

Riley Stinson

Dr. Young

VCOM 322 001

29 April 2025

Project 3- App Design

Contents

Stage 1: Field Research.....	3
Works Cited.....	6
Stage 2: User Research and Modeling	8
Survey Questions	8
Survey Results	9
Persona.....	12
Stage 3: Information Design	13
Sitemap	14
Wireflows.....	16
Stage 4: Prototype, Testing, and Reporting	17
Prototype.....	17
User Testing Plan	18
User Testing Report	19

Stage 1: Field Research

The goal of this app's design is to improve the happiness and well-being of college students by focusing on structure. Though not thought of as a typical aspect of happiness, structure and organization lead to much higher contentment, which can be defined as satisfaction, fulfillment, and purpose (Tinworth). All of these things are quintessential parts of well-being and what it means to be happy in life. What is structure, though, and how does it improve lives in this way? A good way to think about structure in psychological terms is PNS, or personal need for structure. This can be defined as "the tendency to perceive one's social environment in terms of simplified schemata, to avoid ambiguity and unpredictability, and to act in routine ways" (Meiser and Machunsky). Often, people crave structure to reduce feelings of overwhelmingness and stress so that they can handle tasks in a streamlined and organized manner (Neuberg and Newsom). This is extremely relevant to consider when discussing college students, as university often can be the most overwhelming and stressful part of one's life, as they must balance multiple classes, homework, extracurriculars, and often work as well. In order for people to feel content and happy, they must be able to manage all of these things while also being able to detach from them and live individual lives at the same time. Thankfully, behavioral planning and organization has been proved to ease the negative emotions felt when dealing with a large workload (Smit and Barber). Especially for people with mental disorders (of which there are many who attend college), it can often be extremely easy to get overwhelmed and not know where to start are large number of tasks or how to manage time spent on each (Vieira da Silva and Bueno).

Not only can this structure help improve the lives of those that are already struggling, but also “a wealth of findings demonstrate structure-consistency biases in attention, interpretation, memory, inference, and impression formation and change” (Neuberg and Newsom). So, structure is good for overall well-being, but how can this be simulated in an app? In order to know if something is actually able to make a positive change, this change must be measured. Well-being actually can be measured quite easily through collection of subjective data. Though not always thought of as reliable, responses that come straight from the subject’s words “are in fact well-correlated with at least five relevant sets of variables: the reports of friends; the plausible causes of well-being; some plausible effects of well-being; physical functioning, such as levels of cortisol; and measures of brain activity” (Layard). Information about one’s well-being and happiness can easily be gained simply by asking the subject. Another way to measure the positive impact one gains from an experience is “by looking at user engagement metrics such as session length, time spent in the app, and the number of active users” (Lee). How can this goal of increasing happiness and better well-being be implemented in design? A good way to define this is “positive design is the attempt to support positive psychology through design” (Pohlmeyer). There are many ways to do this. Simplicity, clear visual cues, and ease of use can all contribute to higher structure and thus, higher contentment (Lee) (UXPin). Appealing to the visceral, behavioral, and reflective levels of the emotional system can lead to higher happiness (Komninos).

Some similar apps that already attempt accomplishing these things Plaky, Todoist and Calendly, but each of these apps focuses on organizing a specific part of one’s life, such as scheduling, task management, or to-do lists. While accomplishing their individual goals well, none of the three achieve true structure in which a single individual can manage everything in a

single, organized place. Also, all three apps have certain features locked behind a paid version, so for one person to truly experience all features, they would Overall, the implementation of structure and appealing to the psyche of the user can work to improve one's well-being and happiness in an experience, and when these things are implemented into a person's life, they are able to achieve higher happiness and well-being in their life altogether. This is what is hoped for this app to accomplish.

