

Design Thinking 1

Design Thinking I — SEP 760

My Reflection and Portfolio Road Map

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My Portfolio Roadmap

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Reflection on my Design Process

Understanding the Design Challenge

Initially, I was not entirely sure where this project would lead. I started with a broad question: *How might we reimagine the music experience for different people?* However, after conducting interviews with Nigerian students in Canada, I discovered a deeper issue: music was no longer just about sound, but about cultural connection and belonging. For many international students, music had always been a shared and communal experience, something that tied them to home, family, and community. Yet, in Canada, it had become a solitary and passive routine. This realization led me to redefine the challenge. (*Design Challenge Statement, p. 4.*)

User Research: Interviews & Empathy Mapping (*Interview Transcripts, p. 4-12 and Empathy Maps, p. 13-14.*)

To gain a deeper understanding, I interviewed three Nigerian students at McMaster University: Razaq, Tobe, and Emmanuel. Their responses helped map their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors regarding music. Insights gathered highlighted that students weren't just missing Nigerian music; they were missing the shared experience of music as an identity marker.

Why I Focused on Razaq for POV & HMW (*POV Statements, HMWs, & Morph Chart, p. 15-16.*)

Among the interviewees, Razaq's experience best captured the core issue of cultural disconnection. His perspective provided a clear before-and-after contrast, making him the ideal focus for POV and HMW development. After I developed Razaq's POV, I came up with five HMW Statements, each exploring ways to reintroduce communal engagement with music while ensuring music evolves with students' identities in Canada. To further refine my approach, I created a morph chart to brainstorm and compare different solution ideas for each HMW statement. This allowed me to evaluate various possibilities, from physical spaces to digital interventions and identify the most impactful and feasible ones, ensuring that the final concept addressed multiple dimensions of the problem effectively.

Concept Development & Prototyping (*Prototype p. 17-18.*)

After multiple rounds of deliberation, feedback, and iteration, I developed the **Afro-Canadian Music Hub**, a physical and digital space designed to bridge the gap between music, identity, and community for African students in Canada. Key Features include:

- A live map guide to Afrobeat-friendly cafés and events.
- A space/board for students to write songs that remind them of home with sticky notes.
- QR codes linking to the hub's Instagram, event listings, and curated playlists for continued engagement beyond the hub.
- Vinyl listening booths where students can explore old-school Nigerian records and modern Afrobeat playlists.
- Experiences like Karaoke Nights, Live DJ Sets, and Community Jams to recreate the communal music experience.
- A relaxed space for students to socialize over Nigerian food and music.
- Weekly themed playlists, accessible via QR codes on Apple Music and Spotify.

Reflection on the Reimagined Experience

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The Afro-Canadian Music Hub was designed as more than just a listening space, it is a cultural bridge, a tool for connection, and an immersive experience that reflects the evolving identities of Nigerian students in Canada. Through interviews and empathy mapping, I realized that music had lost its communal role for students like Razaq. What once served as a social glue, a background to conversations, family gatherings, and friendships, had become an isolated experience. Instead of merely creating access to Nigerian music, the hub needed to restore the emotional and social significance of music.

1. **The Physical & Digital Integration:** I intentionally combined physical spaces (a lounge, live events, interactive music boards) with digital tools (QR codes, live maps, and curated playlists). This decision ensures that music is not just experienced inside the hub. A dedicated QR code board within the hub now links directly to the hub's social media page, where students can access curated playlists, stay updated on upcoming events, and engage with the community remotely.
2. **Refining the Digital Extension Based on my Professor's Feedback**(*Razaq's Outside of the Hub Experience, p.21*): Based on my professor's feedback, I decided to enhance the accessibility of the curated playlists. Instead of limiting them to just the hub, I created an "outside-the-hub" experience where students can still engage with the music even on days, they cannot visit the space. The QR-enabled playlists and event boards create continuity, reinforcing that music is a shared experience, whether inside the hub or on a student's daily commute. This addition ensures that students who resonate with the hub's experience are not disconnected when they leave, allowing students to carry the sense of belonging with them wherever they go.
3. **The Progression of Razaq's Journey:**(*Razaq's Reimagined Experience/Journey, p.16*)(*Razaq's Reimagined Experience Before and After Visualised, p.20*): I structured the Before, Discovery, and After phases to reflect an authentic shift from isolation to connection. His hesitation to attend mirrors real-world behavior, people often discover spaces but need time before feeling comfortable enough to engage. The small but meaningful steps, scanning a QR code, visiting out of curiosity, writing on the Music Discovery Wall, allow for organic engagement, ensuring the hub becomes part of his routine rather than a one-time experience.
4. **Why Focus on Interactive & Social Elements:** African music is inherently social and immersive, it thrives in shared moments. The inclusion of live music events, a music discovery wall, and interactive playlist boards ensures that the hub recreates the communal experience students miss. The Vinyl & Digital Music Station adds a multi-generational layer, allowing students to connect past and present Afrobeat influences, deepening their cultural appreciation.

