Keeping high schoolers engaged during Covid-19 times

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Executive Summary

Since our product is at a very early stage, our team is interested in exploring opportunities in educational high school subject/topic-based chatroom products. We interviewed 5 high school students that are currently studying from home on their needs, pain points, and how they use digital products to learn high school material online and/or participate in high school WhatsApp user groups.

Key Findings

Home based high schoolers like to engage in online learning during mornings and afternoons as well as participate in high school WhatsApp user groups throughout the day. They use their mobile apps primarily to get help when stuck on a current topic or doing homework, not to learn new topics.

Major products in the market may place too much emphasis on learning new topics optimized for desktop and have less focus on chatrooms or text-based assistance. We identified opportunities to build a product with a focus on text-based peer learning assistance. We also found that the students prefer to get assistance via text from their peers as they relate more to each other and connect more easily.

What did we want to learn?

Our team wanted to explore high schoolers' experiences with existing digital tools for studying online as well as their usage of high school WhatsApp user groups. The goal was to determine what opportunities may exist for creating new educational high school subject/topic-based chatroom products.

Key Research Questions

● [Needs] What is essential for online augmented learning for high schoolers?

● [Behaviors] How do high schoolers currently augment their studies online?

5 Participants

We recruited our participants from high school WhatsApp user groups

	Study frequency	Digital products they currently use	Subject(s) they are currently studying
Participant 1	A few times per day	Khan Academy, WhatsApp groups	Maths, Science, History, Biology, Chemistry
Participant 2	A few times per day	Khan Academy, WhatsApp groups	Maths, Science
Participant 3	A few times per day	IXL, WhatsApp groups	Maths, Science
Participant 4	A few times per day	Khan Academy, IXL, WhatsApp groups	Maths, Science, Biology, Chemistry
Participant 5	A few times per day	Khan Academy, WhatsApp groups	Maths, Science, Biology, Chemistry

Key finding #1

Home based high schoolers use their mobile apps primarily to get help when stuck on a current topic or doing homework, not to learn new topics.

Finding #1

All participants use their mobile apps to reach out for help when they get stuck or need assistance particularly when studying Maths and Science.

Participants feel comfortable texting to their peers when they need assistance with their homework or when they get stuck on a topic especially with Maths and Science

"Yesterday I was stuck on a Maths problem in my homework and was running out of time so I texted my friend who happens to be the top Maths student in our class and he helped me with the solution. I would not have been able to finish my homework on time without reaching out for help."

- Participant 2

Recommendation #1

Our new product could solely focus on offering a text-based chat service app similar to WhatsApp to allow them to easily reach out for help when they need assistance with school-work

Things to consider:

● Chatroom should be categorized by subject for easy search and filtering

● The product should have an easy to use chat UI

Key finding #2

Some high schoolers would really be keen to mentor other students, which is not readily available in some of the digital products they are currently using.

Finding #2

Most participants are interested in mentoring other students if the opportunity is available.

Most participants are already helping their peers through high school WhatsApp user groups and are open to mentoring other students

"I would jump at the chance to be a Mentor! I am already leading study groups at my school and really enjoy sharing my knowledge with my classmates"

- Participant 5

Recommendation #2

Our new product could offer high school students the opportunity to become mentors to their peers

Things to consider:

● Create high school tests to find top performing students and give them the opportunity to mentor their peers

● The product should have an easy way of allowing a student to choose if they want to have a mentor

Next Steps

● Validate findings with surveys

● Conduct foundational studies on how high schoolers engage text-based chat service apps as well as how they approach peer-based mentoring both as a mentor and as a mentee.

● Run a design sprint for brainstorming

Affinity diagram

Do high schoolers use digital tools for learning?

User behaviours

User needs

Yes they use web apps like Khan Academy

Yes they use high school WhatsApp user groups

When and where do users study

How do students get help online?

Students are interested in Mentorship services

They love the digital features

They spend a lot of time on the high school WhatsApp groups

There is an even mix of preference of morning and afternoon study

The students prefer to text their friends for help

Students would love to be Mentors

Students are open to be Mentees

P1) I love how they categorize the subject topics on Khan Academy

P3) The lesson videos are byte sized and entertaining

P4) I like how I can see my progress

P1) I love how i can just text my friends if i get stuck on a problem

P2) I wish i could filter some group texts for subjects im not doing

P5) Iam always on the user group both mornings and afternoons

P2) I usually study in the mornings

P3) I prefer to study in the afternoon when I have finished my chores

P4) Im an early riser so i most productive in the mornings

P5) Im helping my dad during mornings so i study afternoons

P1) I love how i can just text my friends if i get stuck on a problem

P2) I find it easier to text my friends if i get stuck on a problem

P5) I have no problem texting my friends for help with homework

P2) I wouldn't mind becoming a mentor to my classmates

P3) Im already leading my study group. I would jump at the chance to be a mentor

P4) I know a lot about science and am open to mentoring about science

P5) Yes I think I can be a mentor

P1) There are a few subjects that I would appreciate having a mentor

P2) Yes I am open to being a mentee

P4) I dont mind being a mentee really