UniVerse

“College mentorship with freedom and ease”

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Meet the team

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Title & Value Proposition

UniVerse

“College mentorship with freedom and ease”

Problem & solution

Our Primary User:
College Counselors

Problem you are tackling:
Counselors lack independence when choosing students they want to work with (and topics) as they often work under a centralized topic

Brief synopsis of your proposed solution:
An app to allow Counselors to choose to work with small groups of students with interests and backgrounds that cater to their own knowledge.

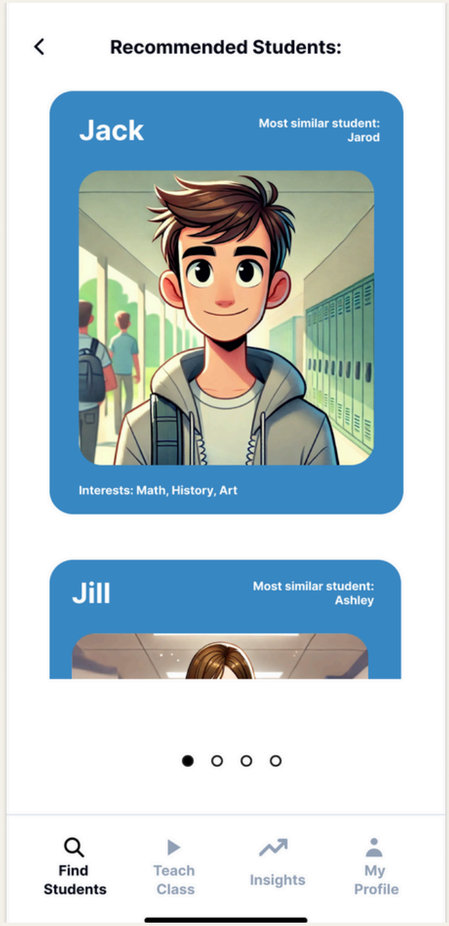
Values in design

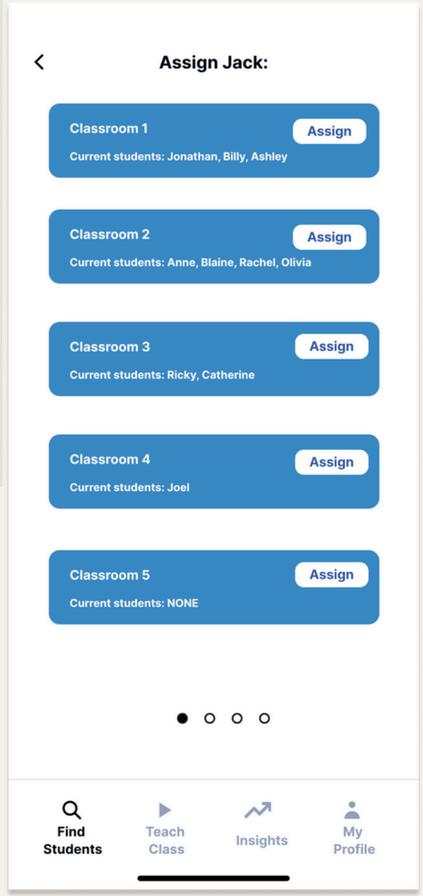
Values

1. **Freedom**
    a. Give counselors a choice in what students they want to work with and subject areas to focus on
2. **Ease**
    a. By providing accessible classroom tools that make it easy to track student progress and AI-generated insights, counselors' work can be made more efficient
3. **Community**
    a. Creating a space for counselors to build d long term relationships with different students, but also where students can find like-minded peers