What I Learned from the Process(*Storyboard-A day in the Life of Razaq, p.20*):

One of my biggest takeaways was that music is deeply tied to identity and belonging. During the initial phases of my design process for the hub, I assumed the problem was simply access to curated spaces that highlight African music, but it became clear that the absence of shared experiences was the real issue.

Additionally, I learned the importance of designing for gradual engagement. A space like the Afro-Canadian Music Hub works because it does not force participation, it creates multiple touchpoints, allowing students to interact at their own pace. Whether through scanning a QR code, writing on the wall, or simply sitting in the space and listening, every interaction helps rebuild the lost connection to music and culture.

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Ultimately, this project reinforced that music is not just about sound, it is about memory, identity, and community. The Afro-Canadian Music Hub does not just provide access to Nigerian music; it restores the feeling of home, ensuring that cultural connection doesn't fade, no matter how far from home these students may be.

Design Challenge Statement

"[Re]imagine the music experience of Nigerian students in Canada by transforming it from a solitary and passive act into a communal, immersive, and culturally connected experience that fosters a sense of belonging."

Tobe's Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Hi, what's your name?

Tobe: My name is Tobe.

Interviewer: Nice to meet you. Thank you for agreeing to this interview. So, I just gave you the question: what type of music do you listen to the most, and why do you think your genre is that?

Tobe: Right now, I think it's Afrobeats, and I'm into it because when in Canada, you get a lot of Afrobeats streams, like it's everywhere.

Interviewer: Interesting. So when you say "when in Canada," do you mean in public places like pubs, clubs, or restaurants where you don't really hear African music completely, but in those places, you hear remixed versions of African artists?

Tobe: Yes, literally everywhere.

Interviewer: Do you usually listen to music throughout the day? Like, do you listen in the morning before work, or do you have music that you listen to set your mood for the rest of the day?

Tobe: Not necessarily, it just depends on my mood. Whatever I'm feeling is how my music is going to go, so I might keep changing as I find something that suits what I'm feeling at that moment.

Interviewer: If your mood isn't happy, not necessarily sad, just neutral, does Afrobeats do anything for you, or does it just help you cloud your thoughts and not think about things at that moment?

Tobe: Yes, it helps me cloud my thoughts.

Interviewer: Do you think your environment affects the kind of music you listen to?

Tobe: No, I don't think so. I mean, it broadens your taste, but I don't think it really changes what I listen to. For instance, I've been in Canada for two years, but the central music played here hasn't affected what I've listened to for the past 16 years of my life.

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Interviewer: So if you were to look back at, say, last December, compared to now, has there been a difference in the kind of music you listen to?

Tobe: My mood has been mostly the same, but yes, there has been a change in some of the songs I listen to. I think there are just one or two constants, but there's been a whole genre change currently.

Interviewer: What kind of music did you listen to last December that's different from now?

Tobe: December was full Afrobeats, completely. I don't think there were that many non-Afrobeats songs. Now, there are more Western songs.

Interviewer: What drew you to the Western songs you're listening to now?

Tobe: Honestly, I don't know. Oh, yes! I was with someone, and they were playing these songs. I liked them, so I started listening to them more. Then, somehow, Instagram started playing the same songs on my feed.

Interviewer: So would you say your music preference can be influenced by other people's tastes?

Tobe: Yeah, because people rub off on you, consciously or unconsciously. Some songs just remind you of a particular person or moment.

Interviewer: Do you have any song that's tied to a special or emotional memory?

Tobe: Yes, "Lovely" by Billie Eilish.

Interviewer: Can you give a brief overview of why that song stands out to you?

Tobe: It was during a time when I liked someone, but it wasn't reciprocated.

Interviewer: So would you say music plays a role in your emotions?

Tobe: Yes, my mood influences my music choices. If I'm sad, I'll listen to certain songs. If I'm happy, I'll listen to something upbeat.

Interviewer: What aspect of a song impacts you the most—lyrics, beats, or sound?

Tobe: It depends. Sometimes, the beat catches me, but the lyrics don't. Other times, I skip a song for a long time and later realize it's actually good.

Interviewer: Do you have any music that gives you a nostalgic feeling, reminding you of your childhood?

