

ADHD Focus Helper App Interview Study Plan

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Goal

This study seeks to examine and assess the effectiveness of current notification systems, reminders, and task management strategies for individuals with ADHD. Given the executive functioning challenges associated with ADHD—such as difficulties with organization, time management, and task persistence—the research aims to identify the most effective digital tools and techniques for support. Psychologist Abigail Levrini outlines in her book that navigating tasks with ADHD can be simplified into three key steps: “set long-term goals... develop a toolbox to keep track of helpful strategies... create and implement weekly objectives” (Levrini, 2023).

Additionally, a study conducted by the National Library of Medicine explored how adults with ADHD managed their symptoms before receiving treatment and a formal diagnosis. The research sought to uncover the coping skills and compensation strategies these individuals developed, as well as their perceptions of their effectiveness. The study found that “patients reported frequent use of diverse compensatory strategies with varying degrees of effectiveness. These were classified into five categories (organizational, motoric, attentional, social, psychopharmacological). In certain circumstances, ADHD symptoms were even perceived as useful” (Carlos et al., 2021). By understanding these self-developed strategies, clinicians can better tailor interventions that build upon existing coping mechanisms. We will conduct interviews with individuals who have ADHD to gain deeper insights into their personal experiences, the challenges they face, and the strategies they find most effective. Secondary research will consist of an extensive review of academic literature, existing studies, and online discussions to provide context on ADHD-related challenges and solutions.

The insights gained from this study will guide the design and development of an ADHD-specific focus and productivity application. This app will offer personalized reminders, optimized notification strategies, and ADHD-friendly task management features. By analyzing how users interact with productivity tools and the challenges they encounter, we aim to create an inclusive and effective digital assistant that enhances organization, minimizes distractions, and ultimately improves study habits for individuals with ADHD.

Our observations indicate that many individuals maintain self-discipline by setting up reminders to keep track of their daily tasks. Additionally, a significant number of people use music to create a focused environment, which helps sustain motivation and productivity throughout their work. Through upcoming interviews, we hope to further explore how these and other strategies impact daily functioning, as well as identify areas where digital tools can provide additional support.

Original design question: How do individuals with ADHD manage their daily tasks and routines in their natural environment, and what challenges do they face in maintaining focus and organization?

Refined design question:

How do individuals with ADHD navigate their daily tasks and routines in their natural environment, and what strategies or tools do they use to maintain focus and organization despite the challenges they encounter?

Research Questions:

1. Who are the primary users of the ADHD Focus Helper app?
2. What specific challenges do users with ADHD face when managing daily tasks and routines?
3. Where do users typically use productivity tools or task management apps (at home, school, office, outdoors)?
4. What times of the day or situations do users feel most distracted or overwhelmed by their ADHD symptoms during the day (morning routines, work meetings, studying)?
5. Why do users struggle to maintain focus and organization despite using task management tools?
6. How do users with ADHD prefer to receive reminders or notifications (text, email) to help them stay focused?
7. What features or functionalities do users want in an ADHD-specific task management app to make it more effective for them?
8. What kinds of hobbies or activities keep the users most engaged?
9. What role does sensory input play in improving attention and task persistence in individuals with ADHD?
10. Do the users multitask or finish one task at a time when completing assignments?
11. Do the users use ADHD medication?

Participants:

Our ideal participants would be individuals who are both diagnosed with ADHD and those who self-diagnose, as this will help us better understand the target audience for the ADHD Helper app we are developing.

The inclusion criteria for the people that are participating in our study is being able to understand from the perspective of a person who has ADHD on how they organize their schedules in order to finish their work. The exclusion is not being able to find people who are not diagnosed with ADHD in order to see from their perspective on how they organize their workflow.

Jasmine and Terry will interview the same participants they used for the field study observations. Their participants include family members and friends who are diagnosed with ADHD. For

Victor and Brandon, they will similarly conduct interviews whether it be with friends or people on campus willing to be interviewed.

All the interviews conducted thus far were mock/run throughs. The full conceptualized interviews will be documented for the next assignment.

The following is an interview template the team used:
Template:

Questions	Answers
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked? Rationale: The first question helps identify strategies individuals with ADHD use to stay focused and if they use incentives to keep motivated. The different ways of dealing with these everyday issues will become valuable information for prototyping.</p> <p>a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work? Rationale: This is similar to the first question as a follow up question to see how often the participants look at their phones when they are doing work to have a better picture of how we can incorporate a feature in our app to isolate distractions.</p> <p>b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or</p>	

<p>better? Rationale: This is the second follow up question to the top question to see how many breaks the participants do in order to reward themselves after doing a certain task.</p>	
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders? a. Do you require any specific medication? b. Do you use digital or physical reminders? Rationale: This second question is to see how often the participants check their reminders, whether they prefer digital or physical reminders, and also to see if they need medications.</p>	
<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind? a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working? Rationale: This is to know what kind of media they use often in order to help them focus and to add to our app and what media do our participants use.</p>	
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work? a. If so, which areas work best? b. If not, why not? Rationale: This question was to see how often the participants like to change environments</p>	

<p>to study to better understand where they are and the reason why they like that particular area to study.</p>	
<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end.</p> <p>a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p> <p>Rationale: This question is to see how often the participants finish their work and the psychological explanation why they chose that particular route. This question helps identify whether someone tends to procrastinate, work at an even pace, or complete tasks early. These patterns could aid in revealing cognitive and motivational styles.</p>	
<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <p>a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?</p> <p>b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?</p> <p>Rationale: This question provides helpful information because it allows us to identify if frustration can affect work, and perhaps what is causing said frustration and how to mitigate it for our app.</p>	

Jasmine plans to conduct her interview with her older brother Joshua on Zoom and will record the interview using Glean software. She will also interview Mio, however in person at the Dining Commons using Glean.

