



Improving Udemy's platform to better support learners over 50

By: Vandana Gangaiah

Overview

Udemy is an online learning platform that offers both free and paid courses to learners across the world of all ages. It provides an opportunity to learn conveniently at the user's comfort. It offers several genres of courses ranging from technology, business, marketing, music, design, cooking, and to personal development.

Mission

To transform lives through learning.

Key Stats

80 million +

Registered Users

Over 250000

Courses

\$786.6 million

FY24 Revenue

Competitors

coursera

edX

Khan Academy

in Learning

UDACITY

User Persona



Motivations

I've spent years as a teacher, but I've never worked in tech. Now that I'm retired, I want to learn coding so I can take up small freelance projects and keep myself mentally active. Most tutorials are too fast or full of jargon, and I often feel lost. I'm looking for something simple, clear, and beginner-friendly.

Goals

About:

Diya - 55

Former High School

Teacher

Interests: Teaching,

Coding Basics, Tutoring

Familiar with:

Smartphones and laptops for browsing, and basic digital tasks

- To learn basic coding concepts at a beginner-friendly pace without feeling rushed.
- To connect with a community of learners with similar interests and age groups..

Pain Points

- Most tutorials are created by and for younger audiences, making them jargon-heavy and too fast-paced for older learners.
- Search results are overly broad, mixing levels and making it hard to find a clear starting point.
- It's hard to judge a course's teaching style, pace, or approach before enrolling.
- I feel isolated and unsure where to ask simple questions or share my learning without feeling judged.

Solution - 1: Personalized Onboarding for Learners

The image shows a mobile application interface for Udemy. At the top, there's a header with the Udemy logo and a message: "Let's personalise your learning journey". Below this, there's a note: "Help us understand you better so we can recommend the right courses tailored to your needs and pace." The form is divided into several sections:

- Age Bracket:** Options include "Under 18", "18 - 30", "30 - 40", and "50+".
- Educational Background:** Options include "High School", "Bachelor's Degree", "Master's Degree or Higher", and "Others: _____".
- Technology Comfort Level:** Options include "Beginner", "Intermediate", and "Advanced".
- Preferred Learning Style:** Options include "Slow paced", "Instructor led", "Hands-on practice", and "Visual (charts, diagrams)".
- What are your learning goals?** A text input field with placeholder text: "Tell us what you hope to achieve... (e.g., get a new job, learn a hobby, stay connected with family, upgrade skills for current work)".
- Submit:** A large blue button at the bottom.

Pain Point:

Most tutorials are made by and for younger audiences. This results in:

- Use of heavy technical jargon
- Fast-paced instruction
- Lack of relatability for older learners, especially beginners or returners to learning (like former homemakers, retirees, etc.)

Proposed Solution:

- Introduce a guided onboarding step that asks users about their:
 - Age bracket
 - Educational background
 - Tech proficiency
 - Preferred learning style and Learning goals/Motivations
- Use this information to personalize:
 - Homepage feed and Course suggestions
 - Search results

Impact:

Creates a more welcoming and personalized learning journey by aligning platform recommendations with users' needs. This improves user comfort, motivation, and course completion rates.

Solution - 2: Expand Regional & Relatable Instructor Content

Pain Point:

Older learners often struggle to follow fast-paced, jargon-heavy tutorials created by younger instructors. Additionally, high-quality courses are predominantly in English, leaving limited options for regional language speakers.

Proposed Solution:

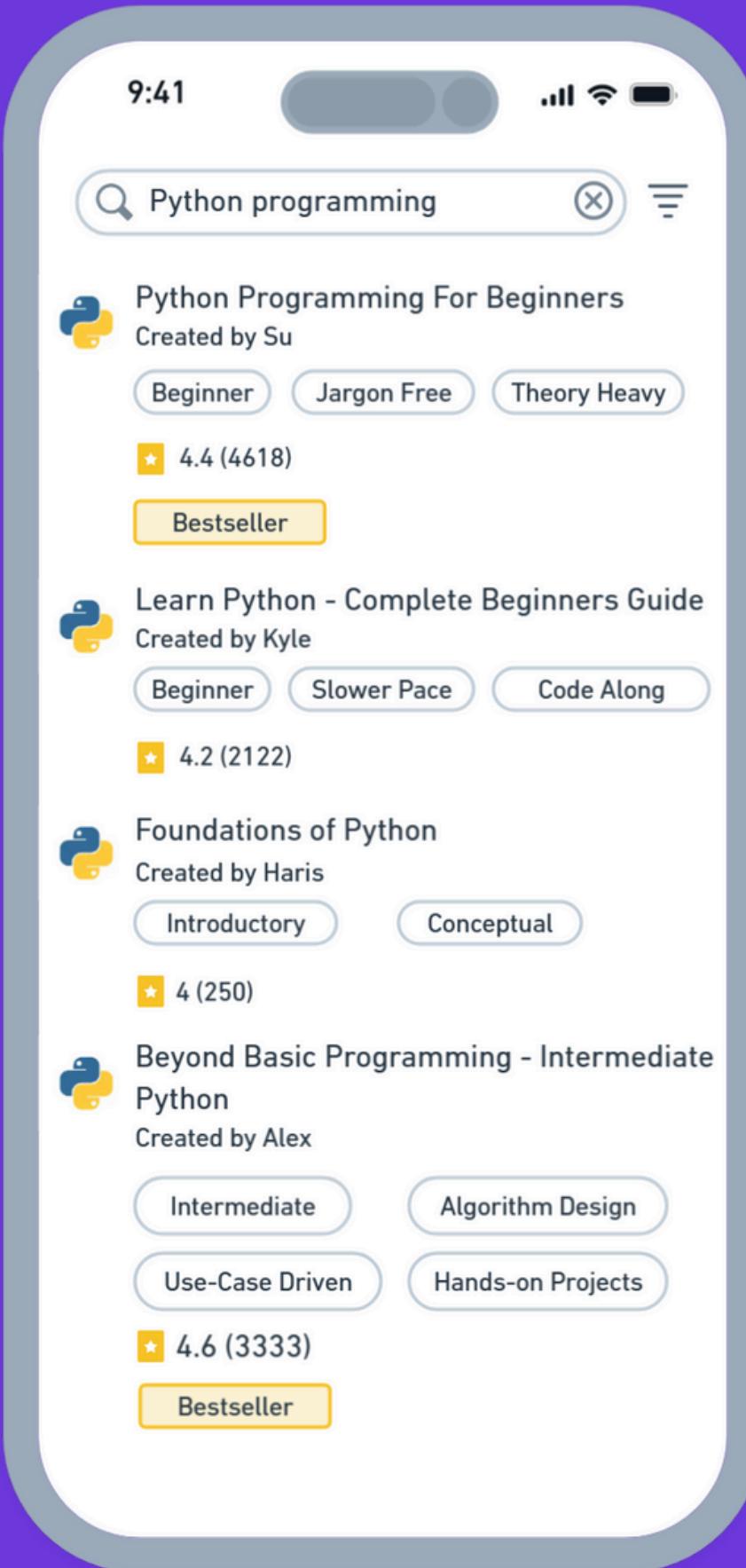
Increase and diversify video content by:

- Expanding course offerings in regional languages.
- Featuring instructors with similar age groups or learning experiences.
- Training instructors to deliver content in a slower, clearer, and jargon-free manner.
- Tagging and recommending these videos based on user onboarding preferences (age, tech comfort, language).

Impact: Improves content accessibility and relatability, helping older and non-English-speaking learners better understand and connect with the material. This increases confidence and encourages long-term platform use.

Solution - 3: Guided Search Experience

Pain Point:



Searching for a topic like “Python programming” often returns a wide mix of courses, from beginner to advanced subjects like Deep Learning or Data Science. This overwhelms users, especially older learners, who may not understand the scope or prerequisites of advanced topics.

