



## **NOVUS UX/UI DESIGN PROCESS**

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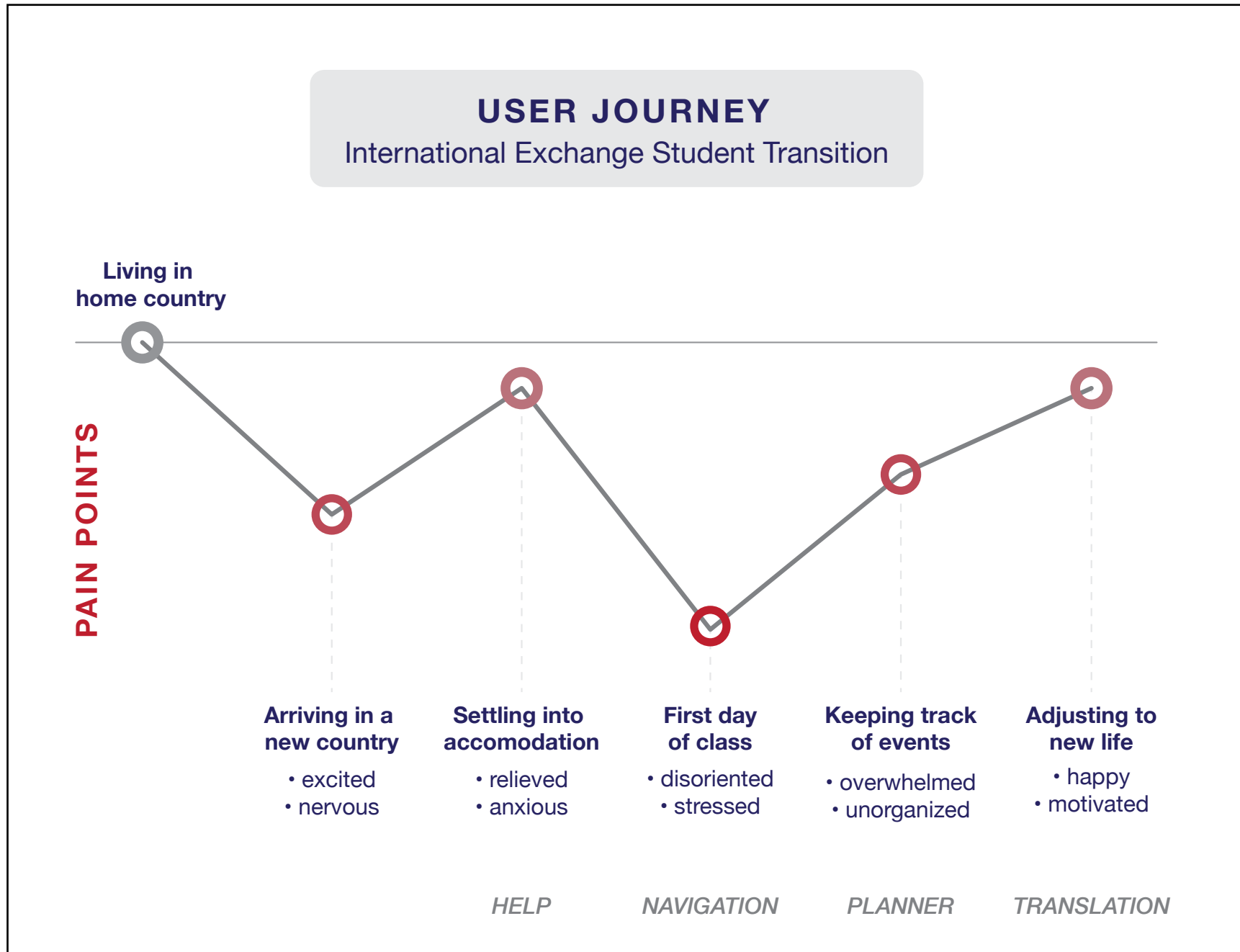
# INITIAL CONCEPT

The assignment to create a digital application that would be helpful for “young people” (between ages 18 and 25) led me to look no further than my current situation. As an exchange student from the United States who is studying in Australia for one semester (4 months), adjusting to the Aussie way of life has had its challenges.

Although the transition for me didn’t involve too much of a culture shock since English is my first language, I have been surrounded by other exchange students who are struggling, to say the least. It is one thing to arrive in a new country and figure out how to get around and where to buy things when you can read all of the signs clearly, but try this challenge when you don’t have the knowledge to have a complete conversation without having to look up how to say certain words. On top of that, once you have adjusted to the new lifestyle, add in the stress of classes starting – sounds fun right? Everyone says “Study abroad! It will be the best time of your life!” but few seem to mention the hardest part: the transition.

A solution to this problem is creating an app designed specifically for international exchange students to help ease the transition of going to school in a different country. Upon mapping out what I thought would be the typical “user journey” for an international student, I discovered that pretty much the entire transition period is a pain point. Upon further examination, and by asking many of my new international friends, I identified five main problem areas. First, the arrival into the new country is filled with excitement, but also nervousness about how to use transportation, or even how to make a phone call. Then, once settled into the accommodation, you feel relieved, but anxious about class starting, and not quite sure who to contact when all of a sudden you are no longer enrolled in the classes you thought you were in. But, ready or not, the first day of class comes and stress takes over because you have no idea where the classrooms are. Nonetheless, you make it to the first class only to be overwhelmed by the amount of dates and events you need to keep track of. Finally, you feel as though you have adjusted to this new lifestyle, but still can’t understand half of the things the professor says – she claims to be speaking English, but it is definitely not the same English you were taught.

This new app will include features that are catered to these main pain points: Help, Navigation, Planner, and Translation. While these functions may already exist on their own, it is inconvenient to switch from app to app to gather all of the information on your own. This would be the first all-in-one app designed specifically for international exchange students to use.



## INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENT PERSONA



### *Polish Exchange Student*

**NAME:** Lena

**AGE:** 18

**WORK:** Student

**HOME:** Poland

**FAMILY:** 3 younger siblings

### **BIO:**

I am an international exchange student from Poland, who is planning to study in Australia for one semester in order to gain class credit and improve my English. The process of moving to a new country to attend classes is very overwhelming, and I am not sure how to keep track of everything I need to do, or who to contact when I need help. I am also stressed about finding my classes and adjusting to a new culture.

### **GOALS:**

- Study at Victoria University in Melbourne, AU for 1 semester to earn class credit
- Improve English skills
- Make connections for social and work purposes

### **FRUSTRATIONS:**

- Not familiar with public transportation
- Not sure who to contact for help
- Unfamiliar with layout of the campus
- Hard to keep track of orientation dates and info sessions
- Unable to understand English slang

# APP NAME

Word dump:

*Student, exchange, international, education, learning, transition, adjustment, newbie, green, amateur, scared, nervous, excitement, obvious, unique, adventurer, brave, challenger, goals, help, navigate, translate, understand, plan, organize, hello, welcome, rookie*

Thoughts:

- The word “rookie” is someone who is new to a situation, such as studying in a new country
- Synonyms of rookie: *newcomer, amateur, beginner, dabbler, neophyte, tyro, novice*
- “Novice” is defined as “a person new to or inexperienced in a field or situation” – perfect

Since part of the app is designed to help the user learn the language of the country they are in, it doesn’t necessarily mean that the language is English. So, a universal name is necessary. The Latin root of the word novice is *novus*.

“Novus” means new. Simple and fitting.

