

# ThinkLink

Ali Sojudi, Ben Lynett-Howes, Himani Singh, Rongda Yu

# ThinkLink

## THE PROBLEM:

The sheer volume of information on the internet is enough to overwhelm even the most curious of learners. Learners would benefit from more personalized, interactive instruction.

## THE SOLUTION:

We are developing an app that will allow users to connect with expert level instructors that will be able to answer any questions that they might have.

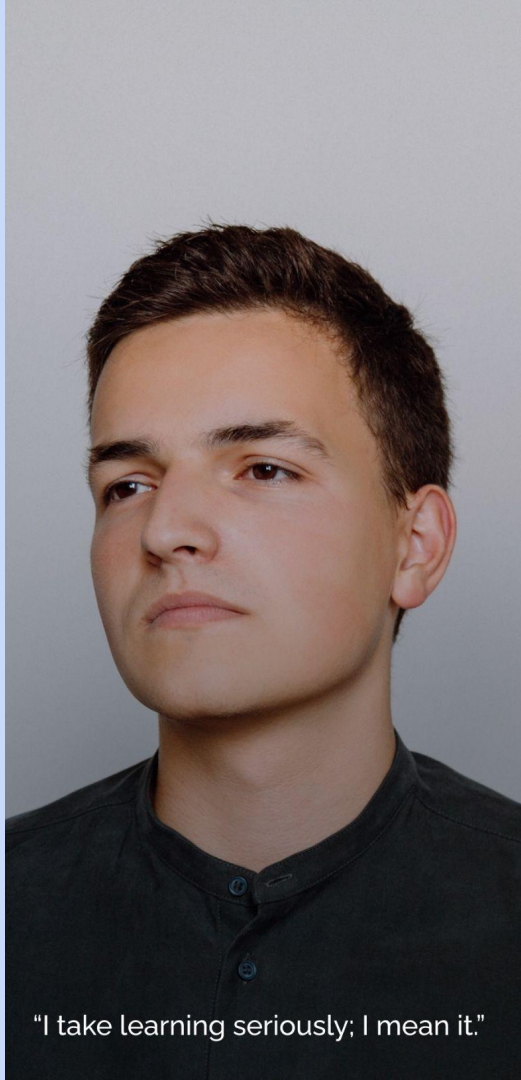
**TOOLS:** Miro, Figma, Google Office, Slack, Zoom



# Research

Rongda Yu

# Proto Persona



"I take learning seriously; I mean it."



## Leslie Alexander

### Personalities

Curious

Precise

Patient

### Demographics

23

Age

Single

Relationship Status

Student

Occupation

Toronto

Location

Design, Creative Tools

Interests

Bachelor Degree

Education

### Goals & Needs

- Acquire industry knowledge on-demand.
- Receive personalized advice and insights about a subject from industry experts.
- Eliminate much time and effort in locating relevant learning resources.
- Need systematized guidance and learning tools
- Learn from different mentors for an integrative study experience.
- Enjoy budget-friendly mentor services.
- Implement learning through extensive practice.

### Pain Points

- Difficult to find a mentor who is both knowledgeable and cost-friendly.
- Spend too much time and effort finding helpful answers or resources.
- Most online resources are not beneficial for personal challenges or understanding learning materials.
- Confused when forming a roadmap or organization in obtained knowledge.
- Difficult to come up with suitable exercises for applying learned knowledge.

# Research Plan

## Objectives

1. Discover the learning process and experience with learning tools and mentoring services from learners
2. Understand learners' expectations before, during, and after they connect with industry experts.
3. Understand the frustrations or things that prevent learners from efficiently learning or seeking help.

## Research Questions

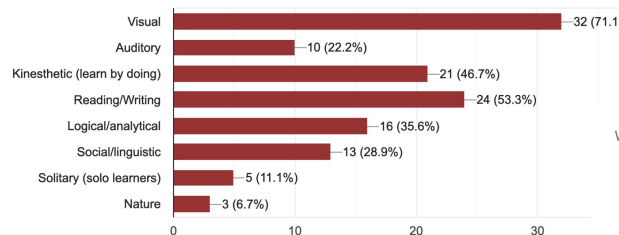
- How can we help learners efficiently seek affordable help?
- How do we help learners find suitable tutors/mentors?
- How can we solve the needs identified in learners' learning process?
- What patterns can we discover from learners' expectations when they connect with industry experts?
- What can we learn from or offer improvements on other learning tools and services?
- What are the difficulties that learners encounter when studying?