Freedom

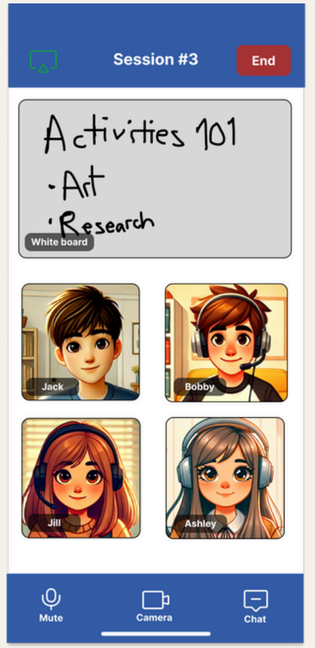
- In our **Simple Task**, we give counselors the choice of choosing students based on common backgrounds and interests
- After selecting a student they want to work with, the counselor also gets the choice of adding the student to a particular classroom that focuses on an area of college applications
- Counselor is **active** in this matching process

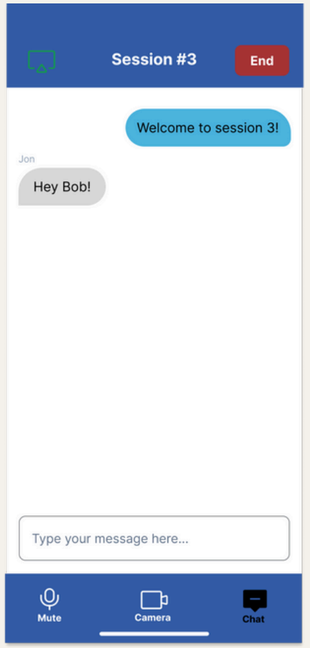




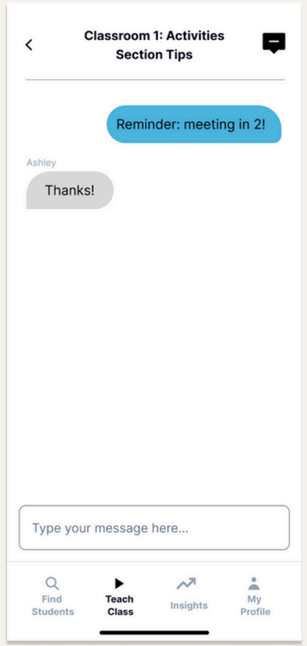
Ease

- In our **Medium Task**, we give counselors the tools to conduct classes both synchronously and asynchronously
- To do this, we have the chatroom class functions both within a live session itself, but also a general chatroom that exists outside any sessions