Questions	Joshua's Answers
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work? b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or better? 	<p>No need for an icebreaker since this user is my biological older brother.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “So routine, a set routine helps with discipline because you’re able to follow a certain routine that’s continuous and repetitive...That’s the same thing that you each day...So it caused you to get more disciplined that way I do it is get a routine...Like a mental grid or like pushing past how I feel...Even though I’m tired then i’ll still make a commitment...ao routine or commitment what makes more selfless...Like going to class...I wake up at 7 or 6:00 am every morning for a 8:00am class every morning on Monday...So I follow set schedule to a certain time that I do each time...And I go to it even though I’m tired, even though, let’s say I’m feeling lazy, tired...I still have to go to it...That’s like a certain routine...Or it’s gonna to be a gym routine...I do my routine of the gym and then I go, I go out there and do it, so I got out there and do it during a certain time and regardless I feel I’m making commitments to go there around evening around 4:00, 5:00, or 6:00 pm.” <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “I have to admit I look, I do look at my phone quite a bit when I’m working...Sometimes, checking the weather or checking the text message on the side...I tend to pick my phone if it’s next to me...Sometimes I even scroll on Instagram...So around an 8.” b. “I think rewarding myself is very good for me because it encourages me to work...For example getting food or hitting up friends or hanging out with them or watching a TV show..”
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you require any specific medication? 	<p>2. “A lot of times I like using Google Calendar, email, and the reminder pops up on my phone because I have the online calendar app, so it helps tell me when to have to get</p>

<p>b. Do you use digital or physical reminders?</p>	<p>something done. Or a few times writing stuff down on notes or something else...”</p> <p>a. “No.”</p> <p>b. “I use digital reminders such as Google Calendar in order to mark down the assignments that I need to finish.”</p>
<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind?</p> <p>a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working?</p>	<p>“I try to have background music playing in the background to keep my mind occupied to make it more entertaining or more enjoyable.”</p> <p>a. “ Sometimes I'll listen to music on YouTube or on Apple Music, um or sometimes I'll watch YouTube videos as I'm doing work just kind of as background sound.”</p>
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work?</p> <p>a. If so, which areas work best?</p> <p>b. If not, why not?</p>	<p>“Yes, sometimes I like to get out of the house to go out with friends or by myself to go to a restaurant or cafe to study...Staying in the room feels suffocating to me and I feel like I get distracted more...”</p>
<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end.</p> <p>a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p>	<p>“ I always make sure to finish a task around the middle because I do not like waiting until the last minute or else I feel more pressured and more stressed.”</p> <p>“The psychological explanation to this is that if I do the task too early I worry that my professors may get angry at me if I did it too early and post new assignments which means I have to do more..I like doing my work in between because it gives me time to look at the assignments and their due dates and get them done in time...If I wait towards the end I feel like I am rushing through the assignments too late and feel like I have to handle so many things at once.”</p>
<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <p>a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?</p> <p>b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?</p>	<p>“Sometimes when there is a hard assignment that I encounter that makes me frustrated, however , I usually use ChatGPT to help me sometimes to come up with more ideas on how to approach the assignment better.”</p>

Questions	Mio's Answers
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work? b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or better? 	<p>No need for an icebreaker since this user is my friend.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. "I stay self disciplined and not get sidetracked by not having my phone near me." <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "I say around a 3 because I have bad ADHD so if I look at my phone, I'm going to be on my phone for 20 minutes. So I try not to. If someone texts me, I get sidetracked more easily. If someone asks me a question, I'll probably respond to it even though I'm working rather than wait. But other than that I don't normally look at stuff until I'm b. done with the current task." <p>"I normally have rewards to finish things. I'll be like if I finish this thing than I can go play a game or something else. This helps me pay attention."</p>
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you require any specific medication? b. Do you use digital or physical reminders? 	<p>2. "I have a to-do list on my phone."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "I have a digital checklist because it is easier to remember something I need to do. It's easier to put it on my phone rather than try and take out a pencil and paper...If I have events that I have to actively go to, it's all on my calendar and it will give me notifications 30 minutes before every single event I see it."
<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind?</p>	<p>3. "I do listen to music."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. "Music that does not have any words. Fun relaxing music such as Nintendo

<p>a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working?</p>	<p>OST music...I do not like music with a hard bass or guitar because it is distracting to me...I sometimes I listen to lo-fi music, however it has a loud bass that is loud...It messes my brain...And I can't focus...I listen to jazz sometimes such as Persona track that I listen that has jazz music...I like to listen to game OSTs...Even Animal Crossing with rain playing.</p>
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work?</p> <p>a. If so, which areas work best?</p> <p>b. If not, why not?</p>	<p>4. "I don't go out of my dorm that often because sometimes I am lazy and I don't want to move because once I'm done with the work then I'd have to walk all the way back to be in my dorm. So I mostly do stuff in my dorm...But also it's a hassle to carry my computer and most of my work is easier on my computer. But ultimately I think sometimes it is beneficial to go to the library because I can't control my roommates because the library is quiet."</p>
<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end.</p> <p>a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p>	<p>5. "Probably more of the middle for the semester because I have a lot of stuff. Normally I try to do it as soon as possible, but just because I'm trying to keep track of all of my classes, I'll do it more in the middle...Because most of my stuff I get like near the beginning of the week and then it's due beginning next week. So I mostly do like Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or like my big work day, which is within the middle of the due date. I try not to leave things until the very end."</p>
<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <p>a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?</p> <p>b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?</p>	<p>"No...I think...It depends on what it is...For example like math I get the problem right it is done. I don't try to do much more than what is needed for my Japanese class...Or presentation for last semester, I've done a lot of work just making sure it sounds good and that everything's good. For other writing tasks, I'm done and write it, reread it, like once it's good enough and then send it through."</p>

Terry conducted the interview questions one-on-one in our living room (he is my brother) as he played video games since it was at the end of the day and he wanted to relax.