# Interviews and Survey

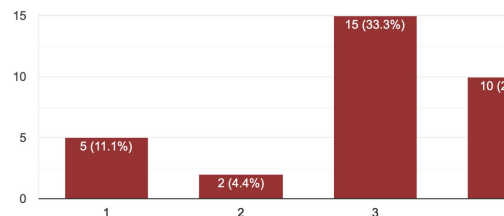
What type of learner are you? (select all that apply)

45 responses

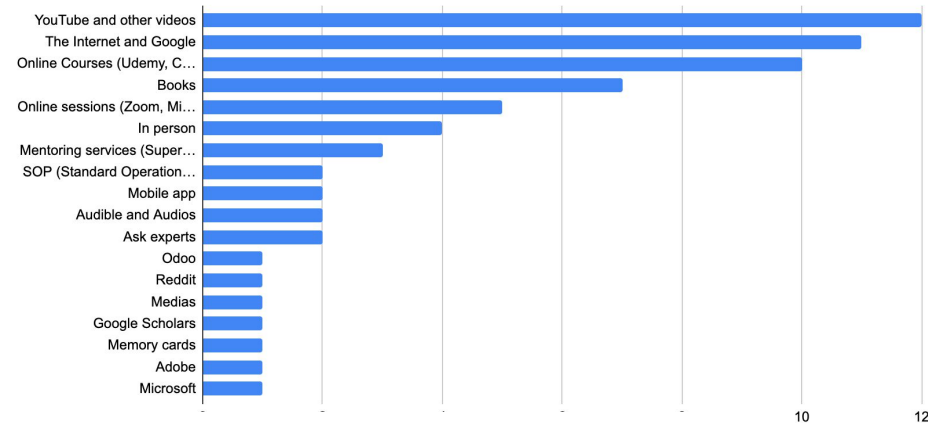


How likely will you hire a mentor to learn?

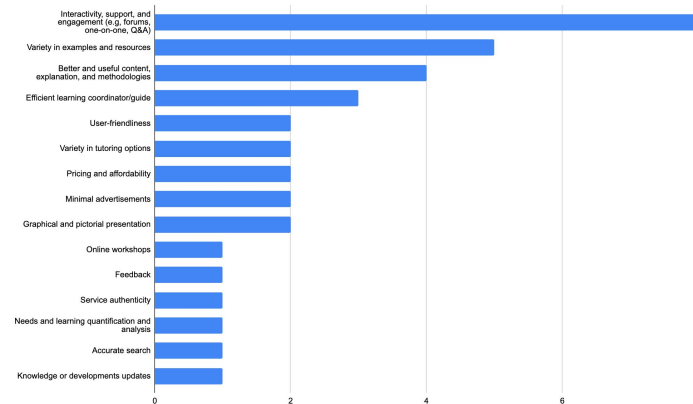
45 responses



What learning tools and mentoring services have you used?



What things that you think the tools and services could do better?



Lack of interactivity in online courses.

Not so personalized learning options.

Disorganized learning resources.

Lack of guidance.

Trust issues with mentors



# Definition

Ben Lynett-Howes



## **Problem Statement**

The volume of resources and information available for free on the internet is not well suited to answer specific, complex questions that learners have.

## **User Insight**

During our interviews, we found that learners would benefit from easy access to one-on-one, expert instruction in their learning.

The main value that we would be providing would be two-fold;

- 1) Learners are able to have their specific questions answered in a way that makes sense to them and ask any follow up questions that they have.
- 2) Thanks to ThinkLink's screening process for our experts, learners can be confident that the information that they are receiving is valid.

We anchored our ideation process by coming up with the following User Persona



**Tim, 28 years old  
Junior Accountant**

#### **Behaviors**

Spends 10 hours per day at work.