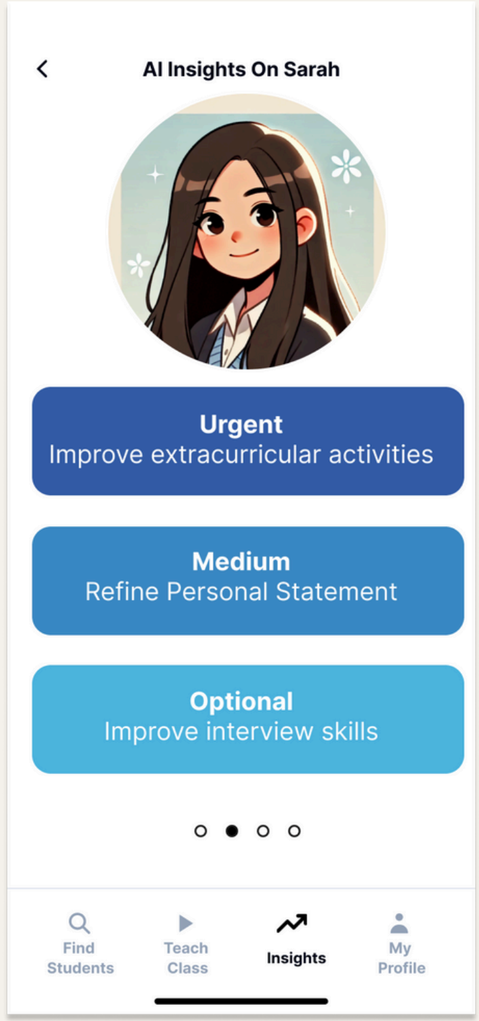
SYNC CHATROOM



ASYNC CHATROOM

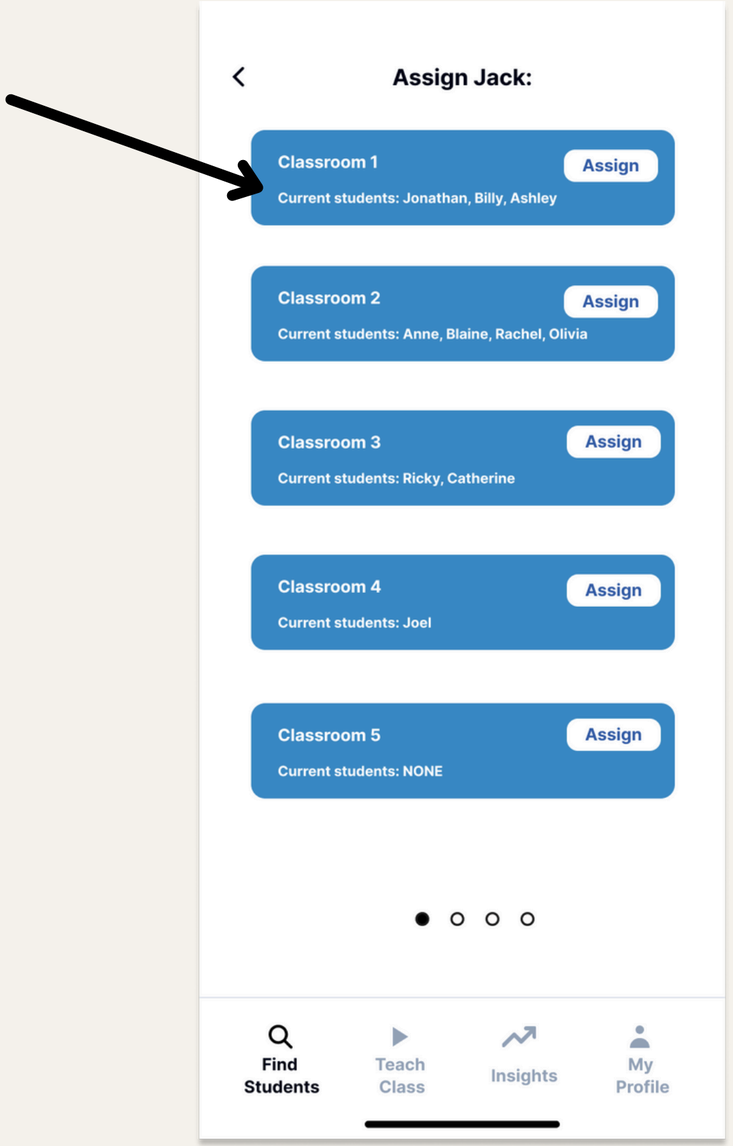
Ease

- In our **Complex Task**, we leverage AI to provide real-time insights for counselors as well as actionable items for them to follow up with their students
- This reduces counselors' workloads, increases their efficiency, and potentially generates insights they would have missed or wouldn't have thought of



Community

- In our **Simple & Medium Tasks**, we allow counselors to add students they would like to work with to existing communities of students
- This not only allows counselors to develop a long-term relationship with students, but allows students to form organic connections with each other since they already share similar interests and goals



Value Conflict: Freedom vs. Community

- **ON THE ONE HAND…**
  - Giving counselors a say in who they want to work with might motivate them to teach more effectively and enjoy their work
- **ON THE OTHER HAND…**
  - Giving counselors the choice to choose could also undermine a truly inclusive community, especially if certain counselors hold prior biases or stereotypes about certain groups of students they don’t wish to work with
- **SO..**
  - While maintaining counselor freedom, we need to monitor for cases where a diverse and inclusive community is being undermined

