Dashboard Chatroom Feature

Background

Currently, students rely a lot on multiple external communication platforms such as WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Telegram to interact with peers, resulting in fragmented conversations, context loss, and inconsistent engagement. These tools operate outside the learning environment and are not designed to support academic collaboration.

To address this gap, we aim to introduce an integrated, all in one communication feature which can be embedded directly within any existing student dashboard. This feature will serve as a centralized classroom communication hub, enabling students to interact with peers in the context of their courses through both group based and private discussions. By bringing classroom-style interaction into a single, native dashboard experience, we intend to reduce dependency on external platforms.

Problem Statements

Students do not have access to an integrated peer-to-peer communication feature within the learning dashboard, forcing them to rely on external messaging platforms like WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and Telegram. This results in fragmented discussions, diminished engagement in the academic context, and reduced visibility into peer collaboration on the platform.

Goals

The primary goal of this feature is to provide students with a centralized communication experience directly within the inbuilt dashboard, eliminating the need to rely on external communication platforms.

Feature success metrics:

- **Feature Adoption:** ((Weekly Active Chat Users ÷ Weekly Active Students)*100)
- **Feature Retention:** (Chat users active in Month N ∩ Month N+1 ÷ Chat users active in Month N) × 100
- **Peer-to-Peer Engagement:** (Students sending ≥ N messages per week ÷ Weekly Active Students)

- **Message Volume**: (Total messages sent ÷ Active classrooms per day)
- **Chat Participation Rate:** (Students who sent ≥1 message ÷ Total enrolled students)
- **Student Satisfaction:** (Positive chat feedback responses ÷ Total chat feedback responses)
- **Session Duration Lift:** ((Average session duration for chat users − Average session duration for non-chat users) ÷ Average session duration for non-chat users)

Hypothesis

If we introduce a dedicated "Chatroom" tab within the existing dashboard that provides a familiar, WhatsApp like chat experience for each class combining group conversations and private peer messaging then students will naturally adopt it as their primary communication channel, reducing dependency on external platforms and increasing in platform engagement.

This hypothesis is grounded in the belief that familiar UI patterns, immediate access, and classroom context communication will encourage adoption.

Validation Plan

To validate this hypothesis, the feature will be launched as a minimum viable product (MVP) with a controlled rollout and clearly defined success metrics.

1. **MVP Rollout:** Release the Chatroom feature to a limited set of classrooms.
2. **Measurement Window:** Track adoption, engagement, and retention metrics over an initial 30,60 and 90 period
3. **Experiment Design:** Compare chat-enabled classrooms against non-chat classrooms on adoption, engagement, session duration, and retention metrics.
4. **Decision Criteria:** Scale/iterate the feature platform-wide if adoption and engagement metrics meet or exceed predefined targets

Feature Description:

The Classroom feature is a built-in communication space designed to replicate the simplicity of popular messaging apps while keeping all interactions contextual to the student's class.

1. Classroom Group Chat (Default View)

- Clicking the "Chatroom" tab opens a group chat for the specific class.
- All enrolled students are automatically added to the group.
- Enables instant class wide communication.
- Keeps all discussions in one place, tied to the classroom.
- No setup or joining links required.

2. Member List Panel

- A left-side panel displays all classroom members.
- Shows basic identifiers such as name and status.
- Makes peer discovery simple and transparent.
- Clear visibility of who is in the classroom.
- One-click access to connect with peers.

3. Private One to One Chat

- Clicking on a student's name opens a private chat window.
- Private chats remain scoped to classroom members.
- Enables focused, personal conversations without leaving the platform.
- Supports peer help, collaboration, and networking.
- Faster than moving to WhatsApp or LinkedIn.
- Keeps all academic conversations in one place.

4. Familiar Messaging Interface

- Chat UI follows common patterns (message bubbles, timestamps, read status).
- Supports basic text messaging in the initial version.
- Reduces learning curve.
- Encourages immediate adoption.
- Feels intuitive and comfortable from day one.

Vision Narrative

A student logs into the existing dashboard to continue their coursework. While reviewing a lesson, they feel unsure about a concept and instinctively think about opening WhatsApp to ask their batch group. In the past, this meant switching apps, scrolling through unrelated messages, and hoping someone responds. This time, however, they notice the Classroom tab within the dashboard.

Curious and motivated to resolve their doubt quickly, the student clicks on the Classroom tab and is taken directly into a familiar, WhatsApp-like group chat for their class. They immediately see their classmates listed on the left, recognize a few active peers, and feel reassured that they are in the right place with the right people. The student posts their question in the group chat, confident that everyone there is enrolled in the same course and understands the context.

Within minutes, a peer responds with a clear explanation. Another student shares an additional insight. The conversation stays focused and easy to follow because it is tied directly to the classroom. For a deeper discussion, the student clicks on a peer's name from the member list and seamlessly moves into a private one on one chat, resolving the issue without leaving the dashboard.