Works Cited

- Komninos, Andreas. "Norman's Three Levels of Design." *The Interaction Design Foundation*, UX Courses, 19 May 2019, www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/norman-s-three-levels-of-design.
- Layard, Richard. "Measuring Subjective Well-Being." *Science*, vol. 327, no. 5965, 2010, pp. 534–35, www.jstor.org/stable/40510173.
- Lee, Simon. "How to Create Emotionally Engaging App Experiences." *Thisisglance.com*, Glance Group, 21 Oct. 2022, thisisglance.com/blog/how-to-create-an-emotionally-engaging-app-experience.
- Meiser, Thorsten, and Maya Machunsky. "The Personal Structure of Personal Need for Structure." *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, vol. 24, no. 1, Jan. 2008, pp. 27–34, <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.24.1.27>. Accessed 25 Feb. 2020.
- Neuberg, Steven L., and Jason T. Newsom. "Personal Need for Structure: Individual Differences in the Desire for Simpler Structure." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 65, no. 1, July 1993, pp. 113–31, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.1.113>.
- Pohlmeyer, Anna. "Design for Happiness." *Interfaces*, vol. 92, no. Autumn, Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences, 2012, pp. 8–11, www.researchgate.net/publication/275336030_Design_for_Happiness.
- Smit, Brandon W., and Larissa K. Barber. "Psychologically Detaching despite High Workloads: The Role of Attentional Processes." *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 4, 2016, pp. 432–42, <https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000019>.

Tinworth, Adam. “Happiness by Design Means Designing for Contentment.” *NEXT Conference*, 10 Jan. 2018, nextconf.eu/2018/01/the-secret-of-designing-for-happiness-design-for-contentment-instead/. Accessed 12 Apr. 2025.

UXPin. “What Is Happy Path in UX Design?” *Studio by UXPin*, 23 Aug. 2023, www.uxpin.com/studio/blog/what-is-happy-path-in-ux-design/.

Vieira da Silva, Aurora Cristina Bunn, and Juliana Bueno. “Compass.” *Information Design Journal*, vol. 24, no. 3, Dec. 2018, pp. 220–35, <https://doi.org/10.1075/idj.24.3.02vie>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2021.

Stage 2: User Research and Modeling

Survey Questions:

(The first 5 questions are based on multiple choice responses scaled from strongly disagree to strongly agree, while the last 5 questions are open response)

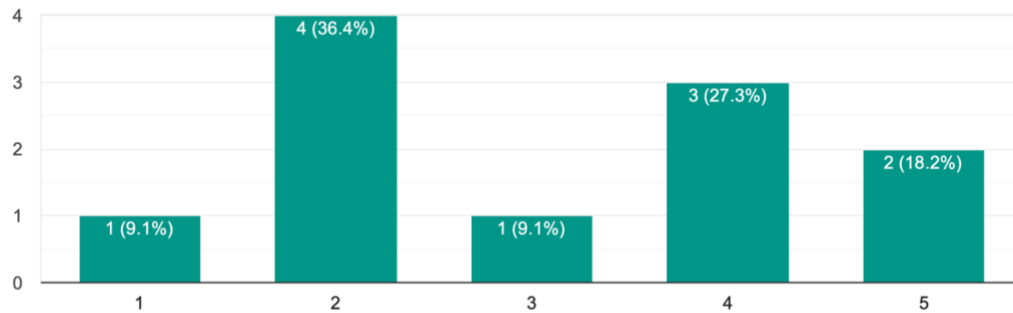
1. I struggle managing my time and my tasks.
2. I need to write tasks down for me to remember them.
3. I prefer having a rigid, set schedule as opposed to open time to manage tasks on my own.
4. I easily get overwhelmed by a large workload.
5. I feel more overwhelmed by homework than work I complete while in class.
6. Do you use any specific scheduling methods to plan out tasks/events? If so, does it reduce any stress you may have relating to your schedule?
7. Do you prefer to be told when to complete a task or do you prefer to complete things on your own time? Why?
8. Do you prefer when your classes use Blackboard for assignment submissions and course materials, or do you prefer when each class utilizes their own methods of submission and course content? Why?
9. Do you have a job or an extracurricular activity (ex. sports, rehearsals, club meetings)? If so, how do you balance your time between classes and this activity/these activities?
10. Do you follow the same schedule each week, or does your schedule frequently change?
Does this have an effect on your mental well-being? Please explain.

Survey Results:

The following graphs are based on questions in which a scale was utilized for how much the responder agreed with the statement in which 1 meant they strongly disagreed and 5 meant they strongly agreed.