Tasks

Tasks Before

SIMPLE

Find students who counselors want to work with

MEDIUM

Teach students they want to with in an app-environment

COMPLEX

Have AI-powered tools that make managing student data and progress easier

Tasks After

SIMPLE

Find students who counselors want to work with

No change - like the simplicity of the most accessible task

MEDIUM

Teach students in an app environment that facilitates sync/async class coordination

More specificity about what our particular app environment provides

COMPLEX

Have AI-powered tools that make generate insights on student progress and give actionable recommendations

Also includes how these insights are followed by actionable items, improving this function’s practicality

Usability goals & key measurements

Usability Goals & Key Measurements

GOAL # 1

Intuitive

Want the UI to be easily understandable so that first-time users can enjoy it as well as power users

Key Measurement:

- # of times user ask clarifying questions
- # of times users press back button

GOAL #2

Helpful

Counselors find the app environment & tools useful and allows them to be more efficient than before

Key Measurement:

- Positive feedback users give from a counselor's POV, especially regarding the quality/novelty of the app's tools and features

Progress towards usability goals

GOAL # 1

Intuitive

Want the UI to be easily understandable so that first-time users can enjoy it as well as power users

Progress towards this goal:

- Changed logic for simple task to make it more easily understandable after user and section feedback

GOAL #2

Helpful

Counselors find the app environment & tools useful, which allows them to be more efficient than before

Progress towards this goal:

- Added new sub-feature for complex task to include actionable steps on top of AI-generated insights
- Created chatting feature to allow for async collaboration

Planned steps to further progress

GOAL # 1

Intuitive

Want the UI to be easily understandable so that first-time users can enjoy it as well as power users

Further progress plans:

- Wait for heuristic feedback and focus on comments on the app's intuitiveness/UI
- Implement these changes as necessary

GOAL #2

Helpful

Counselors find the app environment & tools useful, which allows them to be more efficient than before

Further progress plans:

- Wait for heuristic feedback
- Focus on comments relating to how our app enhances the work of counselors
- Implement feedback as necessary
- Further rounds of testing

Revised interface sketches

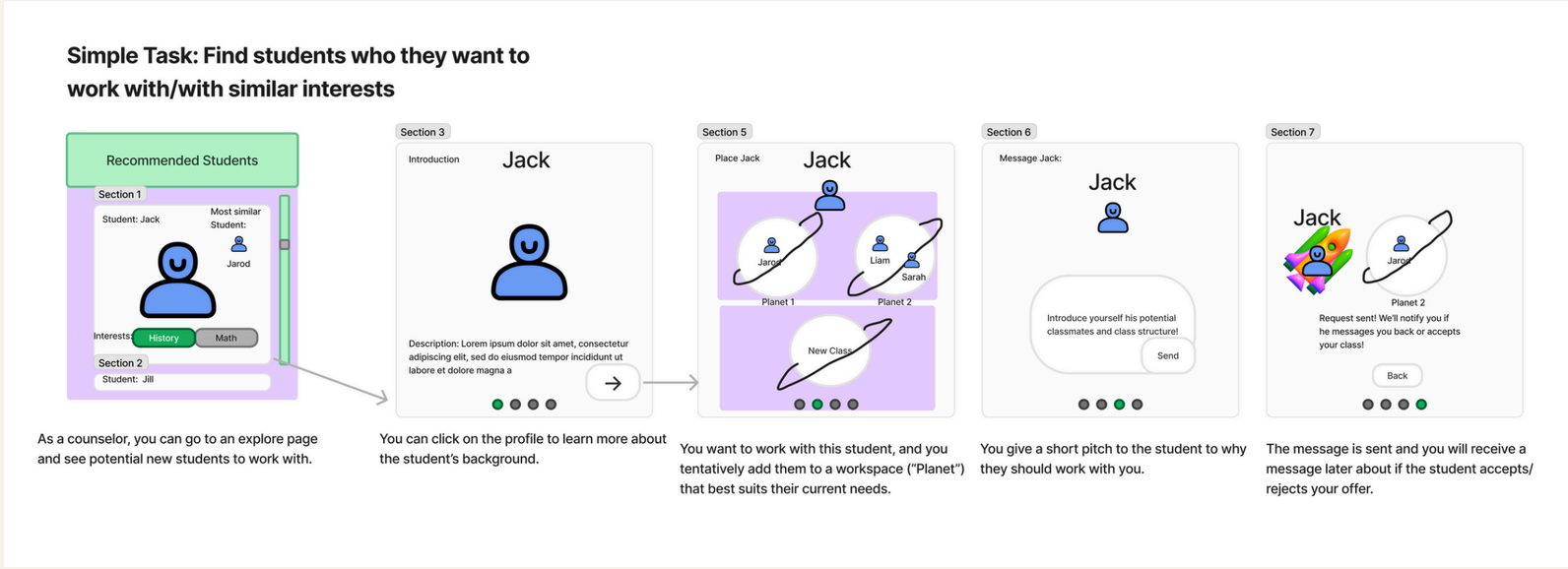
Major Change 1 - Corrected logic in simple task

