

BUDDY



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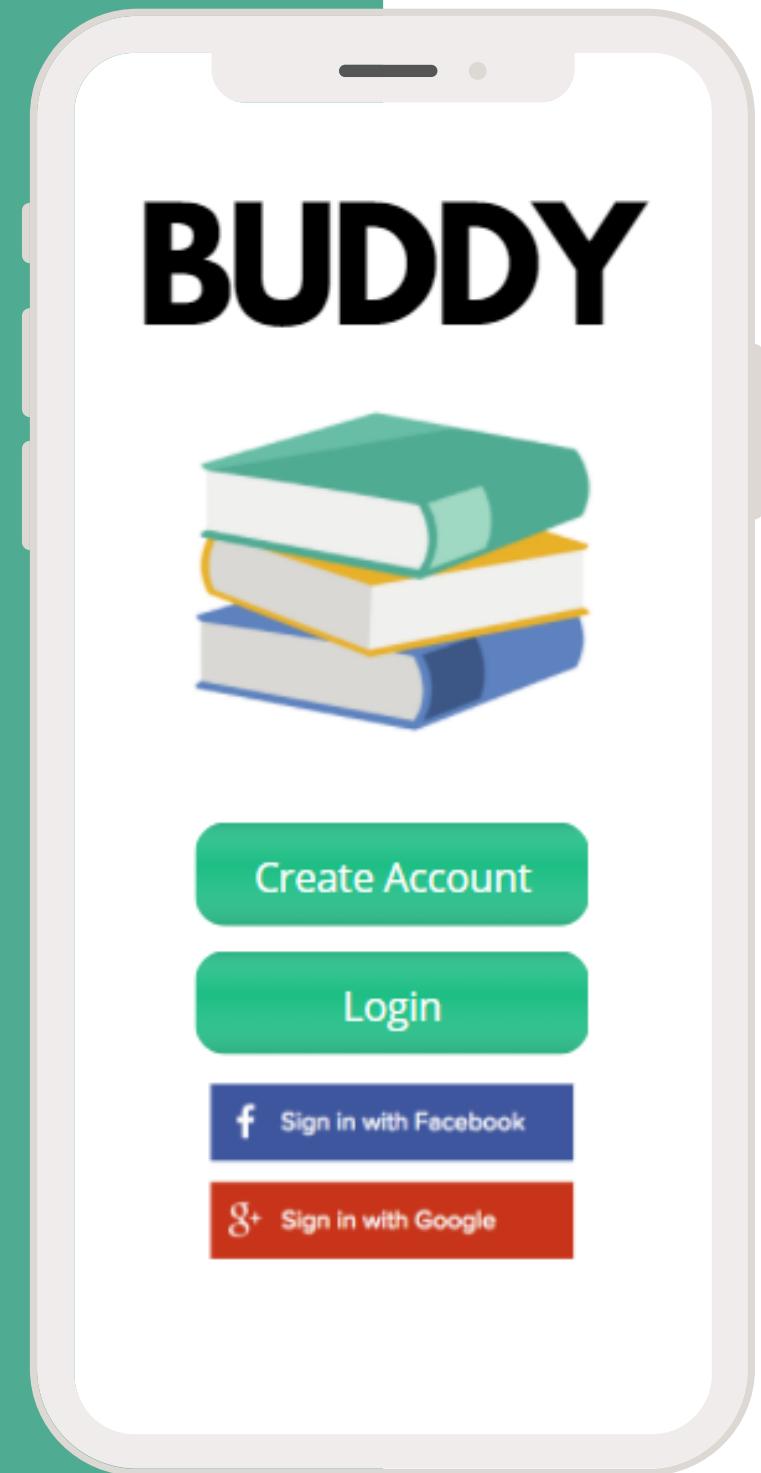
BUDDY

A handy pocket app for storing and studying vocabulary flashcards on the go. Create, sort and store sets of study cards on any topic for quick access to on the go revision.

Duration: 30 days

Role: UX Design, User Research

Purpose: CareerFoundry UX Design course



Overview

The Problem:

Studying new topics, concepts and terms can be an overwhelming and time consuming task for learners. Learners need a tool that can help simplify this task and enable them to undertake their studies when and where it suits them.

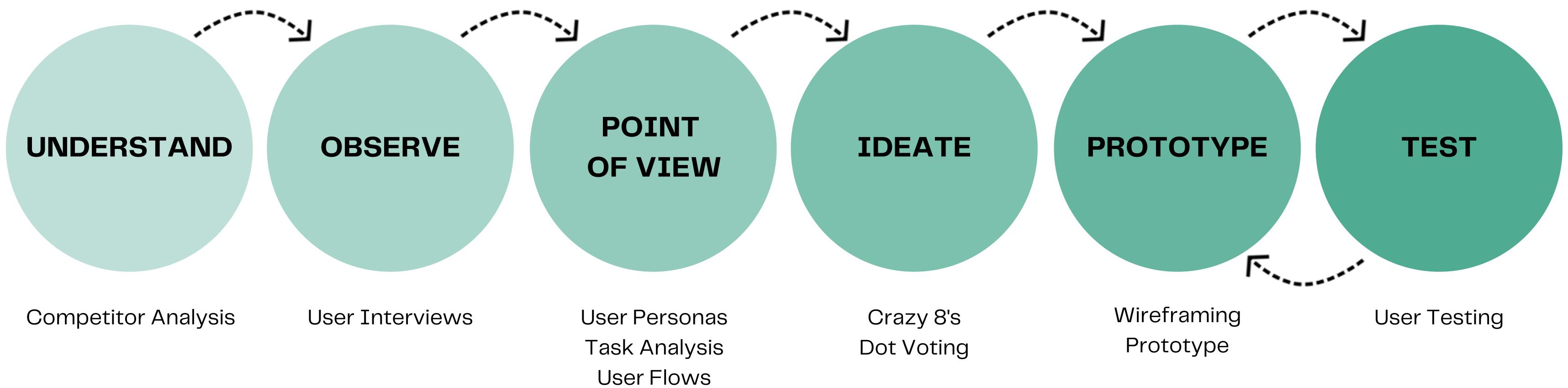
" How might we design a mobile app that empowers people to learn new vocabulary? "

The Goal:

To design an app that simplifies the study process and allows users to easily create and access their study resources for easy study sessions.



Process



Competitor Analysis

Before setting out on creating an app to address the given problem, it was first important to understand what products were already available on the market and evaluate their offerings for users.