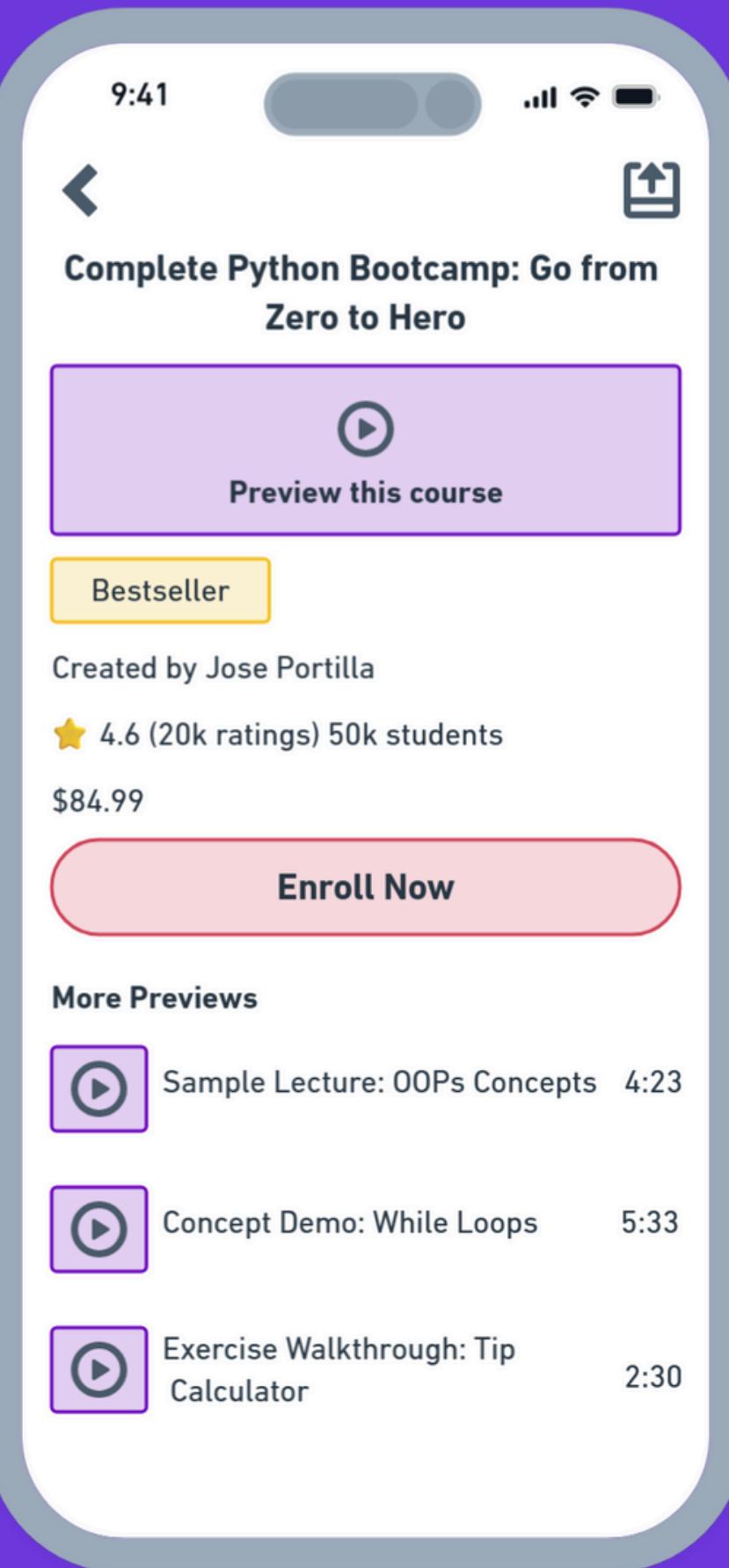
Proposed Solution:

- Prioritize relevant results: Show beginner- to intermediate-level courses by default when users search general terms like “Python programming.”
- Add structured tags: Use clear labels like “Beginner,” “Jargon-Free,” and “Theory-heavy” to help users easily filter and understand course content.

Impact:

This solution reduces confusion by displaying only relevant, appropriately leveled courses. Clear, jargon-free tagging helps users aged 50+ easily discover and understand content, boosting their confidence and motivation to learn at their own pace.

Solution - 4: Enhanced Course Preview Selection



Pain Point:

Current course previews mostly show intros or setup steps, which don't accurately represent the teaching style, pace, or complexity. Older learners, especially beginners, tend to rely heavily on previews rather than reviews when choosing a course.