Likes to watch sports and play music on his free time.

He tries to devote 10 hours per week to studying for professional designations.

#### **Needs/Goals**

He is working towards achieving his CPA designation.

Wants to make the most out of the time he spends studying.

Wants to know that he is getting the best information possible.

Wants his concerns to be addressed by experienced industry professionals.

Does not have time to sign up for a full accounting course to supplement his learning.

# Here is an example of how our app would provide value to a learner like Tim:



While studying for his CPA exam, Tim reaches a question that he cannot answer.



He googles the answer to his question, but finds that the answers are not adequate to address the specific problem he is having.



He tries a Youtube tutorial but finds that it is too long to watch in its entirety, and he is unsure if it will address the specific nature of his question.



Tim decided to find a Tutor to help him with his problem. He installs ThinkLink and signs up.



He proceeds to book a session by entering the subject matter in which he hopes to receive instruction into the search bar.



ThinkLink generates a list of validated finance and accounting experts that are qualified to help Tim out.



Tim is presented with several experts at various rates.



He selects Susan, a certified professional accountant who charges \$50 per hour.



Tim is able to book a session with Susan for later that night.



After his session is complete, Tim hangs up from the call and gives Susan a 5 star rating.

# Ideation

Rongda Yu

## I like

I like the Package deals offered based on the type of course, like single, monthly, annually.	I wish I can leave reviews for my past mentors	I like that tutors are vetted	I like how online courses helps me retain and reinforce knowledge
I like that you are certified for every course you finish and that is valued in the job market.	I like to choose between online and in-person services	I wish I could see the mentor's rating prior to selecting them	I like if first session would be free of charge
I like to see response time	I like tutors have badges so I can choose best one	I like that I can add tutors to my favourite list	I like to search for my topic easily

## I wish

I wish the app have progress tracker or reminders that encourage me to learn	I wish the app offers goals and digital rewards that encourage me to learn	I wish there is an easily accessible place that can save all my questions for my upcoming mentor session	I wish there is a mentoring history so that I can follow-up with my favorite mentors	I wish I can credit my favorite mentors by offering digital rewards or promote their online recognition so that they are happy to stay in touch with me.
I wish I can learn more about a mentor so that I can trust them (e.g. previous roles, student reviews, performance metrics, career reviews, educational background, professional experience, etc.)	I wish I can filter mentors by abilities and qualifications	I wish I can like or follow an awesome mentor	I wish I can learn more about the platform and its great mentor services	I wish there are various mentor price tiers and options
I wish I can filter mentors by price	I wish the app organizes and pushes great resources of a given topic	I wish there are experts who can suggest milestones or roadmaps for my learning	I wish I can address my needs and expectations before the mentor session (e.g. I hope to get recognition for my work)	I wish there is a long-term mentor who can create a learning path and guide me
I wish I can filter mentors by duration and frequency (long-term, short-term, one-time, etc.)	I wish the app recommends helpful learning tools and tips for a given topic	I wish I can write down self-reflection or what I've learned after each mentor session	I wish that mentors are connecting with me in a quiet space	I wish there are goal trackers
I wish the lectures between the mentor and students are recorded for reviewing it anytime.	I wish there were group sessions to reduce costs	I wish the app could recommend free resources as well as connecting users with experts	I wish a mentor could assess my skill/knowledge before recommending the best option	

## What if

What if there is an app that can generate a systemized knowledge map given a specific subject	What if no schedule is needed and I can talk to a mentor on-demand	What if there is an assistant that helps me phrase better questions when a discussion topic was chosen	What if there are mentors who volunteer to help me without charging any fees
What if a system can validate free online resources for me	What if I can foster a cute digital learning bot and raise its levels only by achieving learning goals so that I can stay motivated	What if I can see quantification of my past learning achievements to help identify trends and point of improvements	What if the app transcribes mentor's speech into notes or step-by-step instructions so that I can review them later
What if the app sets up a plan based on the goals I want to achieve	What if the app offers various ways of learning (e.g. mentors, interactive videos and audios, text-based articles, etc.)	What if there are interactive guest lectures by industry experts of specific fields.	

