

Competitive Usability Test Plan

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Introduction/Purpose

The purpose of this document is to conduct usability testing on the competitor app, *neurolist*, how it works, list out tasks that our selected participants are going to perform, and get their opinion on their experience which will help us map out how we will create our own app, Focus Friend.

Usability testing is essential because it helps us map out the strengths and weaknesses of the competitor's product (neurolist) using the knowledge of what works well for users, rather than our personal beliefs or opinions. This helps us pinpoint where improvements are needed, thereby reducing risk and adding value to our product to stay competitive, but also meeting the needs of users in ways that others may not be.

Problem Statement/Test Objectives

College students with ADHD often face unique challenges that affect their academic success and overall well-being. Difficulties with focus, time management, and productivity can lead to poor performance, heightened stress, and diminished self-esteem. As higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping future opportunities, addressing these challenges presents an important opportunity to support student success and personal growth. Our project explores this issue by investigating the daily experiences of college students with ADHD to better understand their needs. Through contextual inquiries, deep hangouts, observations, and interviews, we identified key patterns related to organization, focus, and motivation. This research highlights a critical opportunity to design strategies and tools that empower ADHD students, foster inclusive learning environments, and promote a broader understanding of neurodiversity.

Main Objectives:

- Develop an app that supports college students with ADHD by providing tools and strategies to:
 - Stay organized with assignments and daily tasks
 - Maintain focus during classes and lectures
 - Improve study and work habits for both academic and personal success

Usability Testing Goals:

- Evaluate how effectively the app helps users stay organized and manage task
- Test features that support focus and concentration in real academic settings
- Identify which tools and strategies are most useful and intuitive for users with ADHD
- Gather feedback on user experience to refine the app's design, accessibility, and functionality

We aim to achieve through our usability testing being able to see how our competition app (neurolist) works and testing to see its effectiveness on planning a schedule and maneuvering around the app to see how it works.

User Profile

Our target audience will have to be dealing with people who are diagnosed or self-diagnosed with ADHD that often struggle with task initiation and time management. Our users are tech-savvy and around college age who often struggle trying to keep track of their classes or procrastinate. Depending on the user's preferred environment, they will go to that certain area to study at. For example, one of the personas named Ethan Long likes to go to places with his friends to study. Ethan also has an internship on campus at San Jose State University. He is tech-savvy since he has a minor in computer science, however struggles with staying focused in his class and tends to get distracted easily with his phone which he tends to get text messages or scroll through social media. He wants to study for his Stats exam that is coming up and needs an efficient study plan. The following are four personas of people who would use our app.

Persona 1: Ethan Long

College Student

- **Age:** 22
- **Major:** Business with a minor in Computer Science
- Currently has a job
- **Location:** San Jose, CA
- **Gender:** Male
- **Background:** only child, grew up in a quiet household
- Likes to code and do statistics and plays video games
- Lives on-campus at San Jose State University

Persona 2: Lily Turner

Age: 20 years old

- **Major:** Environmental Science
- **Location:** Los Angeles, California
- **Background:** Lily grew up in a small town, where her constant energy earned her the nickname “Hummingbird”.
- **Gender:** Female
- Likes to enjoy nature
- Lives on-campus

Persona 3: Elliot Park

Age: 23 years old

- **Major:** Liberal Arts
- **Location:** Monterey, CA
- **Background:** Grew up in a quiet, book-filled household, middle child
- **Gender:** Non-binary (he/they)
- **Commutes:** Walks or takes the bus, listens to audiobooks while commuting

Persona 4: Jordan Landcaster

Age: 22 years old

- **Major:** Graphic Design
- **Location:** Austin, Texas
- **Background:** Grew up in a vibrant community and always had a passion for making things but struggled with organization.
- **Gender:** Male
- Enjoys music, digital art, video games, and sketching
- Lives off-campus in an apartment building

Testing Methodology

Overview of the Test:

We are testing the app called neurolist, which is one of our competitive apps that we have selected to look at and download to see the features they provide and see how effective we can use the free version of the app. We will test around five people, one person per teammate that will be individually conducted. We will conduct around five people because it is easier to see different viewpoints on how the participants feel about the app neurolist and see how they feel if the app helps them organize better and helps them with their ADHD. We will use this approach to see how the participants will feel about the app. The test administrators will ask the participants to do one of the tasks they feel assigned to the participant. For example, being able to locate your tasks on the calendar. One of the test administrators will assign that certain task to

one of the participants in which they have to first download the app, answer all of the questions that the app ask about their struggles and what they want to improve on, then begin to create a calendar using the AI feature that neurolist provides, schedule a task of that certain day in which they have to adjust the time and date, and go to their calendar app to view the task they assigned themselves on the calendar.

Script for the Test: Pre-Test Activities Script

Welcome [Name], hello my name is [Name]. How are you doing today? Alright let's begin.

Introduction:

This is going to be a test of our competitive app neurolist. We are going to create an app in order to help people who have ADHD. This will mean that you will have to download the app neurolist and have to answer all of the questions they give you where you have to select what matches what you struggle with or want to improve on.

Entrance:

Before we begin, we want to make sure that you are fully informed and comfortable participating in this usability test. Your participation is voluntary and will be able to withdraw at any time.

This will not be public and only be shared with my teammates and class. You have two options: would you like to verbally tell me or would you rather sign your name?

- Do you give your consent to participate in this usability test?
- Do you feel comfortable being recorded during this test?
- Would you prefer to appear on video, or would you rather participate with audio only?

Scenarios/Task-Based Questions Script

Scenario 1- Locate how to add your reminders to your calendar:

“You’ve just attended one of your classes where the professor introduced an upcoming homework assignment. You were given time to start the introduction during class, and the professor officially posted the assignment on Canvas, due next Tuesday. As the day goes on, you attend other classes and receive more homework, all piling up for the same due date. You begin to feel overwhelmed and stressed about keeping track of it all.”

*“You’ve tried using Google Calendar before, but found it confusing and frustrating to set up. So, you decide to search the App Store for something more ADHD-friendly and discover an app called **neurolist**. You download it, select your personal struggles (like*

time management and organization), and identify your goals. Now, you want to start getting organized.”

Task:

Using the app, locate how to add a reminder to your calendar for the homework that’s due next Tuesday. Create a reminder titled “[Name of Assignment],” and schedule it for Monday at [time] so you have time to finish it before the due date.

Scenario 2 - Create reminders for what a regular day for yourself looks like:

“You’ve just finished adding a homework reminder to your calendar and now want to start using the app to stay on top of your daily routines. You realize that having structure throughout your day could help you feel less overwhelmed and more in control. You want to create a plan that includes simple, everyday tasks to help keep you grounded and organized.”

“These are tasks you do regularly, like waking up, getting freshened up in the morning, doing laundry, changing your bed sheets, and any other daily responsibilities that help you feel prepared for the day.”

Task:

Using the app, create a daily plan on your calendar by adding reminders for your regular tasks. Include at least three items you do every day, and set them for the times you usually complete them (e.g., ‘Wake up and get ready – 8:00 AM’). Explore the options for setting recurring reminders if they are available.

Scenario 3 - Locate where you can find the different kinds of tasks/reminders you have:

“You’ve started using the app regularly and have added several tasks and reminders; some are for homework, others for daily routines like doing laundry or waking up. Now, you want to check in and see everything you’ve added, and possibly organize or review your schedule.”

“You’re looking for a simple way to view the different types of tasks you’ve entered, such as academic tasks, personal routines, or other reminders.”

Task:

Find where you can view a list or calendar view of your current tasks and reminders. Try to identify which ones are related to school, which are personal, and how they’re visually organized or grouped in the app.

Scenario 4 - Find how to rearrange your tasks/reminders:

“You’ve been using the app to stay organized and manage your assignments. While checking Canvas, you notice that the due date for one of your homework assignments has changed. The professor has moved the deadline to a different date, giving students more time to complete the assignment.”

