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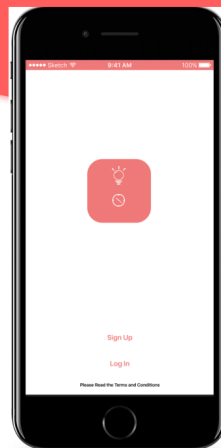
Study Buddy

Interaction Design, UI/UX

STUDY BUDDY

Filter based product that aims to help students find motivated study partners.

Introduction

How do we connect like-minded students studying a subject to clear common doubts and increase mastery of the material at hand?

A common issue at UCSD, and most universities with large student populations, is the fact that an individual is unable to find a partner to study with, keep themselves motivated, and clear doubts in a certain subject area. An example of this would be two students completing their math problem set at a certain location together, clearing doubts and gaining mastery of the subject material.

But why would someone want a study partner in the first place?

As a student myself, sometimes I stumble upon certain issues in a niche subject that someone in my dorm has no idea about. Perhaps I'm trying to find the motivation to complete the next problem set. So a friend and I figured that other students must share these issues as well, and so we tried to design a solution.

buddy true or not. All of them answered either one or both, confirming that this issue indeed occurs.

<p style="text-align:center">"Study partners facilitate learning".</p>

As we conducted interviews across campus, we gained insight toward this issue, finding that the reasons for this stem from
- Mismatch in schedules
- Large class sizes (sometimes to the tune of 450 per lecture)
- Study location preferences (where one prefers the library, while another prefers a coffee shop).

We set ourselves a few goals early on
- Help a user easily connect with someone to study for a certain subject
- Make the connecting experience as seamless as possible
- Create a sense of trust and credibility in the solution through consistency in design.
- A solution with intuitive navigation

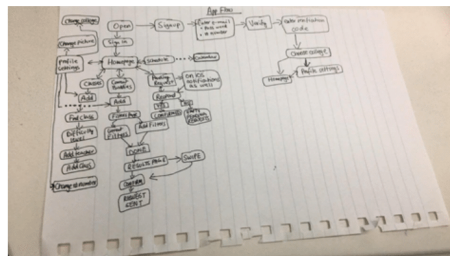Armed with insight from the users and clear goals for our solution, we set off on the ideation stage.

Ideation

Overarching focus for the product -
To create an experience so that we can help students like us connect with potential study buddies where they ordinarily wouldn't be able to.
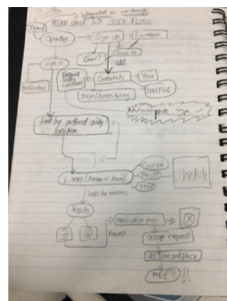
Initial flow

Final flow

feel when using the application? Secondly, what kind of features can we add to make the act of connecting as seamless as possible?
After a brainstorm with the team, we arrived at some important key words and "solutions" for the questions.

1)   Approachable, Intuitive
2)   Filter based system, Classes, major, preferred study location
3)   Results should be presented in a way so that the user can make a quick, yet informed, decision.

A particular solution that struck out at an early stage was the inclusion of preferred study location as a feature, or a filter.
It looked a good solution because even in the user research stage, we found that most people have differing preferences with regard to study locations. For example, one student might prefer a library, while another prefers a coffee shop or a lounge environment.
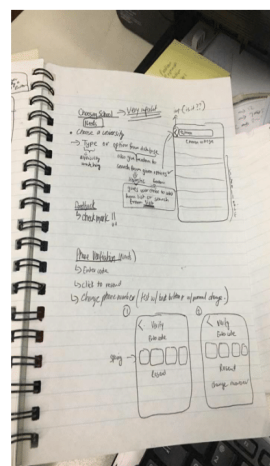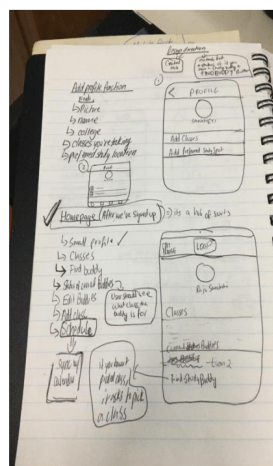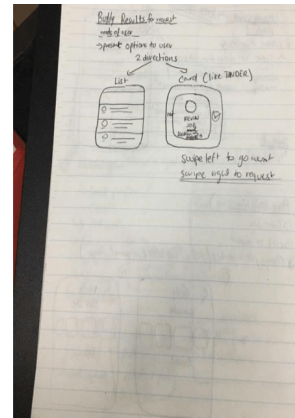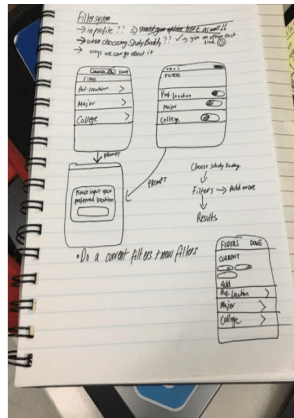
User flows