As days pass, the Classroom tab becomes the student's default space for interaction. They use it to clarify doubts, coordinate study sessions, and connect with peers all without opening external messaging apps. The familiarity of the interface lowers friction, while the academic context keeps conversations purposeful. The student feels more connected to their class, more confident in their learning, and less distracted.

From the company's perspective, this shift creates a significant impact. Communication that once happened outside the platform is now visible, structured, and contextual. Student engagement increases as learners spend more time within the dashboard, forming stronger peer connections and relying less on external tools.

Key Trade Offs & Decisions

1. Classroom-Based Chat vs. Open or Global Chat:

Chosen: classroom-based communication, where only students enrolled in the same class (e.g., Class 5) can interact with each other.

Alternative Considered: An open, global chat or cross-class discussion forum.

2. Private Messaging Limited to Classmates vs. Platform-Wide DMs

Chosen: Allow private one-to-one chats only within the same classroom.
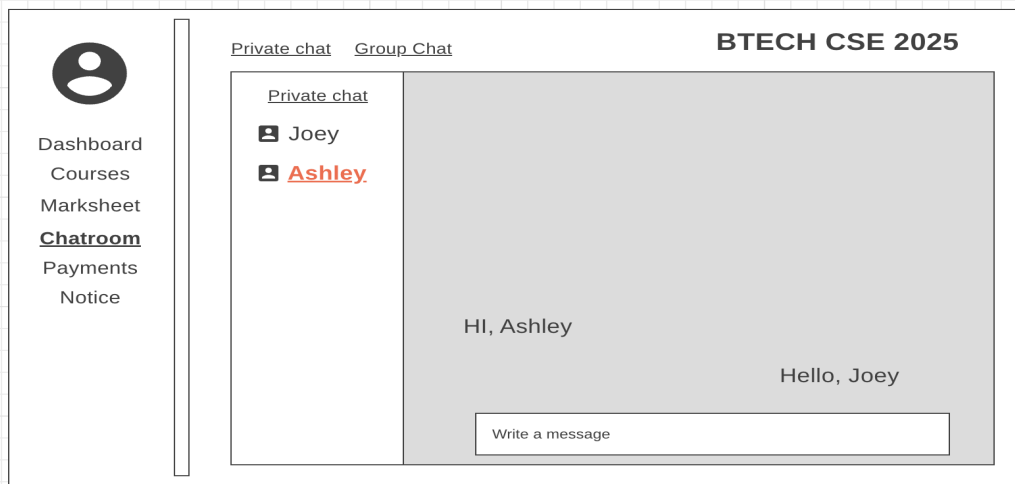
Alternative Considered: Unrestricted platform-wide private messaging(entire school/college level).

3. Text-First Chat vs. Rich Media and Advanced Features

Chosen: Start with a text-first chat experience.

Alternative Considered: Launching with voice, video, file sharing, and reactions.

Concept Mocks

Chatroom Feature:

1. Global chat (classmastes only "cse department 2025")
2. Private chat with classmates (text only for now)

Risks & Mitigations

1. Low Adoption Due to Existing Habit of External Apps

Risk: Students may continue using WhatsApp or Telegram out of habit, despite the availability of the Classroom chat feature.

Mitigation:

- Make Classroom chat the default communication entry point from courses and lessons
- Gradually move official announcements and discussions exclusively to Classroom

2. Off-Topic or Low-Quality Conversations

Risk:Classroom chats may become noisy or drift away from academic discussions.

Mitigation:

- Clear usage guidelines displayed within the Classroom
- Lightweight moderation tools (mute, report, restrict)
- Instructor or moderator visibility to encourage responsible behavior

3. Overuse of Private Chats Leading to Fragmented Knowledge

Risk: Important discussions may move into private chats, reducing shared learning.

Mitigation:

- Encourage group discussion
- Allow users to optionally share private chat insights back to the group
- Highlight popular or unresolved group questions

4. Performance and Scalability Issues

Risk: High message volumes could impact performance during peak usage times.

Mitigation:

- Start with text-first MVP to control load
- Implement message limits and pagination
- Monitor performance metrics and scale infrastructure incrementally based on traffic.

- **5. Privacy and Misuse Concerns**

Risk: Students may misuse private messaging or feel unsafe communicating on the platform.

Mitigation:

- Restrict messaging strictly to classroom members
- Provide blocking and reporting options
- Maintain audit logs and clear escalation workflow

Appendix

References

1. Introduction to Product Management for Beginners
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   https://careerfoundry.com/en/tutorials/product-management-for-beginners/introduction-to-product-management
2. How to Create Your First Wireframe: What Is a Wireframe?
   CareerFoundry
   https://careerfoundry.com/en/blog/ux-design/how-to-create-your-first-wireframe/#what-is-a-wireframe