“Since you’ve already added this task to your calendar, you now need to go in and update it so it reflects the new due date.”

Task:

Find the reminder you created for the assignment in your calendar. Adjust the date and time to match the new deadline and update any other details you feel are necessary to stay on track.

Scenario 5 - See what you can accomplish on the free plan:

“You’ve just started using the app and want to see what you can do without paying. You’re sticking to the free plan for now and want to explore all the core features it offers to help you stay organized and manage your tasks.”

“As you explore the app, you begin to notice that some features may be locked behind a paywall. You want to figure out what’s included in the free version and what isn’t, so you can decide whether this app meets your needs.”

Task:

Explore the app and see what features are available in the free plan.

- Check for any features that are restricted or prompt you to upgrade.
- Take note of anything that feels confusing or unclear about the free-tier limits.
- Try to identify the core features you can use without paying.

Follow-Up Prompts:

- “What’s missing in the free plan that you feel you would need?”
- “Was it easy or difficult to understand what’s free and what’s paid?”
- “How long did it take you to discover the core features of the app?”

Exit Questions (Post-Test Questionnaire):

Post-Test Questions:

These questions include answers from our pilot test user in class as an example.

1. How was your overall experience using the app?

Answers: It’s intuitive, I like that the big actions are at the bottom, easy to do with one hand, easy and clear, everything seen is a design language familiar with.

2. Did the app help you feel more organized with your assignments and tasks?

Answers: I think so, one of the things I could see being effective is checking off tasks and the fact that you can view what you completed. Having a separate current/completed task is helpful.

3. What are your thoughts on the overall layout and design of the app?
4. How do you feel about the use of AI to assist with organizing your tasks and managing your calendar?

Answers: Interesting. Automatic subtasking gives the choice to edit afterwards, good for fixing a task that doesn't 100% apply. Feels streamlined.

5. Do you believe that the analysis near the start was conclusive and resonated with your current issues with ADHD?

Answers: I think so, it addressed most of the areas, allowed choice of multiple options. The beginning of select all that apply was more fulfilling than the yes/no options which wasn't as definitive and room for nuance

6. Did the free plan limit what you could accomplish?

Answers: Yes. Free Plan works well, YOU tab is locked tells user to upgrade. Free Plan is sufficient.

7. What was the most frustrating part of the task, if any?

Answers: No, it was all very clear. When the app used the AI, the progress bar.

8. How confident are you that you completed the task correctly?
(Scale 1-5 or open-ended)

Answers: 5, it was as easy as clicking a button to clear a task, and seeing the completed tasks at the bottom.

9. Was anything confusing or unclear during the task?
(Follow-up: Can you point out where exactly?)

Answers: No, it was all very clear.

10. What feature would you expect in an ADHD-supportive app that you didn't find?

Answers: A way to track progress over a long period of time. Seeing what tasks you completed on time overall rather than day to day. Could be reassurance for newcomers, possibly a paid feature.

11. How visually accessible and easy to read did you find the app?

Answers: Clean layout, minimalist.

12. Do you feel that the app helped reduce your stress or made you feel more in control?

Answers: Yes, the app provided many features that assisted me even during the free plan.

Test Environment & Equipment

The in-person setting will be on campus at Cyber Cafe, Game Room Study room, Library Cafe, Otter Student Union, Otter Express, Dining Commons, or dorm. The equipment that will be needed will be a notebook or phone.

The online setting will be on Zoom or Discord which either will be recorded by phone or either on zoom.

Test Monitors' Roles

Facilitator:

“This is where you’ll select the options that reflect what you personally struggle with and what you’d like to improve on. As you go through this, feel free to say your thoughts out loud—anything that stands out, confuses you, or makes sense.”

“If you see a section asking you to pay, you can ignore it for now and just exit out of it.”

“It’s asking you to create a weekly calendar. What assignments do you need to get done? What kinds of tasks or routines do you usually have in your daily life?”