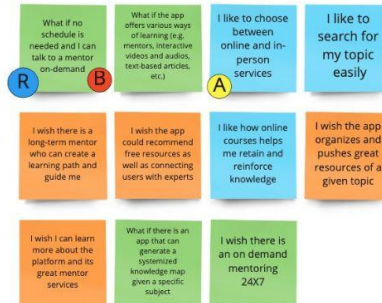
## Rating system and mentor KPI



## Personalization



## Services



## Favorites/Collection



## Learner tools



## Goals and Successes Management



## Promotions



## Low Impact

What if I can foster a cute digital learning bot and raise its levels only by achieving learning goals so that I can stay motivated

What if there is an app that can generate a systemized knowledge map given a specific subject

## High Impact

I like that tutors are vetted

What if no schedule is needed and I can talk to a mentor on-demand

I wish there are experts who can suggest milestones or roadmaps for my learning

I wish the app recommends helpful learning tools and tips for a given topic

I wish I can learn more about a mentor so that I can trust them (e.g. preview videos, student reviews, performance metrics, curator reviews, educational background, professional experience, etc.)

## Low Impact

I like to see response time

I wish that mentors are connecting with me in a quiet space

## High Impact

I wish the lectures between the mentor and students are recorded for reviewing it anytime.

I wish there are various mentor price tiers and options

I wish I can credit my favorite mentors by offering digital rewards or promote their online recognition so that they are happy to stay in touch with me.

I wish I could see the mentor's rating prior to selecting them

I wish I can address my needs and expectations before the mentor session (e.g. I hope to get recognition for my work)

I wish I can filter mentors by abilities and qualifications

I wish I can leave reviews for my past mentors

I like tutors have badges so I can choose best one

I like to choose between online and in-person services

I wish I can filter mentors by duration and frequency (long-term, short-term, one-time, etc.)

I wish a mentor could assess my skill/knowledge before recommending the best option

I wish the app could recommend free resources as well as connecting users with experts