## COLOR RESEARCH

The personality of the brand is a parrot. Parrots are considered very intelligent birds as they are problem solvers, and can mimic the human voice. They are also very curious animals, and social learners. National Geographic describes them as “intelligent, charismatic, colorful, and musical” (“Parrots” 2018). The personality of a parrot perfectly fits the personality of the Novus brand: curious and excited to learn. Not to mention they can fly from one place to another very easily and quickly; they are innate travelers (as are international students).

The Rainbow Lorikeet captured my attention when I first spotted it in Australia. For a first time viewer it's amazing how vibrantly colorful the birds are. I thought their happy bright colors, would be perfect for this app. The first row of colors were selected from the picture itself, then tweaked slightly to make a brighter set (second row). From there, I decided to limit the colors because I didn't want the app to feel like a rainbow, but rather more simple. I focused on blue and green because those are the colors found on a globe and would lend themselves easily to logo design. Also, the color blue is associated with calmness and green with success. Furthermore, I liked how the yellow completed the set of analogous colors.



## TYPE STUDY

Once I had decided on the name “Novus” I opened up my favorite Adobe program: Illustrator. Why? Because you can scroll through all 500 of your fonts while previewing how the selected text would look, streamlining the process.

Since the app is designed for students, I wanted the typeface to feel very modern and youthful. So, I focused mainly on san-serif fonts. I also wanted it to be simple, yet unique. In the end I chose *Dogma OT* because it was stylized, but still easy to read, and had the look and feel that I wanted to carry on throughout the app. I chose to use the all lowercase version because of the distinctive cursive style of the letter “s”.

**novus**

**novus**

novus

**novus**

NOVUS

NOVUS

NOVUS

novus

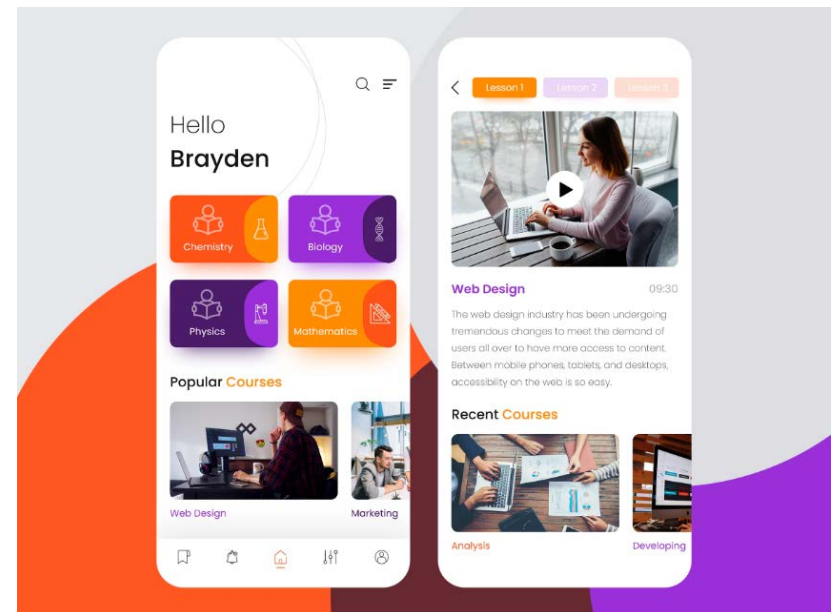
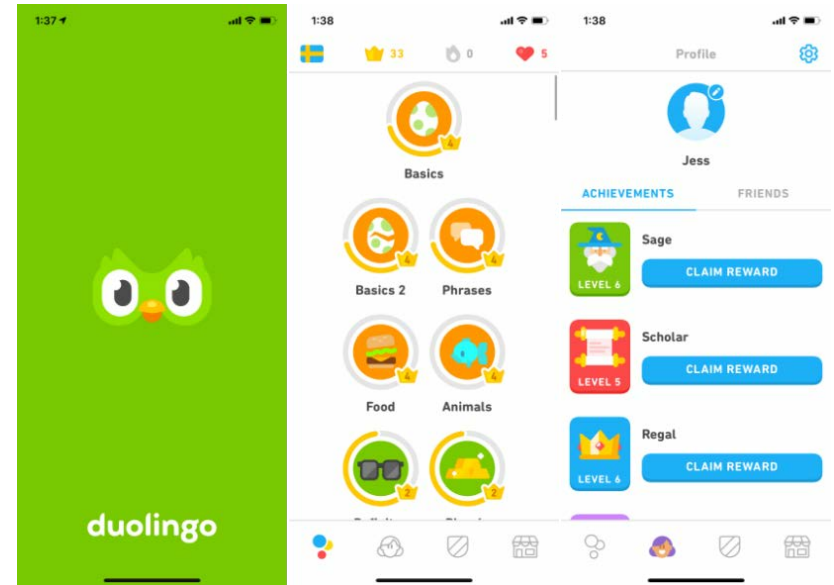
**NOVUS**

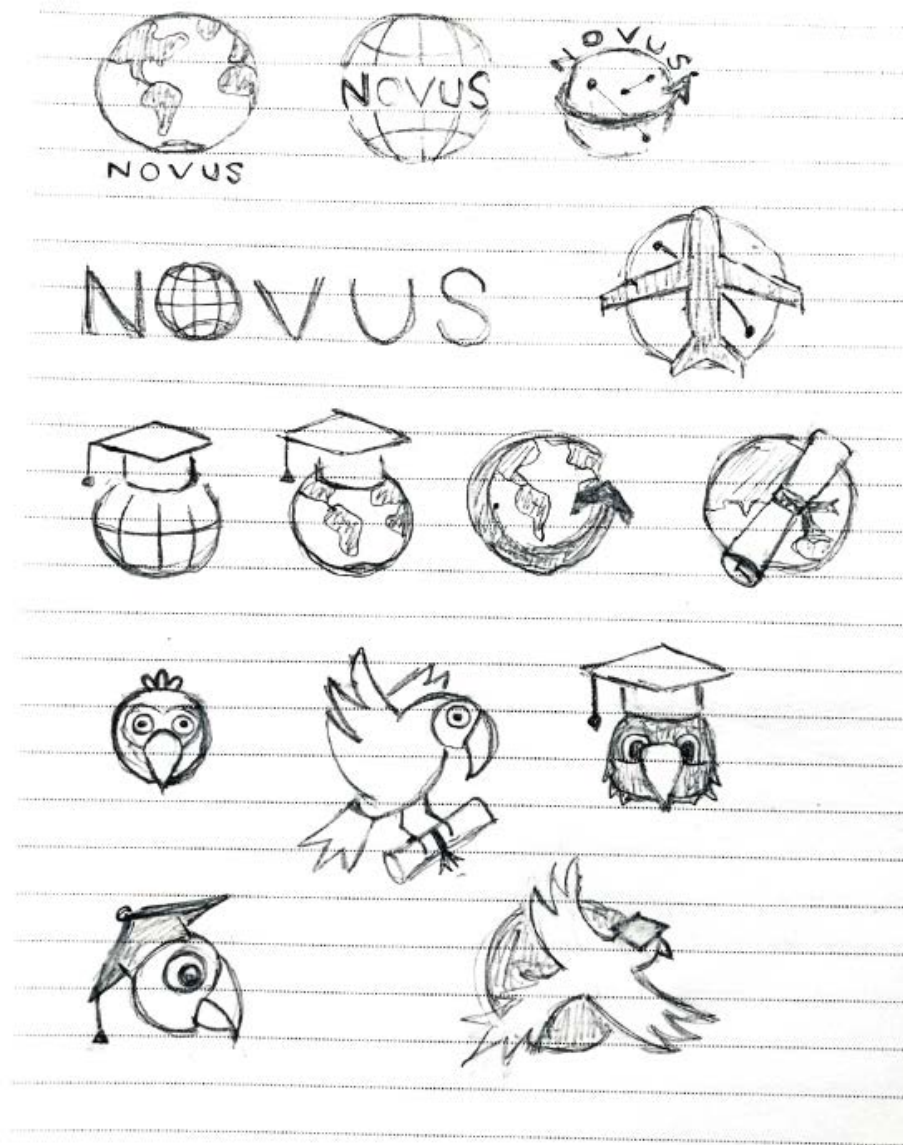


# INTERFACE RESEARCH

As a user of Duolingo, I appreciated the friendliness and universality of the design. While I do think it feels a bit childish due to the cartoon-like illustrations, I am drawn to all of the bright colors contrasting with the white background. Also, the integration of the owl logo into the design is similar to my brand personality of the parrot.