Questions	Salvador
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work? Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or better? 	<p>When I put on music or background noise with my noise-canceling headphones, I also tend to tune everyone around me out to focus.</p> <p>6.5 it depends on the type of work because if it's easy I'll essentially doom scroll but if it's a lot of hard work I'll do my best to ignore my phone.</p> <p>Yes...a bit of both, I reward myself with breaks and then at the end with a snack and video games.</p>
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do you require any specific medication? Do you use digital or physical reminders? 	<p>I don't like to take medicine since my ADHD isn't too bad. I have a family history of prescription medicine abuse so I rather stay away, not saying I would but it's a slippery slope. I also have a family history of addiction so it's a bit of a spooky risk, I rather not mess around and find out.</p>
<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working? 	<p>Yes, I use YouTube music, movies YouTube in general, or Spotify. Depends on my mood.</p>
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If so, which areas work best? If not, why not? 	<p>I can't be in a crowded room with people I know because I won't get stuff done but at the same time I can't be alone because I would get too bored so it's a 50/50</p>

<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end?</p> <p>a. Are there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p>	<p>Middle to the end and no I just like to give myself an adequate amount of time.</p>
<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <p>a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?</p> <p>b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?</p>	<p>Yes, it does. It depends on the work, if it's a big assignment then yes I want to maximize the points I get.</p>

For Victor, he will be meeting with his friend in which he will interview her in person.

Questions	Aubries Answers
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?</p> <p>a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work?</p> <p>b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during</p>	<p>2. “Normally when I will do is I will put like any distractions away so my phone is something that I'm always like reaching for when I'm doing assignment so I'll try to turn off my phone completely that way I don't get distracted by like text messages or um put up my phone in a complete different room. That way I'm not tempted to reach for it. yeah, that's mainly the only thing that like really sidetracks me and then I try not to work on multiple things at once.”</p> <p>a. “ I would say 10. I look at my phone probably every ten</p>

<p>the process to work faster or better?</p>	<p>minutes.” b. Yes, I reward myself by allowing myself to just be on my phone for an hour.</p>
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders? a. Do you require any specific medication b. Do you use digital or physical reminders?</p>	<p>“I normally write things down. I have a bad habit of actually just kind of memorizing things. I try to write it down, but I don't really use like calendars on like my day to day or check things. I kind of just go based off and memory, but if I can, I'll write it down on like notes just to open up them up quickly if I forget what I need you.”</p>
<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind? a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working?</p>	<p>“Normally I'll use chat GPT because I use it sometimes to like simplify um readings that I don't understand. Um Or I will use I'll go like on Instagram sometimes while I'm working, but that's about it.” b. “ Sometimes I'll listen to music on YouTube or on Apple Music, um or sometimes I'll watch YouTube videos as I'm doing work just kind of as background sound.”</p>
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work? a. If so, which areas work best? b. If not, why not?</p>	<p>“Yes, if I'm in a busier, more confined area with like a lot of bodies, I have a harder time focusing. um but if I'm an inquired environment, I work better, but I do still like some sort of noise in the background, not like complete silence. um Otherwise, I feel like I hear my own thoughts, but um I generally prefer harder areas.”</p>
<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end. a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p>	<p>“ I always finish it towards the end I have a hard time like um finishing tasks if they do like in two weeks, I normally wait into last minute because I can't really get myself to do things until I have like the adren and and rush of like oh this is going to be due like two hours. I have to finish it.”</p>

<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?	<p>“ I focus on doing it as well as I can, um not trying to get it perfect, but just trying to do um what I feel like I just is the best in my opinion, like the best of my ability. And then as long as it's completed and I know I tried my best, I turn it in. But I don't really work too much on like perfecting things.”</p>
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For Brandon, he will be meeting with his friend which he will interview via Zoom. Because Alex is a close friend, introductory icebreaker questions were not asked/needed here.

Questions	Alex Answers
<p>1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work? b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or better? 	<p>“Yeah, I'd say like, generally staying disciplined is a challenge sure, and its easy to get distracted—specially if I just have... Like my phone or something, something that just grabs me you know? I guess making smaller tasks for me has definitely helped in ways, but not longterm! Oh I tried this rubber band thing where I'd wrap colored bands around my hand, different colors for different tasks, and it helped but *laughs* I kinda felt like a dumbass doing it.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Lowkey I'd say like a strong 8. I know it's something I need to work on and I am I am, but my phone's a huge distraction. Lots of media apps yeah— TikTok and Youtube, like when I work I'd turn on a video essay, something meaningless like why JJK is peak fiction like totally useless info, but its background noise you know? I've tried... Screenshot locking, this app blocks out specific apps and it helps, though I tend to like, delete and reinstall it time to time.” b. “Oh yeah big time! Rewards are a big motivator for me. Like if I do something like, positive, like cook, clean, go to the gym or something like that, then yeah I'd dedicate about 2 hours to watch stuff at the end of the day. It's not perfect but it helps for sure.”
<p>2. How do you keep track of your reminders?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do you require any specific medication? b. Do you use digital or physical reminders? 	<p>“Sorta a mix of digital and physical reminders, the band thing I mentioned if I like remember it then it helps somewhat. Some apps like the notes app I'd randomly check it cause I'd remember to write something down.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “Yeah my doctor prescribed me Elvanse, it's a pill basically. It helps me with motivation and clearer thoughts. I noticed it does raise my heartrate a bit in stressful situations. I dunno it's a process right now.

<p>3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind?</p> <p>a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working?</p>	<p>“Oh if it's boring enough then yeah I'd play some background stuff, mainly Youtube. Just hearing someone talk like, in the background helps yeah.”</p>
<p>4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work?</p> <p>a. If so, which areas work best?</p> <p>b. If not, why not?</p>	<p>“I mean like, if it's not quiet enough then sure, but not really either. Don't get me wrong, a good environment yeah it helps but it's not like a mainstay for me. I feel environment does factor, but not by much.”</p>
<p>5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end.</p> <p>a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....</p>	<p>“Usually towards the end, cause you know that one saying, ‘diamonds are made under pressure’ or something like that, yeah. It's more an excuse for procrastinating, but if it comes out good it's good ya know?”</p> <p>a. “I guess cause it's like, torturous. Is that a good answer? Hold up hold up... Like, because when I'm given a lot of time, I'm all ‘oh yeah nothing to worry about’ but with little time I'm all ‘shit shit my whole life is gonna turn if I don't get this done like, yesterday!’ So it's definitely a pressure thing.”</p>
<p>6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?</p> <p>a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?</p> <p>b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?</p>	<p>“Getting frustrated does affect my work, like significantly so. Like, I can get some pretty bad headaches if I'm just feeling frustrated with something not working. I dunno if it affects my quality of work really, more so my motivation to actually want to work.”</p> <p>a. If it's something I'm really passionate about then yeah, I'd dedicate a good portion of time to it, like hyperfocused on it almost. If it's not, then I'll make sure it's at least good I guess.</p>

Method:

Overall Approach

The semi-structured interview approach allows us to expand on key topics by incorporating follow-up questions that delve deeper into the psychological aspects of how individuals diagnosed with ADHD manage their daily tasks and maintain organization. This flexibility helps us uncover valuable insights that inform the development of an app designed to support their needs.