As we built on these principles, we designed many kinds of user flows which would help us convey a clear mental model to the users.

One of them included a step by step profile creation, but stress testing this made us realize that we didn't offer the user enough freedom to perhaps add classes later on rather than add one straight away.

Another example was the lack of a proper homepage in the original flow, which was important for the user to see at a glance the classes they've signed up for and any current buddies they have. Stress testing the application made us realize that there needs to be a central hub for the user. We realized that an intuitive and simple home page was important for the user to digest this information.
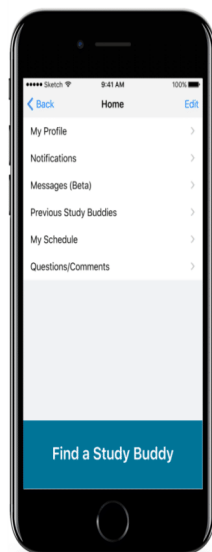
Along the way, we used prototypes and tested with ourselves and other users to validate that what worked in our minds also worked on others' hands.
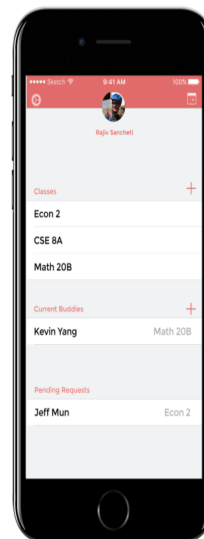
Iteration

After we iterated on the basic user flow and had a solid handle on it, we went to work on the specific pages, with the design going in two directions over the anchor of the application, the home page.
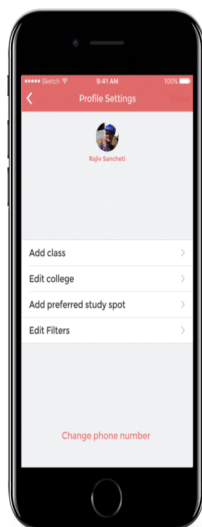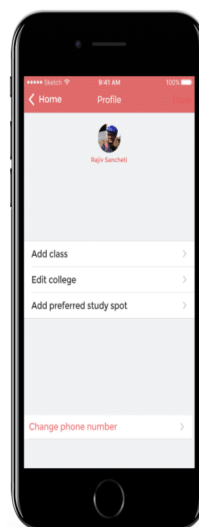

1st homepage

2nd homepage

On the flipside however, the second page presents the information in a "hub", putting the profile and schedule icons on top, so the users can focus on what's in front of them. As the home page is a hub, the users can see the classes they are in and their current buddy status.

As we tested out both these directions with users, we gained the insight that a homepage needs to present the information in a way that is easily digested and intuitive. According to the majority of users, the second one fit the bill more. Therefore, we implemented this design as it gave the users freedom to choose and reduced the overall number of clicks.

There was also a micro-interaction to be considered between the back chevron vs a combination of the chevron and home text.

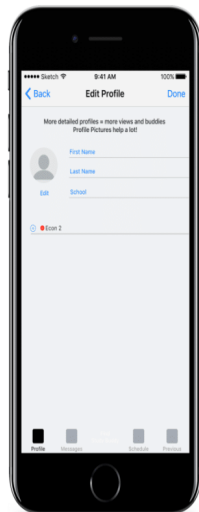Chevron page   Chevron with "Home" page

We user tested this micro-interaction on paper with around ten users, asking the question

"Do you know what the back chevron does?"

