**Market research**

At the beginning of the project, I went into the market research section of the project focusing on which app features I would like to include in the project scope. As I started gaining first-hand experience of existing app, I discovered features that I liked and disliked as expected, but I was surprised to discover that I was becoming more attuned to areas that might cause user frustration, for example the Classify app was aimed towards secondary school children. I was dissatisfied with the experience due to it requiring information that I deemed unnecessary, e.g. teacher name to log a study session. I was also encouraged to think about the importance of accessibility, as I found the Clockify app, which had complicated features but minimal tutorial, difficult to learn. I will continue to use first-hand experience of existing apps to identify potential user frustrations and inform my decisions on how to implement an accessible app using layout and features and tutorial elements in the next stages of design.

**Personas**

After researching several apps, we each decided to do a deep dive into user feedback for one app. This stage is where I most felt the shift from developer to user experience mindset, as it was enlightening to understand how real users connected with the app, how they felt while using the app, and what their end goals were. Being able to empathise with these users helped me to create the persona for Aoife McQuillan. I looked for comments specifically about using the app to optimise study time and used them as inspiration, for example, her frustration ‘procrastinates starting assignments because they seem daunting’ was included after a user commented that this was a problem they had suffered and were hoping to solve by using the app. In this instance I resonated with this as an issue that I also face, but I recognise that in the future I might be working on projects that do not relate so closely to my own experiences. The insights gained by reading real user comments would be invaluable to apply to persona creation in that situation.

**User surveys**

After creating our test user survey and completing two surveys as a test user, I would change my process for future projects. In our survey, one user responded ‘Personally I'd never let an app tell me what to do even if I've programmed it’ when asked about their expectations from a study calendar app that optimises study time. Here, they have interpreted that the app we are creating would automatically allocate times they must study during the week, which is not our intention. In future, I would include the project scope at the beginning of the survey, to minimise the likelihood of misunderstandings and the possibility of skewed results.   
In a survey I answered as a user, in some questions about apps I was unsure if the design team were referring to all apps, or specifically the type of app they were designing e.g., ‘how much would you be willing to pay for an app?’. In writing our survey, I suggested that we edit some questions to clarify that we were looking for responses about study calendar apps. In the future, if possible, I would ask someone who is not involved in the project to give any feedback on unclear questions, so that we could fix any ambiguities before sending them out to users.   
When creating the user survey, I hoped that user responses would give the group clear answers on which features we should include to create a user-centred design. We used a Likert scale answer format on questions about key features and current challenges, and for some results there was no clear priority. A survey I completed for another group asked users to rank a set of answers 1-4. As a user, I found that I put more thought into these responses than the Likert scale questions, and as a designer, I like being able to see a clear prioritisation of features. In future projects, I would include ranking questions when we are looking to understand our users’ priorities.

**Test analysis**

Due to the page limit on the user test analysis, I found that having to justify my decisions on what I felt it was important to include led to a deeper reflection and more deliberate, insightful decisions. I hope to continue this practice into the second stage of the design, perhaps setting myself similar limits, or ranking elements in terms of importance to ensure that my approach is focused on the right place. It was tempting to make the graphs smaller on the test analysis to include more information, but after beginning to learn about the importance of user experience, I took care in making sure that the graphs were readable and easy to understand, adding labels and making key information bold. I hope to continue to carry the user experience principles like this that I had not considered before, not just into the refined design stages, but in all areas of my work.