I wish I can learn more about the platform and its great mentor services

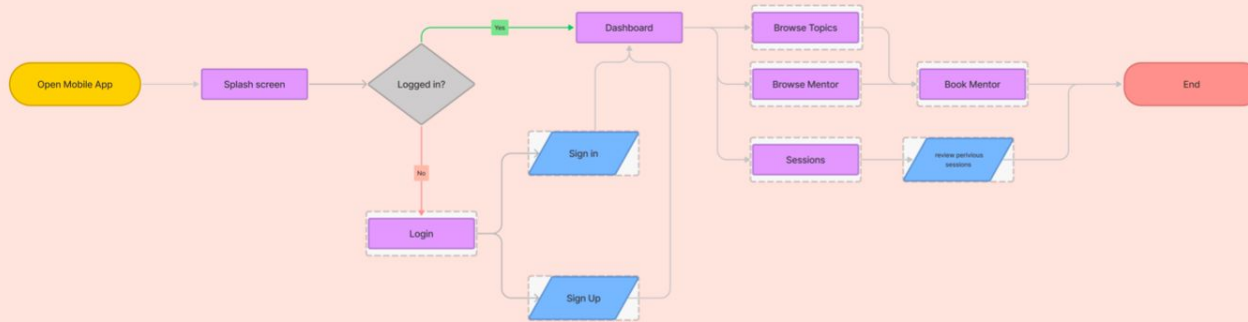
I like to search for my topic easily

I wish I can filter mentors by price



# User Flow

[All User Flows](#) Link





# Take a look behind the scenes

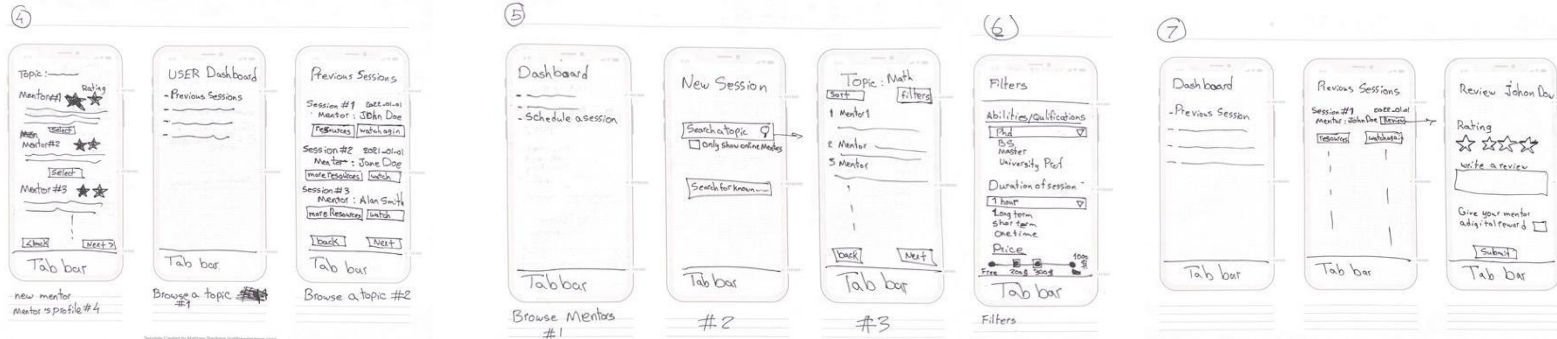
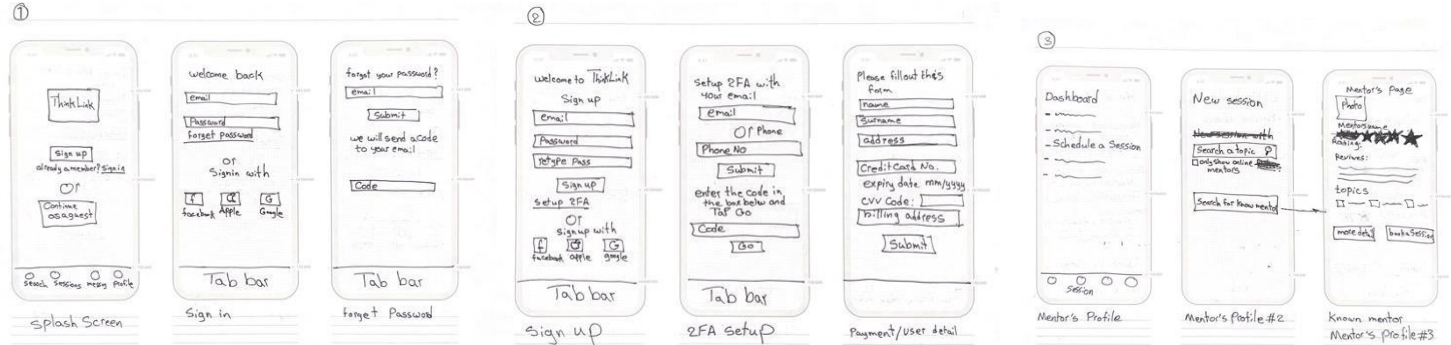
[Click here for a behind the scenes look at our ideation process.](#)