We realized that it'd be better to specify "Home" to give the user timely feedback and maintain consistency in design.
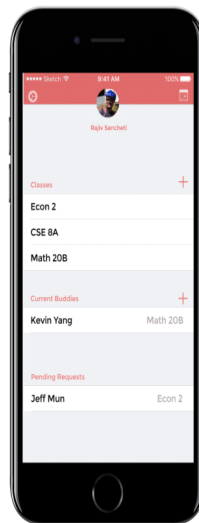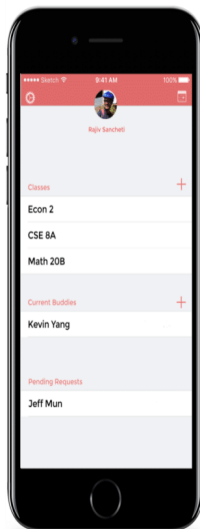
Addition of classes

Add class #1

Add class #2

According to user interviews, we found that the users wanted a system where they could find a common professor and also establish the difficulty they were having with the class. To that end, we implemented the solution on the right.
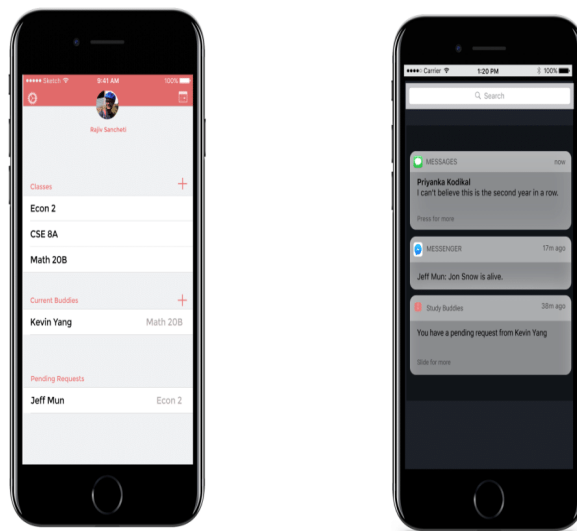
Current study buddies (Class vs no class)

presenting the specific class on the hub.

After interviewing, we realized that users wanted a quick way to see where their pending requests were, so we implemented it in the homepage so the user can quickly respond to the request, while also utilizing the notification widget to that end.

After user testing we realized that a user would want to
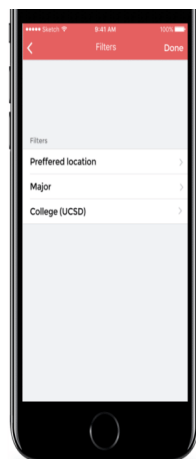
Pending Requests

After interviewing, we realized that users wanted a quick way to see where their pending requests were.
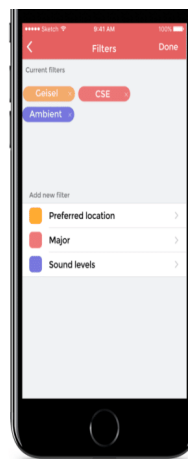So we implemented it in the homepage so the user can quickly respond to the request, while also utilizing the notification widget to that end.

It was a solution that seemed practical and easy to use

Filter system

Initial Filter   Final Filter

We tested this feature and users acknowledged that they'd like to have flexibility every time, but perhaps wanting to save their filters.

So we came up with a solution to input the filters once, save them and show the current filters. Therefore, the user has flexibility to use pre-existing filters or use new ones when finding a study buddy.

Flexibility for the user was key in a situation like this

Find study buddy

and idea through user testing.

Final solution and Takeaways

https://projects.invisionapp.com/share/CW9VRV1J7#/screens/212802619

As my first design project from the ground up it was a wonderful learning experience to see design as not only making something look pretty, but a system which can improve the user's life. In terms of interaction, it was important to not include any gestures which would distract the user from the task of getting a study buddy, instead lending into the natural flow of the application. With each iteration, we gained greater appreciation of the users' needs, while staying true to our goals that we set out. Hopefully we can now go on and develop the application!

Multiple Owners

Follow All
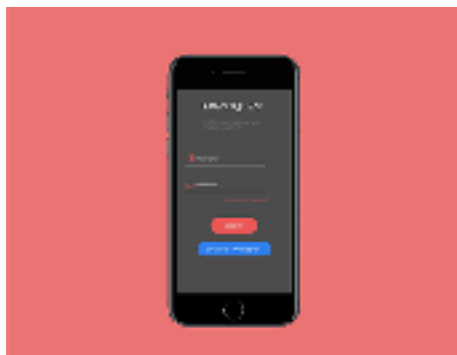
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Basic Info

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