The overall logic of our interview questions was to explore how individuals with ADHD navigate their daily tasks and maintain organization by allowing for in-depth discussions through follow-up questions. This approach enabled us to gain deeper psychological insights into their challenges and needs, helping us identify key factors to consider when designing an app to support them.

The biases we anticipate as we conduct the interviews are potential response biases, where participants may unintentionally provide socially desirable answers rather than fully honest responses about their struggles. Additionally, confirmation bias may arise if we unintentionally interpret responses in a way that aligns with our preconceived expectations. Selection bias is another concern, as our sample may not fully represent the diverse experiences of individuals with ADHD. Being aware of these biases will help us take steps to minimize their impact and ensure more accurate and insightful findings.

Interview Approach

The semi-structured interview approach helped us learn more about our design space by allowing for both structured and flexible discussions, enabling us to gather in-depth insights into how individuals with ADHD manage their daily tasks and maintain organization. This approach provided the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, uncovering personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies that might not have surfaced in a more rigid interview format. By exploring these aspects, we gained a deeper understanding of user needs, which will inform the development of an app that effectively supports individuals with ADHD in their daily routines.

The overall logic of our interview questions was to explore the daily task management and organizational strategies of individuals with ADHD while allowing for deeper exploration through follow-up questions. Our structured questions provided a foundation for understanding

common challenges, while the flexibility of the semi-structured format enabled us to uncover personal experiences and coping mechanisms. This approach ensured that we could gather both broad trends and specific insights, helping us identify key areas where an app could provide meaningful support.

Introduction: We begin by establishing a comfortable environment for the interviewee with their preferred place where they study, explaining the purpose of the interview, and asking general questions about their daily routines. This helps ease them into the conversation and provides context for deeper questions.

Beginning – Self-Discipline: We start with questions about self-discipline to understand how individuals with ADHD manage distractions and stay focused. This sets the foundation for follow-up questions about specific strategies they use.

Middle – Tools & Techniques: After discussing self-discipline, we transition into questions about external aids such as reminders and music. This allows us to explore how different tools help or hinder their ability to stay organized and productive.

End – Challenges & App Relevance: We conclude with broader questions about the biggest challenges they face in managing daily tasks and what they wish they had to support them. This helps us identify gaps that our app can address and ensures the interview ends on a reflective, open-ended note.

Interviewee Bias (Response Bias): This occurs when participants provide answers they think the interviewer wants to hear rather than their genuine experiences. This is especially common when questions are too open-ended or lack clear structure.

Mitigation: We will ensure our questions are clear, neutral, and consistently phrased. Using a semi-structured approach allows us to ask follow-ups to clarify responses and reduce misinterpretation.

Prestige Bias: This happens when interviewees give responses that make them appear more disciplined, organized, or successful than they actually are to impress the interviewer.

Mitigation: We will create a comfortable, non-judgmental environment by emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers. We will also use indirect questioning techniques, such as asking about general habits before personal experiences, to encourage honesty.

Our interview is designed to address our research questions by uncovering how individuals with ADHD manage their daily tasks, stay organized, and overcome challenges. By starting with self-discipline, we explore intrinsic strategies, then transition to external tools like reminders and music, and finally identify key pain points. This structured yet flexible approach allows us to

gather both broad trends and personal experiences, informing our design space by highlighting essential features and user needs for an effective support app.

Interview Questions

1. How do you stay self-disciplined when completing a task and not getting sidetracked?

Rationale:

The first question helps identify strategies individuals with ADHD use to stay focused and if they use incentives to keep motivated. The different ways of dealing with these everyday issues will become valuable information for prototyping.

- a. On a scale from 1-10, 1 being not frequent and 10 being very frequent, would you say you look at your phone/device screen for social media and others when doing work?

Rationale: This is similar to the first question as a follow up question to see how often the participants look at their phones when they are doing work to have a better picture of how we can incorporate a feature in our app to isolate distractions.

- b. Do you reward yourself after doing an assignment or during the process to work faster or better?

Rationale: This is the second follow up question to the top question to see how many breaks the participants do in order to reward themselves after doing a certain task.

2. How do you keep track of your reminders?

Rationale: This second question is to see how often the participants check their reminders.

- a. Do you require any specific medication?

Rationale: This is a follow up question to clarify if they need to take any medication in order to see if we need to add a feature for this.

- b. Do you use digital or physical reminders?

Rationale: This is another follow up question to clarify if they prefer doing physical or digital reminders to see what we can include in our app.

3. Do you use any media whenever you are doing a task and what kind?

Rationale: This is to know what kind of media they use often in order to add to our app.

- a. Which media do you listen to and which is best when you are working?

Rationale: This is a follow up question to see what media would best fit to add on to our app if we were to add a music feature for our participants to use.

4. Do you find changing the setting in which you're in affects the way you're able to focus on your work?
- a. If so, which areas work best?
- b. If not, why not?

Rationale: This question was to see how often the participants like to change environments to study to better understand where they are and the reason why they like that particular area to study.

5. When given a task with an adequate time frame to finish it in, do you take the route of finishing it as early as possible, in the middle, or towards the end.
- a. Is there any psychological explanations as to why you chose....