The second interface caught my eye because of its inclusion of organic shapes. Many UI designs are very rigid and template-like, and don't have much creativity. However, this one stood out because of the design of the buttons on the home page and the organic shape in the background. I also think it is a good use of the two-toned two color, color scheme.





## LOGO DESIGN

Since the app is for international students, the first concept was a globe. I focused on combining symbols of education with symbols of traveling. However, I quickly discovered that the icon of a world wearing a graduation cap is overused and quite frankly, cliché. I returned to the idea of a parrot and ultimately chose the flying parrot holding a diploma because it is the most dynamic and engaging.



# UI STYLE GUIDE

## COLOR PALETTE



## TYPOGRAPHY

**HEADING 1** (Dogma OT 36pt)

**HEADING 2** (Montserrat Regular 24pt)

**HEADING 3** (Montserrat Bold 16pt)

**BODY COPY** (Montserrat Regular 16pt)

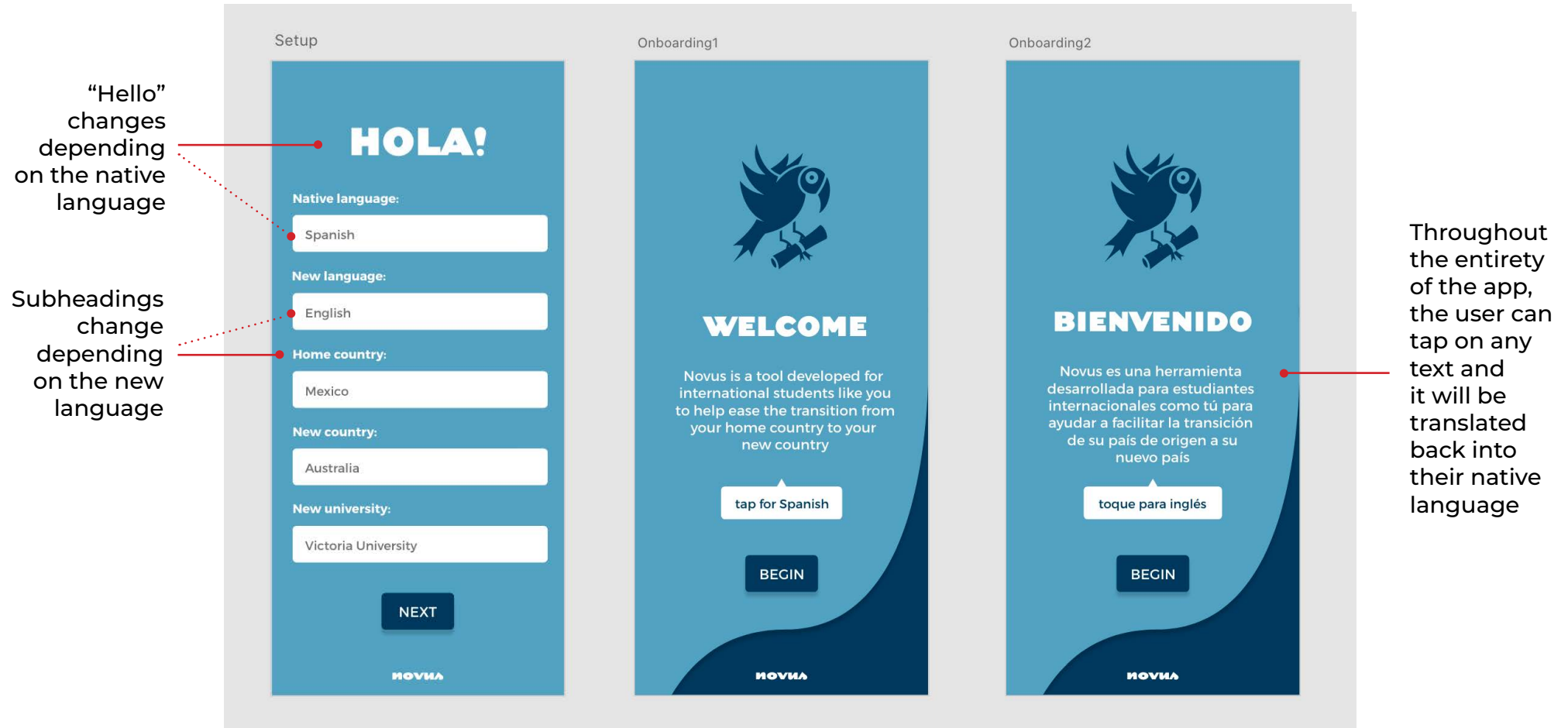
