Team: Dikonakaya

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Overview:

The growing dependency on digital platforms for academic purposes has uncovered a significant problem students struggle to stay organized and manage their workload efficiently across various tools and systems. Many academic platforms are fragmented, lack cohesive reminders, and do not account for students' varied study habits. This causes missed deadlines, increased stress, and reduced academic performance.

A dedicated interface or system is needed to bridge the gap between learning management systems and student productivity needs. Such a system should centralize academic tracking and provide personalized pacing tools to promote healthier and more effective study habits.

Solving the problem:

To better understand the challenges faced by students in managing their academic workload, our team examined common patterns of disorganization, procrastination, and stress linked to poor pacing and fragmented study tools. Through preliminary surveys and interviews, we learned that students often lack an effective way to track task progress, review material in a structured way, or stay focused during self-study.

As a result, we propose conceptualizing a supportive system to address these pacing and productivity issues not to finalize a solution now, but to explore how certain features might illuminate the underlying problem better.

We aim to study student needs further through data collection (e.g., surveys, interviews) to determine which features students value most in maintaining an effective learning rhythm. This exploration will guide the eventual design of a tailored academic assistant in the next phase of the project.

The Application:

- **Application Name:** PACE (Personal Personal Academic Companion & Evaluator)
- **What it is:**PACE is a conceptual mobile-first system designed to help students manage their academic workload more effectively. While it is not yet developed,

envisioning its core features allows us to more clearly identify the root causes of disorganization and stress in academic environments.
The app's primary goal is to assist students in tracking their assignments, self-assessing their progress, and staying motivated through an engaging, supportive interface.

- **Features:** These features are not design commitments but are used to explore what students lack in their current tools
    - **Task Progress Tracker**
      Users can tag tasks as "Not Started", "In Progress", or "Completed", and see visual progress timelines to pace their week.
    - **Custom Review Quizzes**
      Students can generate their own quizzes using course notes. This reinforces active recall and allows self-evaluation.
    - **Note Summarizer (Cliff Notes Generator)**
      An in-app tool to create short, structured summaries from class materials or readings.
    - **Ambient Focus Modes**
      Includes customizable soundscapes like lo-fi music or nature sounds to promote deep focus.
    - **Pacing Feedback**
      A smart reminder system offers gentle nudges if a student is falling behind schedule without overwhelming them with notifications.
- **Question about the Application**
    - **Who are the potential users?**
        - High school and college students enrolled in hybrid or online learning.
        - Users who already rely on digital tools but struggle with pacing, consistency, or overcommitment.
    - **What tasks do they seek to perform?**
        - Monitoring daily/weekly academic obligations.
        - Structuring study sessions.
        - Reviewing learning material in an interactive way.
        - Managing mental fatigue via controlled task segmentation and focus aids.
- **What functionality should any system provide to these users?**
  Any system developed based on this concept should:
    - Be easy to use without a steep learning curve.
    - Reduce the number of apps students use by combining essential features.

    - Help users *visualize* their progress and upcoming workload.
    - Encourage healthy study habits without overwhelming them.
- **What constraints will be placed on your eventual design?**
    - **Accessibility**: Must consider color-blind users and those with reading or attention difficulties.
    - **Device Limitations**: Many users have budget or mid-range phones, so the interface must be lightweight.
    - **Internet Reliability**: Should work offline or sync effectively under limited connectivity.
    - **Platform Targeting**: Initial focus would likely be Android-only due to its higher usage in many student populations.
- **What criteria should be used to judge if your design is a success or not?**

    We will know the eventual system is successful if:
    - Users feel less overwhelmed managing their tasks.
    - They report improved consistency in their study routines.
    - Task completion and retention improves (measured via self-reported surveys or usage analytics).
    - They prefer this over fragmented systems (e.g., Google Calendar + Notion + flashcard apps).

Figure 1. Flowchart