Tobe: Yes, the AIT news jingle. My dad used to watch AIT and NTA news every morning.

Interviewer: Did you grow up in a big family or a smaller setting?

Tobe: Just a small nuclear family.

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Interviewer: Was it a Christian background with morning devotions and gospel songs?

Tobe: Yes, we had those gospel songs we sang every morning. Some of them are still stuck in my head.

Interviewer: How do you express yourself aside from music?

Tobe: I don't think I express myself a lot. At some point, I thought it was through earrings because I like colorful ones.

Interviewer: What kind of earrings do you like?

Tobe: Anime-themed, colorful ones, anything unique.

Interviewer: What got you into anime?

Tobe: My brothers used to watch it when I was younger, and they loaded it onto the computer for me to watch.

Interviewer: If you could describe how music makes you feel in one word, what would it be and why?

Tobe: Confused. My playlist is never the same genre back-to-back. One minute, it's Afrobeats; the next, it's a slow song.

Interviewer: Do you use music as a form of escape?

Tobe: I use it to zone out.

Interviewer: Why do you feel the need to zone out?

Tobe: That's just how I've always been. I don't think the music itself helps; I just get lost in my thoughts.

Interviewer: Do you need background noise to block out everything?

Tobe: Sometimes, but I also like to be aware of my surroundings for safety reasons.

Interviewer: Aside from music, do you have other ways to express yourself—journaling, video diaries, venting?

Tobe: Not really. I tend to overthink things. Dreaming is my top form of escape.

Interviewer: What do you dream about?

Tobe: Being rich, getting a new job, moving out, life changes, and how things will be in the future.

Interviewer: Do you have any music that reminds you of high school?

Tobe: Anything by Lil Wayne and Rick Ross.

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Interviewer: What kind of person were you in high school?

Tobe: Quiet. I had a few friends, but we drifted after high school.

Interviewer: Has making friends here been similar to high school?

Tobe: Yes, I tend to make one or two friends per location.

Interviewer: Do you have music that helps you relax?

Tobe: No, I just listen to music to fill silence.

Interviewer: What helps you relax?

Tobe: Sleeping and mindless scrolling.

Interviewer: What was the last song you listened to today?

Tobe: “Bend You” by Omah Lay.

Interviewer: Was it a recommendation or something you searched for?

Tobe: I just wanted background noise while filling out job applications.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time. This concludes the interview.

Stories Highlighted in the Interview with Tobe

1. **Discovering Western Music Through a Friend** - Tobe started listening to Western music after being introduced to it by someone they spent time with.
2. **Emotional Connection to “Lovely” by Billie Eilish** - The song reminds Tobe of an unreciprocated romantic interest.
3. **Nostalgia from the AIT News Jingle** - The AIT and NTA news jingles bring back memories of childhood and watching news with their father.
4. **Growing Up with Christian Morning Devotions** - Tobe remembers singing gospel songs every morning with their family.
5. **Anime Influence from Siblings** - Tobe’s interest in anime was sparked by their brothers, who introduced them to it at a young age.
6. **Music as a Tool for Zoning Out** - Tobe uses music to disconnect from reality and fill silence rather than for relaxation.
7. **Making Friends in New Environments** - Tobe tends to make only one or two friends in new environment and expands their circle only through mutual connections.
8. **Dreaming as an Escape Mechanism** - Instead of journaling or venting, Tobe prefers to daydream about future possibilities like career advancements and personal life changes.

Memorable Quotes from Tobe's Interview

1. *"I listen to music to fill in the void."*
2. *"I make like one or two friends per location, and I'm fine with that."*
3. *"Daydreaming is top-notch."*
4. *"I don't go out of my way to make friends, but sometimes someone else makes a friend for me, and I just go with it."*

Interview Transcript for Razaq

Interviewer: Hello, what's your name?

Razaq: Hi, I'm Razaq.

Interviewer: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. So, what type of music do you listen to the most, and why do you think that is?

Razaq: I'd say I listen to people's music the most, and it's just something I've developed a keen interest in over the years. I feel like I follow pop culture a lot, and that's just what appeals to me.

Interviewer: So, when you say pop culture, what exactly do you mean?

Razaq: Streetwear, fashion, and trends in general.

Interviewer: Okay, so trends. Would you say fashion influences your music taste?

Razaq: Yeah, definitely. I think fashion is a big part of culture, and music is intertwined with that. Like, what's in trend fashion-wise also translates into the type of music people listen to.

Interviewer: Does where you grew up influence your music taste?

Razaq: Not necessarily. I grew up in Lagos, which has a strong street fashion and music scene, but I don't strictly follow that. I just take inspiration from global trends and incorporate them into my own style.