Three prominent study apps were selected for review and evaluated, with a summary of 'pros' and 'cons' created for each. By conducting this exercise I was able to assess three main areas; positive features of the apps that I may be able to incorporate in my app, any features that I may be able to improve in my app, and what (if any) gaps existed in the market that I may be able to address through the creation of this app.

I conducted research on these apps by downloading them onto my mobile and going through the app from sign up to task completion, as though I was a new user on the app. This gave me a good idea on how users of my app may approach my designs.



GRE Vocabulary Flashcards

Magoosh

PROS:

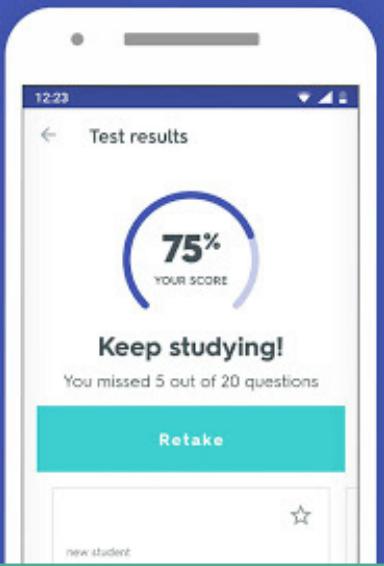
- Comprehensive vocab definitions
- Ability to provide feedback to track learning progress

CONS:

- No ability to add own vocab words, definitions or visual aids
- No ability to organise vocab into own categories

Quizlet

MASTER ANY SUBJECT
ONE SUCCESS AT A TIME



Quizlet

PROS:

- Ability to tailor experience based on occupation
- Community contributions
- Ability to create sets, and input own vocab and definitions

CONS:

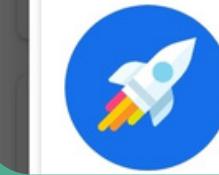
- Unable to edit flashcards
- Minimal onboarding and explanations of features

Practice



Basic Review

Basic flashcards review.



Select Definition

Select the correct definition

Flashcards

PROS:

- Languages other than English available.
- Ability to add images & audio descriptions
- Ability to track progress

CONS:

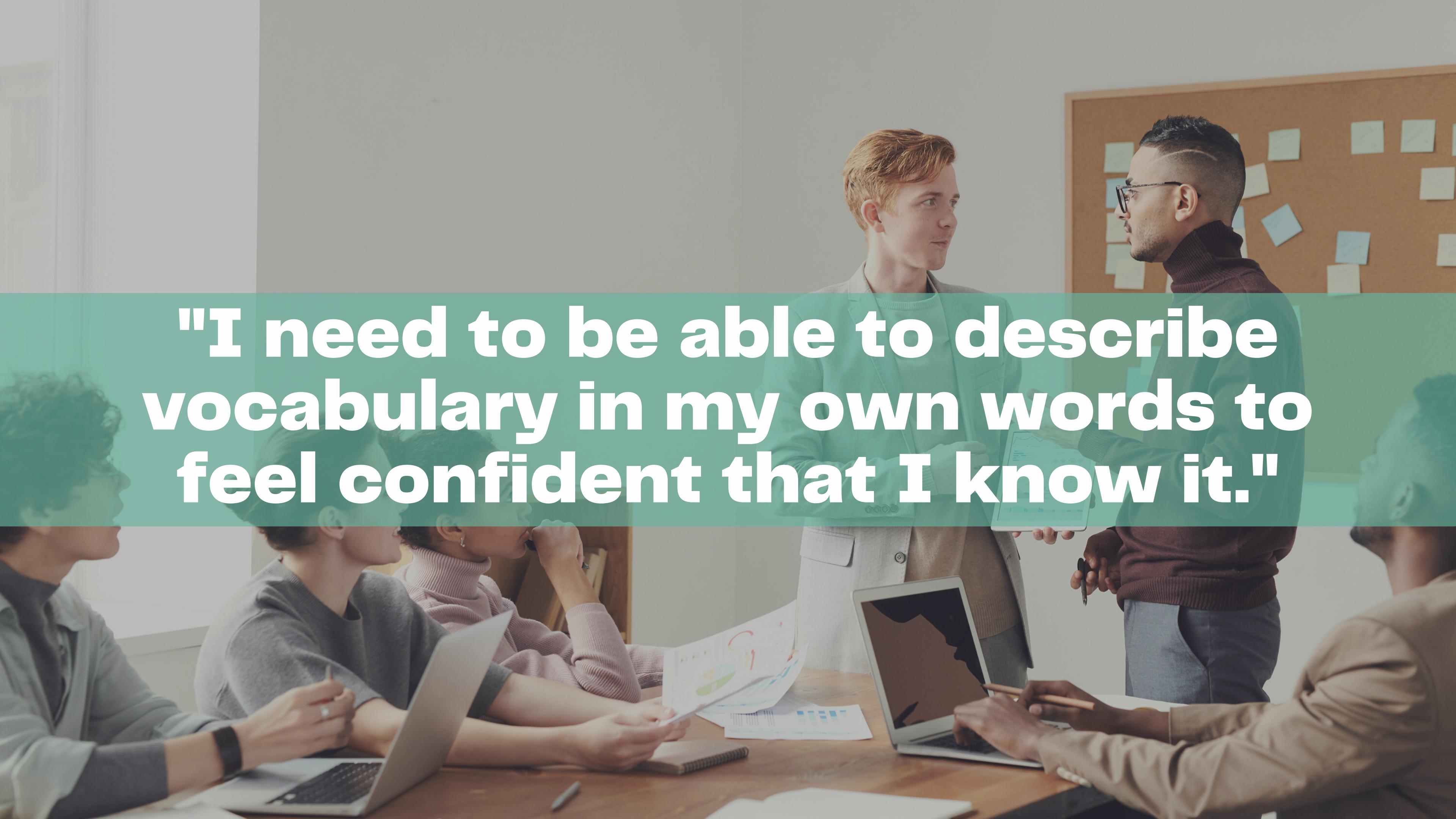
- No explanations of key features
- No prompts or instructions on how to navigate activities

User Interviews

In order to understand what features potential users would actually find useful and how they may use a study app, a round of user interviews were conducted with a variety of participants in order to gain insights from a cross section of the app's potential users. This research would inform our User Personas down the line. Three participants were recruited, covering a variety of ages, professions and locations. These interviews were conducted both online and via Skype video calls.

