Case Study

Unacademy is India's largest education platform. We have around 50,000 educators who are changing the lives of over 75 million learners, **quite a few of them being from the remotest places in the country.**
The success of Unacademy stems from its focus on making learner and educator experience consistently better. As Unacademy's CEO says, "**Our entire team is obsessed about giving learners and educators the best experience**."

Imagine that you are leading the product for learner experience for test prep vertical (meaning competitive exams like IITJEE, UPSC, CAT, Bank exams, etc.) on Unacademy.

Pick a particular problem in the **learner experience** that can be solved using technology.

- Impact: Describe why you chose this particular problem
- Pain Points: List down the pain points and solutions to these pain points
- Prioritize: Which pain points/use-cases will you solve first and why?
- Measure what matters: How would you measure the success in the prioritized use cases
- Risks: List the risks associated with the proposed solution. If possible, how will you mitigate these risks?
- Strategy: How would solving this problem help Unacademy?

Submission By

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The Competitive Learning

Success in competitive exams requires **dedication, focus, and consistency.** And not only is intrinsic motivation sufficient, but the environment also plays a key role. It is the external source of motivation that keeps an individual motivated to keep up the momentum. One of the reasons most success stories lie around Major cities is because of their environment.

While the students from tier 1/2 cities have this environment in nature itself, the user, mainly from tier 3/4 or even remote villages don't have these privileges and need to settle in these former cities to build up, which comes with a lot of challenges. They shift to cities like Kota to prepare for a year or two.

To understand the problem better, narrow down to who are the stakeholders playing a pivotal role in what we call an environment:

- **Family through**
  - Support both morally & financially
  - Regular updates on
- **Peers through**
  - Competitive nature
  - Performance upgrades
  - Aid & help in understanding
- **Teachers through**
  - Mentorship
  - Support
  - Building confidence

While unacademy has created an impact by providing mentorships and help from teachers to the students and making efficient & quick processes for students to clear the doubts, there's more to work on this problem overall.

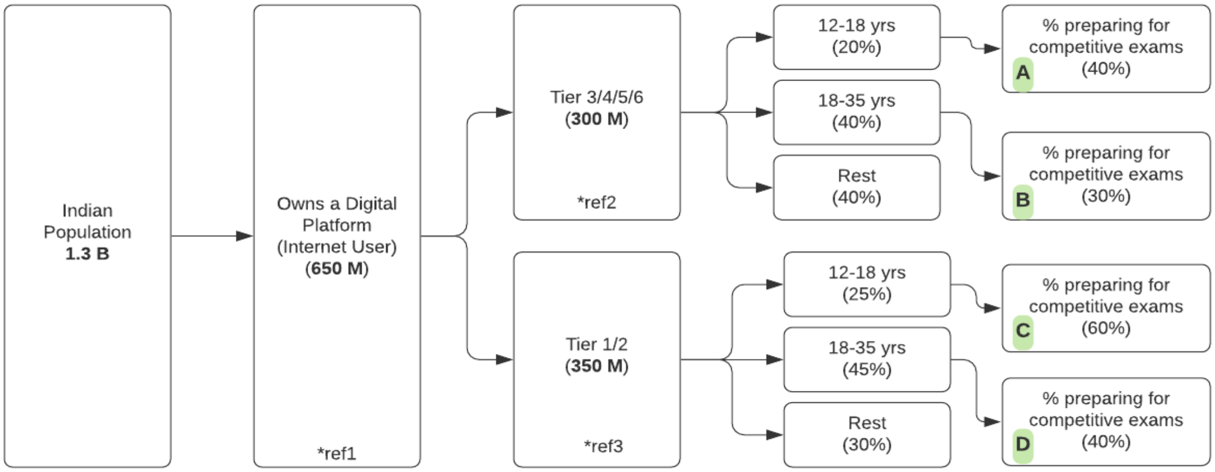
So narrowing down to:
Parents & Peers, while it is difficult to onboard Parents on the platform and solves this problem digitally but the end result might not be as expected. And considering the current capabilities of the Unacademy, this might be a hard nut to crack.

Problem: **The lack of peer to peer learning nature on Digital Platforms**

Impact of the Problem:

While the Problem seems to be real in qualitative terms, let's understand the quantitative aspects of it. To better understand and access whether to go about this problem or not, let's start with the Total Market size and then understand which portion is serviceable or not.