## ICONS



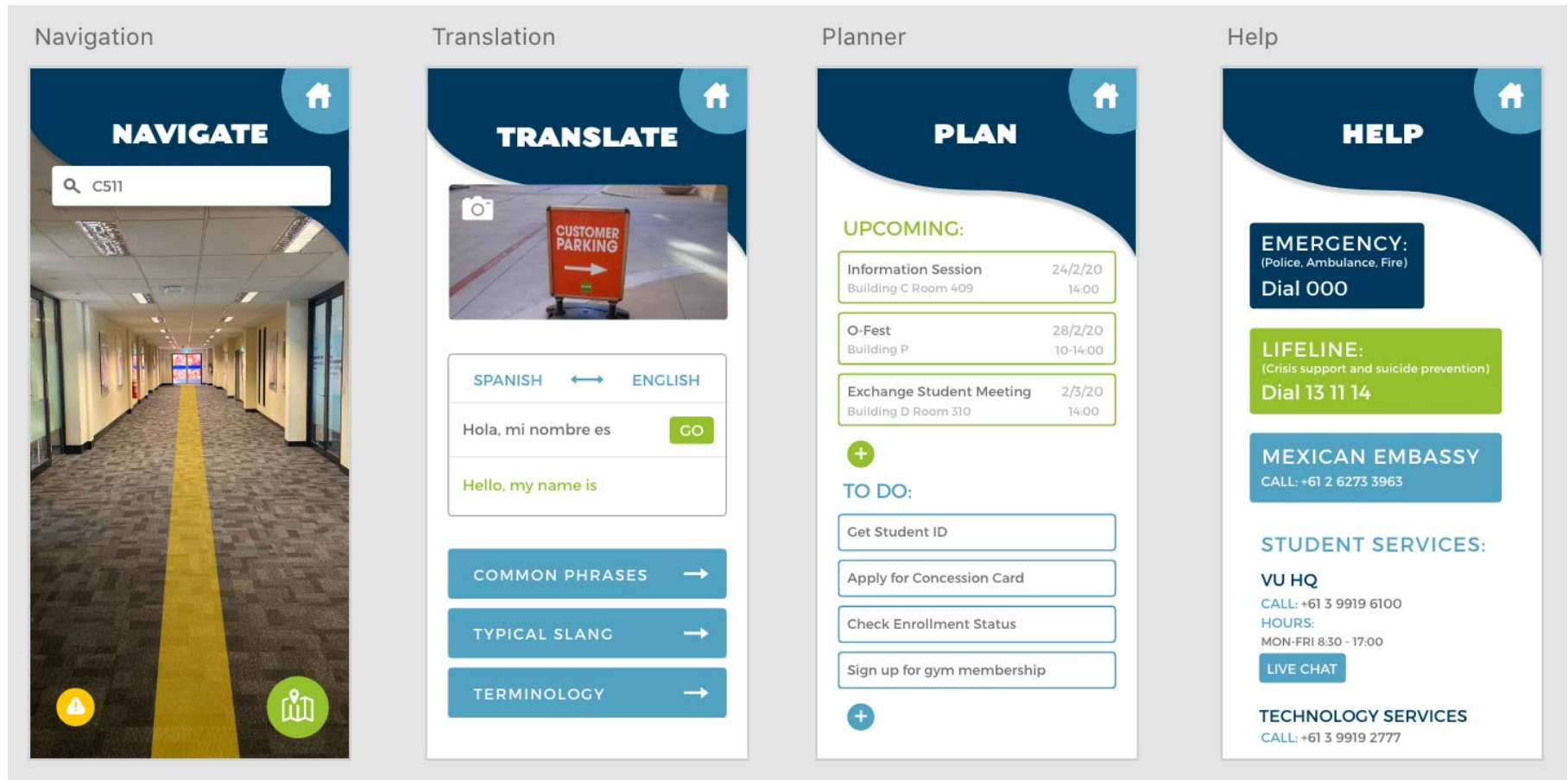
# INTERFACE DESIGN



# FIRST TIME USERS

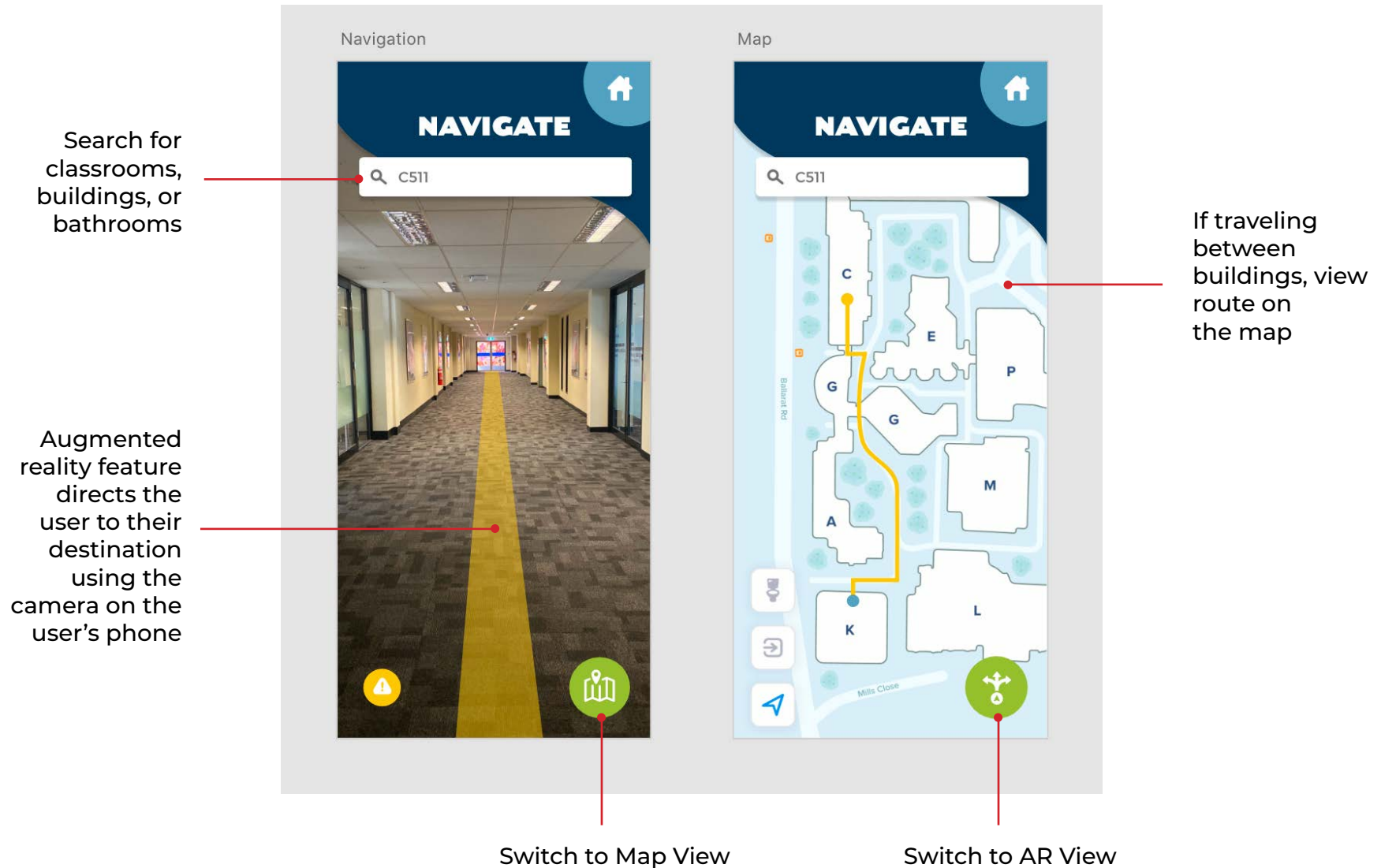


# BASIC FUNCTIONS





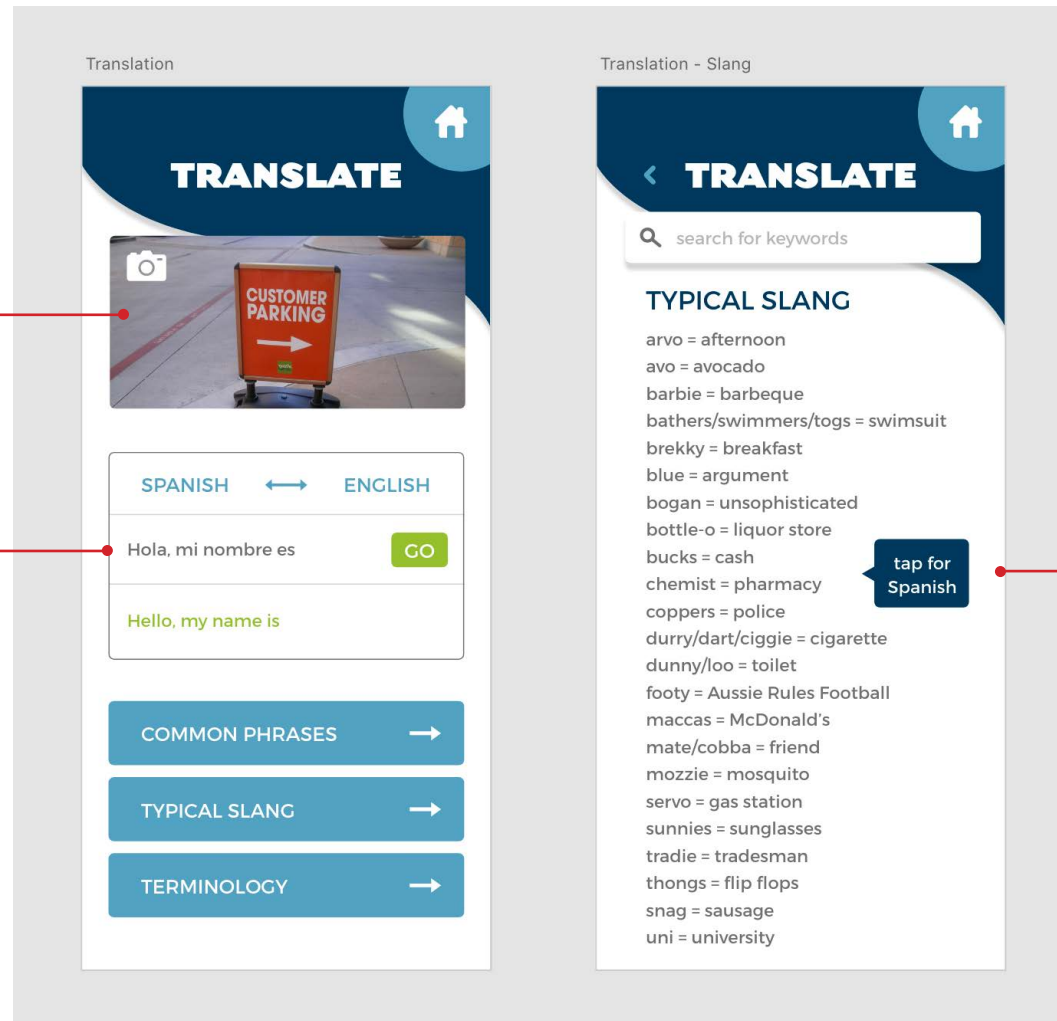
# NAVIGATE



# TRANSLATE

Text found through camera will automatically be translated to native language

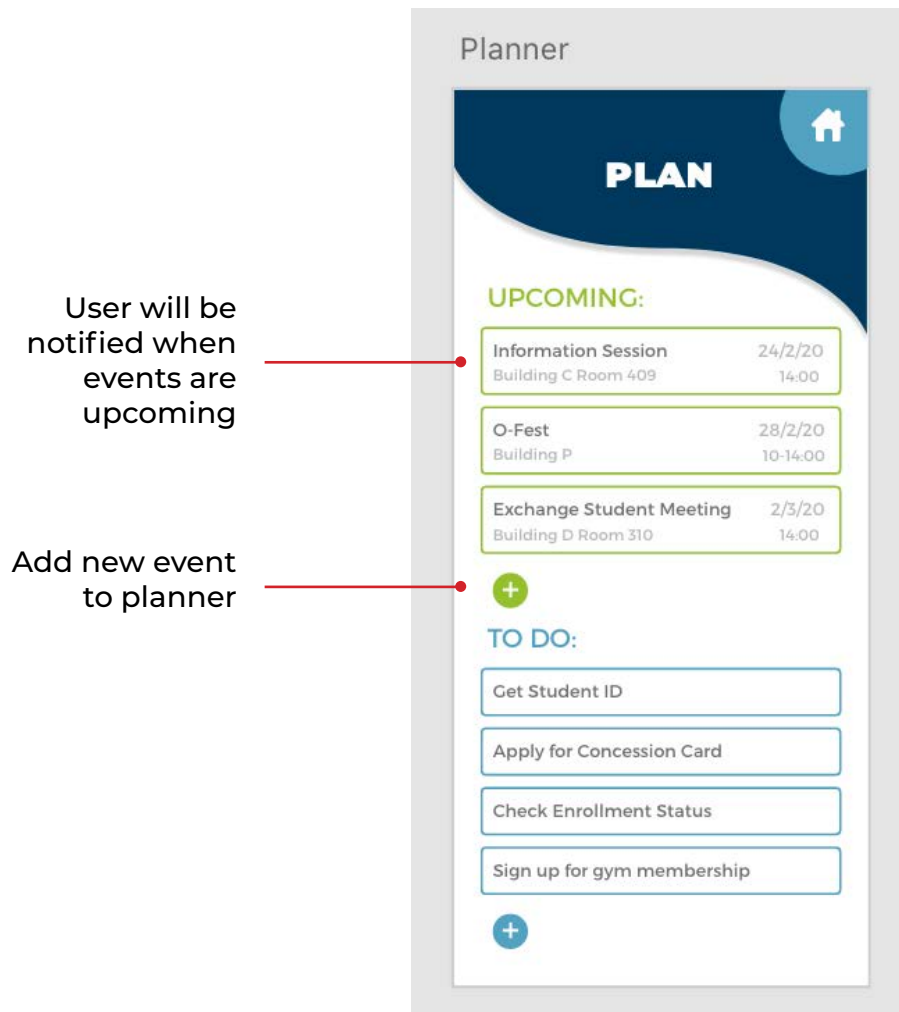
Direct translation, and ability to toggle the languages



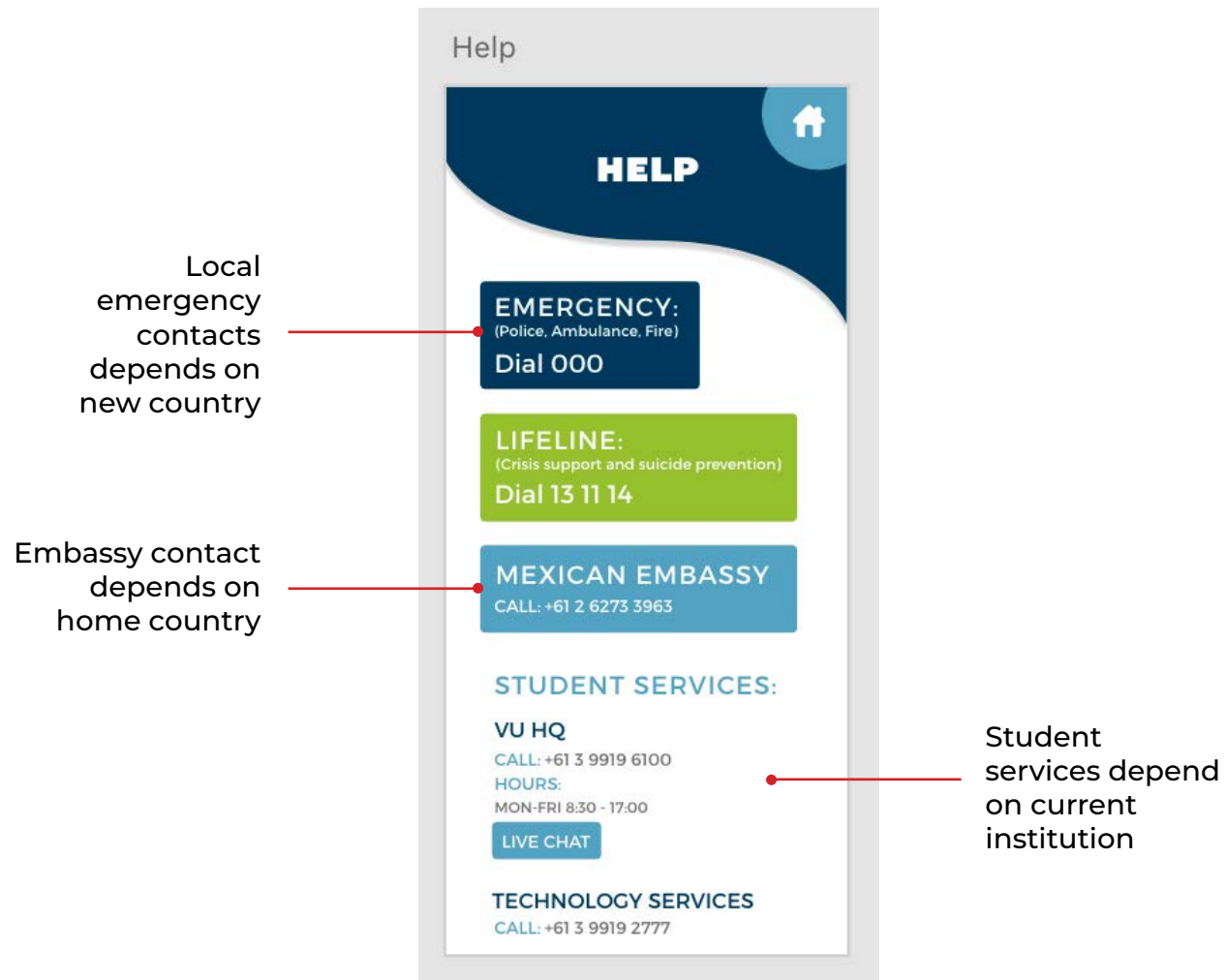
Tap list of words for translation to native language