These interviews proved to be very insightful into the study methods and routines used by participants, and the manner in which they already used apps to study various topics. Participants also provided a number of their own suggestions into what features they would find useful in a study app.

As this was my first time conducting user interviews, I found it challenging to balance sticking to the pre-determined interview questions and letting the interview follow a natural conversational course that could lead to previously unconsidered insights. In saying this however, I enjoyed conducting these interviews and they provided great insights into how potential users would use the app and what they needed from it.

A photograph of a diverse group of professionals in an office environment. In the foreground, several people are seated around a wooden conference table, looking at laptops and documents. One person in the center is holding up a white tablet displaying a presentation slide. In the background, two men are standing and talking; one has short blonde hair and is wearing a grey blazer over a light-colored shirt, while the other is wearing glasses, a dark turtleneck, and grey trousers. A corkboard wall with various sticky notes is visible behind them.

"I need to be able to describe vocabulary in my own words to feel confident that I know it."

User Persona

In order to put a face to my potential user and help maintain the ‘customer-first’ approach, I created a user persona with the aim to define the behaviours, needs, and goals of my average user. Through this I was able to imagine the context of the problems my persona ‘Rachel’ may be facing and how this app could help her face these.

To do this, I devised a number of user stories and job stories for her, and ultimately defined an overarching problem statement and hypothesis statement for how this app would help her. Due to the great insight I had gathered through my user interviews, I found the task of defining who Rachel was and the context on how she would use this app to be quite straight forward. From this point I could start imagining in detail how ‘Rachel’ would go about using the app.



**Rachel
Edwards**

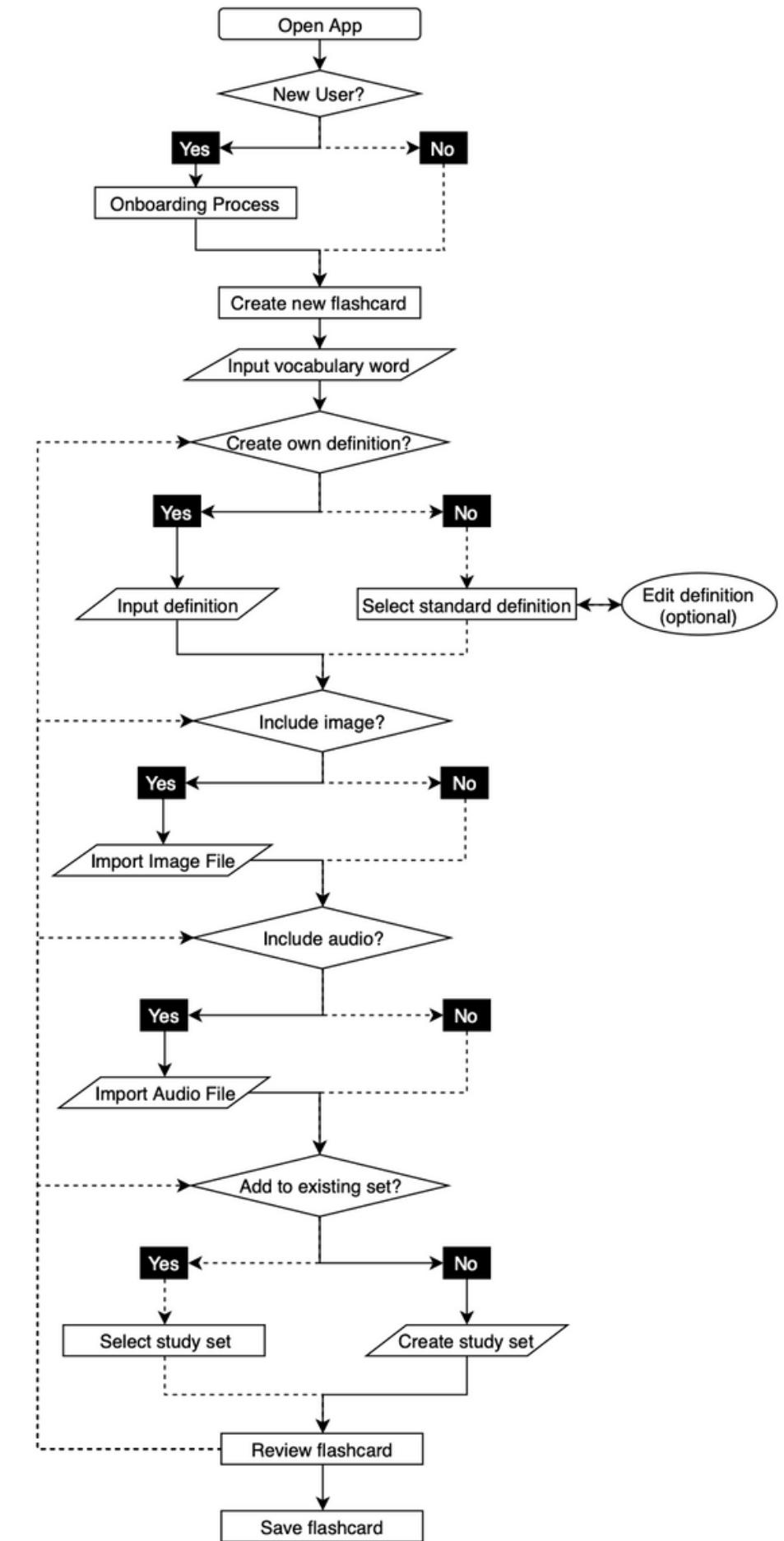
- University Student
- 22 years old
- Australian
- Single
- Full-time student
- Part-time waitress