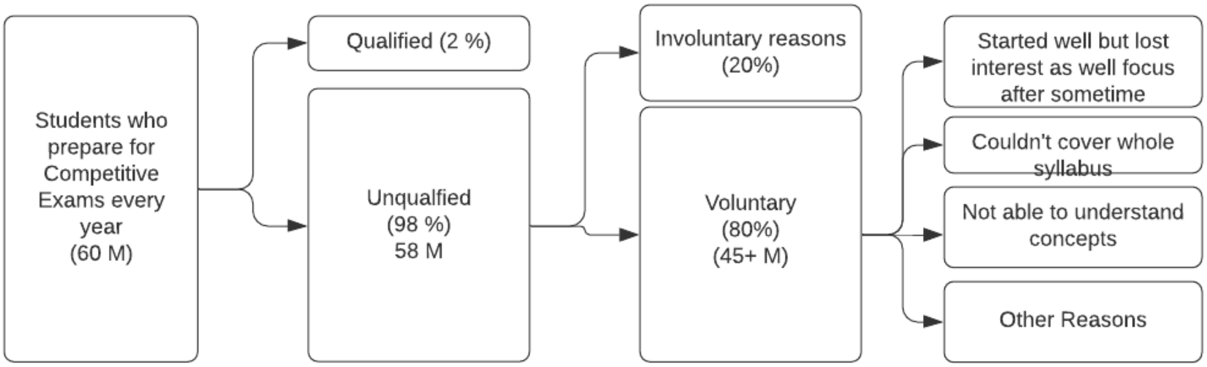
Total Addressable Market:


Indian Population 1.3 B
Owns a Digital Platform (Internet User) (650 M)
*ref1
Tier 3/4/5/6 (300 M)
*ref2
Tier 1/2 (350 M)
*ref3
12-18 yrs (20%)
18-35 yrs (40%)
Rest (40%)
12-18 yrs (25%)
18-35 yrs (45%)
Rest (30%)
% preparing for competitive exams (40%)
A
% preparing for competitive exams (30%)
B
% preparing for competitive exams (60%)
C
% preparing for competitive exams (40%)
D

Ref2; Ref3

Total Population preparing for Competitive exams = **A + B + C + D ~ 175M**
(115 M Top tier + 60 M Lower Tier)

Serviceable Addressable Market:
Majorly focusing on **Tier 3/4/5/6 cities**, which is a more prominent user group and lacks this competitive nature. The qualification rate stands very poor with the ever-increasing nature of exams and the competition among applicants which is **effectively less than even 2%**, and shows a massive gap in kind of preparation the rest 98% have in these compared to the top 2%.


Students who prepare for Competitive Exams every year (60 M)
Qualified (2 %)
Unqualified (98 %) 58 M
Involuntary reasons (20%)
Voluntary (80%) (45+ M)
Started well but lost interest as well focus after sometime
Couldn't cover whole syllabus
Not able to understand concepts
Other Reasons

The Potential Market Size **~ 45 M** (Unqualified Individuals)

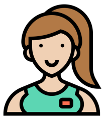
So even if we are able to solve for a 10% market share, we can create a huge impact in the competitive exam space. We have a very significant untapped market to revolutionize.

User Groups

User Prioritization Criteria: With the focus on the users coming from Lower Tier cities (Tier 2-6) as the problem is more serious & frequent, these have more conversion potential.

Understanding the Target User Group Better:

- Students
  - Want to have an interactive and engaging way of study
  - Difficult to do a monotonous activity straight for hours and hours
  - Prefer to talk & be open about the challenges faced with a known peer compared to a mentor or a teacher
  - Have to explain the reason for underperformance to parents
  - Have a tendency to procrastinate tasks to the last date
  - Don't have the capacity to handle pressure much, tendency to mess-up
- Parents (Secondary Customers)
  - Parent's don't trust them with everything(providing facilities like smartphones, laptops) unless there's a good reflection in the result
  - Parent's have "Sharma Ji ke beta/beti's" comparison tendency