Interviewer: How would you describe your personal fashion style?

Razaq: I'd say calm and comfortable, but also with a way of standing out. My comfort color is black, but I like to style it in a way that looks intriguing. It's like, you see me wearing black, but you still notice something about my outfit.

Interviewer: So, is music as big of a factor in your life as fashion?

Razaq: Yeah, definitely. Many artists transition into fashion, and it's part of their brand. But for me, I wouldn't say music dictates my fashion. I have my own personal style. My music taste is just what sounds good to me.

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Interviewer: So, would you say your music reflects your personality?

Razaq: To some extent, yes. I'd describe my personality as laid-back, playful, and serious when necessary. I think my music reflects that balance.

Interviewer: What was the last song you listened to before this interview?

Razaq: I was trying to figure out an assignment, so I was listening to a playlist called "Drama Boy." It's a mix of instrumentals and amapiano sounds that help me focus.

Interviewer: Do you create playlists for different moods?

Razaq: Yeah, I do. I enjoy creating playlists, but not just for productivity. I have different ones for different moods.

Interviewer: Do you have playlists for specific activities like working out or commuting?

Razaq: Not exactly. I have a pool of songs I like and just shuffle through them for any task. But if I really need to concentrate, I have a lo-fi playlist with no lyrics, just soft background noise.

Interviewer: How do you discover new music?

Razaq: Spotify recommends new songs every Monday, so I check out that playlist. I also follow artists on social media, and if they post about a song, I check it out. If I like it, I add it to my routine.

Interviewer: Do you actively search for new music, or just stumble upon it?

Razaq: A bit of both. If a song fits a vibe I already have in my playlist, I'll add it. If not, I just add it to my general liked songs.

Interviewer: Do you have any songs that bring back nostalgic memories?

Razaq: Yeah, growing up, my mom used to play "Sexual Healing" a lot. I didn't have control over what I was hearing, so the song just stuck with me. I still know the lyrics even though I never played it on my own.

Interviewer: What about any recent memories tied to music?

Razaq: Yeah, there's "Sued" by Asa. It reminds me of last year when I was in a transition period, figuring out what I wanted to do with myself.

Interviewer: Would you say you listen to that song as much now?

Razaq: Not really. Last year, it was more of a meditation song for me. Now, I'm in a different headspace, more focused on my goals, so my music has shifted too.

Interviewer: Would you say music helps you push through difficult times?

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Razaq: Not exactly to calm me down, but it puts things into perspective. It helps me process situations and move forward.

Interviewer: Has your music taste evolved over time?

Razaq: For sure. I've gone through so many phases. There was a time I listened to a lot of underground alternative artists, especially after university. I used to explore SoundCloud and deep dive into new sounds.

Interviewer: How was your music taste influenced in high school?

Razaq: In high school, I just listened to mainstream music. I didn't really have the chance to discover music myself. It was mostly whatever was playing on the radio.

Interviewer: Do different types of music bring out different sides of you?

Razaq: Yeah, I think so. If I'm listening to hype music, I have high energy. If it's lo-fi, I'm more reserved. Music definitely affects my vibe.

Interviewer: Have you ever used music as a way to escape reality?

Razaq: Not escape, but I've used it to manage nerves. Like, before playing soccer, I'd listen to music to calm myself down.

Interviewer: Do you prefer lyrics or beats when it comes to music?

Razaq: It depends. Some artists I follow no matter what they release, but sometimes it's about the lyrics.

Interviewer: Have you ever connected deeply with someone over a song?

Razaq: Yeah, I've made playlists for people as a way to express how I feel. Also, concerts with friends can bond you over shared music experiences.

Interviewer: What's a concert experience that stood out for you?

Razaq: I went to see my favorite underground artist with a friend, and we knew all the lyrics. That really bonded us.

Interviewer: Have you used music to process grief or loss?

Razaq: Not really, I haven't gone through anything too serious in that sense.

Interviewer: Do you have songs tied to big milestones in your life?

Razaq: Yeah, "Champion" by Kanye reminds me of my graduation because it made me feel accomplished.

Interviewer: Do you think recorded music captures the same experience as live performances?

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Razaq: No, live performances have a different energy. Seeing an artist perform lets you connect with their emotions.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time. This concludes the interview.

Stories from the Interview with Razaq

1. **Childhood Influence:** Razaq's mom frequently played "Sexual Healing," embedding it into his memory despite never actively choosing to listen to it.
2. **A Transition Year:** "Sued" by Asa reminds Razaq of a significant waiting period in his life where he was figuring out his next steps.
3. **Music and Anxiety Management:** Razaq uses music to calm his nerves before soccer matches and other nerve-wracking situations.
4. **A Concert Bonding Moment:** Attending an underground artist's concert with a friend strengthened their bond through their shared love for the artist.
5. **Graduation Song:** "Champion" by Kanye West serves as a reminder of Razaq's sense of accomplishment upon graduating.