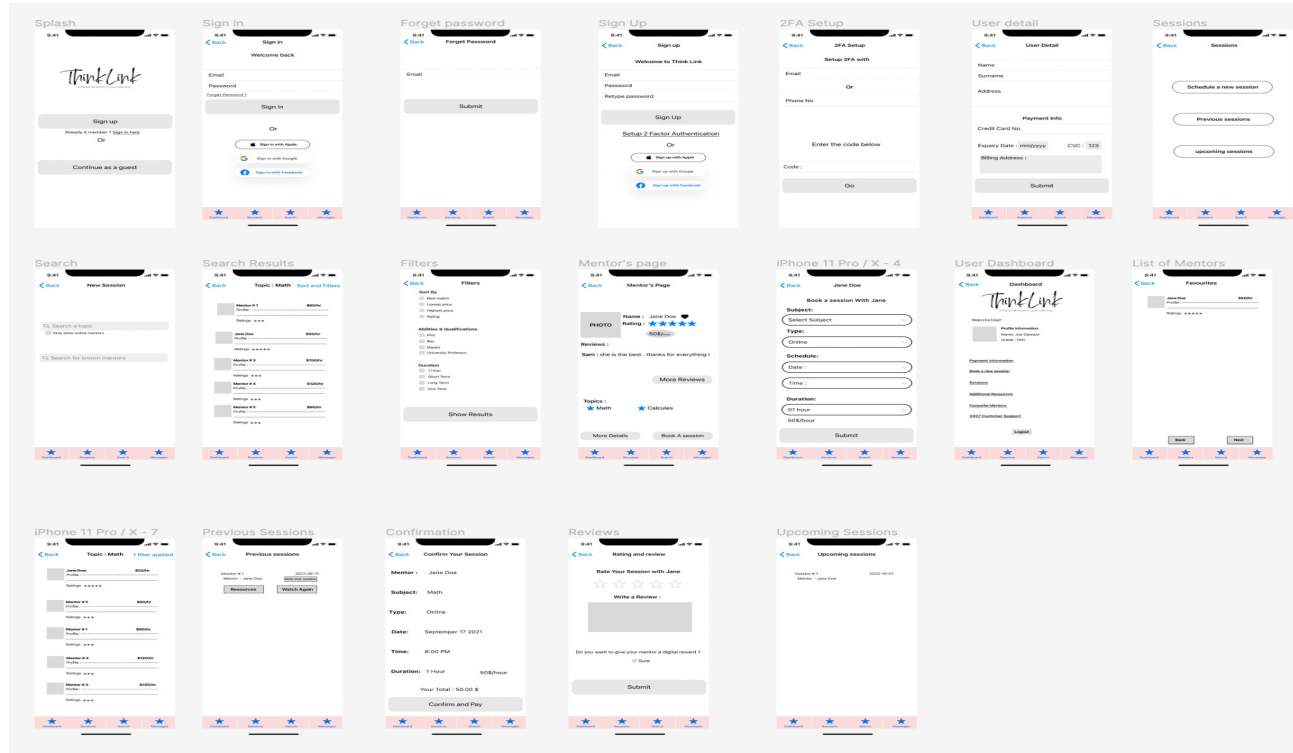
# Prototyping

Ali Sojudi

# Sketches



# Digital Wireframes



Low fidelity prototype link

# Testing and Iterating

Himani Singh

# Guerilla Testing Plan & Notes

## Product Under Test

ThinkLink is a learners app, that allows users to connect with expert mentors based on their knowledge levels.

## Business Case

### What are the benefits?

We are asking people to try using our app that we are working on, so we can see whether it works as intended.

### Why are we doing this?

We are doing this to help us improve our app with honest feedbacks from our users.

### What are the risks of not testing?

Testing helps us understand our flaws in an app from user perspectives. Based on them iterations are made.

## Test Objectives

We are trying to determine how easy it is to sign-up for an app, book a mentor, access additional resources, and leave a review for a mentor.

## Participants

We carried out our user testing on 5 participants. Our users were from different demographic backgrounds.

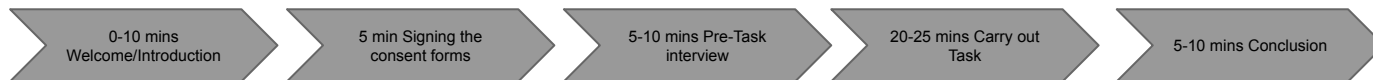
## Tasks

- Is it easy for users to sign-up for the app?
- Can users easily book a session with a mentor?
- Can users access the additional resources offered after they complete a lesson?
- Can users easily leave a review for mentors?

## Feedbacks

- 'Continue has a guest' feature does not lead to the right page
- Two factor authentication should be a mandatory pop-up after you click sign up
- Show up-coming sessions on the dashboard after they are booked
- Add functionality to the 'additional resources' feature
- dashboard button needs to be functional on the Mentor's Profile page
- more details button on mentor's profile leads back to sign in page.