Customer Persona	
Aryan Sharma | 16 High School Goals: **To crack JEE in the first attempt**	Kartik recently completed the 10th standard and was suggested to prepare for JEE, was suggested to enroll in the Unacademy JEE batch. He likes math but finds it difficult to deal with Physics and Chemistry. While he is interested in applying for the Unacademy batch but not very motivated as he must study Physics and Chemistry **Specific Pain Points:** 1. Don't want himself to be judged on basis of test scoring only 2. Want to understand how others study these 2 subjects
Kartik Sharma | 21 Fresh Graduate Goals: **Planning to prepare for UPSC**	Kartik has recently completed his BBA. He is the first graduate of his family. His family has many government employees in the family and which inclines his interest to become IAS. He is interested in applying for the Unacademy program, as his family continuously motivates him **Specific Pain Points:** 1. Don't just want to clear the exam but want to develop the understanding while preparing for it 2. He wants to compare himself with peers he knows not just the leaderboard
 Kanika Agarwal | 27 Working Professional Goal: **Crack top IIM**	Kanika is working as an Associate at a company that operates in Small business consulting. Living in a Tier 3 city, she has been working for 3 years now but not found herself learning anything new last 6 months onwards. She finds it difficult to find the motivation to continue after working hours, while she cannot leave the job due to insecurity as well. **Specific Pain Points:** 1. Difficult to find Motivation to continue and cover up the syllabus 2. Due to work, she finds it difficult to plan the week for CAT study

Prioritizing The Pain Points

While there's no end to solving the pain points of the users, due to the limitation of resource availability and customer demand, prioritization is important

Prioritization Criteria:

- Portion of the prioritized Users affected because of this, ie (**P**)
- Impact on the end Goal (exam, like JEE, CAT, etc) (**I**)
- Frequency of the occurence Pain-point to the user group during preparation, (**F**)

These parameters are measured (comparative) on a scale of 1 to 5 and a score is calculated:

Score is calculated as,	**Score = (Portion * Impact * Frequency)**

And user stories are prioritized based on the score, **Higher the score, the higher the priority**

Apart from the Customer Persona, Other User goals through stories are as follows:

User Stories:	**Priortization**			
	P	**I**	**F**	**Score**
As a user, I want to stay motivated and confident throughout my preparation and appreciate & enjoy small achievements	5	4	5	100
As a user, I want to want to know what I have covered and what I have not yet	4	5	4	80
As a user, I want to complete all chapters and practice all of them along with extra questions	5	5	3	75
As a user, I want to discuss my doubts, discuss solutions to what others are doing and what's working for them, and what's not (potential hacks)	4	4	4	64
As a user, I want to plan my week ahead of time and try to complete all the planned tasks	4	4	4	64
As a user, I want to compare my performance against someone I know and understand to where's a lack and could discuss	3	4	4	48
As a user, I don't want to miss out on any test without any solid reason to maintain consistency	3	3	5	45
As a user, I don't want a monotonic journey and lose interest in the exam over the time	2	3	4	24
As a user, I don't want to create a psychology of undermining myself by continuously looking at the leaderboard ranking	1	2	3	6

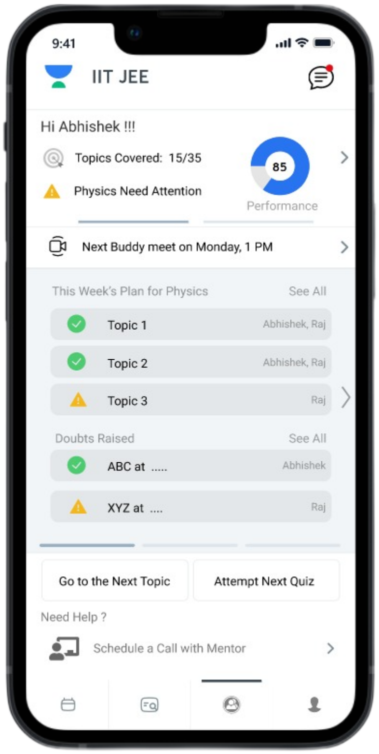
So, leaving the last 2 pain-points building the solution considering the rest pain-points.

Solution: The Buddy Program

Goal: Building a positive & encouraging competitive Peer to Peer Learning by connecting them together

A peer to peer experience for learners, bringing the social touch, letting them learn, grow and excel together:

- Practice and compete together to a single goal
- Discuss Doubts /concepts together and expand the thinking
- Plan the exam cracker together & start small (weekly)
- See an overall performance of both you & your buddy
- Connect with a mentor and uncover the potential loopholes


9:41
IIT JEE
Hi Abhishek !!!
Topics Covered: 15/35
Physics Need Attention
85
Performance
Next Buddy meet on Monday, 1 PM
This Week's Plan for Physics
See All
Topic 1
Abhishek, Raj
Topic 2
Abhishek, Raj
Topic 3
Raj
Doubts Raised
See All
ABC at .....
Abhishek
XYZ at ....
Raj
Go to the Next Topic
Attempt Next Quiz
Need Help ?
Schedule a Call with Mentor