“Can you tell me one or two things you’d like to get done this week, for example, schoolwork or daily habits?”

“Now it’s asking you to create a calendar plan. You can name the task, set the date and time...go ahead and try that now.”

“What task or assignment do you want to add?”

“Once you save it, the task should appear in your calendar. Let me know what you think about how it works and how it looks.”

“Tell me what you see...Does it look how you expected?”

“Are there any assignments or tasks you want to change now that you've added them?”

(Prompt if applicable):

“Maybe the due date changed, or you want to move something around...go ahead and try adjusting it.”

“Take a moment to explore the app and see what features are available under the free plan. Try to notice if anything is restricted or locked.”

“Is there anything you tried to do that was blocked or required payment?”

“Was it clear what’s included in the free plan and what’s not?”
“Do you feel the free plan gives you enough to stay organized?”

Observers:

Note-taking or recording and time

Evaluation Measures

- a. Include both **Quantitative** (e.g., success rate, time on task) and **Qualitative** (e.g., satisfaction, open-ended feedback) measures. Define usability as a quality metric, referencing key criteria.
- b. Provide data sheets for logging data, with suggested columns:
 - i. **Task #**
 - ii. **Participant ID**
 - iii. **Success Rate**
 - iv. **Time on Task**
 - v. **Error Rate**
 - vi. **Severity Rating**
- c. **EXAMPLE:**

Participant	Success Rate	Time on Task	Error Rate	Severity Rating
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

- d. **Quantitative Measures**

- i. Refer to Nielsen's "[Usability Metrics](#)" for specific measures relevant to your test.
- e. **Usability Problems & Severity Ratings**
 - i. Severity depends on:
 1. **Frequency:** How often the problem occurs.
 2. **Impact:** Difficulty in overcoming the problem.
 3. **Persistence:** Whether it's a recurring issue.

f. **EXAMPLE**

SEVERITY RATING: The following is a 0-4 rating scale

Rating	There is no problem	Description
0	There is no problem	The participant doesn't agree there is a problem
1	Cosmetic Problem	Fixing the problem is not necessary unless extra time is available
2	Minor Usability Problem	Low priority fix
3	Major Usability Problem	High priority fix
4	Usability Catastrophe	Has to be fixed prior to release! Highest priority

g. **Qualitative Measures**

- i. **User Satisfaction:** Collect ratings using a Likert scale for subjective satisfaction.

ii. **EXAMPLE:**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Very Unsatisfied–Somewhat Unsatisfied–Neither Satisfied Nor Unsatisfied–Somewhat Satisfied–Very Satisfied

iii. **Open-Ended Questions:**

- What are your overall impressions of the app?
- What features stood out to you the most, and why?
- Was there anything confusing or frustrating while using the app?
- What do you think could be improved or made more user-friendly?
- Did anything about the experience surprise you?

- How well do you think the app supports your needs as a student with ADHD?
- If you could change or add one thing to the app, what would it be?
- How would you describe the app to a friend who might benefit from it?
- Did you feel the app was personalized or adaptable to your needs?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience?
- Do you feel the analysis accurately captured your current issues with ADHD?
- Are you satisfied with what you were able to accomplish on the free plan?

Conclusion

By conducting usability testing on our competitive app, neurolist, we anticipate gaining valuable insights into user behaviors, needs, and pain points. This process will help us better understand how users interact with task and calendar-based productivity tools, especially those designed for individuals with ADHD. Observing how users navigate the app will inform decisions about layout, user flow, and functionality.

These insights will directly influence the design of our final project by helping us:

- Identify areas where Neurolist falls short in usability or accessibility
- Understand what features users find helpful or frustrating
- Define a clearer, more intuitive layout tailored to our audience
- Develop an app aesthetic that is both functional and calming for ADHD users
- Ensure our final product fills the gaps that Neurolist leaves unaddressed

Ultimately, this testing will guide us in creating a user-centered app that supports organization, focus, and productivity more effectively.