Job Quest: Turning resume writing and interview prep into a guided learning experience for entry-level job seekers

DISCOVERY

Quest began as an exploration into reducing overwhelm in the job search process. Early on, we explored ways to support job seekers by gamifying the process through "Quests" and "Missions." However, through deeper investigation into the root cause of the problem and personal reflection, the focus of the project shifted.

WHY WE DECIDED TO PIVOT OUR FOCUS

As an entry-level job seeker myself, I experienced a recurring challenge: **not knowing how to translate experience into clear, well-structured resume bullets that highlight impact, how to clearly talk about my projects, or how to avoid filler words during interviews.**

The problem wasn't a lack of tools. It was a lack of guidance.

This insight reframed the product direction. Instead of optimizing for output, Quest evolved into a **guidance-first learning experience**, similar to Duolingo, designed to help entry-level job seekers learn how to:

- Write meaningful resume bullets that highlight impact

- Speak confidently about their projects and experience

- Practice interview responses without relying on scripted answers

Above all, Quest focuses on **teaching job search skills**, not replacing them.

PROBLEM

Entry-level job seekers are often expected to present themselves confidently in resumes and interviews without **learning how to do so**. Many struggle to explain their work clearly, choose effective action verbs, or articulate impact, leading to overwhelm during interviews.

42% of participants reported struggling to secure interviews despite actively job searching for 3 to 12 months.

In our interviews and survey responses, 42% of participants reported struggling to secure interviews despite actively job searching for 3 to 12 months.

This gap isn't about effort. It's about **understanding and confidence**. Without guidance, job seekers resort to over-reliance on templates, overusing filler words, or relying on tools that generate content without teaching transferable skills.

DESIGN GOAL

How might we guide entry-level job seekers through resume building and interview preparation while using AI to reinforce learning?

Goals:

- Help users understand why certain resume and interview techniques work

- Clarify when and which resume style should be used, including ATS (Applicant Tracking System) considerations

- Build confidence through repetition and guided practice

- Reduce dependence on copy-paste or opaque AI-generated outputs

---

CONSTRAINTS & PRIORITIZATION

With an 8-week timeline and limited development capacity, we prioritized features that supported learning and guidance rather than automation.

We used the **ICE prioritization framework (Impact, Confidence, Effort**). As the product direction became clearer, our evaluation criteria evolved. Features were prioritized based on their ability to:

- Teach core job search skills

- Reinforce understanding through practice

- Support confidence-building over time

Deprioritized for future iterations:

- Fully automated resume rewriting

- Job or role matching features

- Learning, practicing, and studying tools modeled after platforms like Quizlet

While these features could improve efficiency and motivation, they risked prioritizing speed over learning and bypassing **the guided practice** and **repetition** needed for users to truly understand why certain job search strategies work.

KEY INSIGHT

The biggest barrier for entry-level job seekers isn't access to tools. There is, in fact, a surplus of them. Instead, users are unfamiliar with the structure needed to explain their own experience.

[image here]

Our swot analysis showed that many job search tools prioritize speed and automation, often at the expense of learning and long-term skill development. Job Quest was intentionally designed as a guidance-first experience that helps users understand how to communicate their experience through explanations, structured frameworks, and guided practice rather than generating answers.

Where we landed

Job seekers need:

- Guidance on which action verbs best describe their experiences

- Support translating project results into clear impact statements

- A safe space to practice speaking without relying on filler words

---

SOLUTION

Designing Guidance That Builds User Confidence

To support learning without creating dependency on tools that automate content, we designed assistive patterns that focus on how to communicate ideas, because telling users what to say does not build long-term confidence.

- Suggestions are paired with explanations, not just outputs

- A "Help me understand" option allows users to explore the reasoning behind changes

- Explanations focus on why wording works, not just what to use

This ensures users leave the experience more confident and capable, able to apply what they've learned elsewhere.

Value statement: Empowering users to understand and confidently communicate their experience.

WHAT I LEARNED

Guidance matters more than automation.
Early-career users benefit most from support that helps them understand why things work, not just tools that speed up output.

Confidence comes from practice.
Repeated, guided practice helps users articulate their experience more clearly and reduces anxiety in resumes and interviews.

Designing for learning changes success metrics.
When the goal is skill-building, success is measured by understanding and confidence, not just completion.

IMPACT

From performance to learning.
Quest reframed resume writing and interview preparation as a guided learning journey rather than a high-pressure performance task.

Clarity builds confidence.
By breaking skills into manageable steps, users gain confidence in explaining their projects and experience.

NEXT STEPS

Validate learning outcomes.
Test whether guided practice improves users' ability to explain their work over time.

Expand guided lessons.
Extend the learning model to networking and behavioral interview scenarios.

WHAT I'M PROUD OF

Strong direction under constraints.
Within a short timeline, we aligned on a clear, learning-first vision and made intentional tradeoffs to support users' growth.