How this will work:

While the program is optional, learners can opt-out in to let other buddies find new ones With features learners can:

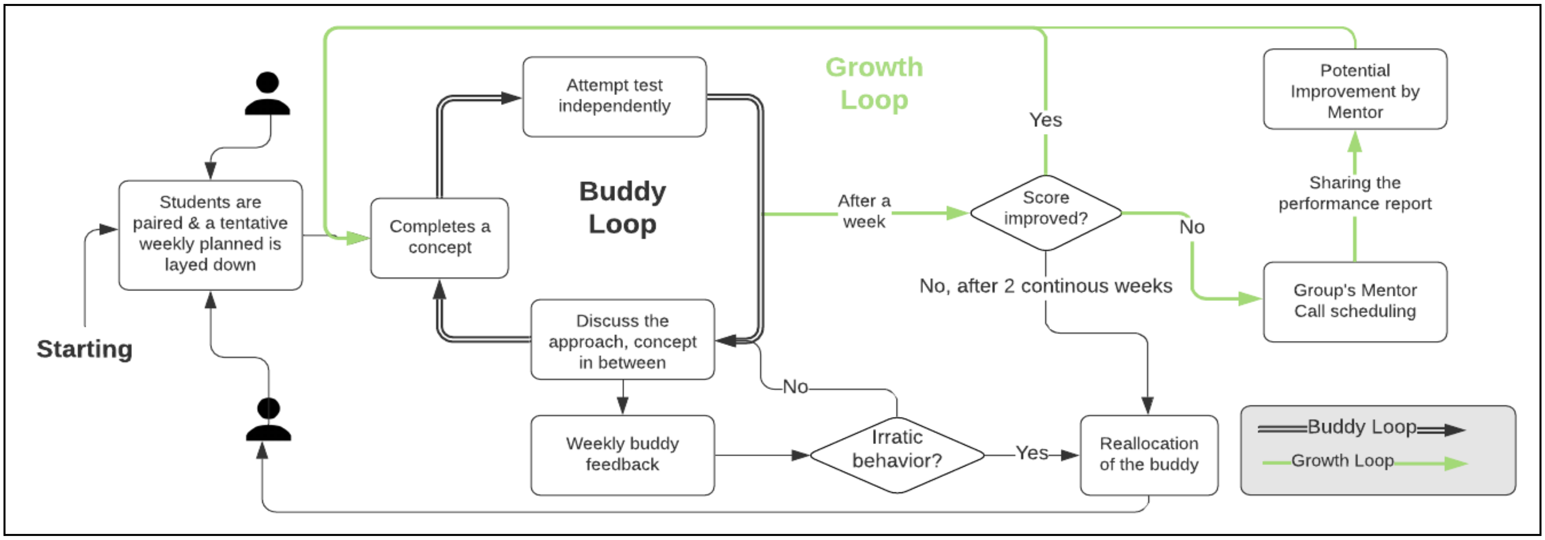
1. Connecting with a Buddy preparing for the same goal in the similar time-frame
2. Both Plan the Week by adding the topics & chapters to the list subject by subject
3. Discuss doubts, test solution approach keeping a record of what is covered & what's not and improve score
4. Connect with the mentor together and discuss the doubts
5. Uncover the weak spot in the preparation with the advanced performance reports

What it will solve & what's in it for the user:

- It helps them understand the concept & its application better, open up their thinking process
- Keep them engaging on the platform, which will have a positive impact on the results
- Support will Keep them motivated, consistent, and efficient for long and
- Build up confidence helping them in dealing with exam better & mentally healthy as well

(PS: Other Screens ; Criteria For Pairing Up Learners)

End to End User Flow:


Starting
Students are paired & a tentative weekly planned is layed down
Completes a concept
Attempt test independently
Buddy Loop
Discuss the approach, concept in between
Weekly buddy feedback
Irratic behavior?
No
Yes
Reallocation of the buddy
Growth Loop
After a week
Score improved?
Yes
No
No, after 2 continous weeks
Potential Improvement by Mentor
Sharing the performance report
Group's Mentor Call scheduling
Buddy Loop
Growth Loop

Measuring The Success of Buddy Program

The following metrics will help us in better understanding and validating the hypothesis we started which was: Peer to peer learning Experience:

Performance Improvement	Engagement with the Platform
● Number improved leaderboard ranking ● **Number of learners improved scores in the tests** ● Number of learners increased the weekly test attempt number ● Number of users who completed the weekly plan successfully	● **Number of learners increased time on platform** ● Average time spent increment on the platform ● Number of discussions scheduled ● Number of doubts/topics discussed and completed ● Average time spent on the chat ● Number of group mentor call scheduled
Satisfaction: - **Number of weeks learners connected with the buddy program** - Number of learners who stay connected on the buddy program - Average rating of buddy programs weekly/monthly basis	

The Prioritized Metrics Which Will give the validation to Hypothesis of the Feature:

1. **Number of learners improved scores in the tests**
2. **Number of learners increased time on the platform**
3. **Number of weeks learners connected with the buddy program**

Risks While Building The Buddy Program

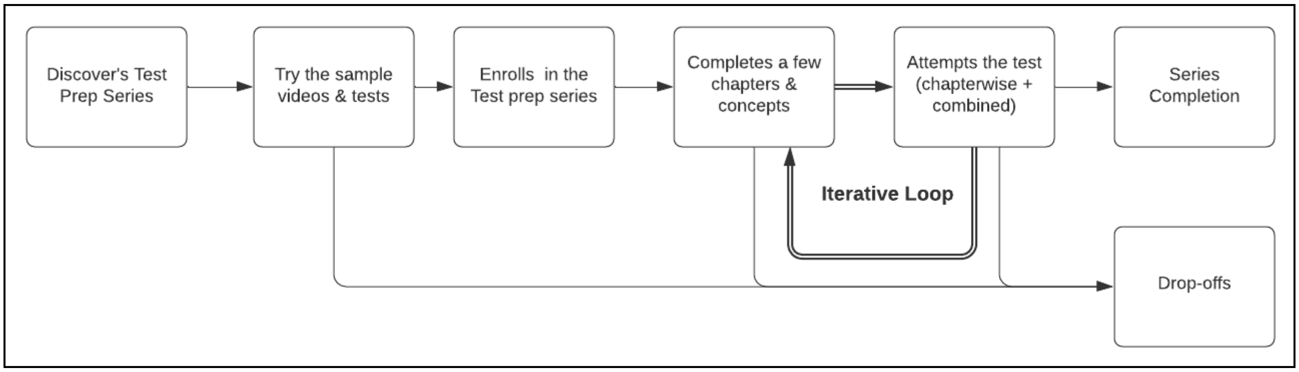
Distracting & Discouraging Buddy:
While building the solution, we might have come across the possibility of users starting feeling it as a distraction rather than an opportunity due to getting influenced by others.
Solution: An automated test score analyzer which we already implemented giving results every week and option to learners to reallocate Buddy or to opt-out of the program

Potential scams:
This challenge is something everyone wants to be assured of as the buddy might turn out to be a scammer or more of a distracter to learners
Solution: Quick customer service especially for this feature, recording past behavior of buddy to check for potential frauds. Allowing only Geniune Learners to connect

Huge Difference in the Performance Improvement of the Buddies
While it might occur, one of the buddies has excelled and the other buddy didn’t improve enough, which could potentially lead to discouraging & misalignment in buddies
Solution: Mentor calls will be scheduled when either the score has not improved or there’s a huge gap in the improvement, to help out the under-performing learner, the other learner will also be encouraged to help out the buddy, through messaging.

Product & Business Strategy Behind The Buddy Program

To better understand how solving this can help Unacademy become a better platform, let's looks at user Pain-Points. But before understanding the Pain-points, lets first see the touchpoints where the user drops off in the user's overall journey:


Discover's Test Prep Series
Try the sample videos & tests
Enrolls in the Test prep series
Completes a few chapters & concepts
Attempts the test (chapterwise + combined)
Series Completion
Iterative Loop
Drop-offs

Having multiple drop-off in the app requires a sticking factor that can help engagement metrics and finally the revenue goal itself. So in all the solutions proposed to cover the potential points where drop-off is maximum.

Funnel Improvement:
In the buddy program user flow discussed above, the generated loops will improve the funnel

1. **The Buddy loop:**
- It generates a trigger (a reason) for the user to engage more, and moreover the time
- It builds a hook with the product for users to rethink to change its behavior
2. **The Growth Loop:**
- This is the overall loop that gives users more independence and power
- It prevents users from churning out quickly (slowing the process)

Operational Benefits
With the buddy program in place, the 1-1 interaction mentorship would be less and the operational number of teachers required for mentorship would be less & availability would be more will help in quick and effective feedback to the learners.

