

Executive FollowUp

A productivity and organization tool

Design Problem


How do you provide enough structure to students in the upper high school years and early college years so that students can be successful academically? Is there a way to provide a system that students can actually grow in their ability to manage their time and workload? Can a student, then, turn these skills into success in their academic life and adulthood?

Appendix


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Personas and Scenarios


Austin

	<h3>Motivators</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● loves to work on the computer; has saved up money and built a whole system himself● wants to go to college● getting finished with work so he can play video games
<h3>Demographics</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Age: 17● Occupation: student● Location: Silver Spring, Maryland● Life Stage: high school junior	<h3>Constraints</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● shy and reserved● scattered;● diagnosed with ADD● he plays video games on the same computer that he does his homework

Austin comes home after school and can't wait to get on his computer and play Minecraft with his on-line friends. School is really hard right now and everyone is asking about "where he wants to go to college". He doesn't want to talk about it. He is having fun now and is sick and tired of thinking about his future. Math is really hard and he HATES English. He used to have to write 1 paragraph essays but now they are two pages long. How is he going to come up with enough stuff to write to fill 2 pages? His Mom is always on him. He knows she loves him but he just wants to avoid the issues. His grades have dropped recently and he is feeling overwhelmed. He figures he will start work after dinner. His Mom and Dad work so they always eat late and often don't start homework until 8. He is tired and puts any long-range projects off until the next day.

	<h3>Motivators</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● hard worker; good work ethic● wants to try to get his grades up so he can get into the Business school. The applications come out in November.● also wants a good social life
<h3>Demographics</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Age: 20● Occupation: student● Location: Herndon, Virginia● Life Stage: college sophomore	<h3>Constraints</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● likes to party● not too strong in math

Danny loves his college. He is in an off-campus apartment this year with some other guys. On Thursday nights, they often have some dudes over to pre-game before going to a sorority/fraternity social. He is always trying to figure out when to get his work done. There seems to be so much time but it just gets away from him. There is always so much activity in his apartment, it is hard to concentrate. The best time for him is in between classes. There is nothing else to do but eat and do a little work. Weekends are tough. He goes out on Friday nights, sometimes stays out pretty late, then sleeps until noon. He is not in the mood to do work at that point. He should be able to do all his work. He is taking a reasonable load and does not have a class on Fridays. He also planned his schedule so he doesn't have any early classes on any of the other days. He doesn't get up early to study. He sleeps in. He doesn't really know why his grades are so mediocre but in high school, his mother was always working with him to organize his schedule and he had a tutor in math. He really doesn't know what to do. There are group study sessions for 2 classes but they are always at night and on campus. It is pretty far to walk.

	<h3>Motivators</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● support good habits in her children ● support good academic performance ● support healthy self-esteem ● support good self-discipline ● she wants her children to graduate from college and be able to support themselves
<h3>Demographics</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age: 51 ● Occupation: part-time lawyer ● Location: Silver Spring, Maryland ● Life Stage: Mother of 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ son, 20 years, second year college student ○ son, 17 years, high school senior ○ daughter, 14 years, rising high school freshman 	<h3>Constraints</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not much control over the educational choices of her college son ● high school son is resistant to outside tutoring ● budget is limited ● time is limited

Mary is a very hands-on Mom. She keeps up what is going on academically with each of her children. Both of her boys have had some academic issues but she has been able to mitigate any low performance with a combination of her attention to their schedules, tutors and some psychotherapy.

Her oldest is in college and she is worried. He was a pretty good student in high school but he seems to be making some questionable choices. She is not happy that he has scheduled all his classes later for later in the morning and has nothing scheduled for Fridays. That means he can party Thursday night and not get any work done. He never seems to answer the phone on Saturdays, even at noon, and she is suspicious that he is staying out late and drinking a lot. His most recent report card was poor. She has called the college but they only want to talk to him and besides, all the options that were suggested had obstacles.

Her second son is getting ready to apply for college. He has so much work and really can't seem to "get down to business" until the pressure is on. Tests, for him, require multiple nights of study and she only sees evidence of

cramming at the last minute. She is taking advantage of a tutor for math, which is extremely expensive. When she tries to ask him about his schedule or suggest a study plan, he gets extremely defensive and won't listen.

Pre-test Checklist

- Prepare and send link for clickable prototype
- Print admin forms: Consent form, Logging sheet, Post-test questionnaire
- Arrange the printouts according to the tasks.
- Go through the tasks once yourself before administering the test.
- Setup video and start it when appropriate.