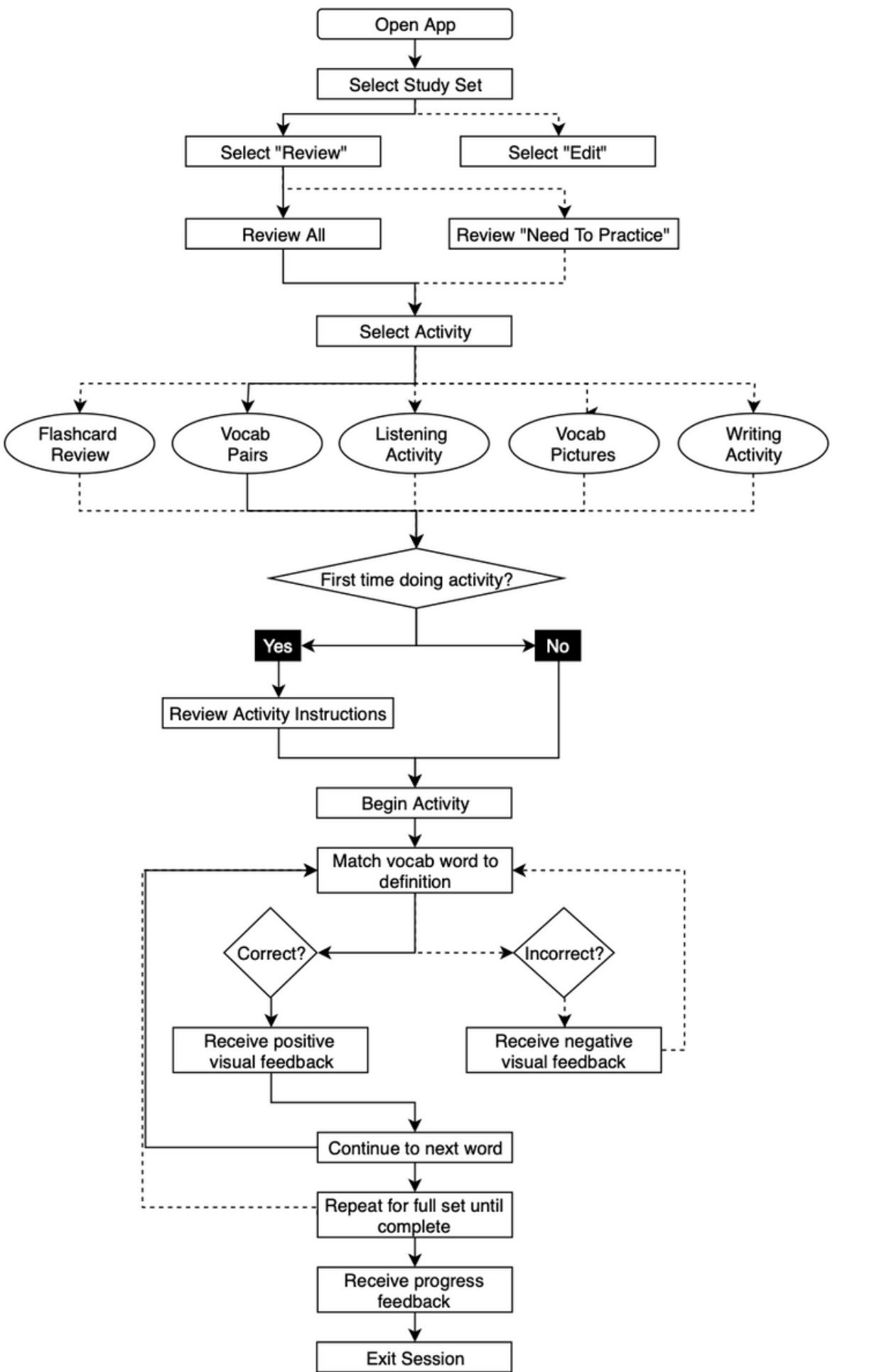
"With my busy schedule I need to be able to study efficiently and be confident in my progress!"

User Flows

To begin structuring the app architecture, it was first important to understand what tasks Rachel would be completing on the app and the steps she would need to take from entry point to task completion. From here I was able to map out the user flow diagrams for these tasks, starting to add in specific in-app prompts and guides.

This was a great exercise to perform before jumping into designing the app screens, as it ensured I considered every element that would be needed to perform the desired tasks through the app. As I worked through creating the user flows I came across a few elements I had not previously considered, and likely would not have picked up until further down the line had I not taken the time to perform this task.