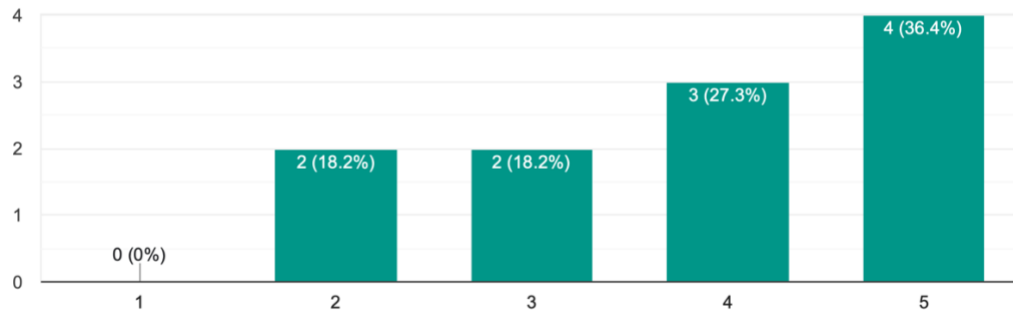
1) I struggle managing my time and my tasks

11 responses



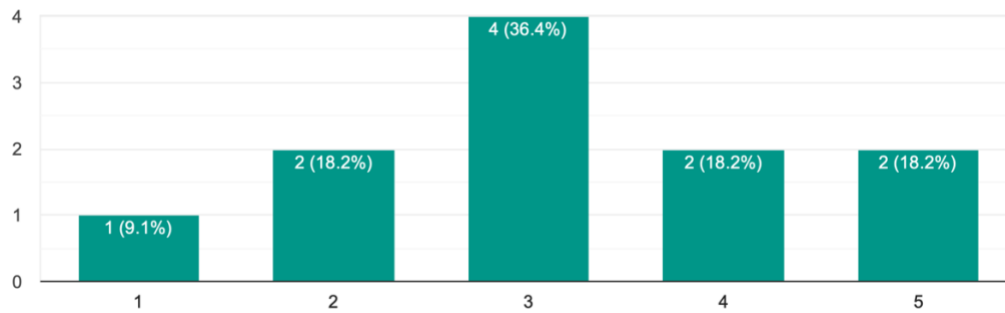
2) I need to write tasks down for me to remember them

11 responses

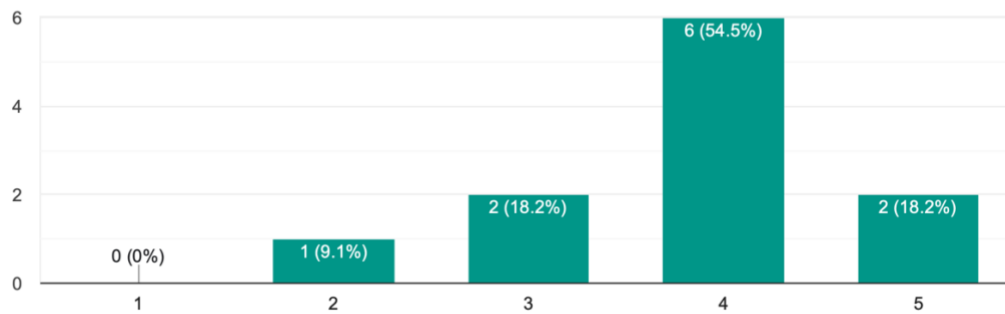


3) I prefer having a rigid, set schedule as opposed to open time to manage tasks on my own

