Development of a Culturally Sustainable Universal Admissions Interface for First-Generation College Students

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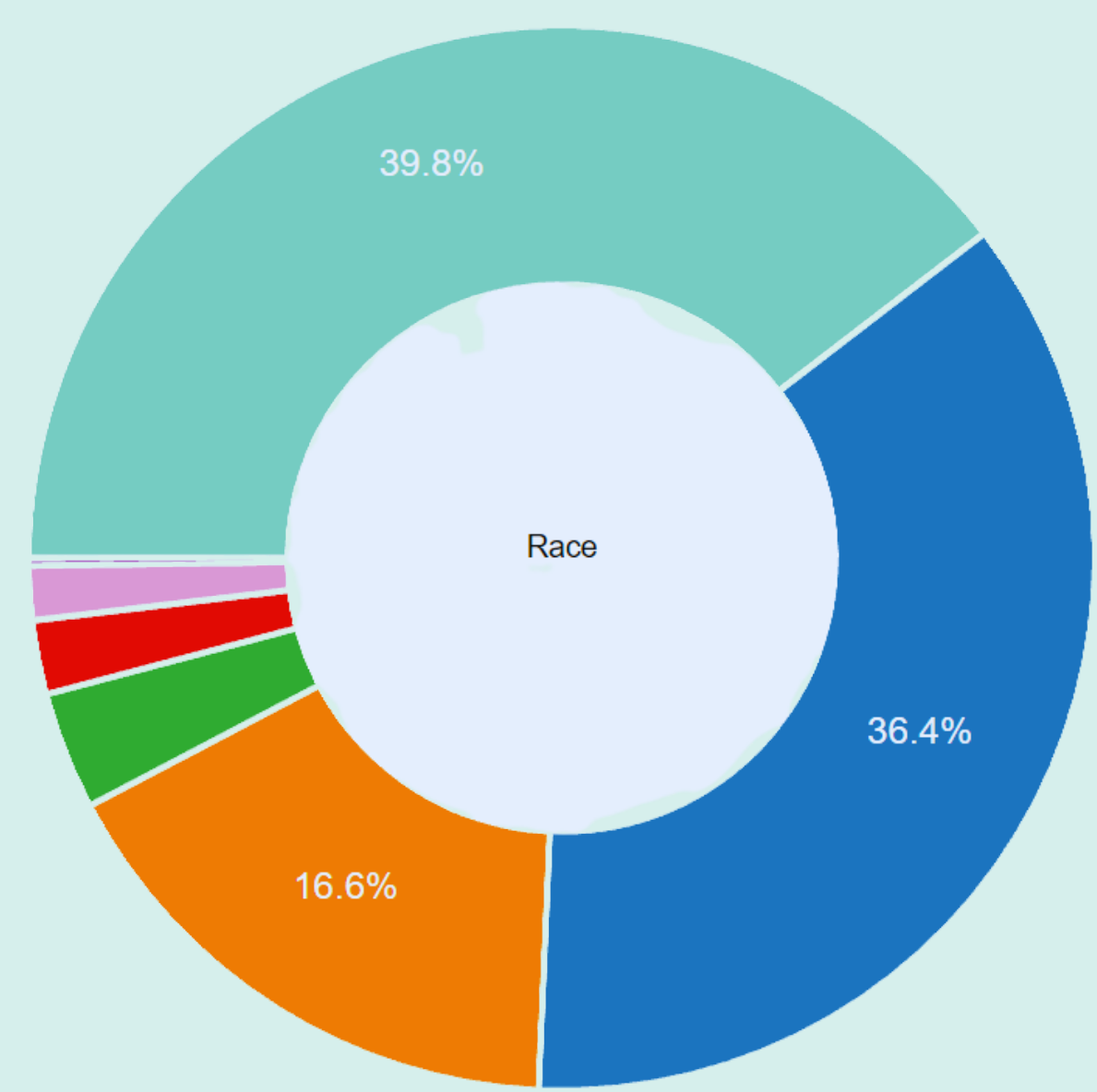
Purpose

The project's purpose is to design a **culturally sustainable web-based interface** that will utilize **community assets** to **empower** high school students in the **college admissions** process.

Problem

- The college application process is complex and may require mentorship to be understood.

- Cultural and language barriers make the admissions process less accessible.

- Not all school systems are equipped to support and guide students through college admissions.

Storm Lake Demographics

Storm Lake Context

- Population: 11,400 (1)

- Growing midwestern town because of low-skilled worker demand.

- Multilingual population: over 50%
  - English
  - Spanish
  - Asian and Pacific Island Languages. (1)

- Bachelor Degree or Higher: 16.3% (2)

Prototype

Customizable Journey Map
View a typical college application journey and create their own.

