

# Google Classroom UX/UI

## Case Study:

**"Miss! I don't  
see it!"**

**Jaida Taylor**



# My Role

- Lead Researcher
- Lead Designer
- Lead Engineer



# Background

During the pandemic, most schools in the U.S. transitioned to remote learning, which meant that students were left to their own devices — literally — when it came to taking responsibility for their learning.

I couldn't be the finger-wagging, helicopter teacher I had always been, and when it came to using Google Classroom, I noticed that the more resources I uploaded to benefit students, the more confused they became. Were students just feeling the fatigue of online school? Or was there a larger issue at play?

# Background

Students claimed that from the classwork page they "couldn't see" when a new resource was uploaded.

Thus, they felt defeated, and were not completing the assignment.



I figured this was a simple rendering error on my part, I asked a student to share their screen with me via Zoom to assess the problem.



# High School Students

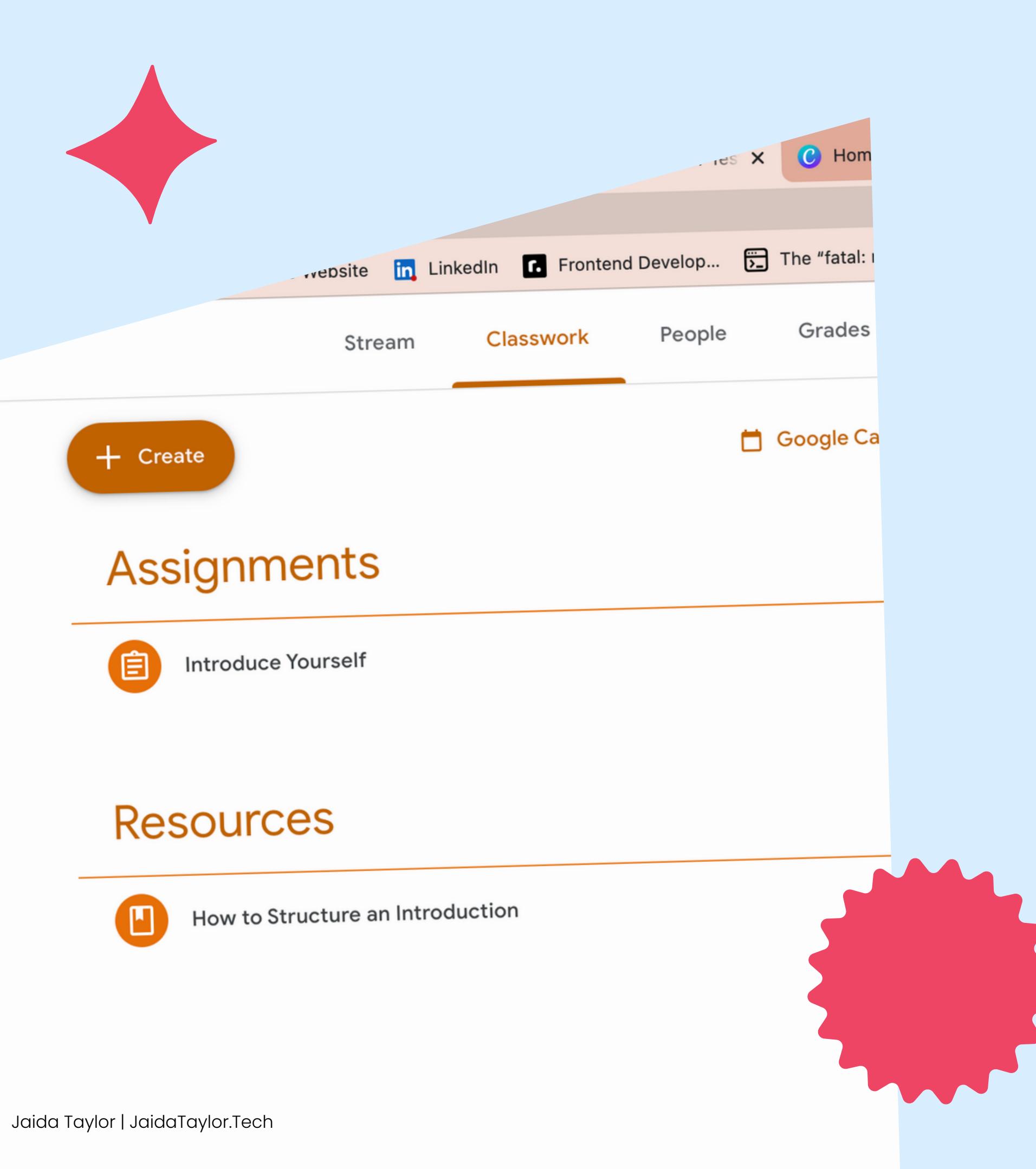
The school is located in a metropolitan city, and most students commute to school via subway.