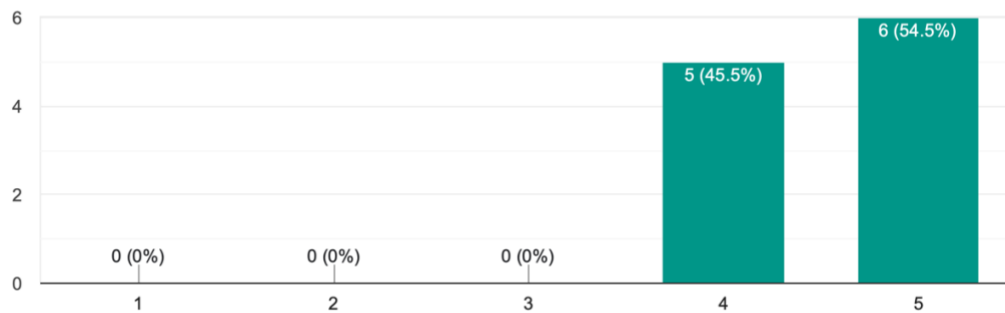
11 responses

**4) I easily get overwhelmed by a large workload**

11 responses

**5) I feel more overwhelmed by homework than work I complete while in class**

11 responses



According to data and information gathered from this survey, most students require some form of organization to manage their time and the tasks they must complete. The majority of the participants are Sophomores (6/11), while some others were Juniors (3/11) and the remaining Freshmen (2/11). Participants expressed varying amounts of confidence in their own time management and task management abilities, with most saying they need to use some form of writing tasks down to remember them. All but two of the participants use some form of alternative scheduling or planning methods, and most said it helps them stay organized. Most of the students get easily overwhelmed by large workloads, especially work that they have to manage themselves on their own time. It was fairly evenly spread if they preferred managing their own time or having someone else do it, with most saying they had no preference. Based on written responses from a later question, this seemed to correlate with whether the students felt confident in their own organization and time management capabilities, meaning they preferred having someone else give them a rigid schedule if they struggled with procrastination or time management. All participants agreed that they found homework more overwhelming than classwork. All students except one stated they preferred when all of their classes utilized the same location for class content and submissions (in Winthrop's case, Blackboard), stating they preferred everything to be in the same, centralized place. Students who participate in extracurriculars or who had a job were more likely to use alternative planning methods to balance their workload. The participants expressed varying amounts of week-by-week schedule consistency, with some saying they always followed the same schedule and others saying their schedule was constantly changing. This had a varying amount of impact on their mental well-beings with some saying they preferred the more rigid schedules because it kept them on track and some saying they preferred the looser, changing schedules because they were able to plan

their week around whatever was happening each week. Some also expressed they did not prefer their current schedules because the rigid schedule was too constricting or that the changing schedules could become stressful and overwhelming.

Persona:



Angelina Combs

About



Angelina is a dance major at Winthrop University. She keeps herself busy with her many classes, rehearsals, and part-time job. She loves drawing in her free time.

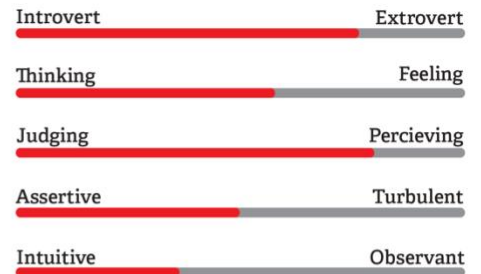
Scenarios

Angelina has an essay due this week for her CRTW class, but she is struggling to find time to work on it with her many rehearsals and job shifts for the week. Because of her major in dance, she doesn't usually schedule much time for homework. Angelina ends up having to stay up really late to finish her essay the night before it is due.

Angelina's friends want to go to the beach now that the weather is warming up. They are trying to find a day that fits everyone's schedules, and Angelina decides that Saturday is the best day to go since she doesn't have any rehearsals or job shifts that day. However, she forgot that she already had previous plans to get lunch with her parents this day. Now, she has to cancel on one of them.

Angelina has a whole, free weekend to complete a choreography assignment. Instead of picking a time to do it, she assumes she can just complete the assignment whenever she feels like it. She ends up waiting until the last night, and then her friends ask her to hang out. Now, she has to turn them down.

Personality



User Stories

"I want to keep track of all the things I have planned so I don't forget them."

"I want to have a place where I can view my whole schedule so that I can see when I am free."

"I want to put all my tasks in the same place so I can manage them all together."