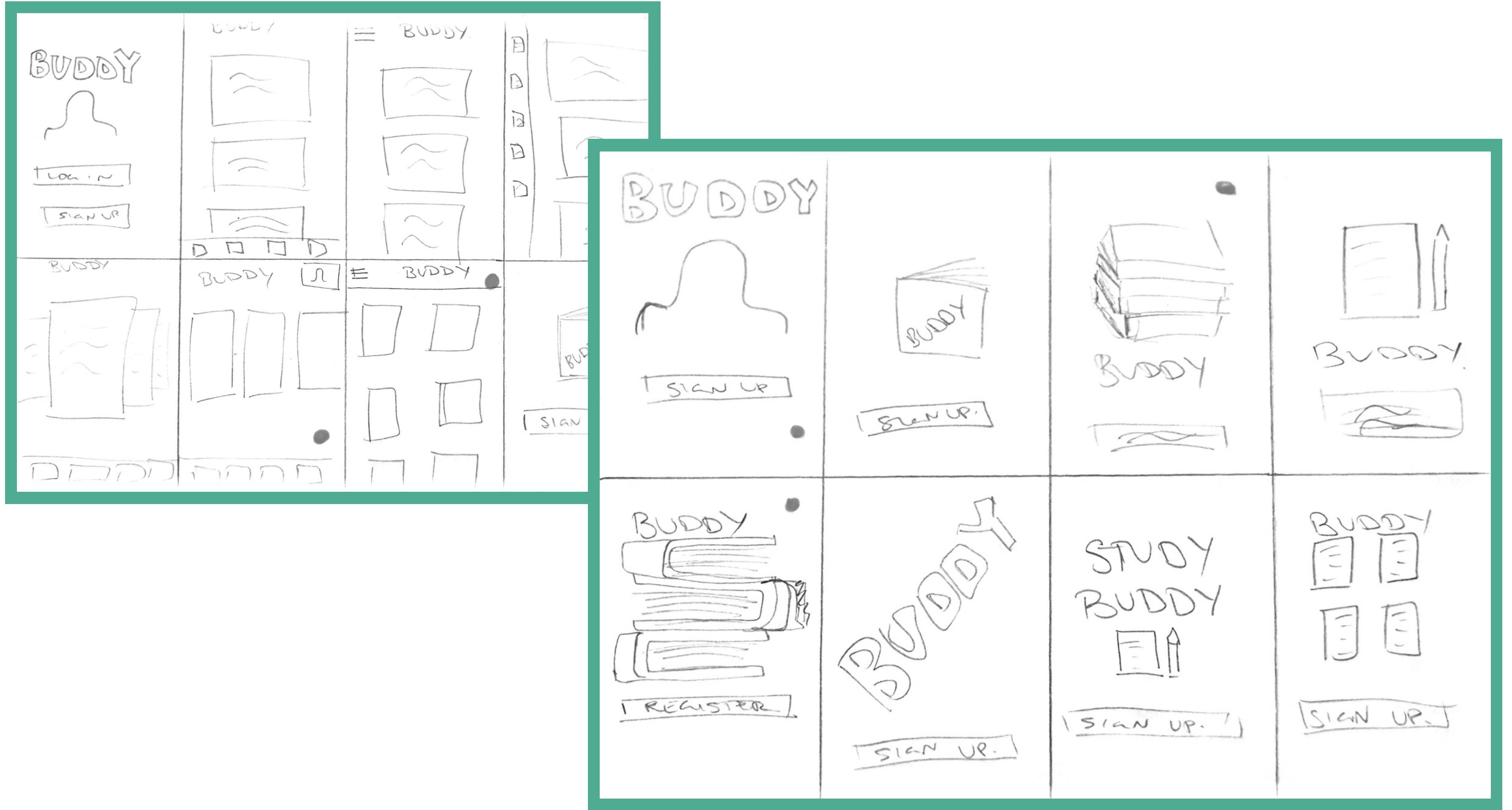
Wireframes & Prototype

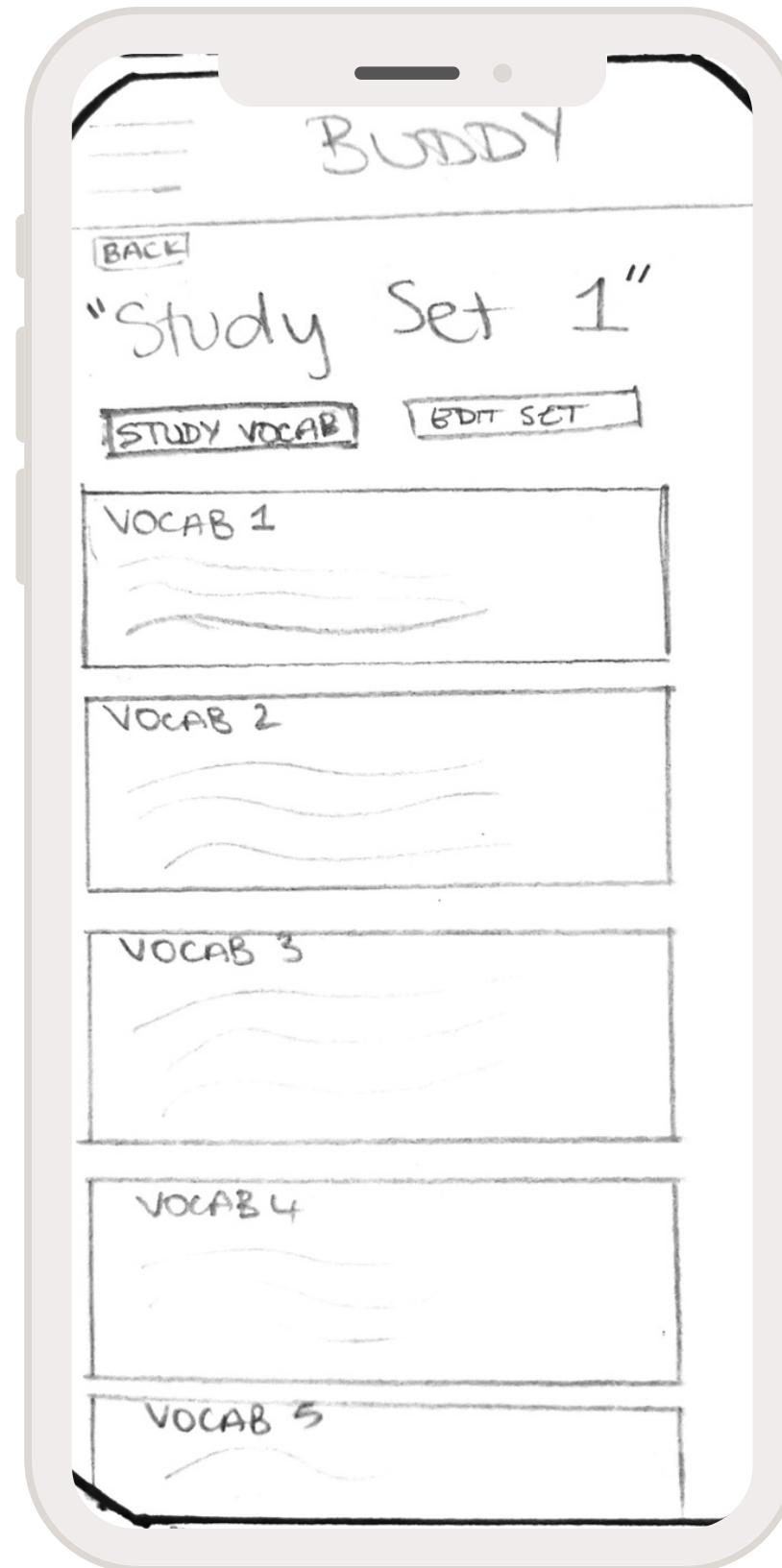
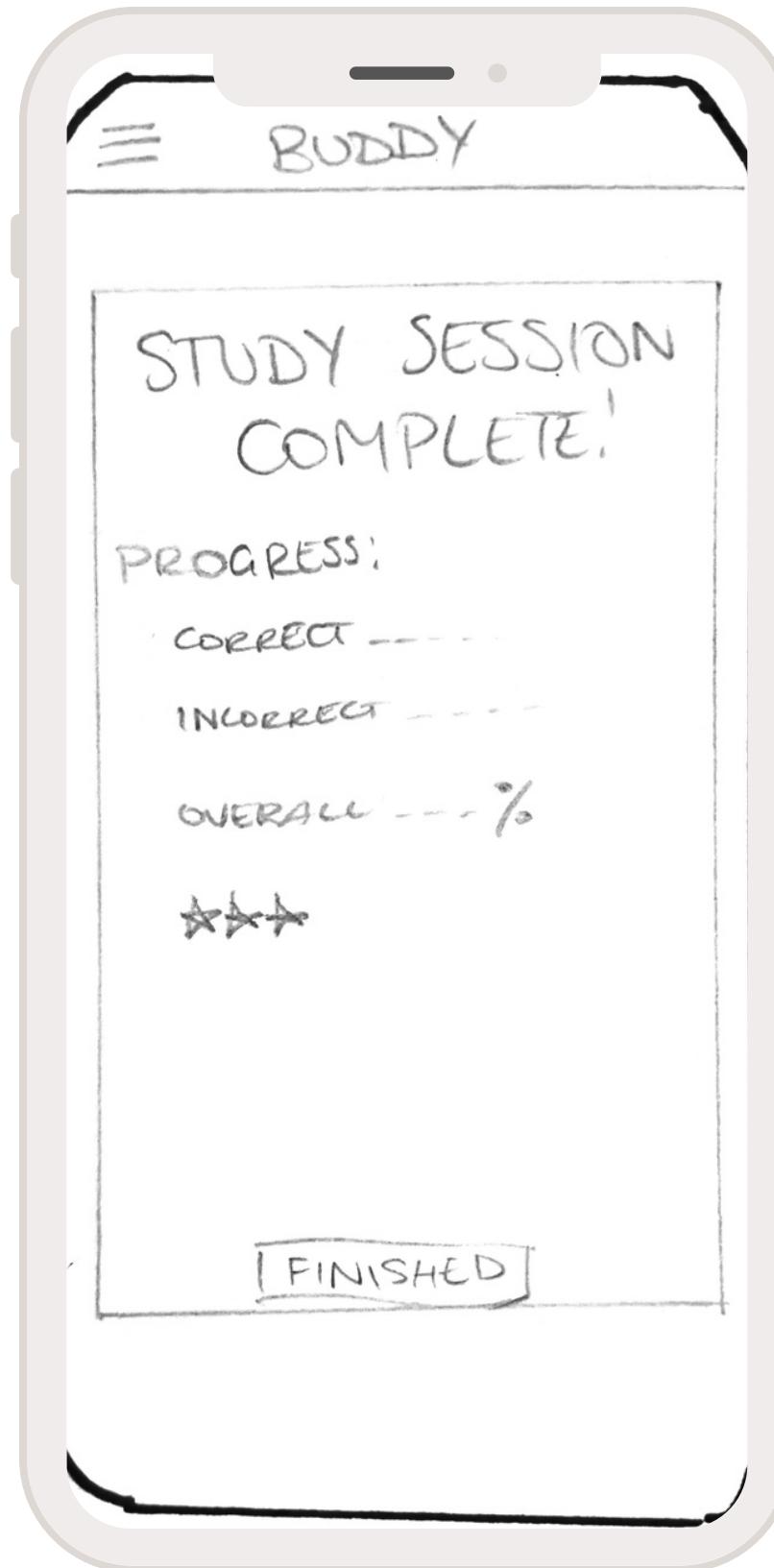
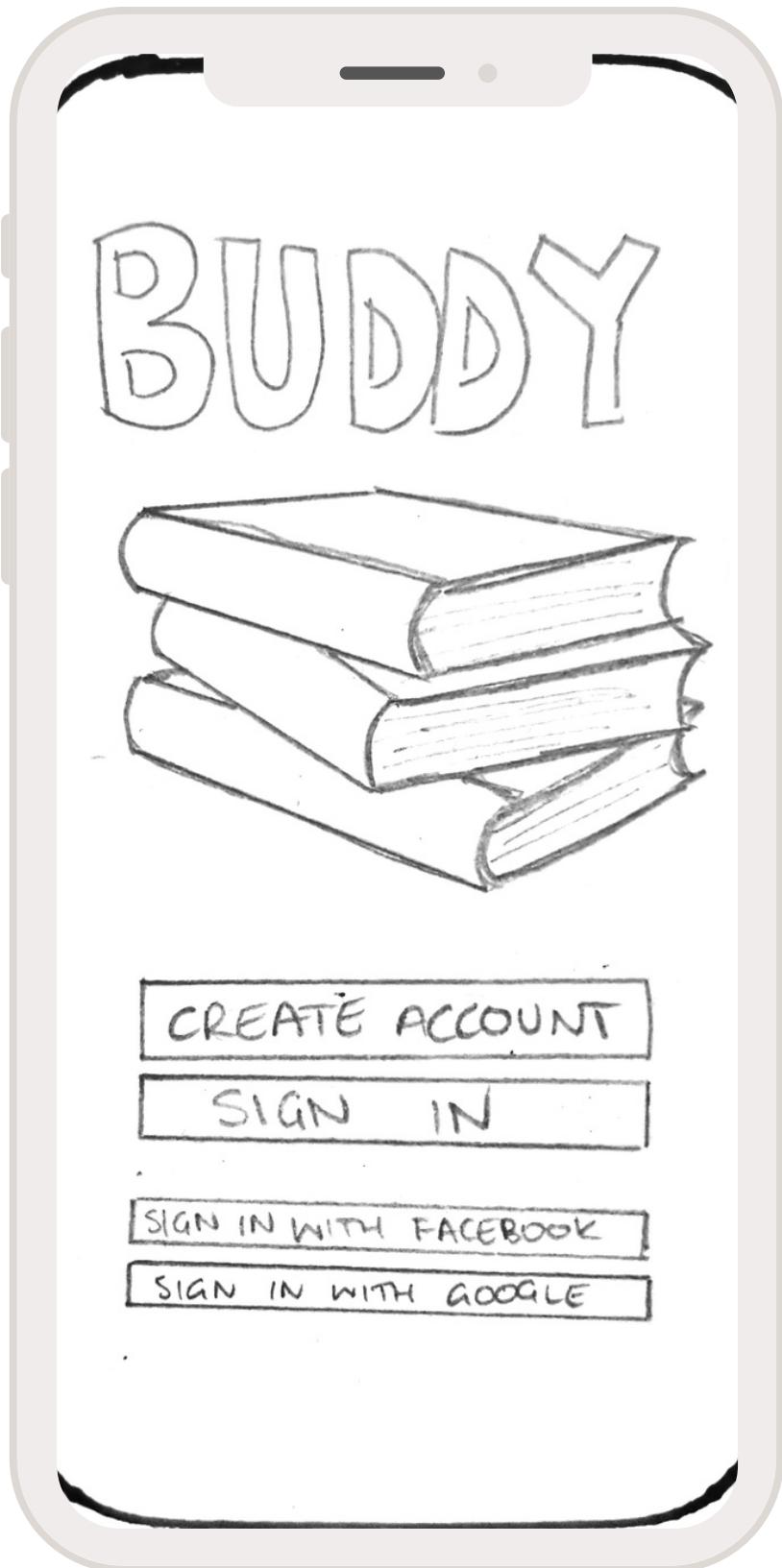
With the details and needs from my user flows in mind, I undertook a series of exercises in 'Crazy 8s' and 'Dot Voting' to begin conceiving the designs of my app screens. While I found this type of rapid designing challenging, it was a great way to dump out a range of ideas, concepts and layouts for the app screens that I may not otherwise have considered.

