Accessible Education Platform Development for ASU's EASE Program

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Objective & Research question

The goal of this project is to explore and determine important features to prioritize in the design of a new digital platform geared towards supporting ASU's Employment Assistance & Social Engagement (EASE) program, its students, and their mentors.
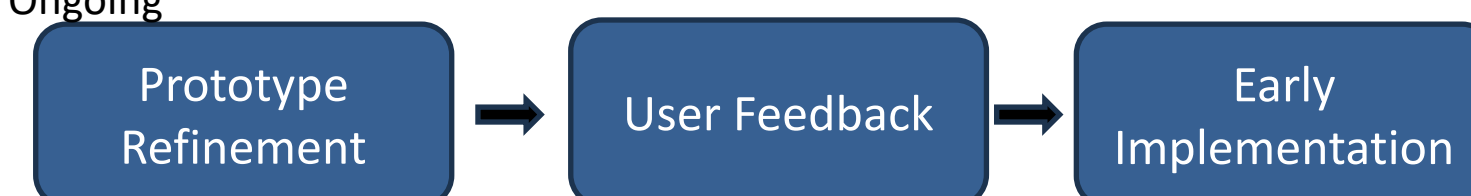
Background

- The Employment Assistance & Social Engagement (EASE) program aims to assist ASU engineering students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) **transition to college life** and **career readiness**.
- **A digital mobile platform** has been proposed to help facilitate the connection between EASE mentors and their mentees as well as provide additional tools to foster student success.

Project Timeline

Phase 1: January – May 2023

Survey Design & IRB Approval → Survey Distribution → Data Analysis → Early Prototype Creation
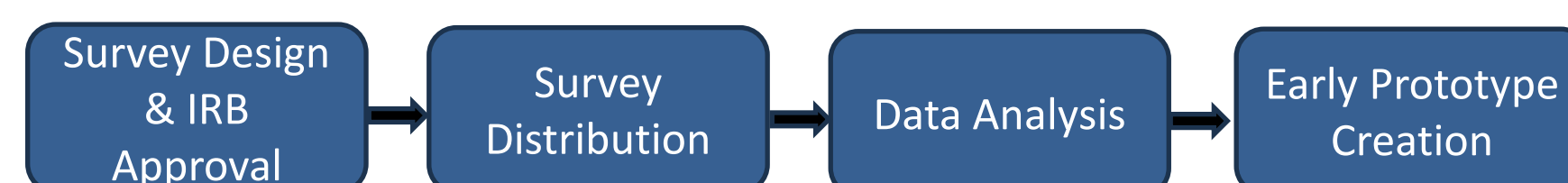
Phase 2: September 2023 – Ongoing

Prototype Refinement → User Feedback → Early Implementation

Methodology Overview

- Two separate surveys for EASE mentors and mentees, were designed to gain feedback on features perceived to be useful for the proposed platform.
- 3 EASE mentors and 3 EASE mentees completed the survey from February 20 – March 15, 2023. Qualitative analysis was used to discover common themes in free response data while quantitative analysis was used to aggregate features that were most highly ranked.

Results

Emerging Themes

- **Communication:** Survey data found EASE mentors and mentees valued features that facilitate a quick check-in process using various modalities

An option to allow your peer mentees to send you quick, multiple-choice check-ins to update you on how they are feeling.

- Extremely useful
- Very useful 33%
- Extremely useful...
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
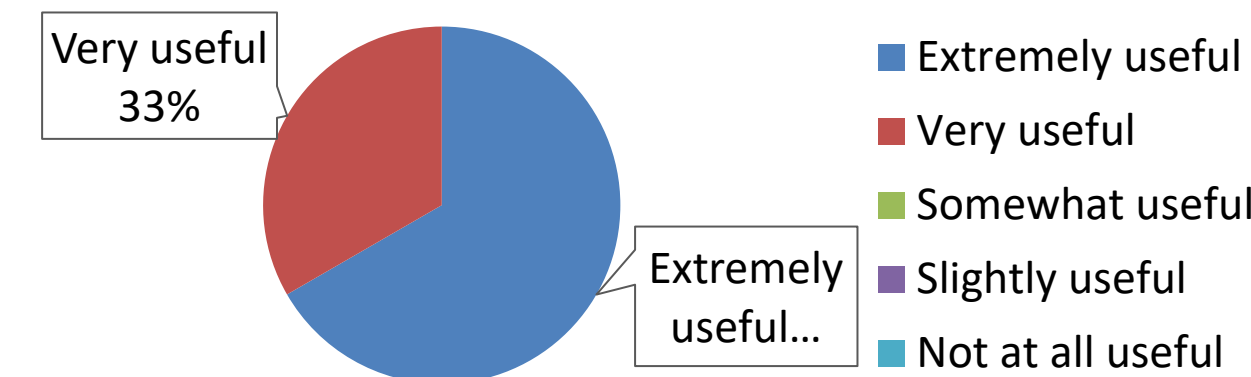- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

Figure 1: Results for EASE Peer Mentor Survey Question evaluating perceived usefulness of a multi-modal (text, email, call) check-in feature

An option to allow your peer mentees to send you quick, multiple-choice check-ins to update you on how they are feeling.
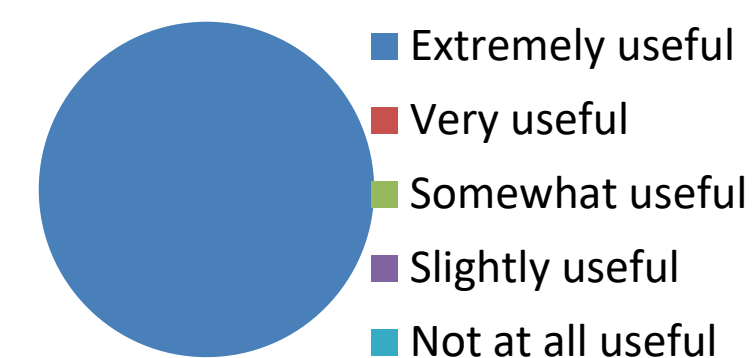
- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

Figure 2: Results for EASE Peer Mentee Survey Question evaluating perceived usefulness of a multi-modal (text, email, call) check-in feature

Emerging Themes

- **Executive function:** In both groups time and task management type features were also considered high priority features to include in the platform

A time planner so mentees can map out their day.