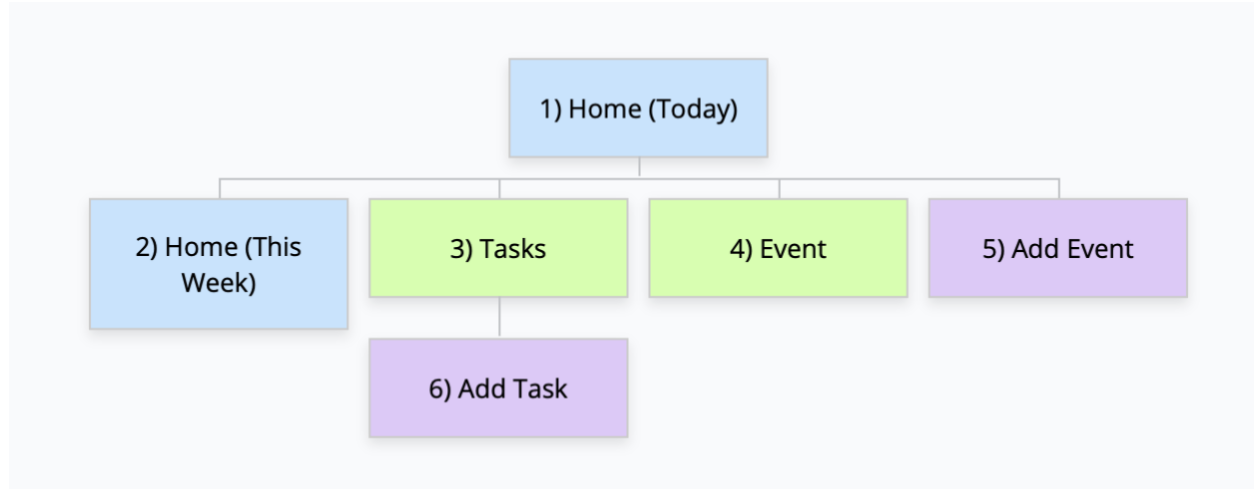
"I want to have a place to easily view my current schedule since it changes so much."

"I want to be able to gauge how much time I have to complete something so I don't run out of time."

Stage 3: Information Design

The name of this app is going to be SchedBuilder. This app will allow for people to input events and tasks that will be blocked into a calendar so that they can properly gauge everything that they need to do and how much time they have to do it. Events are scheduled time periods in which a single thing will be occurring. These can be repeated (every day or every week) or single time events. There will be much customization of events, with categories they can be placed under, rigidity that can be assigned, and of course, the amount of time the block will take up. Tasks can also be added. These are things that don't have a set time and may span across multiple days. A due date/due time can be added (or not), and task urgency can be assigned so that more urgent tasks will appear higher on the list. One category of events can be created called a task event. These are events that will appear as a block on the schedule that is tied to a certain task. For example, if a task is an essay that is due soon, the user could make a task event called "Work on Essay". There are also leisure events, in which users can create a block of time in which they are scheduled to relax or hang out with friends. There are many other categories of events that they can be assigned under.

Sitemap:



Page 1: Home (Today)

- The main home page will be the calendar for whatever the current day is. The user will be able to scroll down to see their entire day with events blocked out for the times that they will be occurring. To see the previous or following days, there will be arrows at the top of the screen/they will be able to swipe right and left.

Page 2: Home (This Week)

- To view the entire week, users can click on the date at the top of the screen and will be directed to this page. All seven days of the current week will be displayed on this page, with some important events shown underneath each day (importance of events will be assigned when creating events). Important task due dates will also appear underneath the day that they are assigned to. Users will be able to access any day of the week by clicking on it, and they can see previous/upcoming weeks by clicking the arrows or swiping left/right. To access weeks further away, users can click on the dates of the week at the top of the screen to then access a small calendar to find the week that they are looking for.

Page 3: Tasks

- This page will be accessible through a button at the top of the Home (Today) page and the Home (This Week) page labelled “Tasks”. This page will show whatever tasks are active for the day ranked by urgency and how much time is remaining. The amount of time before the task is due will be displayed underneath each task. Upon clicking on a task, further details will be displayed as well as a button to create a task event.

Page 4: Event

- This page will be accessible through clicking on an event on the Home (Today) page. More detailed information about the event will be displayed on this page. Users will also be able to make edits to the event, such as changing the amount of time, cancelling the event, making it repeat, changing the category, editing the rigidity, or linking tasks to it.