Memorable Quotes from Razaq's Interview

1. *"I wouldn't say music calms me down, it just puts things into perspective."*
2. *"Bando Diaries just reminds me of hanging out with my friends in Lagos."*
3. *"Concerts feel more personal when it's a smaller artist. It's like they're performing just for you."*
4. *"Back home, music was more of a shared experience. Here, I listen to it more on my own."*
5. *"Some songs feel like a reflection of my life at a certain moment, and when I move past that phase, they don't feel the same anymore."*



Empathy Map for Tobe



Empathy Map for Razaq

POV and HMW' statements with Morph Chart

Revised POV Statement for Razaq (Aligned with Feedback)

"Razaq, a Nigerian student adjusting to life in Canada, needs a way to engage with music in a way that still reflects his cultural identity and personal memories because moving away from home has turned music from a shared experience into a more solitary one, making him question its role in his life."

HMW Statements for Razaq

1. HMW help Razaq maintain a sense of cultural connection through music while living in a different country?
2. HMW recreate the communal aspect of music for students who feel isolated in a new environment?
3. HMW design a music experience that blends nostalgia with discovering new music that aligns with personal growth?
4. HMW create meaningful ways for students like Razaq to share their music experiences with others beyond just listening?
5. HMW make music an adaptable experience that evolves with both environment and personal growth over time?

Morph Chart for Razaq's Music Experience

HMW (How Might We)	Idea 1	Idea 2	Idea 3	Idea 4
HMW help Razaq maintain a sense of cultural connection through music, despite being far from home?	A community-curated playlist featuring Nigerian and diaspora music.	A weekly Afrobeat listening session hosted at student centers or cultural clubs.	A live map app showing locations where Afrobeat and Nigerian music events happen in Canada.	A live music café experience where students can listen to Nigerian music while connecting with others from similar backgrounds.
HMW recreate the communal aspect of music for students who feel isolated in a new environment?	A campus-based music club where students from similar backgrounds share music and experiences.	A music-sharing board where students post song recommendations that remind them of home.	A virtual house party feature that lets students listen to the same playlist in real time with reactions.	A pop-up cultural music night hosted at student hubs, playing nostalgic music from home.
HMW design a music experience	A 'throwback Thursdays'	A cultural fusion playlist generator	A smart music diary	A Nigerian music discovery hub

that balances personal nostalgia with the discovery of new music?	feature that surfaces songs tied to past personal events.	that blends familiar Afrobeat music with emerging genres.	that tracks emotions and memories linked to music over time.	where students can find artists from their home country making waves in Canada.
HMW create a way for students like Razaq to share their music experiences with others in a meaningful way?	A music journaling app where students document how songs shape their moods.	A collaborative storytelling project where students pair music with personal migration stories.	A Canadian student Afrobeat mixtape where students across campuses share their favorite tracks.	A music time capsule app that lets students store meaningful songs and revisit them later in life.
HMW make music an adaptable experience that reflects both changing environments and personal growth?	A smart playlist that adjusts based on daily student life, morning motivation, study focus, commuting, or winding down.	A music memory scrapbook that links songs to different life phases and locations.	AI-generated mood-based playlists that adjust based on emotions detected through journaling input.	A digital scrapbook where users can attach songs to key memories , cultural experiences, or personal milestones.

Razaq's Reimagined Experience

Imagine stepping into a space where music is more than just background noise it is a bridge to home, a connection to culture, and a way to build community.

Before the Hub: Isolation & Disconnection

At Home: Razaq wakes up to silence. He sits alone with his thoughts. The walls of his apartment feel unfamiliar, distant.

On Campus: He walks alone, headphones in, drowning out the chatter of students passing by. The campus feels vast, but he moves through it unnoticed. He eats alone at the café, scrolling on his phone, with no one to share a meal with.

Discovering the Hub: A Turning Point

One evening, on his way back from class, a vibrant digital board catches his eye

"Afro-Canadian Music Hub: A Space to Vibe, Connect & Feel at Home."

Curious, he scans the QR code and finds an address. He hesitates, saving the details but unsure if he will actually go.

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A few lonely Friday nights later, he remembers the hub and finally decides to check it out. As he steps inside, the energy is different. Afrobeat fills the air, students are vibing, and the space radiates warmth and familiarity.