- Very useful
- Extremely useful
- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful
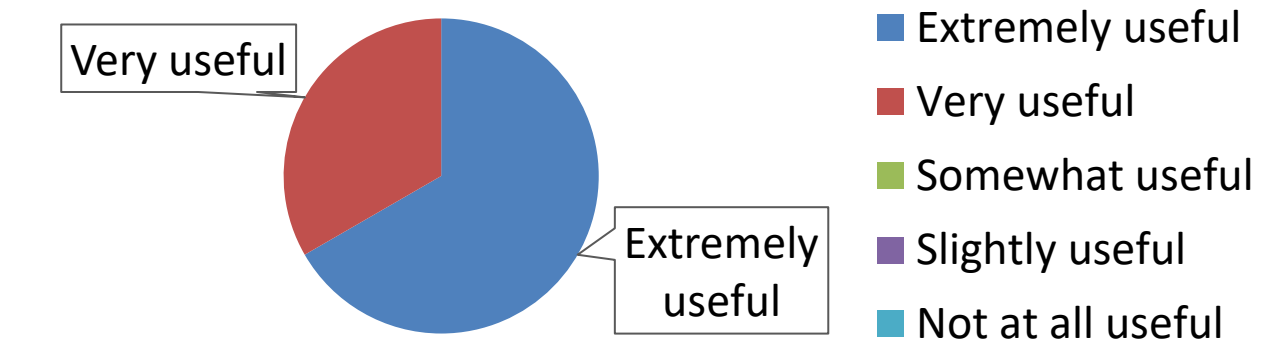- Slightly useful
- Not at all useful

Figure 3: Results for EASE Peer Mentor Survey Question evaluating perceived usefulness of a time planner type feature

A time planner so you can map out your day.

- Somewhat useful
- Extremely useful
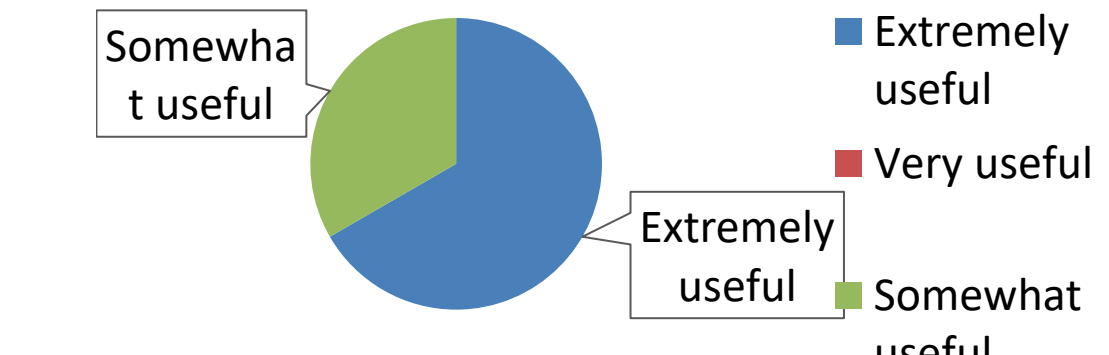- Extremely useful
- Very useful
- Somewhat useful

Figure 4: Results for EASE Peer Mentee Survey Question evaluating perceived usefulness of a time planner type feature
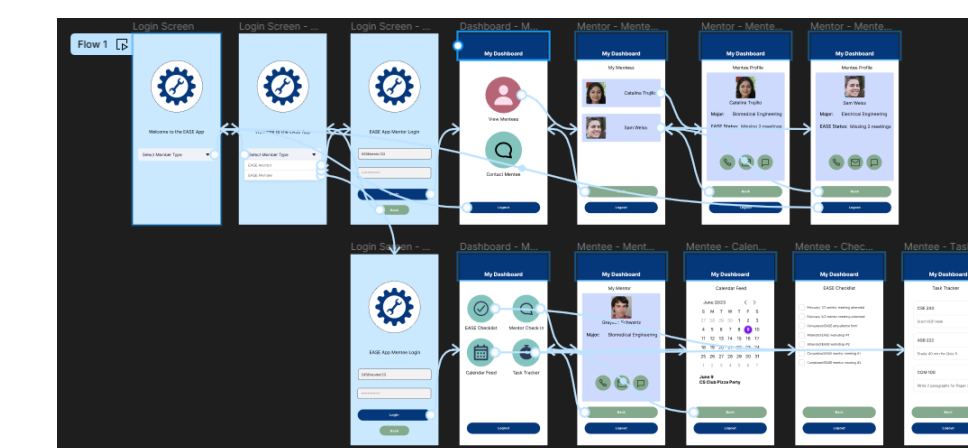

Figure 5: Early platform prototype created in Figma based on emerging themes

Conclusion

- EASE mentors and mentees primarily value **communication** and **time/task management type features**, which are incorporated in an early Figma prototype.
- Prototype feedback and early implementation are ongoing.

Try It Out – Early Prototype