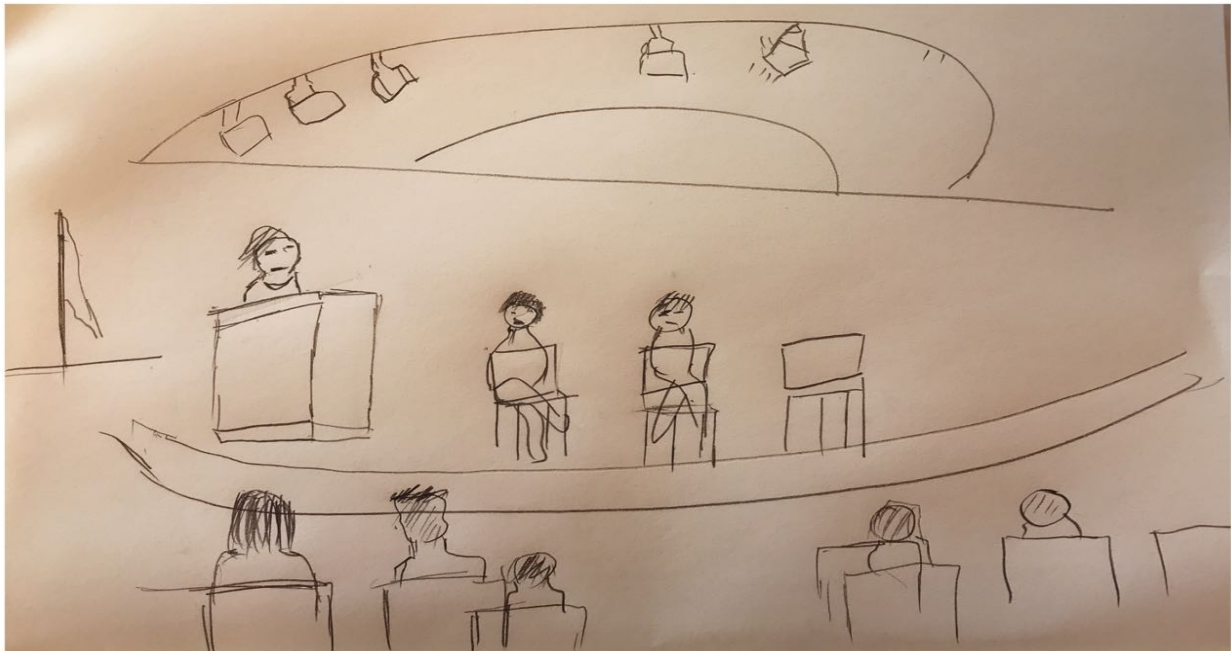
<div align="center">POV</div>

We met a berkeley faculty teaching public speaking. We were surprised to realize that despite having different opinions and perspectives on the topic, people were able to have constructive and positive discussions with one another. We realized that the faculty presenter and the audience were more likely to have constructive and neutral discussions rather than arguments when they first had "walk in someone else's shoes" by picking a random political perspective and argue for it. It would be game-changing to allow people to first consider multiple perspectives and put themselves in that person's shoes and try to understand why someone might believe that point of view.

<div align="center">How Might We</div>

How might we encourage … display a video that has people guess/understand certain political beliefs and reward them points based on correctness (define correctness later)

HMW: How might we encourage people to avoid putting their feelings and personal beliefs?

HMW: How might we motivate people to search for evidence and understanding of other perspectives before arguing about those perspectives.

"We realized that certain individuals in the group were able to hold a certain belief but were able to not take contrasting opinions as a personal attack/issue."

Event: [White Supremacy, Gender, and Speech in the wake of Charlottesville](#)

Subject 1

Q: How do you generally deal with opinions that are radically different from your own?

I usually try to look at where the other person is coming from, and understand what led them to adopt the point of view that they have. If they're really angry or passionate, I try to take that into account and realize that they must have some sensitive personal experience that caused them to be that way. Of course, if they start yelling at me, then I begin to take them less seriously

Q: How should people deal with opinions that are radically different from their own?