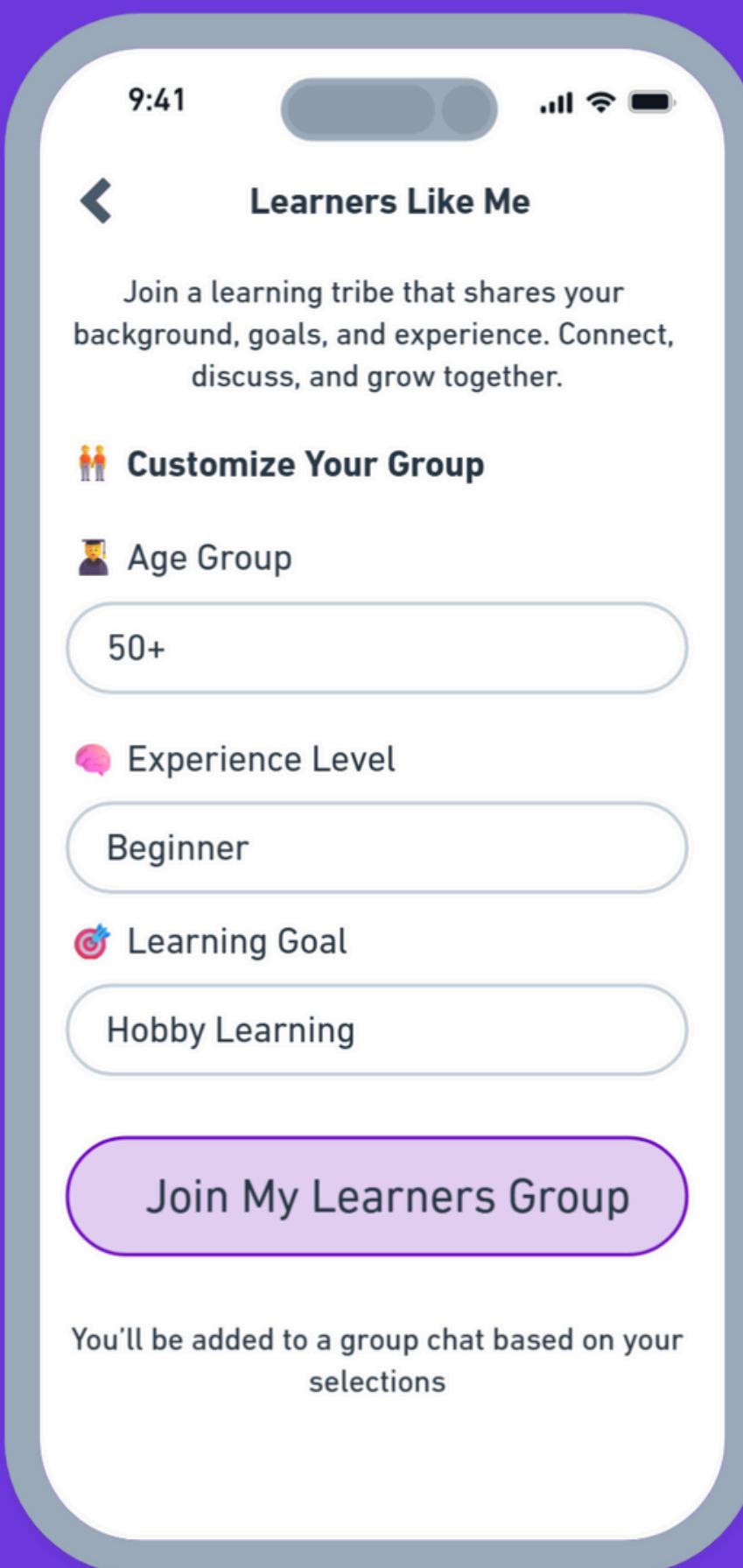
Proposed Solution:

- Allow instructors to tag multiple preview segments (e.g., concept explanation, sample lecture, exercise walkthrough) to showcase teaching approach more effectively.
- Indicate the nature of each preview with simple labels like "Sample Lecture" or "Concept Demo."

Impact:

Helps learners better assess course fit, leading to more confident decisions and reduced drop-offs or refund requests.

Solution 5: Age-Aligned Learning Communities



Pain Point:

Younger learners typically discuss their learnings via Reddit, Discord, or Slack groups. Older learners don't frequently use these platforms or use them at all, and the Q&A section inside the course is more about doubts than discussions. There's no space for peer-based encouragement or conversation.

Proposed Solution:

- Create peer-based community discussion groups tied to each course.
- Let users opt in to a "Learners Like Me" discussion space, where groups are formed based on age bracket, tech experience, or learning goals/interests.
- Offer guided prompts in these groups to facilitate discussion, e.g., "Share how you understood this concept."