This audience is comprised of junior level high school students studying English across two classes, approximately 75 students.

- 44% of students are classified as students with special needs
- 13% of students are classified as English Language Learners

# Audience



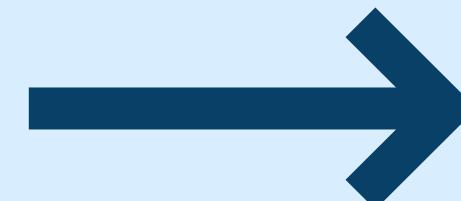


# User Research

## Week 1

Upon viewing the classwork page from both my account and a student account, I found that classwork I labelled as "materials" were rendering a different icon color than "assignments."

Students claimed to "see" the assignment, but not the resource to help them complete it because of the icon color difference!



# Teacher View

A screenshot of the Google Classroom interface from a teacher's perspective. The page title is "Test Class". The "Classwork" tab is selected. On the left, there are sections for "All topics", "Assignments", and "Resources". The "Assignments" section contains an item titled "Introduce Yourself" with a due date of "Due Nov 30". The "Resources" section contains an item titled "How to Structure an Introduction" posted at "1:28 PM". A large blue circle highlights the "Assignments" section, and a blue arrow points from it to a red callout box.

Opaque, colored icon  
that signals to students  
that an item is "due" or  
even exists.