Rationale: This question is to see how often the participants finish their work and the psychological explanation why they chose that particular route. This question helps identify whether someone tends to procrastinate, work at an even pace, or complete tasks early. These patterns could aid in revealing cognitive and motivational styles.

6. When working on tasks, does any frustration affect the quality of your work?
- a. Do you spend extra time to perfect your work?
- b. If not, do you focus on getting done with what you can?

Rationale: This question provides helpful information because it allows us to identify if frustration can affect work, and perhaps what is causing said frustration and how to mitigate it for our app.

Data Collection

Jasmine took audio and notes for collecting the data from the people that she has interviewed. She recorded a Zoom meeting using Glean for her older brother, Joshua. She then met with her

friend Mio in person to talk and used Glean in order to record the audio and take notes from her interview.

Terry took audio recordings and took notes on Google Docs with her brother whom she interviewed.

For Victor, he plans to interview his friend Aubrie in person, audio only. He'll have his laptop with him.

Brandon took notes from Alex, the person he interviewed. He wrote down what was said and thanked him for the time to interview.

Work Back Schedule

Define Research Objectives and Goals (Timeline: February 19, 2025)

- Outline the objectives of the interviews

Identify and Select Participants (Timeline: February 19 - 21, 2025)

- Determine the criteria for selecting interviewees.
- Reach out to potential participants and confirm their availability.

Design Interview Questions and Structure (Timeline: February 19 - 21, 2025)

- Develop a list of open-ended questions.
- Ensure questions are clear and unbiased.

Schedule Interviews (Timeline: February 18-20, 2025)

- Confirm interview dates and times with participants.
- Send reminders to participants ahead of time.

Conduct the Interviews (Timeline: February 21 - 25, 2025)

- Conduct interviews as per the scheduled dates.
- Record and document responses with participant consent.

Analyze and Synthesize Findings (Timeline: February 25 - 28, 2025)

- Review and transcribe interview recordings if necessary.
- Categorize key themes and insights based on the responses.
- Look for patterns, commonalities, and opportunities for improvement.

Report Findings and Next Steps (Timeline: March 4, 2025)

- Summarize the insights and document key takeaways.
- Prepare a report or presentation outlining findings and recommendations.
- Determine how the insights will inform design decisions or next steps in the project.

Jasmine's work back schedule:

Day	Time	Place
Joshua's Zoom meeting Interview date: February 22, 2025	6:30 PM	Dorm on Laptop
Meeting with Mio Interview date: February 24, 2025	12:00 PM	Dining Commons

Terry's work back schedule

Day	Time	Place
Terry In-Person Interview February, 22th, 2025	12:00 PM	At home in the living room

Victor's work back schedule:

Day	Time	Place
Victors In-Person Interview February, 25th, 2025	7:00 AM	On a walk back home.

Brandon's work back schedule:

Day	Time	Place
Brandon's Zoom Interview February 23nd, 2025	4:30 PM	Dorm on Laptop

Appendix

References

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L. Levrini, A. (2023). *Succeeding With Adult ADHD: Daily Strategies to Help You Achieve Your Goals and Manage Your Life* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Associations

NeuroLaunch.com. (2024, August 4). *ADHD and routines: Unlocking the power of structure for better focus and productivity*. <https://neurolaunch.com/adhd-and-routines/>

Planning Materials

iPhone for recording observations

Taking notes on a notebook from the observations

Terry

Google docs to observe on iphone

Laptop discord call

Field Study Notes

Method: Areas of Focus

Build environment

Where do people go to study and complete their work.

Media consumption

How many people look at their phones scrolling through stuff.

Tools and technology

How people organize their work using certain tools.

Overall experience

What keeps them focused day to day.

Method: Overall Logic

Methodology for your observation? (Contextual Inquiry, Deep Hangout, Observation Only...etc.)

Describe how you will conduct this research method.

Jasmine and Teresita will do Contextual Inquiry observation by asking their users to walk through and ask them to walk you through the steps they take to stay organized and focused. They will quietly observe how a user interacts with their environment and note the distractions (phone notifications, noise) and how they respond to them. They will also watch how long a user spends on each task and whether they shift focus between tasks quickly. Jasmine and Teresita will observe two users each for at least 30 minutes.

Brandon and Victor will do Deep Hangout by joining online communities such as Reddit, Discord, or Facebook groups for people with ADHD to learn about their struggles and the strategies they use to cope with their symptoms.

Bring a phone or notebook, pencil, and eraser, or use an app to take notes

Introduce yourself

Ask for permission to record or observe

Observe for 30 mins or more

Interact with the participant about themselves

Location for where the observations will take place.

These are possible locations:

Makerspace

Library (First or Second floor or Library Cafe, not Third)
 Otter Express
 OSU
 Dining Commons
 Cyber Cafe (Promontory)
 Dorm Lobby (North Quad, Avocet, other buildings with lobby not including Strawberry)
 Online
 Home (where we live if we have someone who is part of our family who has ADHD)

Duration of the observation session
 Observe for 30 minutes or more

Method: Specific Logic

- Overall protocol to be followed in carrying out the observation
- Prep for the session: form, thing to take notes(paper, laptop, tablet, phone)
- Have the person set up for their study session as they normally would
- Sit with them or across from them to observe them as they study
- A possible form they can fill out of the effective things they did to stay focused on studying
- Thank them for their time, and maybe give them a small snack
- Maybe we can meet for another session, if possible at a different time

Method: Data Collection:

- free-form notes of the observation
- Forms for them to fill out how they focused during their study session
- Ask permission and analyze screen time usage.

Who did what and went where? How did you divide up the work?

The following is how we divided up the work and our observation notes.

- Deep Hangout (Conducted by Victor) For this deep hangout I visited Reddit to see and research what kind of tactics and methods people with ADHD typically use for concentration purposes and the reasoning behind them. Since all users are anonymous on the website I will use their screen name. Additionally, I will only include methods/strategies that are being used actively during something. So factors such as sleep and rest will not be accounted for.
- The following is a list compiled by a user named “SpareAd2794” under the ADHD subreddit/thread.
 - Medication

- Getting dressed up
- Allowing poor performance
- Having music/videos run in the background.