# PLAN



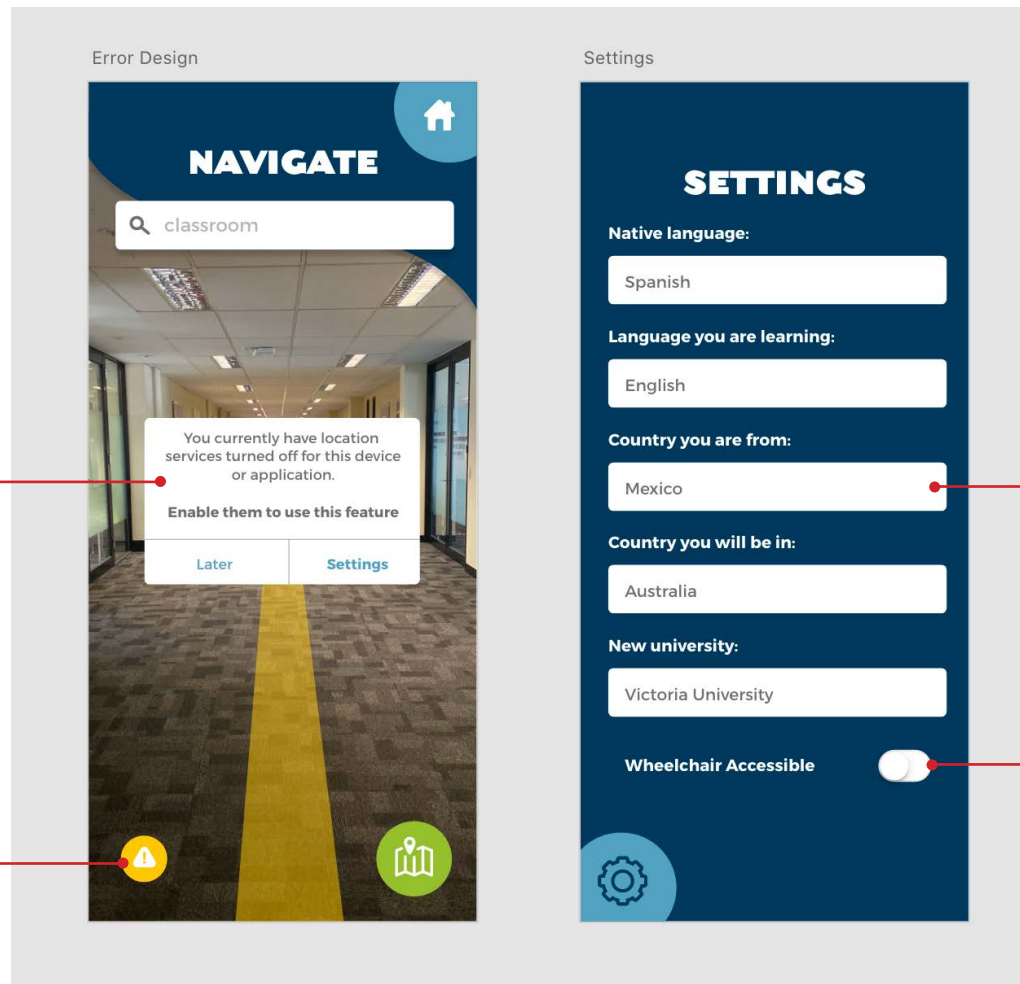
# HELP



# ERROR DESIGN

Allows users to turn on location services if they are turned off

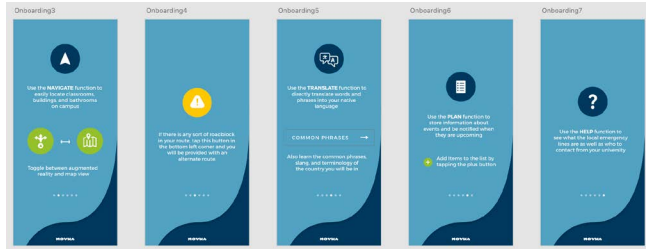
If there is a roadblock, tap this button, and the navigation will determine the next quickest route



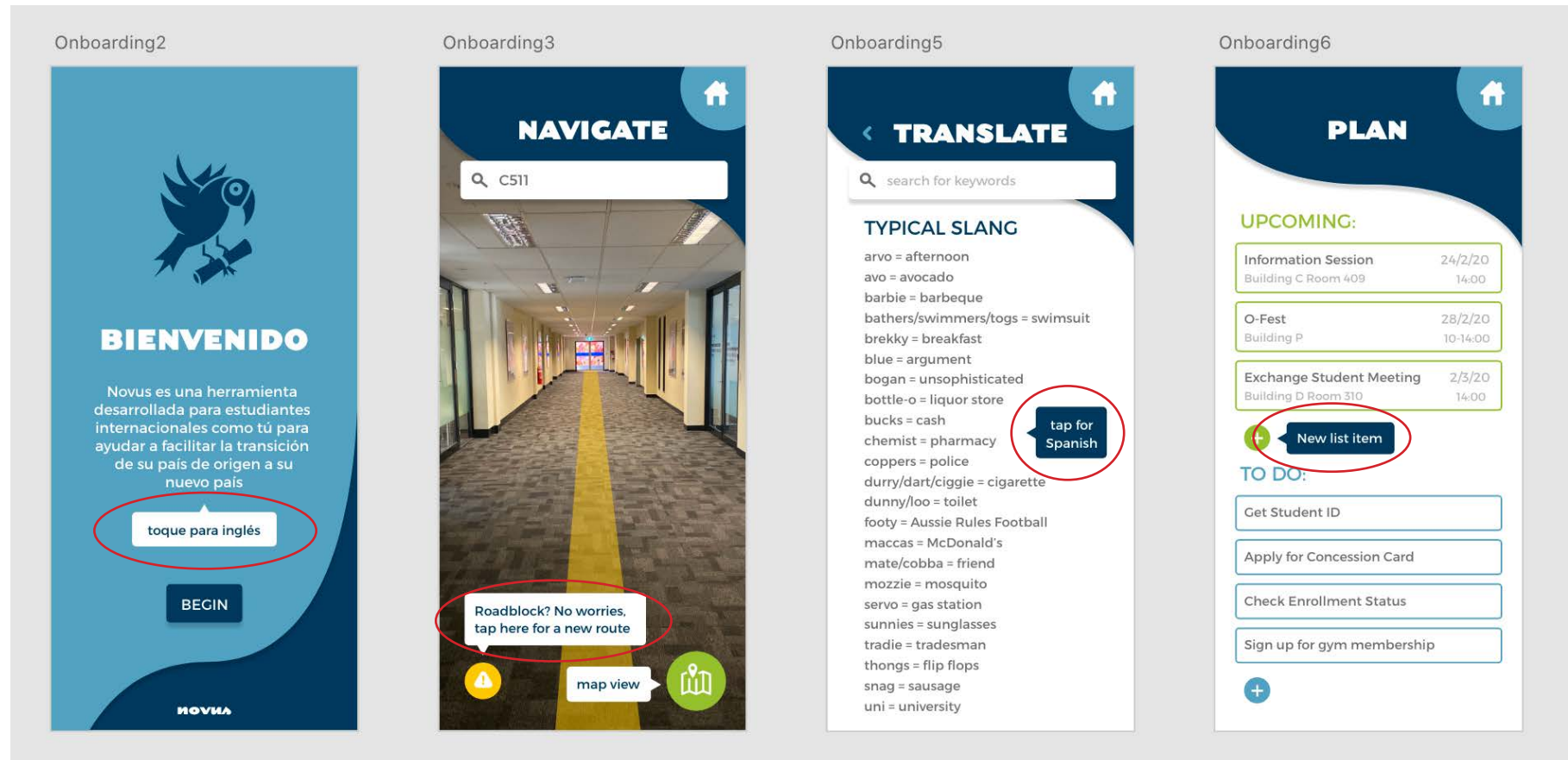
User can change the language and country settings if needed