Page 5: Add Event

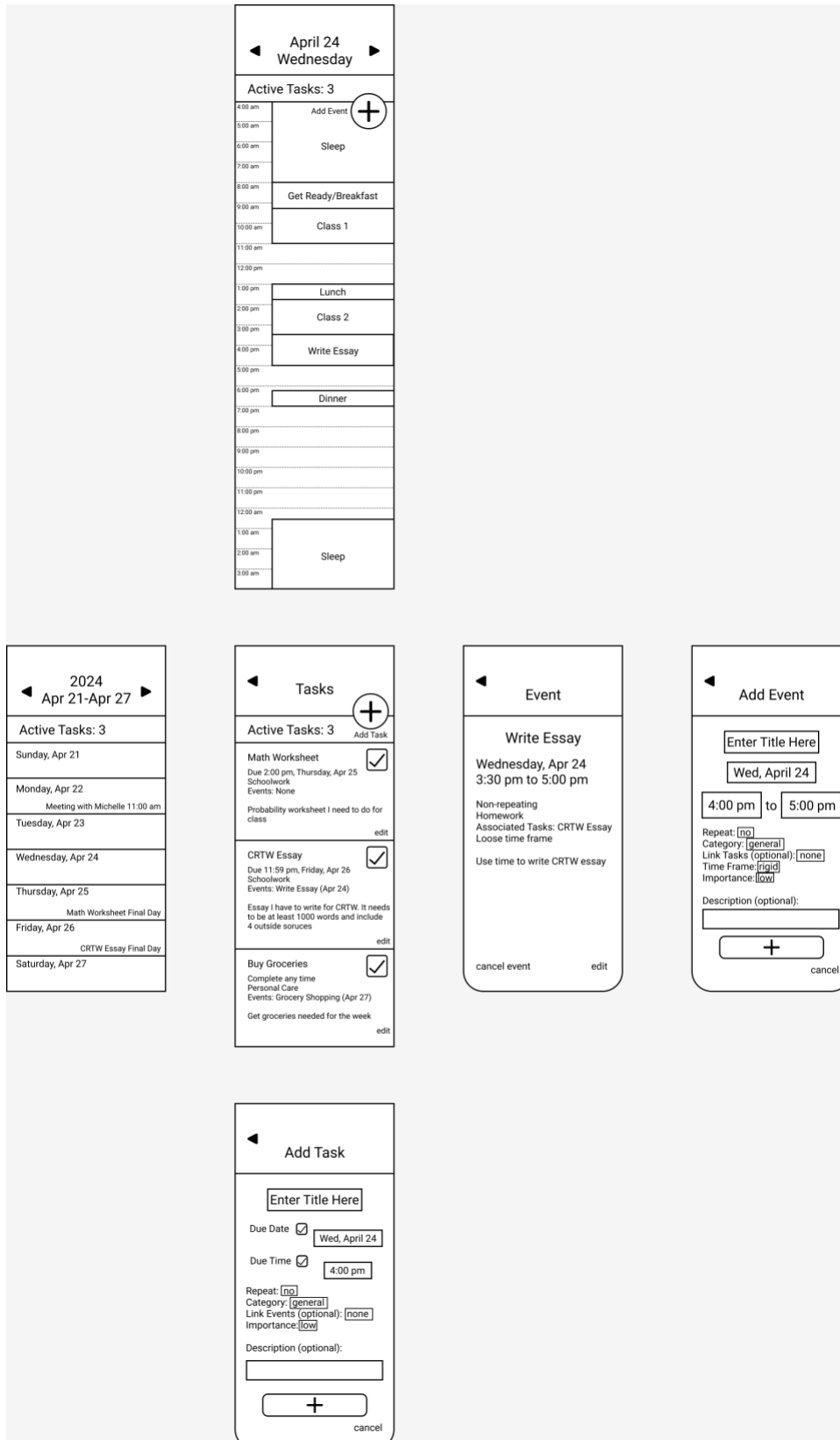
- This page will be accessible through a button on the Home (Today) page. It will also be accessible through the Add Task page if user creates a task event via a preexisting task. When creating an event, users will be able to choose a date and amount of time while also customizing all other aspects of the event as mentioned before.

Page 6: Add Task

- This page will be accessible through a button labeled “Add Task” on the Tasks page. Similarly to adding an event, users will be able to create a task, set its due date/due time (if applicable) and further customize it by giving it a category, designating its urgency and linking it to any preexisting events.