From what's been gathered there seems to be a universal pattern where people, aside from medication, will use a physical ailment that they utilize to enhance their concentration and performance.

The following is a quote from user "SirNobOff" in reference to getting dressed up to enhance performance:

"On my days off I usually chill in just pajama bottoms and end up doing entirely nothing... Unless I get dressed then I become ridiculously more productive in what I'll do throughout the day, even if it's just adding a pajama top and socks."

Upon doing further research in the same reddit thread. There also seemed to be universal appeal and usage with strategies that don't necessarily involve external physical factors but rather change in setting/environment.

The following is a quote from user "seasuighim":

"For some reason, I always have to have it completely silent to work. I just created a soundscape on that website, the sound of summer where I live, as I've always wanted to capture that. However, I would become too busy looking up what type of birds I hear, and then go down the rabbit hole. For me, it's just silence I guess. Although, if I have to get college work done, I go to a more academic setting, or away from my computer/bedroom, At the cafe, library, around the main building are tables/seats, I usually take up one of those for four to five hours and get all my work done there."

From the two sources that I pulled there was no logistical explanation as to why those methods work for them other than personal experience/preference. The following will be common explanations and definitions for the reasoning behind why they primarily aid those with ADHD and performance.

- **Getting Dressed Up:** Dressing well can boost self-esteem and confidence. When individuals feel good about their appearance, they're more likely to feel competent and capable. This is often referred to as "enclothed cognition," where the clothes we wear affect our psychological state and performance.
- **Working in Silence:** Working in silence can often reduce cognitive load which helps the brain focus on the task without distractions, enhancing memory and reasoning. Quiet

environments allow individuals to enter a state of flow, leading to higher productivity and better task performance.

- Change in setting: A change in scenery provides new stimuli, which can refresh your mind and prevent feelings of monotony. This can reignite your creativity and help you approach tasks with renewed energy and perspective.
- Having music/videos run in the background: Music has the ability to elevate mood, reduce stress, and induce positive emotions. When individuals are in a good mood, they're more likely to be productive and motivated. For some people, having background videos can provide a sense of company or engagement, reducing feelings of isolation, especially when working alone.
- Allowing Poor Performance: Allowing for poor performance gives individuals the chance to make mistakes. Mistakes are valuable learning experiences that provide insight into what doesn't work and how to improve. This iterative process of trial and error is crucial for skill development and innovation.

Deep Hangout (Conducted by Brandon)

For my research, I observed open forums as well, particularly Reddit and YouTube, and open source articles/studies on the struggles and daily battles with ADHD.

For apps like Youtube and TikTok, the rise of short-form content and the tendency to engage in multiple tasks simultaneously for constant stimulation are notable trends that have created a trajectory towards how many view the entertainment they engage with.

Users on Reddit have pointed this out, particularly on the ADHD subreddit. Many are looking for remedies for this addictive form of entertainment.

- A user going by "DunnoMyself" stated in a thread: "I've wasted nights with shorts (YouTube videos less than 30 seconds long) before and it was terrible. So now I allow myself nothing. I don't have a TikTok/Instagram/Snapchat and other social medias of any kind. I use a Youtube APK with shorts disabled."
- One method discussed in a separate thread regarding battling ADHD methods was "Body Doubling."
- This method has two different meanings, one of them is:
- Working alongside another person, physically or virtually, enhances focus and accountability.
- The second definition is seeing your future self and holding yourself today accountable. In a way, you aren't who you are today, you're always your future self and can reinvent yourself at the moment and begin going down a new path.
- Many on the subreddit talked about how they implement prompts or mini-tasks throughout their day to overcome a feeling of inertia and start bigger tasks.

Contextual Inquiry (Conducted by Jasmine)

I conducted a contextual inquiry with two people on what they do to stay focused in class and organize their assignments on how they handle their ADHD. I will use their real names. I will be adding the methods or strategies they used while keeping track of their assignments.

User 1: The first person I asked to participate was my older brother Joshua where I observed him at home.

Time: 10:00 AM, Saturday, Feb. 8

Before starting his work, I noticed he had gone into the bathroom with his phone and had been there for 10 minutes.

- He finally came back to his room and got on his computer to look at his email, however only looked briefly and has a lot of unread emails and only read ones that are from Handshake for job opportunities.
- He then logged into Canvas, looked through each class module, and took note of any new assignments. He is currently taking three classes this semester.
- He checks his first class which is a physical education class. So far, no assignments.
- He checks his second class and sees there are no new assignments.
- He then checks his third class and sees that the professor has posted two homework assignments that are due Feb. 16.
- He then copies the assignments and puts them in his Google calendar on the date they are due.
- He also plans out when he will start on the assignment so he has enough time to do them.
- I observed other things are planned on his Google calendar such as planning to work out and attend some career workshops at school.
- However, he admits he doesn't stick 100% to his plans as he gets distracted by fun things or gets tired and puts off the task.
- He then receives a text message from his friend which he responds to right away.

Quotes:

- "Usually I like to listen to some chill hip hop music or lo-fi music or I listen to white noise or just kind of ambient stuff in the background. It helps me focus a lot more."
- "The way I stay organized is first off, categorizing my time schedule and in different tasks that I have to get done in a day. And then I usually just prioritize the ones that are most important and I make sure to keep them different in sections."

Observation summary:

Joshua keeps his room dark and doesn't like to use his ceiling light. He says he doesn't like bright light as he finds it hurts his eyes and being in a darker room makes him feel calmer, but sometimes sleepy. He spends a lot of time in the bathroom and seems tied to his phone. He says

he gets text messages a lot or phone calls, which distracts him. He admits he has a hard time telling his friends he is busy, so it takes away from his focus. Putting his assignments and other important tasks in a Google Calendar is a technique he learned from an academic coach. This helps him feel more structured and organized.

User 2: The second person I asked to participate was my friend Mio (they/them) whom I observed at the Dining Commons.