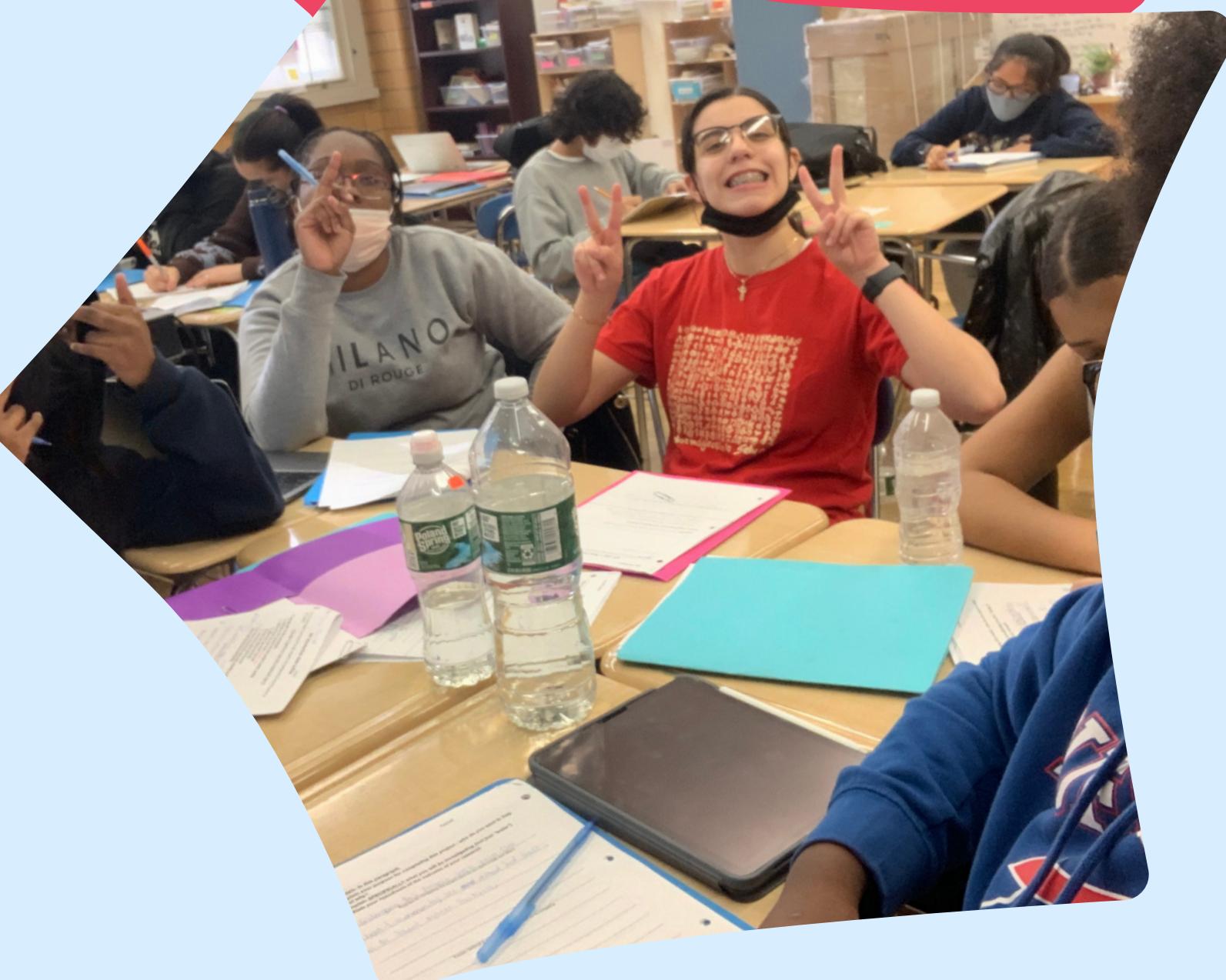
# Student View

A screenshot of the Google Classroom interface from a student's perspective. The page title is "Test Class". The "Classwork" tab is selected. On the left, there are sections for "All topics", "Assignments", and "Resources". The "Assignments" section contains an item titled "Introduce Yourself" with a due date of "Due Nov 30". The "Resources" section contains an item titled "How to Structure an Introduction" posted at "1:28 PM". A large blue circle highlights the "Assignments" section, and a blue arrow points from it to a red callout box. The "How to Structure an Introduction" resource is shown with a grayed-out icon and text, indicating it is not available to the student.

Grayed-out icon that  
students don't "see" or  
interpret as non-  
existent/unimportant.



# User Pain Points



- ✿ Google Classroom content labelled as "materials" have a different color icon than those labelled "assignments."
- ✿ Students scan the assignment page quickly and don't necessarily read the words next to the material, rather they just scan the icons on the left side of the page.

# User Personas

99



**Mikayla**

**Age:** 16  
**Education:** High School Student  
**Hometown:** Bronx, NY  
**Family:** Single  
**Occupation:** Student

**"I just want to get good grades."**

## Goals

- Wants to find and complete her work quickly, less focused on accuracy

## Frustrations

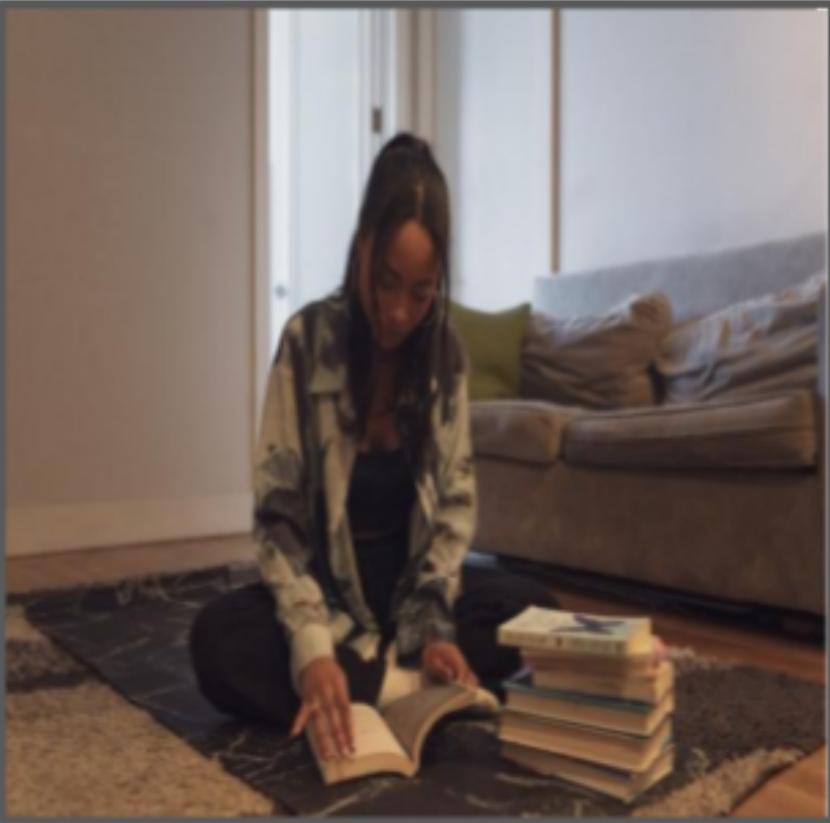
- When she can't immediately find what she is looking for