## Procedure



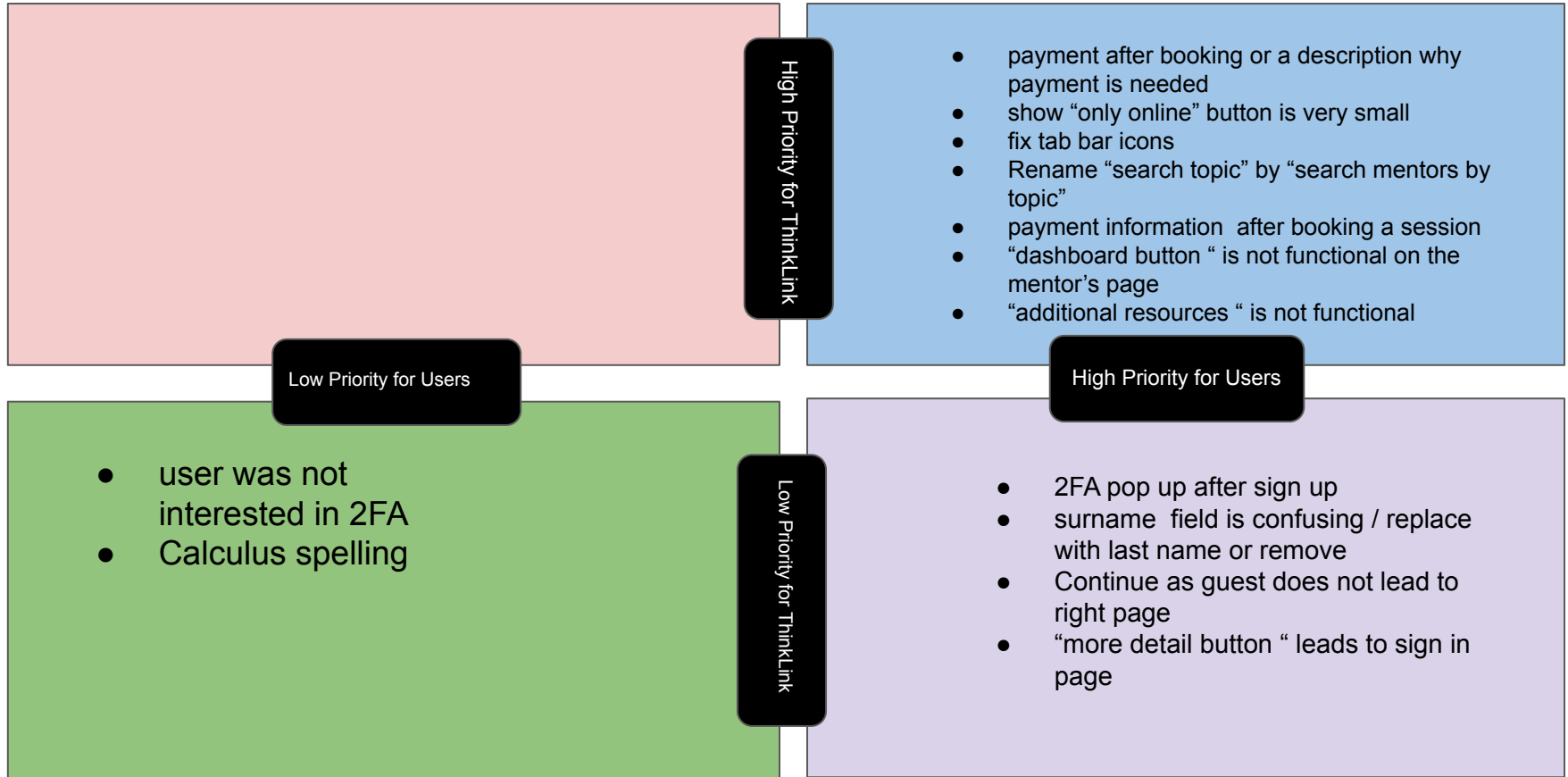
# Key Learning from User Test

- Two factor authentication should be a mandatory pop-up after you click sign up
- Add functionality to the 'additional resources' feature
- User attempts to access additional resources through the dashboard, but failed to open them due to errors in our prototype..
- User expresses that she was confusing of why there is a back button in User Homepage (Dashboard), and this back button leads her to the last step in the sign-up process.
- User expresses that they expect to see a list of topics instead of mentors because the search bar says "Search a topic". It confuses user.
- Dashboard button needs to be functional on the Mentor's Profile page
- More details button on mentor's profile leads back to sign in page