He lingers at the entrance, observing. Hesitant but intrigued. Slowly, he makes his way through the space, taking it all in.

At the Music Discovery Wall, he notices sticky notes filled with song titles and memories from students like him. One note stands out a childhood song he hasn't heard in years. A nostalgic wave hits him, a reminder of home.

Nearby, at the Vinyl & Digital Music Station, old-school Nigerian records play alongside modern Afrobeat playlists. A student next to him hums along to a Fela Kuti track. Razaq nods, and a conversation sparks.

Later that night, he finds himself at the Afrobeat Karaoke Night. The first few moments are nerve-racking, but as he sings along with other students, the tension melts away. He laughs. He connects. He feels something new belonging.

As he leaves, he scans a QR code at the exit, saving the night's curated playlist to his phone. Now, whether he's walking to class or studying in his apartment, the hub's music and community stay with him through social media and digital playlists.

After the Hub: A Newfound Community

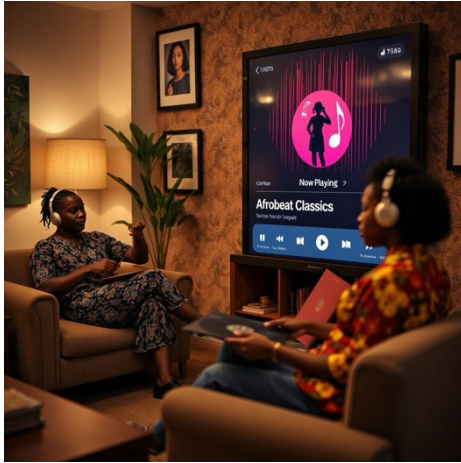
The hub becomes his Friday night ritual. No longer just a visitor, he now walks in with friends. The once-intimidating space is now familiar, filled with familiar faces.

On days when he can't physically be there, he checks their social media for updates, engages with event posts, and listens to the latest student-curated playlists. He even contributes his own song to the Music Discovery Wall, a personal mark in a place that once felt foreign.

Now, when Razaq listens to music, it's not just through his headphones. It's in the conversations, the shared memories, and the friendships he's made.

The hub has transformed Razaq's relationship with music. It is no longer just something he listens to it is an experience he shares, a part of his identity, and a way to build meaningful connections in his new home.

Prototype of the Hub



Lounge Area



Vinyl Listening Booth



Drink and Food Spot, Live
Map to African Hotspot in
Canada



Dj Set Area

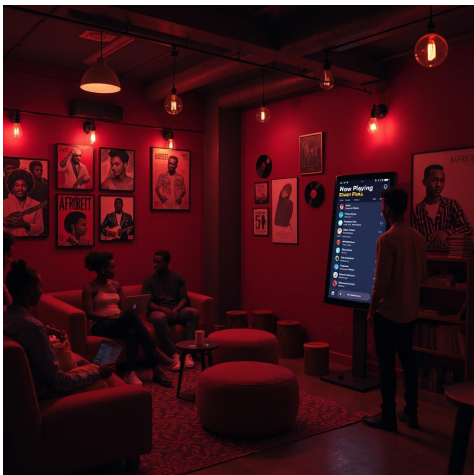
Prototype of the Hub(Continued)



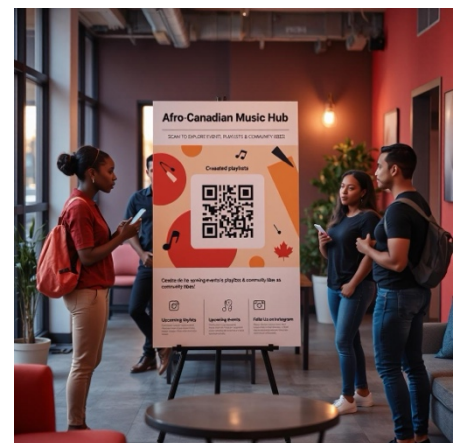
Karaoke Spot



Music Discovery Wall (Songs that reminds you of home)



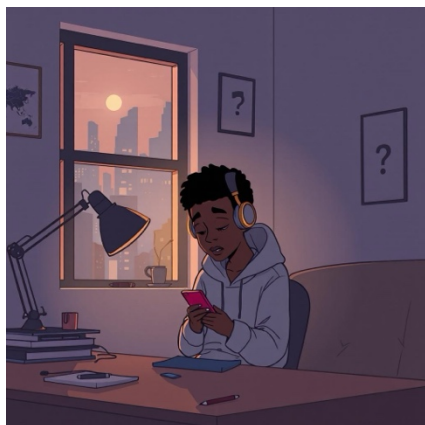
Digital Screen with Weekly Themed Student Curated Playlists with QR Codes



QR Boards with Linking to The Hub's Instagram, Event Listings, and Curated

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Storyboard-A Day in the Life of Razaq



Razaq sits by his desk, headphones on, scrolling through his phone, about to leave for school.