Wireflows:

This wireflows was created in Figma and is laid out in the same order as the sitemap.



Stage 4: Prototype, Testing, and Reporting

Prototype:

[Link to access app prototype](#)

This is a clickable prototype of six app pages. All six pages can be navigated to through use of interactive buttons as well as arrows at the bottom of the screen that move through the pages in order. Not every button is interactive, only the ones that navigate through the six included pages, so to see which are interactive, click anywhere on the screen and the buttons with interactive features will briefly flash. The only event that is clickable is the “Write Essay” event, and the only weekday that is clickable is Wednesday, April 24th. Actual app features other than navigation do not function in this prototype. Scrolling up and down is functional and required to see the full extent of each page.

User Testing Plan:

Objective-

- The objective of this test is to see if this app would be useful and work well for users.

Observations will be made on the functionality of the layout, navigation, and design of the prototype as well as the actual usefulness and need of the app's concept. Data will be gained through participant responses and subjective feedback from the participants.

Feedback will be analyzed using Layard's rules of measuring subjective well-being.

Task to be completed-

- Participants will be instructed to navigate through the prototype while giving feedback on how the prototype looks and whether it would be useful to them or not. Upon observing each page, participants will be instructed to state whether or not they feel each page would improve their scheduling process compared to how it currently is and if they think the page is useful.

Participants-

- Elisabeth Stafford, Winthrop Freshman
- Autumn Pearson, Winthrop Junior
- Kyrin Anderson, Winthrop Sophomore

Method-

- Testing will be done in person in a secure, private environment. Test will be audio recorded for easier notetaking. Participants will take a short survey after completion of the test to get more feedback and direct quotes.

[Survey Link](#)

User Testing Report:

The main feedback from participants in this test is that the concept is very well thought out and useful with only a few small tweaks in the design and layout. None of the participants struggled navigating the pages, and often they expressed excitement about finding a new feature. Kyran said, “the task function is super helpful, and being able to link tasks to events would be great for a lot of the meetings that I have to go to, as I often need materials prepared for said meetings.” The participants enjoyed how the features are all included and how they interact with each other. Elisabeth, who currently struggles with task management and doesn’t use any scheduling methods, expressed that she would enjoy using this app and that it would help her a lot with staying organized since everything is in the same place. Kyran also expressed interest in using the app since his current scheduling methods, Google Calendar and TimeTree, do not include a task feature to act like a to do list. Autumn expressed she likely wouldn’t use the app, but because she has a preference for handwritten scheduling methods like a planner or physical calendar since it helps her remember it better. There was overall a good response for the concept, and most participants stated that they would find the app useful, and it would improve upon their current scheduling method because of the more organized structure. Elisabeth said, “this app would be much easier than my current method because I could actually track my day to day activities instead of just events that fluctuate from my normal schedule. It would especially be useful because I currently do not track my homework assignments, which is something I probably should do.” There aren’t many changes I would make to the actual features and purpose of the app.

As for the design and layout of the prototype, there was an overall positive response aside from a few small changes that could be made to improve usability. When asked about what improvements could be made, Autumn stated, “The only thing I might change is the visual layout of the creating a task to the creating an event since they are very similar, and I could easily get confused as to which one I might be making!” This quote refers to Pages 5 and 6 and how their similar layouts could lead to mixing up which is which. There are multiple ways the pages could be differentiated better, such as rearranging of layout or color differences in a more developed iteration. Kyran also mentioned another small issue, stating, “I would love if the "Add Event" button didn't overlap with other text, because it creates a very busy screen and may dissuade from using the app.” This is an issue with overlapping of text when scrolling, which could easily be fixed by a repositioning of the text or a box behind the front text so text behind doesn’t overlap with letterforms. It is important to keep the layout and design simple and organized, so there really didn’t need to be any design additions, and participants expressed this. Elisabeth expressed, “I like how it is simple, but still very effective. I think scheduling apps should not be overly complicated, and this one was the perfect amount of complicated.” A few changes could be made to improve the usability of the app, but otherwise, there was an overall positive response to this prototype!

There are no visuals or screenshots that are needed to be included in this report, as test data and feedback was gained from audio recordings during the tests.