Impact:

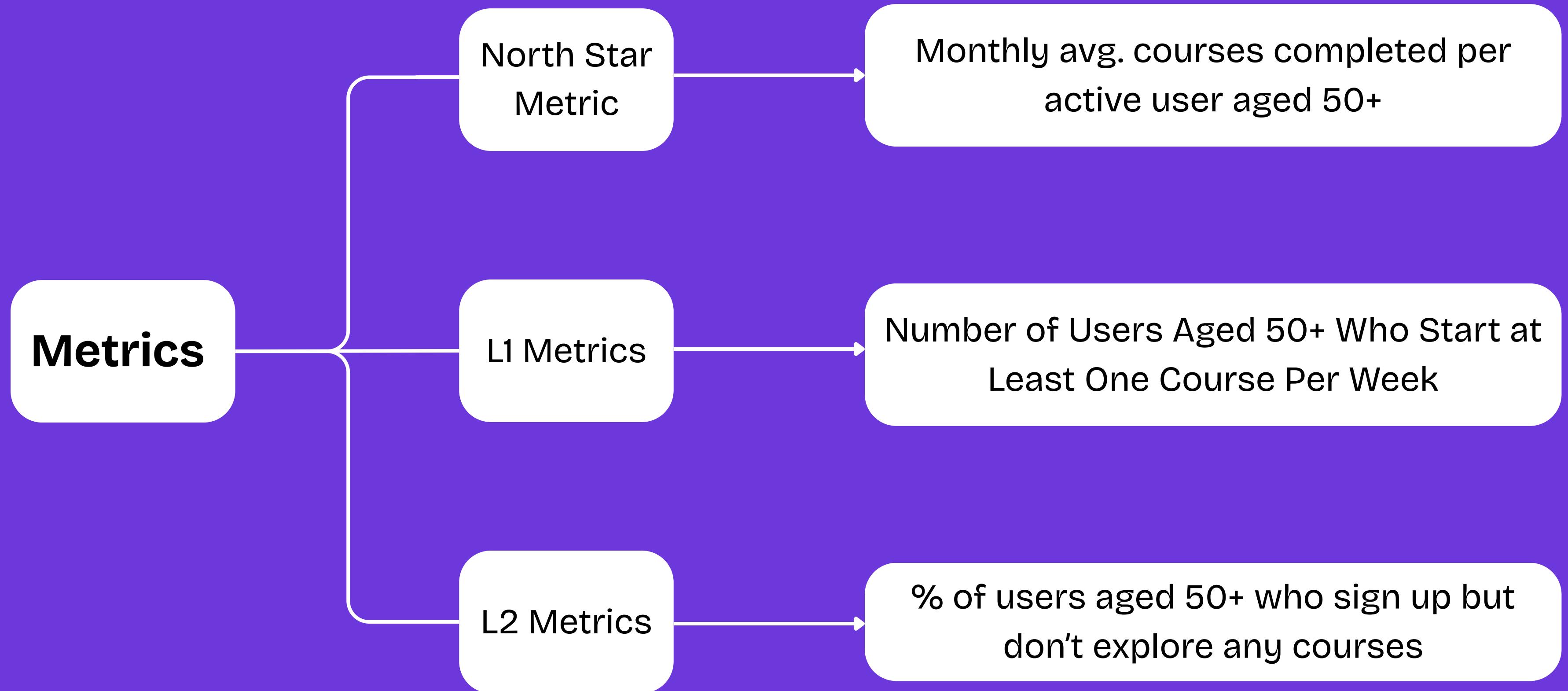
Creates a sense of community and shared progress, encouraging consistent learning and reducing drop-off due to isolation or self-doubt.

Solutions Effort Vs Impact and Rationale:

Solution	Effort	Impact	Rationale
Improve onboarding by collecting information about age, interest, educational background, tech level, and goals	Low	Medium	Offers personalized content and a clear path for beginners, with minimal effort since a similar feature already exists but isn't mandatory.
Add tutorials by instructors of similar-age and in regional languages.	High	High	Needs onboarding and incentivizing new creators, but boosts relatability and learner engagement.

Solution	Effort	Impact	Rationale
Improve search algorithm and add relevant tags on course cards	High	High	Requires backend work and tagging, but makes it easier to find the right content.
Add lecture walkthroughs and concept explanation previews	Low	Medium	Easy to implement using existing video segments; improves trust and helps informed decisions.
Build community and discussion groups for older learners	Medium-High	Medium	Requires platform update and light moderation, but increases engagement and peer support.

Key-Metrics



Thank You!