Mikayla is a high school junior who earns a B average. She is not enrolled in many extracurricular activities, and mostly sees school as her stepping stone to graduation, her ultimate goal. She is not comfortable with just "passing," but does not over-exert herself to earn A's. In remote learning, she just wants to get her work over with, and hates working online for prolonged hours.

**Mikayla is a complacent student who needs to find and complete her assignments quickly to earn passing grades.**

# User Personas

99



**Janell**

**Age:** 16

**Education:** High School Student

**Hometown:** Bronx, NY

**Family:** Single

**Occupation:** Student/Peer Mentor

**“Unlike my friends, I really care about my learning.”**

## **Goals**

- Is serious about her schoolwork, and wants to truly absorb her learning

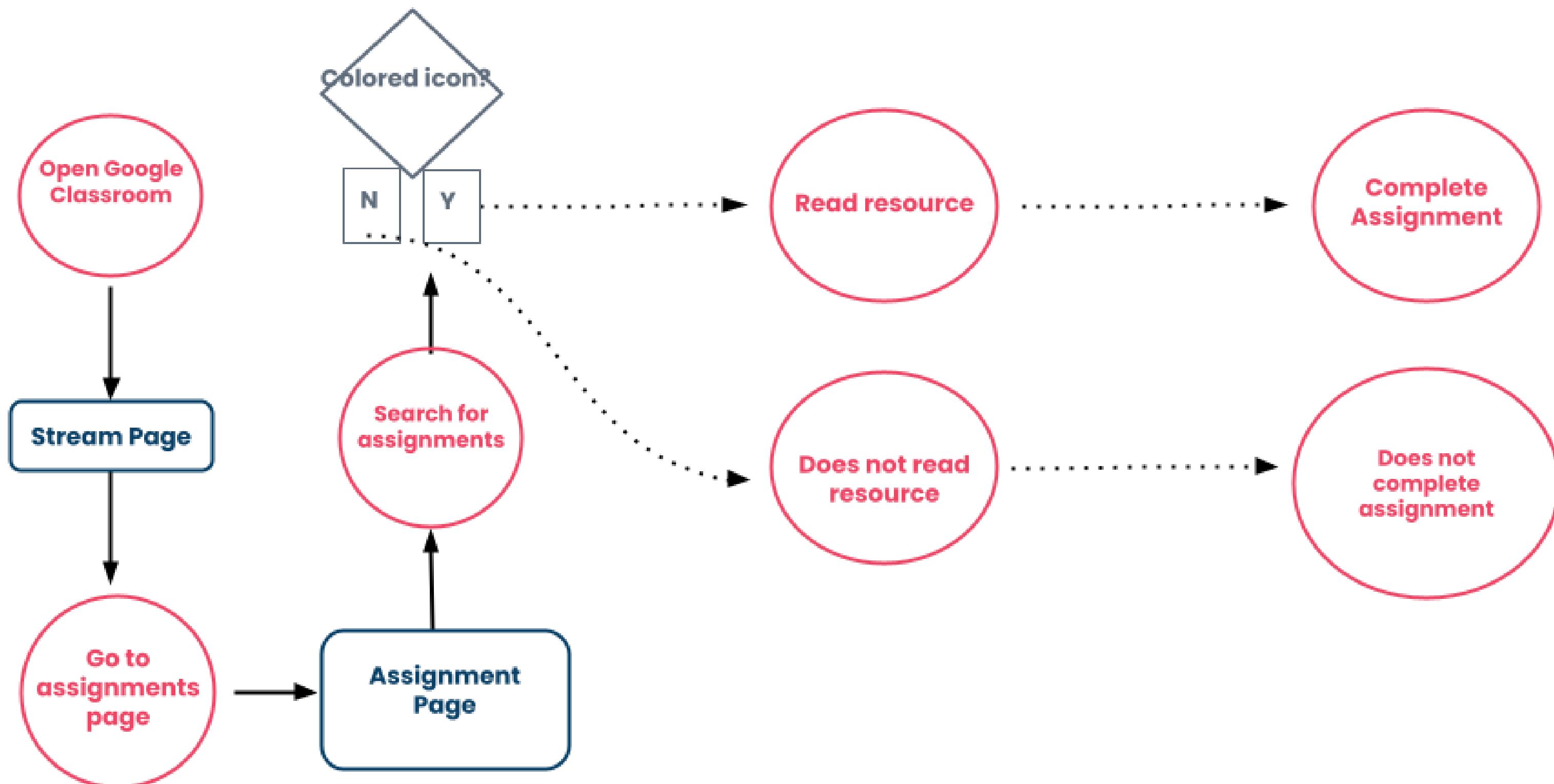
## **Frustrations**

- Unorganized or cluttered Google Classroom assignment pages

Janell is a high school junior with an A- average and goals of becoming an OBGYN. She is very involved in the school community, and plays on various sports teams and works as a peer mentor to younger students. Janell is a special education student who becomes anxious or overwhelmed when she feels her grades are dropping or that she does not understand an assignment.