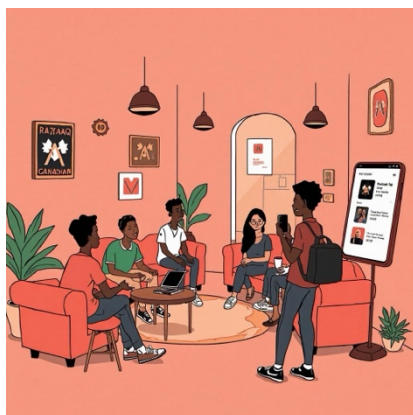
He walks through campus, lost in thoughts, disconnected with his environment.



On his way back home, he sees this digital ad for the hub with a tagline "Feel the beat, Find your home". Curious, He scans the QR code, found a location and saved it just in case.



One Friday night he got bored, he remembers the location details he saved and decided to see what the place was about. On his arrival, he was greeted by a track from Burna Boy and saw people dancing. The energy felt familiar, yet new.



He steps into what looks like a lounge and see people chatting and notices this big screen behind with different playlist with a "scan me" beside it and saw people coming to scroll and scan.



Intrigued, he notices another QR code board, that read "scan to keep updated with hub". He immediately scans for later purpose.



He kept walking around and stumbled to an area where he saw people singing to a karaoke sound but sometime caught his eyes, it was a board that said "songs that reminds you of home" with a lot of sticky notes of different songs. He immediately felt this nostalgic feeling.



Next to that area, he noticed another space with a lot of vinyl record and flips through a pile and saw old school records like Fela Kuti, nostalgia washes over him, and he briefly through about his childhood memories,



He went back to the karaoke spot for bit, and to end the night at the hub, he went to get some drinks and snacks before heading home. While eating, he notices a big screen beside him. He asked someone what it was, "oh that just shows you a live map of other African hotspots to visit in Canada. "Oh, that is so cool, Razaq said