Post-test Checklist

- Stop recording the video and save it to the cloud.
- Make sure admin forms are filled out correctly: Consent form, Logging sheet, Post-test questionnaire

Introduction Script

Hi, my name is Missy Maloney. Thank you for being willing to participate in this test. We are trying to find a solution for students to help them manage their time better and we have a prototype of the app to show you. This app is not functional but is designed to give you a sense of how the app would work. There are areas to click on and they will move to another screen.

To the extent possible, I will take your comments to be confidential. My research team and I will aggregate all the comments from several interviews we're conducting so that your comments are not easily traced to you. If there's anything you really don't want on the record, even if it's anonymized, please let me know that, too. Also, this interview is entirely voluntary on your part – if for any reason you want to stop, please let me know. We can end the interview at that point with no repercussions for you of any kind. I can also throw out anything you've told me until that point. Do you have any questions for me? All right, then, let's proceed.

Do you mind if I take an audio recording? No one other than the research team will have access to the recording.

The test is in four parts. I'd like to start by asking you some background questions. After that I will show you a series of printed images of our initial design and give you some tasks to do. After the tasks, I'll ask a few more questions and have you fill out a survey. The test should take about 30 minutes.

To the best of your ability, I'd like you to think out loud. This means giving me a running commentary on what you're doing as you work through your tasks. This means that you should try to give a running commentary on what you're doing as you work through the tasks. Tell me what you're trying to do and how you think you can do it. If you get

All your feedback is good, both positive and negative. You will not hurt my feelings. The best kind of feedback is frank and honest. Do you have any questions for me?

Logging Sheet

User Test Logging Sheet

Thank you! We appreciate your participation.

Test Name		Logger	
Participant ID		Date	
Task Number		Task Success	

[illegible]

Pre-testing Questions

1. User Background and Demographics
 - To get started, can you tell me briefly about yourself?
 - [Probe:] What year are you in school?
 - [Probe:] How would you describe yourself as a student? How would you describe yourself as a planner?
 - On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not at all confident, 5=very confident), how would you rate your level of confidence in using your mobile phone for academic technologies?
2. Current approaches
 - How often do you plan out your preparation for assignments, tests and homework?
 - [Probe:] Have you ever taken advantage of a tutor to help you be more organized?
 - [Probe:] When was the last time you have taken advantage of technology to schedule your preparation time for assignments?
 - [Probe:] What tools do you use, if any, to help with your schoolwork?
 - [Probe:] Please describe your experience with this tool. What tasks does this technology help you to complete.
 - [Probe:] What do you think would be most helpful to you in trying to improve your grades.
3. How much prior knowledge does the user have
 - Which of the following indicates how much you know about technology that helps you plan and organize your studying/preparation for assignments?
[Option 1:] I don't know anything about that.
[Option 2:] I know a little, but I could learn more
[Option 3:] I am an expert.

Post-Testing Questions

- Debrief

At the end of the task list, a debrief will be conducted, using the notes taken, with the following questions in mind:

- Review parts of the test where the user struggled. What difficulties did you have on _____? I noticed that you struggled with _____. Can you tell me what happened? You paused here, tell me more about that.
- Preferences: What did you think of the site? What did you like/dislike? Which parts of this page are most/least important to you?
- Changes: If you had 3 wishes to make this better for you, what would they be? Why?
- Understanding: How would you describe this to a friend?

- Use Cases: Under what circumstances would you use this? Why?

Post-Test Questionnaire

Post-test questionnaire

Answer the following questions based on the scale of 1 -5 where 1 is 'strongly disag' and 5 is 'strongly agree'.

1. I think that I would like to use Executive Followup frequently.				
1	2	3	4	5
2. I found Executive Followup unnecessarily complex.				
1	2	3	4	5
3. I thought Executive Followup was easy to use.				
1	2	3	4	5
4. I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use Exec Followup.				
1	2	3	4	5
5. I found the various functions in Executive Followup were well integrated.				
1	2	3	4	5
6. I thought there was too much inconsistency in Executive Followup.				
1	2	3	4	5
7. I would imagine that most people would learn to use Executive Followup very quickly.				
1	2	3	4	5
8. I found Executive Followup very cumbersome to use.				
1	2	3	4	5
9. I felt confident using Executive Followup.				
1	2	3	4	5
10. I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with Executive Followup				
1	2	3	4	5