If turned on, the navigation will only use elevators

# HELP DESIGN



While initially having designed a series of screens to act as a quick tutorial for first time users (see left), I decided that progressive onboarding would be much more effective. Hick's Law states that "the time it takes to make a decision increases with the number and complexity of choices," so it is important to minimize the cognitive load for new users (Yablonski). Using progressive onboarding is the best way to inform the user how to use the app, while not overwhelming them.



# FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

PART 1: Students responded to the following survey questions:

## For International Exchange Students:

1a. Rank the following from most stressful to least stressful (1 = most stressful, 5 = least stressful)

- A) Not knowing who to contact for help
- B) Not knowing how to get around campus
- C) Not being fluent in English
- D) Keeping track of important events and sessions

1b. Is there anything you can think of that would have been helpful in your transition?

2. Do you wish you had access to an app like this when arriving here?

## For Domestic Students:

1. If you were studying abroad, what would you be most nervous for?

2. Would you download an app like this?

PART 2: Local Australians were provided a list of Australian slang, phrases, and terminology, and then asked to verify and add to the list. Exchange students who were native Spanish speakers were asked to verify the Spanish translation of all of the words.

## Australian Slang:

Arvo = afternoon *tarde*

Avo = avocado *aguacate*

Barbie = barbeque *barbacoa*

Bathers = swimsuit *traje de baño*

Brekky = breakfast *desayuno*

Bogan = redneck *campesino*

Bottle-O = liquor store *licorería*

Chemist = pharmacy *farmacia*

Coppers = police *policía*

Durry = cigarette *cigarrillo*

Footy = Aussie Rules Football *Aussie Reglas Fútbol*

Maccas = McDonald's *McDonald's*

Mate = friend *amigo*

Mozzie = mosquito *mosquito*

Servo = gas station *gasolinera*

Sunnies = sunglasses *gafas de sol*

Tradie = tradesman *comerciante*

Thongs = flip flops *chanclas*

Snag = sausage *salchicha*

Uni = university *universidad*

# FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

## PART 1 FEEDBACK:

### For International Exchange Students:

1a. In order of most stressful to least stressful:

- 1) Not knowing how to get around campus
- 2) Not knowing who to contact for help
- 3) Not being fluent in English
- 4) Keeping track of important events and sessions

1b. More direct help from the university

2. Unanimous Yes

### For Domestic Students:

1. Language barrier and getting lost

2. Unanimous Yes

## PART 2 FEEDBACK:

### Australian Slang:

Arvo = afternoon *tarde*

Avo = avocado *aguacate*

Barbie = barbeque *barbacoa*

Bathers/swimmers/togs = swimsuit *traje de baño*

Brekky = breakfast *desayuno*

Blue = argument *argumento*

Bogan = unsophisticated *campesino*

Bottle-O = liquor store *licorería*

Bucks = cash

Chemist = pharmacy *farmacia*

Coppers = police *policía*

Durry/Dart/Ciggie = cigarette *cigarrillo*

Dunny/Loo = toilet *baño*

Footy = Aussie Rules Football *Aussie Reglas Fútbol*

Maccas = McDonald's *McDonald's*

Mate/Cobba = friend *amigo*

Mozzie = mosquito *mosquito*

Servo = gas station *gasolinera*

Sunnies = sunglasses *gafas de sol*

Tradie = tradesman *comerciante*

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# FOCUS GROUP APPLICATIONS

## PART 1 APPLICATION:

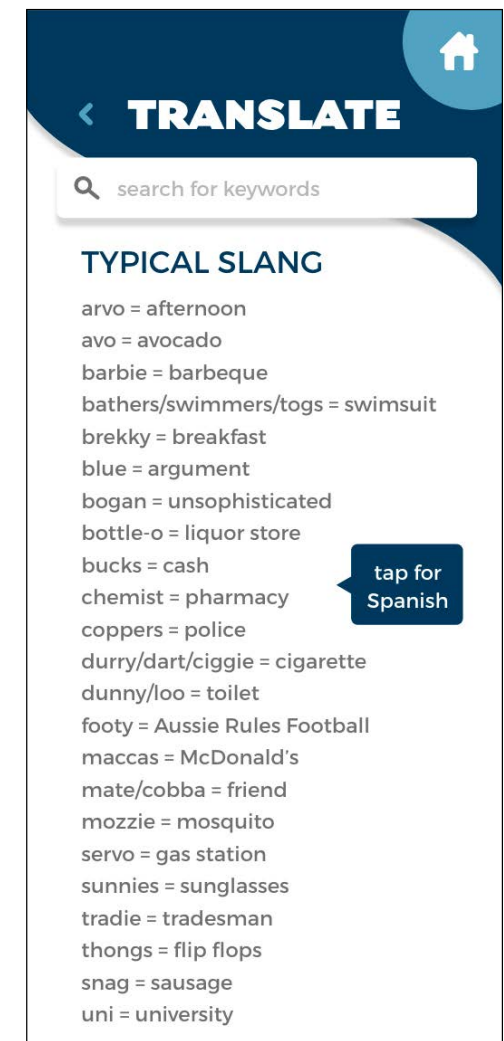
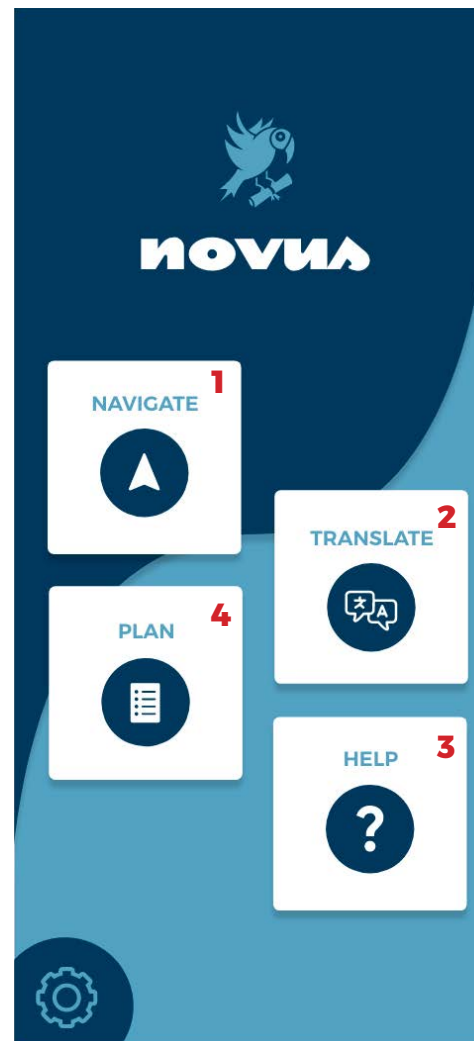
Based on the survey results, I ranked the most stressful parts of being an exchange student in this order:

- 1) Not knowing how to get around campus (Navigate)
- 2) The language barrier (Translate)
- 3) Not knowing who to contact for help (Help),
- 4) Keeping track of events (Plan).