I believe people should keep an open mind and try to sympathize with the experience of other people. A lot of times people aren't willing to understand the life circumstances that made people adopt the opinions they do, and I feel like starting out with that aspect might enable people to humanize each other and reach an understanding

Q: Do you think there's a problem with how society deals with unpopular opinions? If so, how do you think we should fix it?

I believe that society is very polarized when it comes to controversial opinions, and often times, both sides handle the situation very poorly. Whenever there are controversial statements or remarks expressed on social media, the initial response by the condemners generate a wave of flame against the remark. And then, the backlash against those condemners escalates the situation, and pretty soon everybody's angry. I feel like this is an incredibly tough problem to solve, and the only thing we could perhaps to fix it is to somehow convince people not to comment on uninformed, ambiguous statements.

Subject 2

Q: How do you generally deal with opinions that are radically different from your own?

First, I try to be open and try to understand the background that somebody else is coming from. Unless it's a really obviously wrong.

Q: How should people deal with opinions that are radically different from their own?

Of course, when people don't have the same opinion, they don't agree with each other. But if they have to work together, they have to figure out something else. Having different opinions should be an acceptable thing.

It's really more about diversity than anything else. If they talk about religion or race, some extreme people might be extremely rigid. For me, I don't mind working with people from all backgrounds. But this might not be the case for everybody, and those people need to accept diversity as a fact.

Q: Do you think there's a problem with how society deals with unpopular opinions? If so, how do you think we should fix it?

It's more or less a natural thing that the majority of people will have power over the minority. I'm not necessarily sure if it could be considered a problem. I suppose if there is a problem, then I suppose the best way to fix it is education.

Subject 3

Q: How do you generally deal with opinions that are radically different from their own?

Because I am so often in an environment where I'm surrounded by opinions that are radically different from my own, I'd like to think I've come up with a good way of dealing with them. First off, I try to detach emotion from my opinion, and try to stay calm even if faced with something I'd initially find offensively wrong. Next, I try to make an clear index of the points that the presentation of that opinion is making. Lastly, I compare the index of the opposing opinion to my

own index of points supporting my opinion, and try to reason through which makes more sense for each one. This is a difficult process, because often the first impulse is to violently reject opposing opinions, and I've often found opposing opinions are not presented in the most calm, reasonable way.

Q: How do you think people should deal with opinions that are radically different from their own

I'd like to think the way I deal with opinions radically different from their own is the model, and while I don't always put the process into practice as flawlessly as I and people in general ought to, I consider that a flaw with myself and not the method.

Q: Do you think there's a problem with how society deals with unpopular opinions? If so, how do you think we should fix it?

I do in fact think there's a problem with how society deals with unpopular opinions, in that many people, once they get set into an opinion, don't question their reasoning again. Instead, they opt for their gut reaction to opposition, which involves recognizing the opposition as false, recognizing themselves as correct, and then coming up with reasoning to support that stance. This process is also muddled by emotional response that has people getting angry and villifying the opposition. To fix this people need to recognize that an opinion doesn't wholly characterize a person or group of people, and people must come to terms with the fact that there is no absolute moral authority, if there were their own moral compass would almost definitely not be it, and that with the range of opinions each person holds there is no possibility that every single opinion they hold could be the correct and virtuous one.