Students Advice
Guidance from community members, college students, and organizations.

Globe Icon
Easy, translatable statements for students' family.

Customizable To Do List
Break down the college admissions process into achievable steps.

Encouragement Button
Receive encouragement throughout their journey.

Design Takeaways

- Cultural Sustainability: Utilize the knowledge of the Storm Lake community.

- Language Accessibility: Usable for speakers of other languages.

- Growth Mindset: Encourage the college admissions experience to be a learning opportunity.

Empathy Workshop

Journey Map

Students marked high school events based on emotions and when it occurred (*image adapted from original artifacts*).

Map of Assets

Students evaluated current assets in their community and discussed resources that they wish they had (*image adapted from original artifacts*).
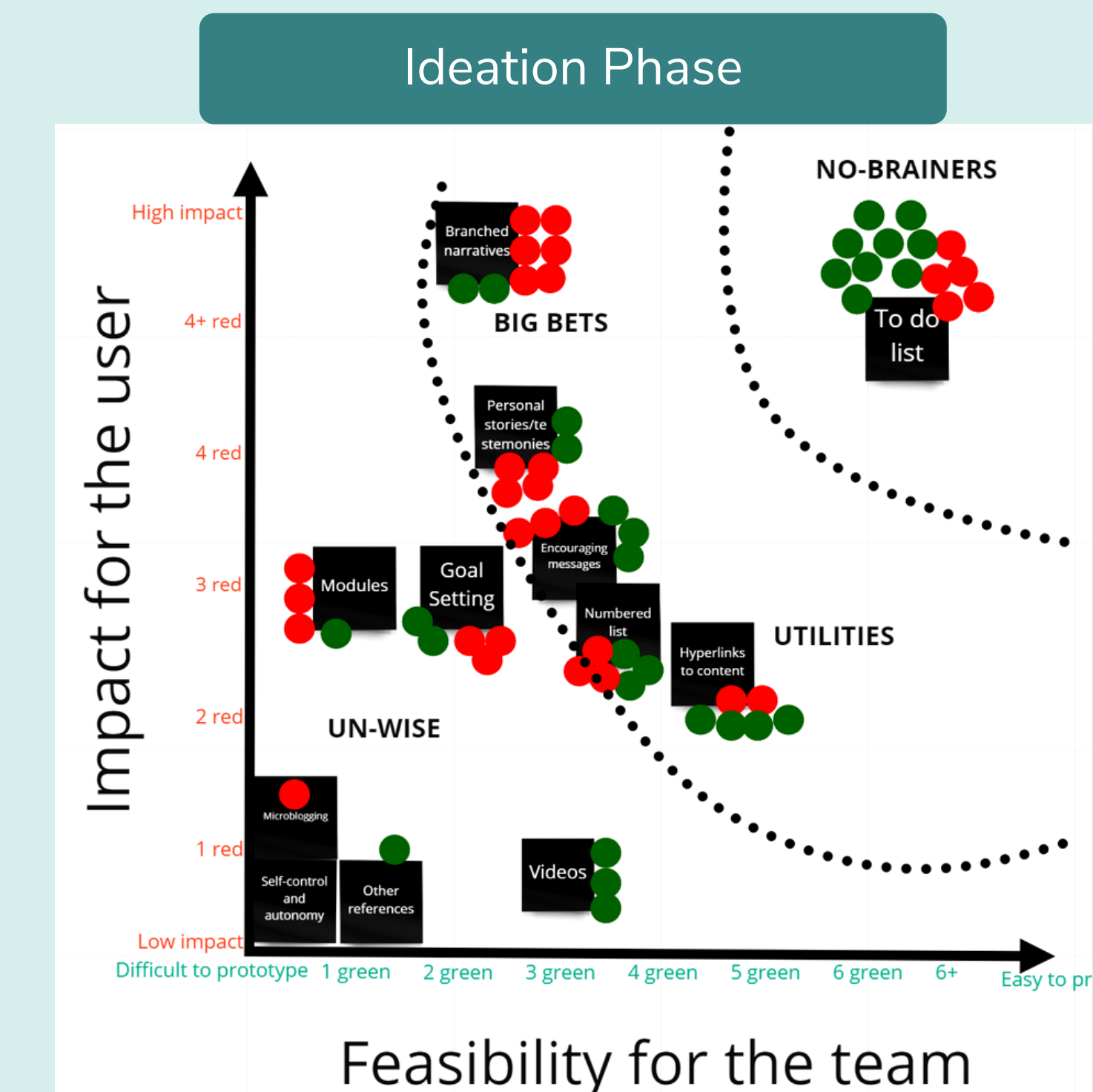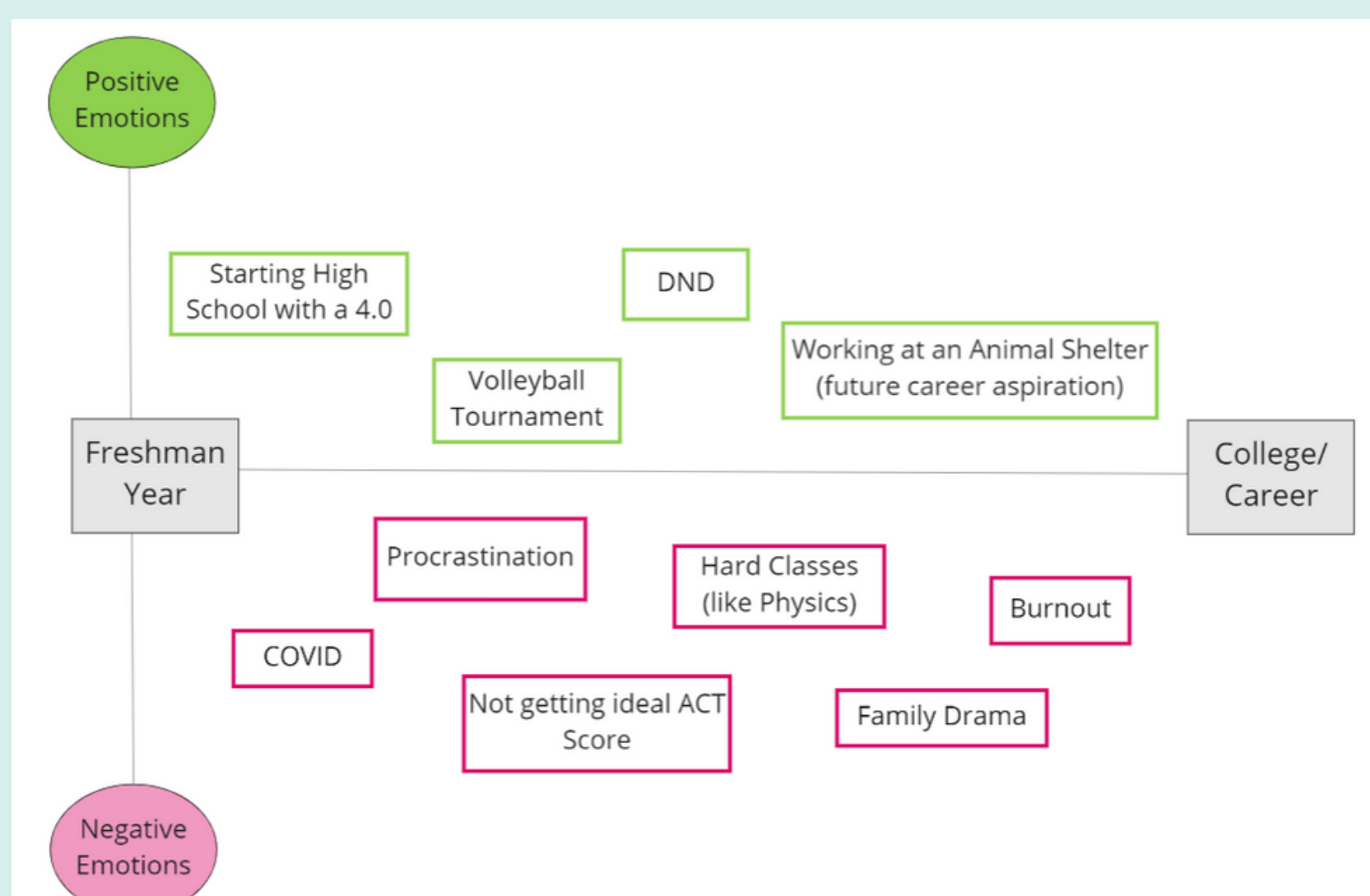
Community

- Met with Community Stakeholders.

- Received positive feedback on the prototype
  - Advice page was well received.

- Participated in a mapping exercise
  - Mapped areas where learning occurred in Storm Lake.

Ideation Phase

Future Work

- Apply for a 4-year grant with Storm Lake.

- **Iterate** upon the prototype and maintain design takeaways.

- Create an **active website** for the community to use and contribute to.

Sources

- (1) World Population Review. (n.d.). Storm Lake, Iowa population 2022. Storm Lake, Iowa Population 2022 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). Retrieved July 29, 2022, from https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/storm-lake-ia-population

- (2) Citytowninfo.com. (n.d.). Storm Lake, Iowa. Citytowninfo.com. Retrieved July 29, 2022, from https://www.citytowninfo.com/places/iowa/storm-lake

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