Then, I reorganized the positioning of the buttons on the home screen to better fit the importance of each function. Assuming most people are right handed the buttons would be easiest to click in this order: Navigate, Translate, Help, Plan.

## PART 2 APPLICATION:

These verified lists were used in the interface mockups.



# USABILITY TESTING

Setup - 1

**HOLA!**

Native language:  
Spanish

Language you are learning:  
English

Country you are from:  
Mexico

Country you will be in:  
Australia

New university:  
Victoria University

Wheelchair Accessible ☐

NEXT

NOVUS

Setup - 2

**HOLA!**

Native language:  
Spanish

Language you are learning:  
English

Country you are from:  
Mexico

Country you will be in:  
Australia

New university:  
Victoria University

Wheelchair Accessible ☒

NEXT

NOVUS

In the video, “Nudge: improving decisions about wealth, health and happiness,” Richard Thaler discusses the behavioral science concept of “the nudge” which is a way to influence people’s choices (The RSA 2010). He suggests that everything is a type of choice architecture which prompts users to respond a certain way. One part of this concept that clearly applies to design is *default options*. Many studies show that people will typically go with whatever the default option is rather than taking the time to think about choosing a different option (Barby et al. 2012).

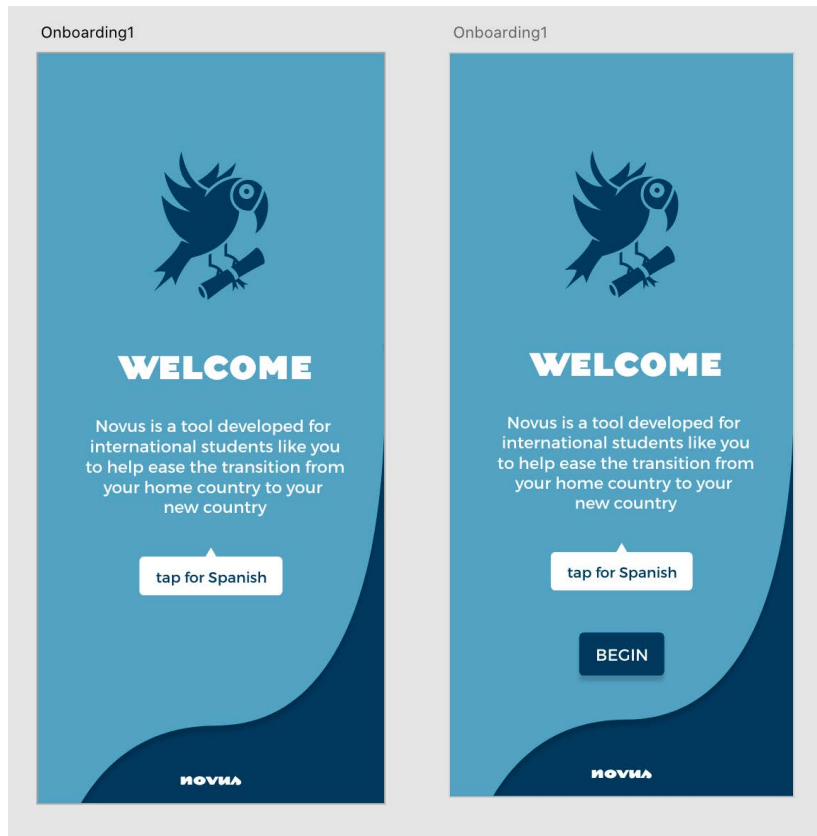
With this in consideration, I wanted to test this theory with Novus. I created two different interactive mockups of the initial setup process: one with Wheelchair Accessibility defaulted to “On” and one with it defaulted to “Off”.



# USABILITY TESTING RESULTS

The default theory proved to be true.

During the setup process, every user left the Wheelchair Accessibility option set to the default, even though all of the users did not require this option. With this being the case, I thought that the default should be set to “Off” so that more people use the stairs to prevent congestion at the elevators.



BEFORE

AFTER



I also let students interact with the app through Adobe's XD app on my phone to verify the user flow and test the effectiveness of the progressive onboarding.

**Task:**

Navigate the app with no explanation of how it works

**Observation:**

A few users didn't know where to tap to get from the welcome screen to the home screen

**Solution:**

Adding a “Begin” button

# REFERENCES

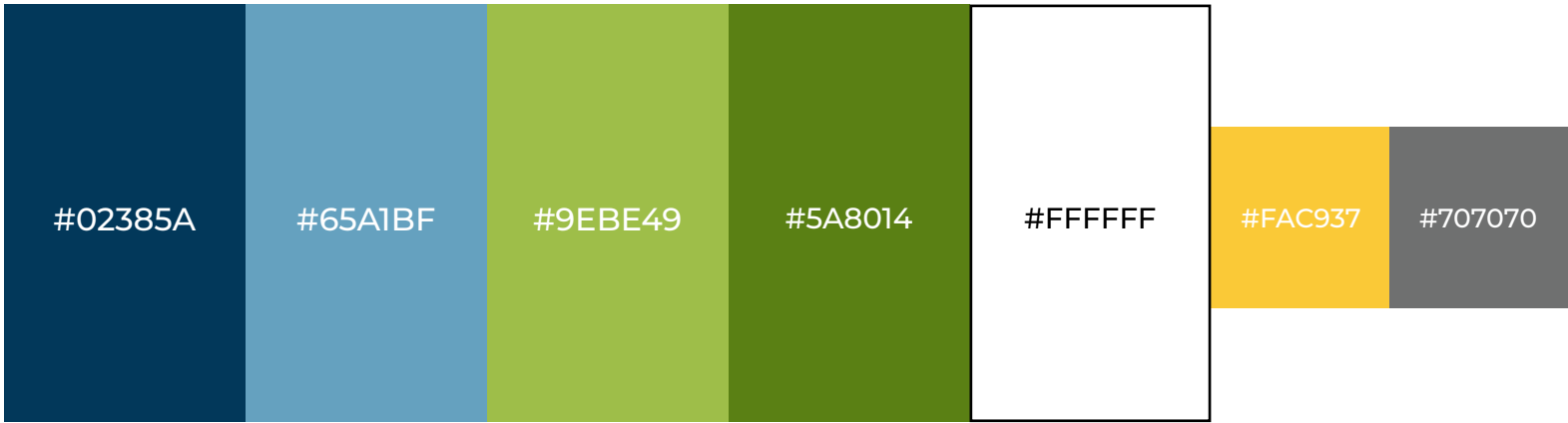
J. S. Blumenthal-Barby & Hadley Burroughs, 2012. Seeking Better Health Care Outcomes: The Ethics of Using the “Nudge”, The American Journal of Bioethics, 12:2, 1-10, DOI: 10.1080/15265161.2011.634481

“Parrots.” National Geographic, National Geographic Partners, LLC., 24 Sept. 2018, [www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/group/parrots/](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/group/parrots/).

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The RSA. “Richard Thaler - Nudge: improving decisions about wealth, health and happiness” Online video clip. YouTube. YouTube, 4 Feb 2010. Web.

COLOR PALETTE



TYPOGRAPHY

**HEADING 1**

(Dogma OT 36pt)

**HEADING 2**

(Montserrat Regulara 24pt)

**HEADING 3**

(Montserrat Bold 16pt)

Body Copy

(Montserrat Regular 16pt)

ICONS