After selecting a few of the ideas I was most drawn to exploring further, I was able to create a series of wireframes with more detailed elements. Even at this stage I came across details and elements that needed amending as I went, in order to put together a series of basic wireframes that I would be able to present to test participants for usability testing. I photographed and uploaded my screens onto MarvelApp I was able to create a clickable prototype for the next stage.



marvelapp.com/d4bh484





Usability Testing

In order to assess whether my designs would actually be viable for implementation into an app, usability testing was the next vital step in the process. This would allow me to see how real people interacted with the app and determine whether it serves its intended purpose and met my original goal. Testing sessions were conducted in person with three participants from a cross section of our intended target users.



Diandra, 27
Legal assistant



Hannah, 26
Medical Researcher



Liam, 24
Pharmaceutical Sales Rep

Metrics

0 = I don't agree that this is a usability problem at all

1 = Cosmetic problem: need not be fixed unless extra time is available on the project

2 = Minor usability problem: fixing this should be given low priority

3 = Major usability problem: important to fix, so should be given high priority

4 = Usability catastrophe: imperative to fix this before product can be released

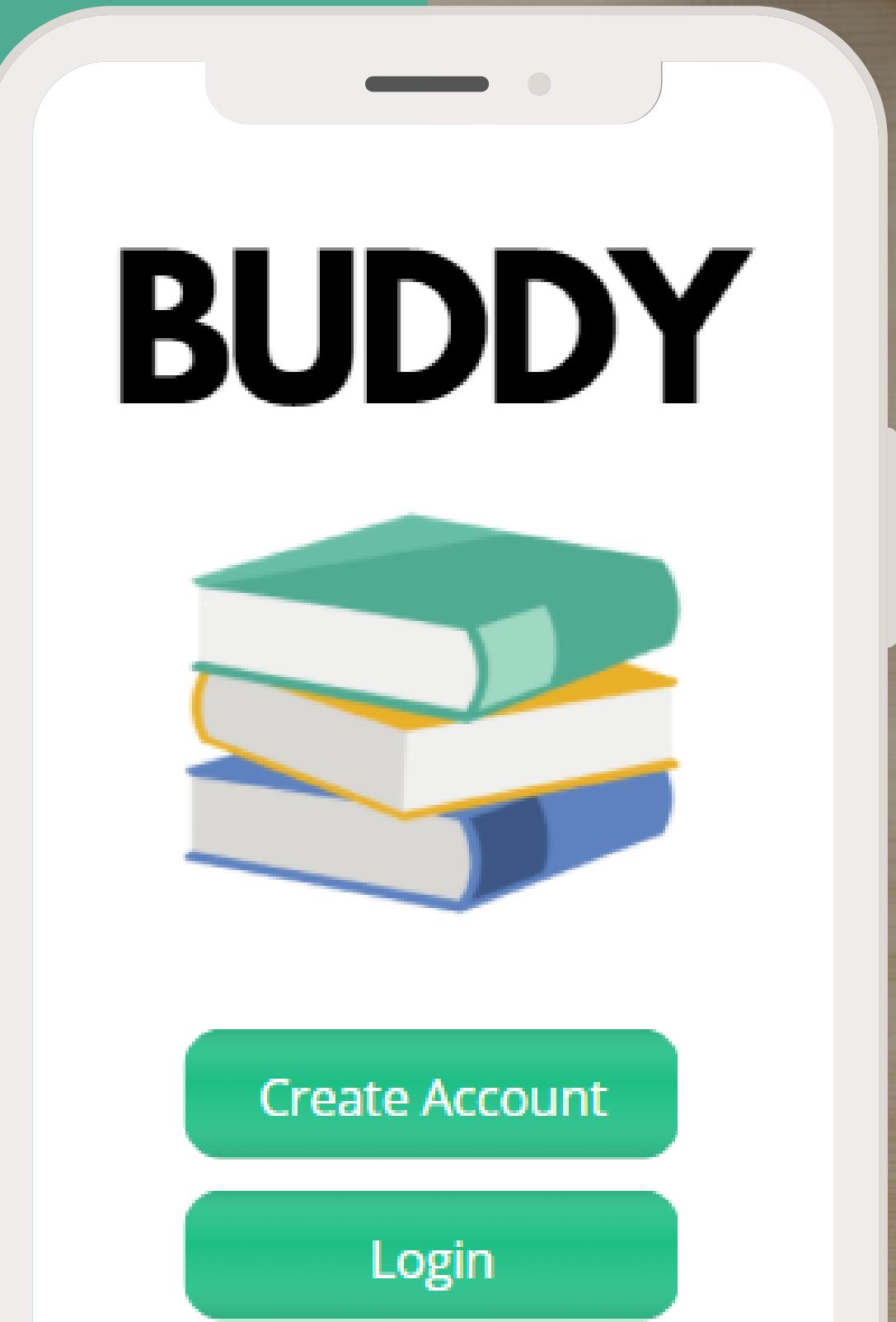
Handing my designs over to test participants was a daunting task at first, however was an important step to take. The issues encountered for some users that I had not previously encountered or considered problems forced me to challenge my existing preconceptions of the app, stepping beyond myself to see the app from a neutral viewpoint to understand the views of the test participants. Being able to break through this mental barrier ensured I could take on the feedback of my test participants and ensure my designs served them in the best way possible.