Observations + Sketch

- Lot of old people here, maybe in the 50-60 range, but also a fair amount of young people (diverse age ranges)
- seems like the opinions being expressed are very hardline - "if you're not with us, you're against us. There's no middle ground"
- Seems like these things are not really "opinions" to them, more like "facts" - would be offensive to them to possibly even suggest that they are opinions
- They use a lot of digital media to underscore their points
- Lots of agreement, chuckles, nods, "mhmms" -> points to the presence of an echo chamber at this very event
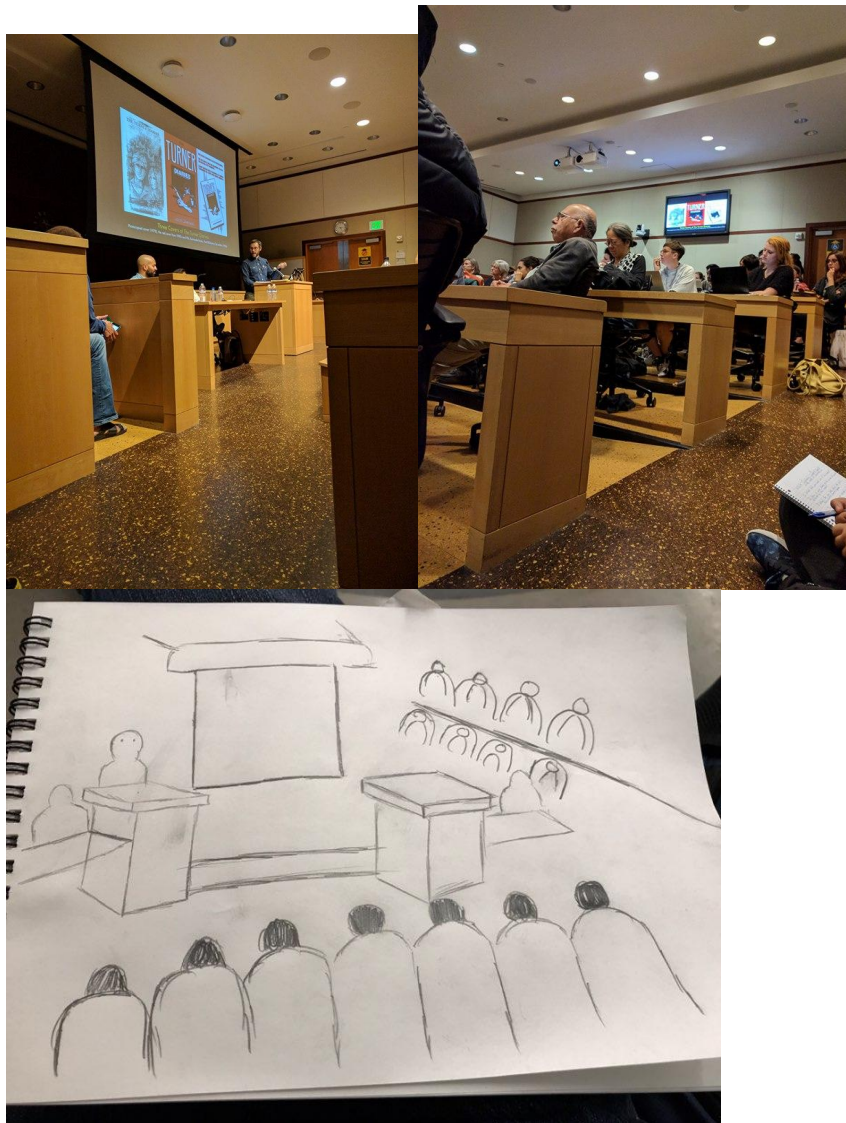
I observed a fairly outspoken group of panelists essentially delivery lectures to an audience of people. Instead of an open Q&A discussion, the panel was more oriented as a series of speeches. The only audience participation during these speeches was a few nods and audible 'mhmms'. I also noticed that the speakers are so steadfast about their opinions, they don't even seem to consider them opinions, rather they're *facts*. (I heard the word "Fact" thrown around quite often). That being said, I was surprised to realize that people are actually more than willing to listen to other opinions, and it's more dependent on how different opinions are presented

POV

We met a couple of people who both discussed how volatile others get when they encounter opinions that oppose their own, even if those people know how to reasonably argue and discuss an issue. This helped us realize that most people, at least on paper, are willing and able to see the other side, as long as that side is presented objectively and calmly. It would be game changing to offer these people a way to communicate with one another in non-inflammatory language.

How Might We

1. How might we create a platform where heavily opinionated people can identify their own biases, and after identifying them learn to cast them away and understand other people's biases?

2. Given that people generally make inflammatory snap statements despite having incomplete information, how might we incentivize people to ask questions about opposing opinions rather than starting off by making ill-informed, biased value judgments.