Razaq Reimagined Experience Before and After Visualised

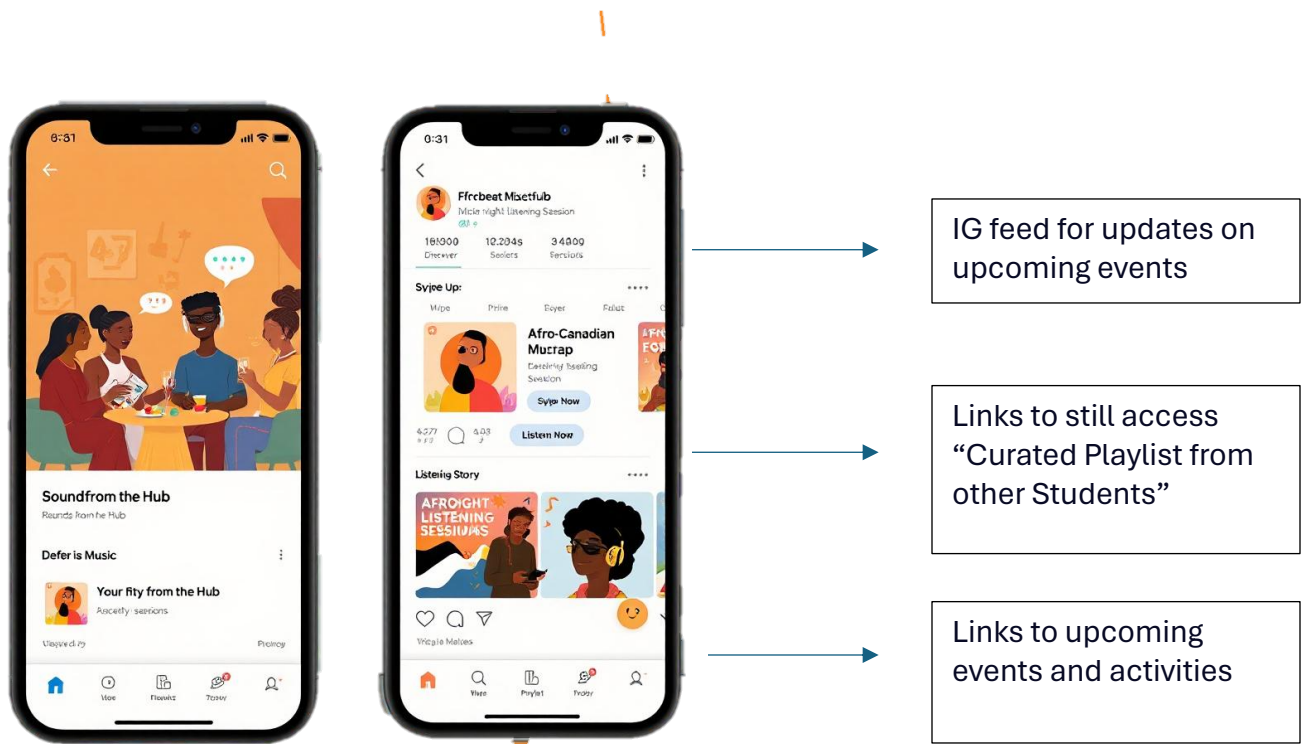


Before the Hub: Isolation & Disconnection



After the Hub: A Newfound Community

Razaq's Outside of the Hub Experience



Feedback from Testing and Design Iteration

As part of refining my Afro-Canadian Music Hub concept, I conducted a testing and feedback session where I presented my idea using the storytelling approach of *A Day in the Life of Razaq* (p.19). I structured the story to showcase his journey from isolation to connection, highlighting the before, discovery, and after phases of his experience with the hub.

To ensure my idea resonated, I presented it to two different individuals, one male and one female, who provided valuable user-centered feedback. Their perspectives helped me refine the storytelling elements, emotional impact, and usability of the hub's features.

Key Feedback from Testing

1. Emotional Resonance & Storytelling Flow

- Feedback: The male participant felt that Razaq's transition from isolation to connection was authentic but could be emphasized more gradually. He suggested that instead of immediately

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feeling at home, Razaq could have a few small moments of hesitation, which would make the transition more realistic.

- Iteration: I adjusted the storytelling flow by making Razaq's initial visit more observational, he does not instantly engage but gradually warms up to the environment, eventually joining in when he feels more comfortable.
- Feedback: The female participant mentioned that the turning point (when Razaq first engages with the hub) was impactful but needed a clearer emotional hook. She suggested highlighting a specific feature that draws him in, making it feel personal.
- Iteration: I expanded on the "Music Discovery Wall", I now include a moment where Razaq sees a song from his childhood written by another student. This moment creates a nostalgic connection, reinforcing the theme of music as memory and identity.

2. The Digital Accessibility & QR Features

- Feedback: The male participant was excited about the QR-enabled playlists and event boards but raised concerns about how students would continue engaging when they are not physically at the hub.
- Iteration: Based on this and my professor's feedback, I further developed the digital extension by ensuring that the QR board also links to the hub's social media. Now, students can:
 - Access curated playlists via a link in the Instagram bio.
 - Stay updated on upcoming events through real-time posts.
 - Keep engaging with the hub's community even when they cannot physically visit.
- Feedback: The female participant liked the idea of digital playlists but suggested adding a more interactive element beyond just scanning a QR code.
- Iteration: To enhance interactivity, I added a Student-Curated Playlist Screen inside the hub, where students can submit songs for a collective playlist each month, creating an ongoing engagement loop.

3. Social Engagement & Community Building

- Feedback: Both participants felt that the hub's ability to foster friendships and shared experiences was its strongest aspect, but they wanted more moments that show how people connect over time.
- Iteration: I expanded on the "After the Hub" experience, showing how Razaq forms new friendships. Instead of just attending events, he:
 - Starts checking the hub's social media to stay engaged.
 - Begins visiting the hub with friends instead of alone.
 - Contributes his own song to the Music Discovery Wall, making the space feel personal to him.

Notes from the Meeting with the Instructor

During my meeting with my professor, I received critical feedback on strengthening the storytelling aspect. The key takeaways were:

1. Put More Focus on Razaq's Daily Journey

- My professor advised me to frame the hub experience as a part of his routine, rather than just a one-time event.
- Iteration: I expanded on how Razaq interacts with the hub beyond his first visit, incorporating how it becomes a familiar and comforting space over time.

2. Separate the "Before" and "After" Storytelling More Clearly

- Initially, I had the transformation blended into one story, but my professor suggested splitting it into distinct slides to emphasize the contrast.
- Iteration: Now, I have two clear sections, Before the Hub (Isolation & Disconnection) and After the Hub (Community & Cultural Belonging), making the transition more powerful.

3. Enhance the Digital Aspects of the Hub

- My professor pointed out that technology should play a bigger role in making the hub accessible beyond physical visits.
- Iteration: This is what led to the addition of the social media integrated QR code board, ensuring students remain engaged even outside of the space.