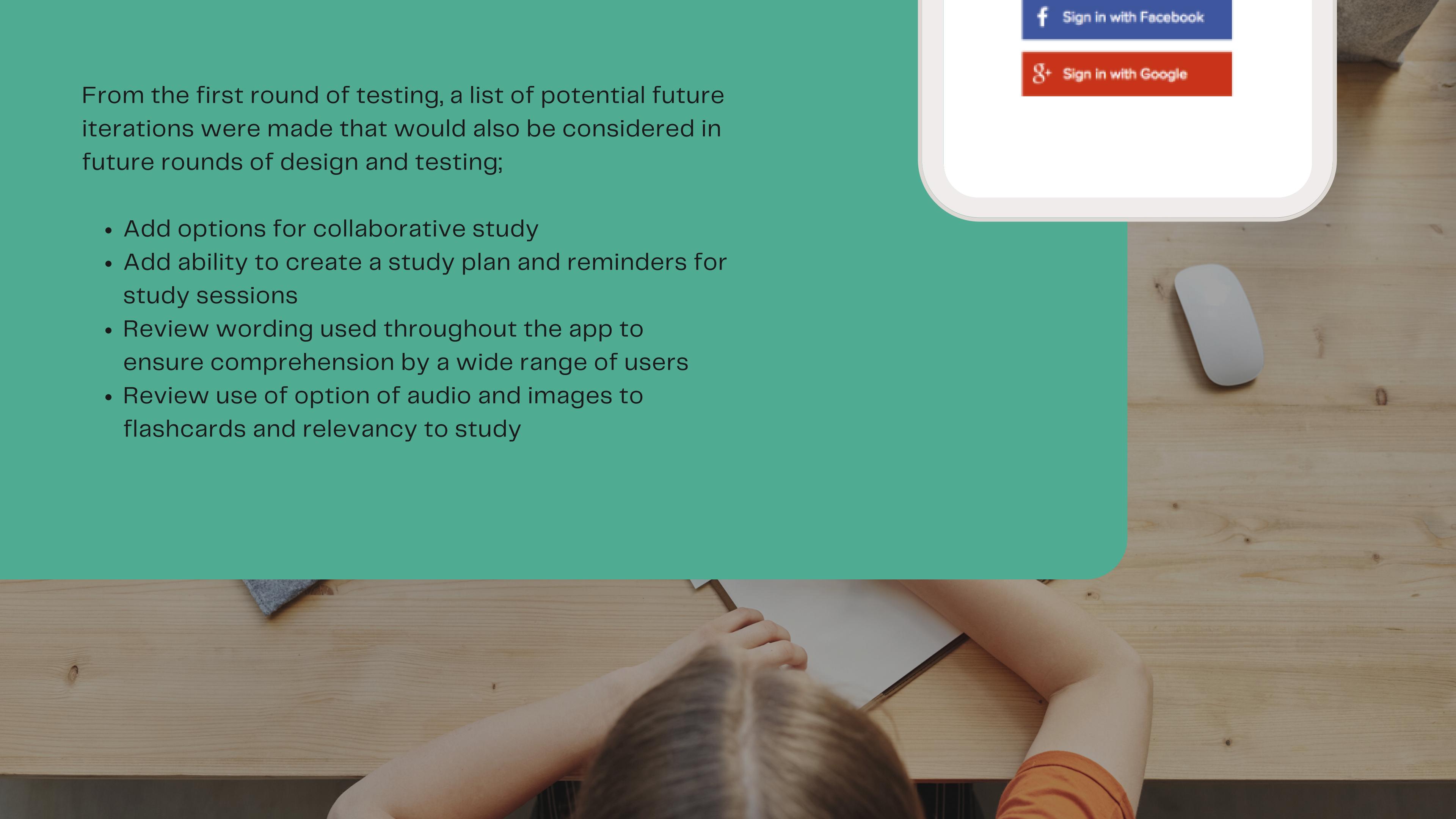
TASK #	OBSERVATION	SEVERITY	RECOMMENDATION
2	One user remarked it would be good to be given brief instructions on the apps features and explanation of 'Sets' after logging in for the first time.	3	For users new to creating flashcards and sets this would be highly useful and their usability of the app without it may be hindered. Suggested to add a brief explanation page upon first time log in after creating an account.
2	Multiple users navigated to creating a new flashcard via the "create a study set" prompt and didn't navigate the menu. Only one user navigated the menu to add a new Flashcard and did not navigate via the prompt.	2	As the prompt take users to creating a new flashcard already this isn't a high issue, however wording on it could be clarified to encourage easy navigation for first time users.
2	Multiple users didn't understand the use of adding audio, how it would work or the feasibility of searching the web for audio	1	This doesn't hinder the ability to create a flashcard is a minor issue to be reviewed at a later time.
2	Some users found the option to add images and audio being presented up front when creating a new flashcard confusing and thought they would be better to be offered as 'advanced options'	1	This didn't hinder users from creating a new flashcard, however could be reviewed to decrease confusion for users just wanting to create a basic flashcard.
2	One user found the option to search for a definition confusing	0	Not a usability problem, no hindrance to ability to use the app
3	All users hesitated on the page to select or create a new study set, found it to be slightly unclear.	1	Wording could be clarified to make it clear that users are being presented an option to select an existing study set or to create a new. Ultimately did not hinder usability.
3	One user questioned the use of the term 'Set', didn't fully understand what it meant	1	Not a usability problem, though if given a proper explanation of terms upon log in this would be avoided.
4	One user didn't understand "Review Vocab" to be the navigation link to begin	2	Suggested to review the wording used to clarify where to start to begin a study

Future Steps...

As it stands, I believe the basic prototype I have created is a great base from which to further develop an app that will ultimately fulfil the original project goal of creating a study app that assists learners to create, organise and review study flashcards on the go.

The next steps for this project will include high-fidelity prototypes with the revisions made following usability testing, including the development of basic app UI for a more realistic experience. This prototype would go into further usability testing before entering development.





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From the first round of testing, a list of potential future iterations were made that would also be considered in future rounds of design and testing;

- Add options for collaborative study
- Add ability to create a study plan and reminders for study sessions
- Review wording used throughout the app to ensure comprehension by a wide range of users
- Review use of option of audio and images to flashcards and relevancy to study



Learnings

Undertaking this project gave me a great insight into the steps involved in a UX project that I will be able to take with me onto future projects, including;

- Creative exercises that helped with getting out of my head and quickly testing many potential design solutions
- The importance of user testing to get feedback on designs, and how your own experience/assumptions can influence your designs (either positively or negatively!)
- It's important to take feedback when it is given, and be open to make changes to designs
- Consistency in design is important for improving user experience
- While having a script for user testing can help form the backbone of sessions, it's important to remain open to following alternate (relevant) discussions.