Time: 12:00 PM, Monday, Feb. 10

Sometimes they would go to the Dining Commons to do their work and eat lunch at the same time.

They showed me how they take notes in class as they were taking notes for their math class on their iPad.

They usually take notes to stay organized when they take notes in class with their notebooks. They usually like to draw in class while in class and it helps them pay attention in class and lectures or take notes in their notebook.

They like to take one assignment at a time either using Google Docs.

They usually write something physical for their Japanese class and they showed me how they write hiragana, katakana, or kanji on the paper and the proper way to write the characters.

They also showcased to me what they draw in their notebook during lectures.

Quotes:

“I like to draw or write notes to keep me entertained during lectures and organize my notes on a Google docs or write it down in my notebook. Then I check on my to do list with the work I got done one at a time. I feel that this is easier rather than tampering with multiple assignments at one time. I also take notes using the Glean app.”

“I prefer to draw or write notes rather than looking at my phone when the professor is talking and I feel that looking at my phone makes me feel more distracted. I will be glued to watching videos of different things when I should be focusing on the lecture.”

Observation Summary:

Mio prefers to bring their iPad to class because it is easier to carry compared to their computer because their computer is bulkier and heavier to carry around campus. They also like to take notes or draw during lectures because it keeps them focused in class rather than looking at their phone. They admit that looking at their phone makes them feel more distracted and become more focused on watching videos rather than focusing on lectures. They prefer to organize their assignments using a to-do list on their notebook or iPad to keep track of the assignments they finished. This helps them feel more structured and organized.

Contextual Inquiry (Conducted by Teresita)

User 3: I will be observing my younger brother Salvador Hernandez and how he manages to stay focused while doing his work. He is a senior in high school and is in independent studies. He was in regular school for the first few weeks but due to his ADHD, he realized he had a really hard time focusing in class. He wasn't able to use his earbuds or any of his usual tactics, as well his friends proved too much of a distraction so he migrated to independent studies which has significantly helped him improve his grades.

- Logs into his laptop and then goes to his Google Drive to see what the plan is for the week and what he needs to catch up on. He meets with his advisor to monitor his progress this meeting takes an hour and a half more or less
- He starts with checking his assignment folder and starting with the easier work which is online work through APEX
- After setting up all the work he needs to do in different tabs he takes a small snack break and watches Instagram reels and messages his friends through Snapchat and Instagram.
- Once he finishes his snack he goes back to his laptop opens a separate tab for Spotify and YouTube and proceeds to bounce between music and random gameplay videos
- He puts his headphones on and starts to do his online module work to “get started and in the mood for studying” which is computer applications, Spanish, and I believe math
- After finishing his modules he moves on to his reading and writing assignments for history and English
- He goes into a separate tab for a text-to-speech website downloads all his reading into PDFs then uploads them to help him read his work then answers his work.
- He sometimes uses voice-to-text to get his thoughts out faster then uses chat GPT to organize them in a better format
- Takes a break again to eat then plays video games for a bit on the laptop
- He starts by looking at work he needs to catch up on and proceeds to do it after getting permission from his teacher which opens the math modules he needs to work on and other work.
 - I'm not too sure what it is but he works on it as much as he can before calling it a day then proceeds to play video games with his friends for the rest of the day.

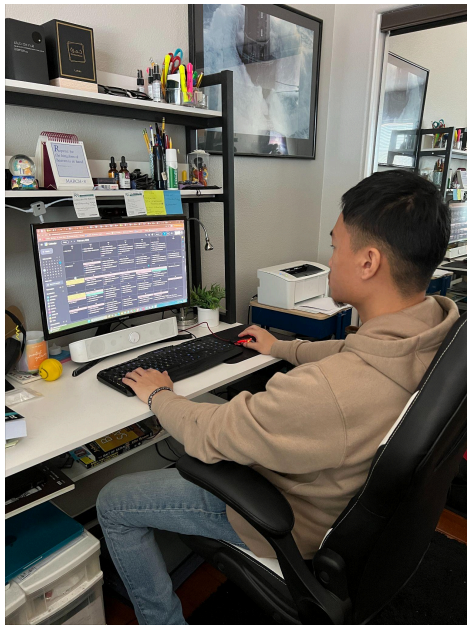
User 4: This is my brother's friend, Ceasar, who goes to school physically, they are old enough to go to the doctor and are actively trying to get a diagnosis in the meantime they manage along with teas, music, and fidget toys. I was able to do a partial observation because they had sports events during the weekend and we both go to school physically so I did what I could with this one.

- Once getting home from school they take a resting break
- Depending on the assignment workload they either extend their break or immediately get to work
- They open Google Drive and open the docs they need, they look at their written agenda

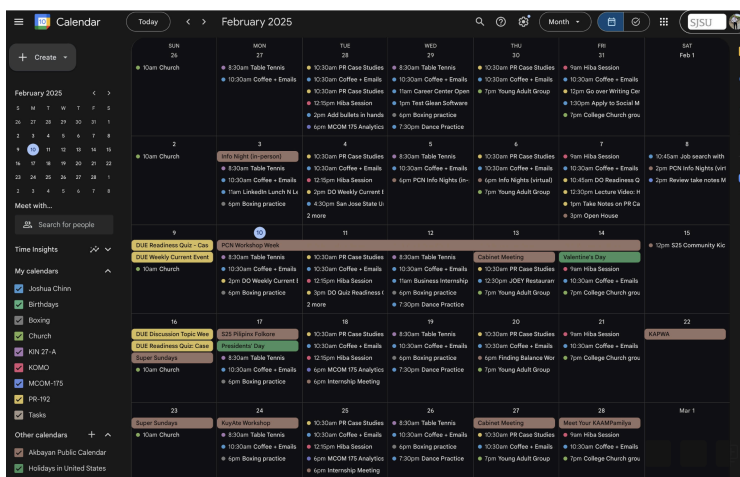
- Put on a music playlist then put their phone to the side to focus depending on the workload they take a hand full of short breaks or one long break in between
- They have snacks nearby because they like to snack while they study/do hw
- After finishing he plays video games

Images

Jasmine's users:



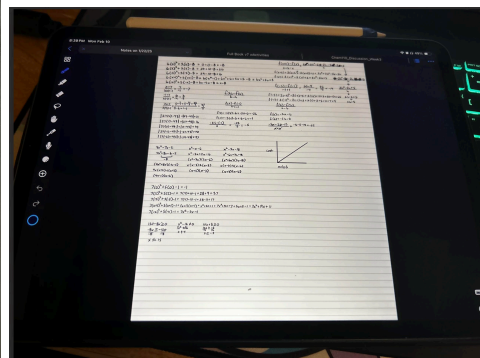
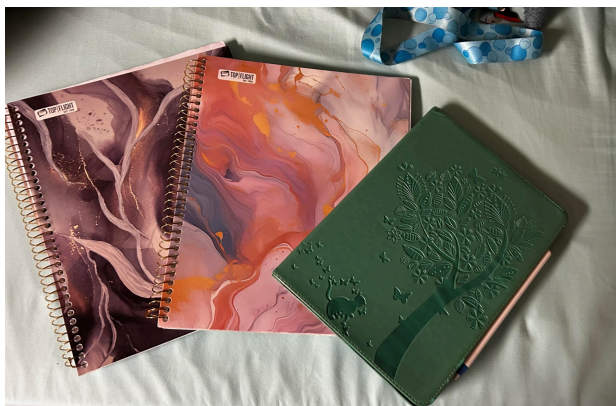
Joshua's workspace



Joshua's artifact—Google Calendar

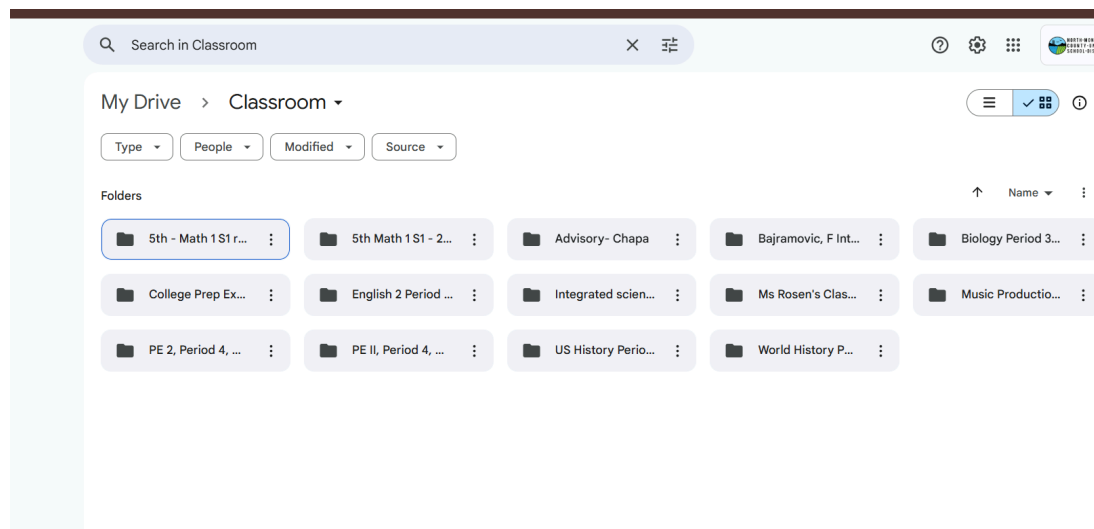












Mio's picture



Mio's artifacts – notebooks and iPad notes

Teresita's users:



2	 Motion Sickness Vestron Vulture	Lionheart
3	 Gallowdance Lebanon Hanover	Tomb for Two
	 Dirty Cash (Money Talks) - Sold Out 7 Inch Mix The Adventures Of Stevie V	Dirty Cash (Money Talks)
5	 Alien Blues Vundabar	Gawk
6	 My Flaws Burn Through My Skin Like Demonic Flames from Hell \$uicideboy\$	I No Longer Fear the Razor Guarding My Heel
7	 NEW MAGIC WAND Tyler, The Creator	IGOR
8	 Neglect Mr.Kitty	Time
9	 Sixteen Tons Tennessee Ernie Ford	Sixteen Tons
10	 Feathered Indians Tyler Childers	Purgatory
11	 (Ghost) Riders in the Sky Johnny Cash	Hello I'm Johnny Cash

Three video thumbnails are displayed in a row. The first thumbnail shows a character from the game Poppy Playtime with a duration of 1:38:24. The second thumbnail shows a cat with the text 'Just Tostada being silly' and a duration of 1:15. The third thumbnail shows a man with the text '24 hours alone' and a duration of 40 minutes. Below each thumbnail is the video title, channel name, and view/age information.

- Poppy Playtime: Chapter 4 - Part 2**
Markiplier
352K views · 5 hours ago
- Just Tostada being silly ✨**
Fanforever :/
1.6M views · 1 year ago
- I Locked Myself in a Haunted House for 24 Hours (Part 1: Meet Malvern Manor)**
Watcher
1.2M views · 1 month ago

Quick picks

Play all

	GOSSIP (feat. Tom Morello) Måneskin · 155M plays · RUSH!		Running Up That Hill (A Deal With God) Kate Bush · 63M plays · Hounds Of Love		My Way (2008 Remastered) Frank Sinatra · 2.1B plays · Nothing But The Best
	死ぬのがいいわ - Shinunoga E-Wa Fujii Kaze · 459M plays · HELP EVER HELPS		The Ballad of Mona Lisa Panic! At The Disc · Vices & Virtues		T-Pain Mashup T-Pain · 65M plays · Oblivion (Expanded Edition)
	Daydream in Blue I Monster · 19M plays · Neverodmore		Daydreamer Adele · 29M plays · 19		Enormous Penis Da Vinci's Notebook · Brontosaurus
	Sit Next to Me Foster The People · Sacred Hearts...		Good Luck, Babe! Chappell Roan · 4.5M plays · Good Luck, Babe!		Ain't No Sunshine Bill Withers · 109M plays · Just As I Am