**Janell is a zealous student who needs to complete her assignments accurately otherwise she comes anxious.**

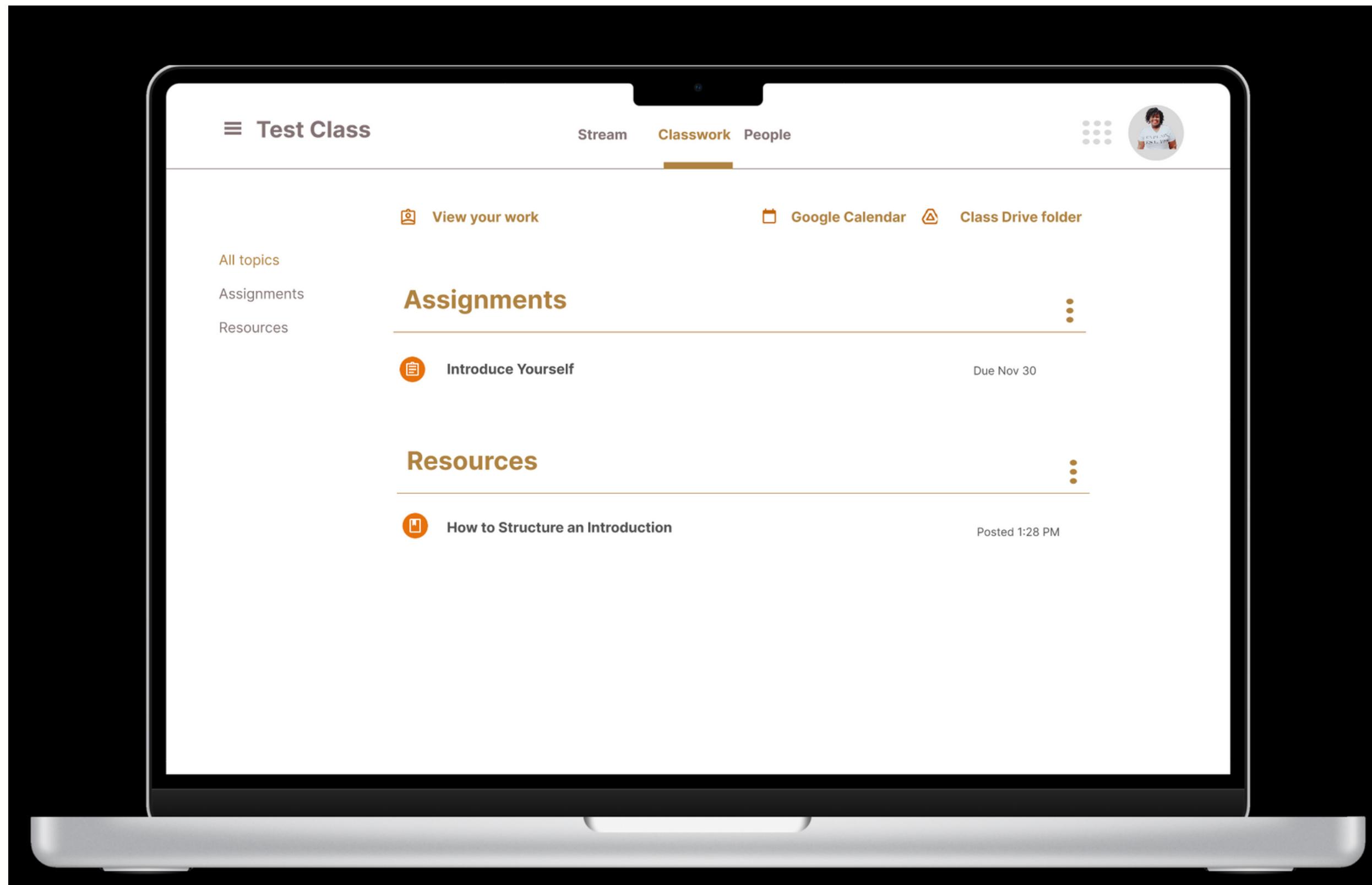
# User Journey

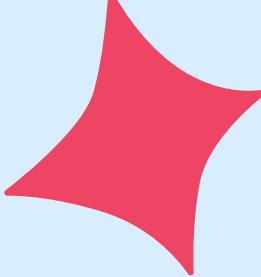


# Digital Wireframe

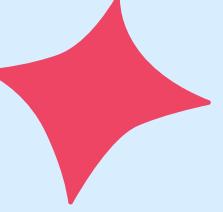


# Digital Mockup





# Accessibility Considerations



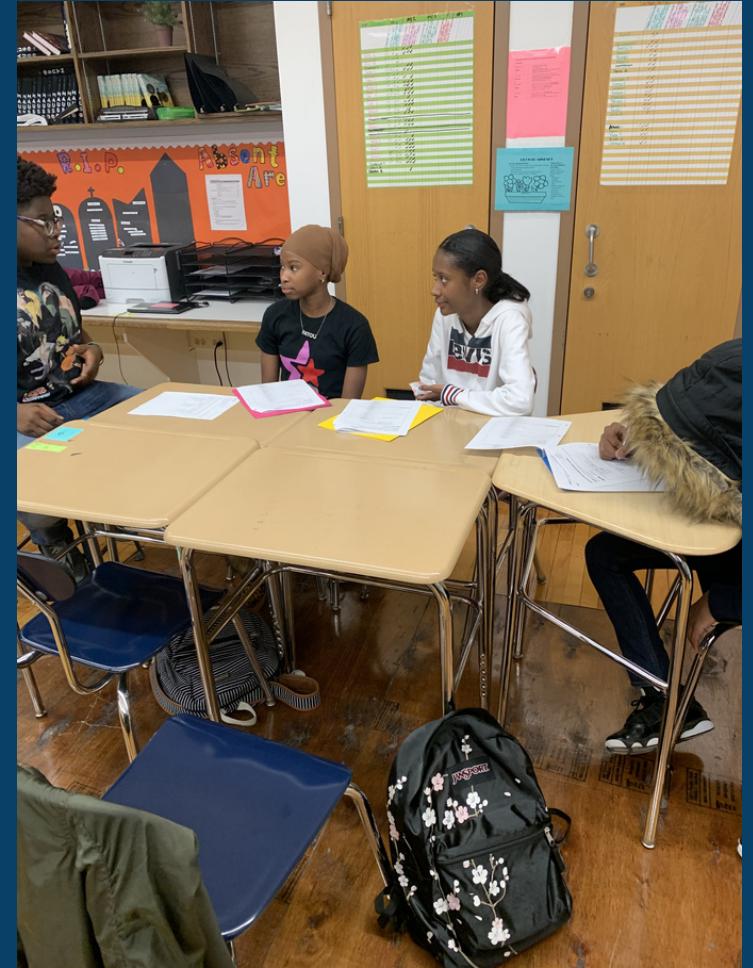
Students with color-blindness will notice similarity in hue between icons

Design follows the Gestalt principle of similarity

Proximity of similar icons tell students the items are of equal importance

Source: <https://www.colourblindawareness.org/>

Source: <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/gestalt-principles>



# Impact

"Having both icons be the same color makes it easier to see the work quicker." – Sasha

"I like that I don't have to look too hard for the resources so I can get my stuff done." – Destiny

# Takeaway

Most students, whether dedicated or otherwise, want to complete their work on time. However, there are some who are more patient to complete this task , but have a hard time seeing assignments due to disabilities, cognitive or emotional. Other students rush and are able to read material, but rather look for colors as quick indicators. Regardless, in a time when students had to take on a lot of responsibility they weren't used to, the subtlest difference as a grayed out icon defeated them.

# Thank You! Let's Connect:

I'm always open to chatting more about this project!



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