Future Potential
The data collected has a lot of potential associated for future itself, considering the long term vision and future of teaching and competitive exams

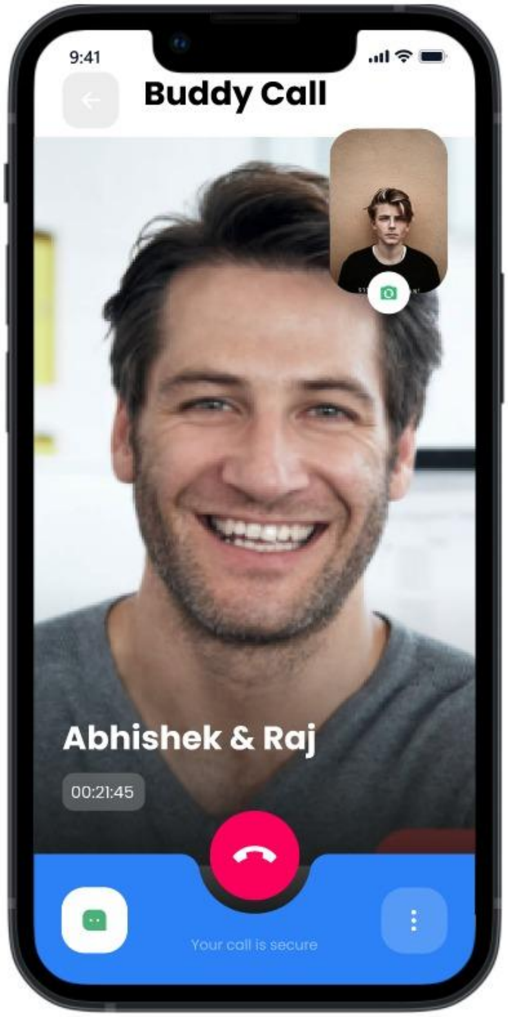
- The user behavior, in terms of interaction, time spent, and intent
- It will help in identifying what kind of teaching works for learners based on demographics

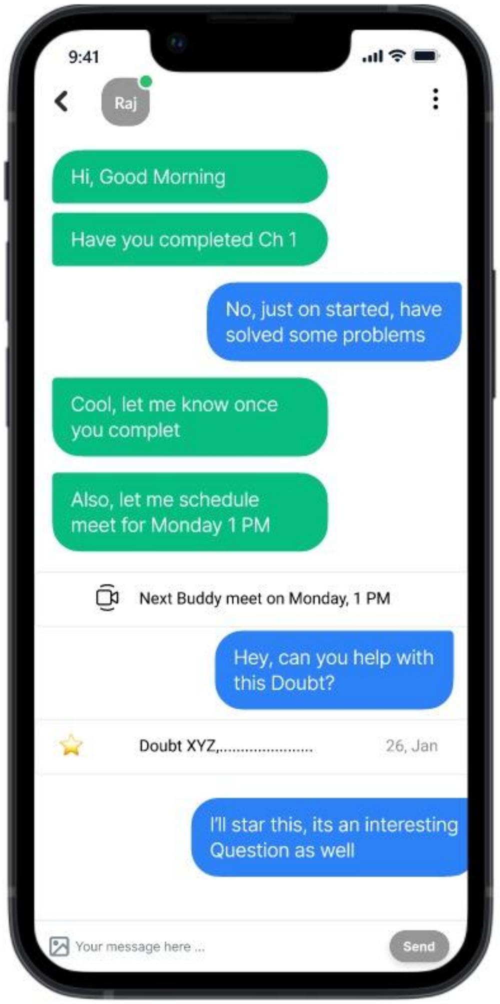
Appendix

Criteria For Pairing Up Learners:

- Must enroll for the buddy program & have the same target exam & year
- Lies in a similar Rank group (Leaderboard) & around the same coverage of the live batches (or recorded ones)
- Being fully verified by completing a few tests independently
- Being a user completes a threshold of 400 mins content every week

Other Screens


9:41
Buddy Call
Abhishek & Raj
00:21:45
Your call is secure


9:41
Raj

Hi, Good Morning

Have you completed Ch 1

No, just on started, have solved some problems

Cool, let me know once you complet

Also, let me schedule meet for Monday 1 PM

Next Buddy meet on Monday, 1 PM

Hey, can you help with this Doubt?

Doubt XYZ,...................... 26, Jan

I'll star this, its an interesting Question as well

Your message here ...
Send