Click here for User Testing Plan Link.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fMTdeBni\\_ToHGmhBas4MpsmzYRyIXoBQxDj0NF-spHg/edit#gid=872870965](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fMTdeBni_ToHGmhBas4MpsmzYRyIXoBQxDj0NF-spHg/edit#gid=872870965)

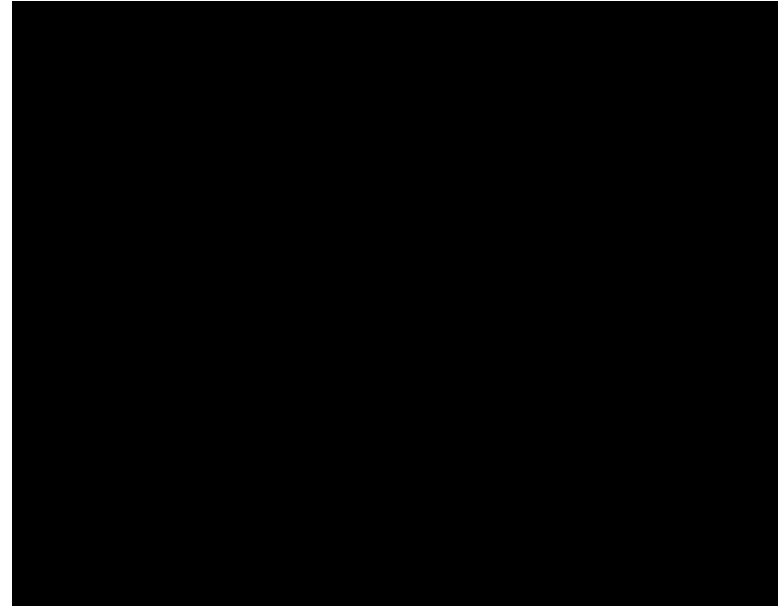
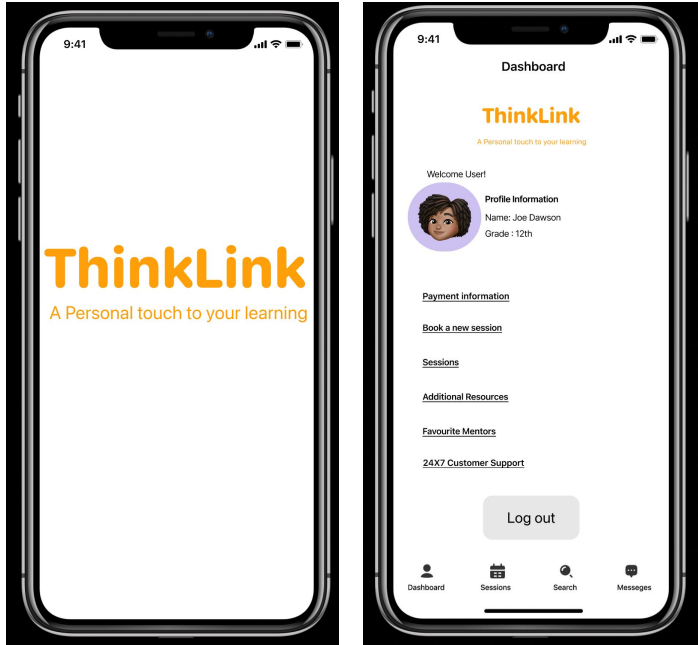
# Iterations Made Based on User Test





# iOS Prototype

## iOS Prototype



# Final Thoughts / Conclusion

We believe that ThinkLink would provide tremendous value to all learners. It would be particularly valuable to those learners who desire to learn at their own pace and according to their own schedule, but still want the benefit of one-on-one instruction.

The next step for development on this app would be shorter 'micro-sessions', where users can have specific, complex questions answered by live mentors within minutes of making the request.