Before

- Counselors choose a student they are interested in and temporarily assign the student to a classroom
- They would then wait for the student's acceptance

Feedback

- The simple task flow was not intuitive enough
- In particular, people did not understand why students were assigned to classrooms even before they accepted the counselor's invite



Major Change 1 - Corrected logic in simple task

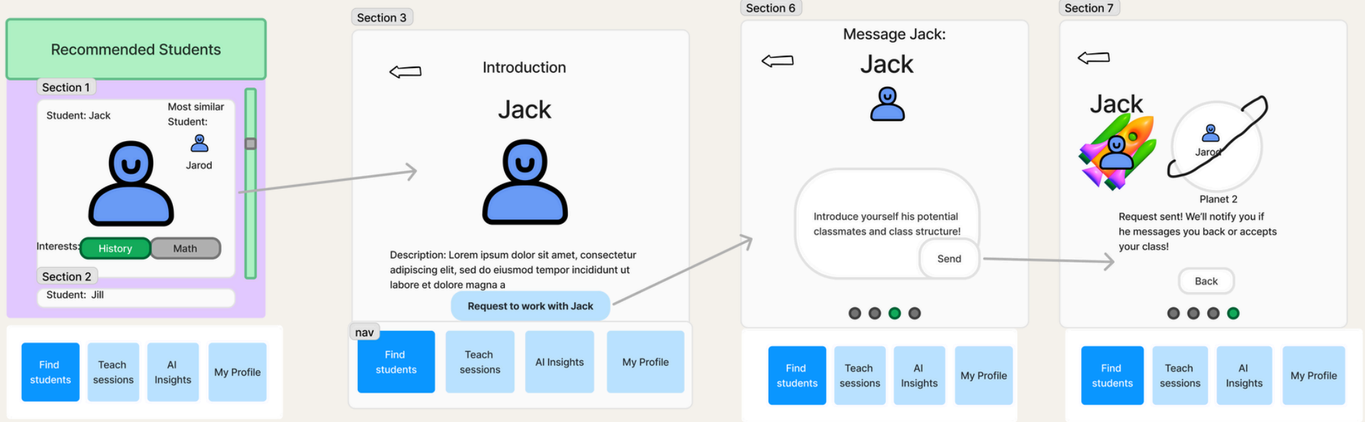
After

- Split the task into 2 parts
- Counselors first send a request to a student they would like to work with
- If a student accepts their request, the counselor is notified, and only then can they add the student to a classroom

How change addresses usability goals

- Addresses concerns about how the original flow is unintuitive
- The fact that counselors are only able to assign students after they accept is more aligned with how we think about requests/acceptance in real-life

Simple Task: Find students who they want to work with/with similar interests

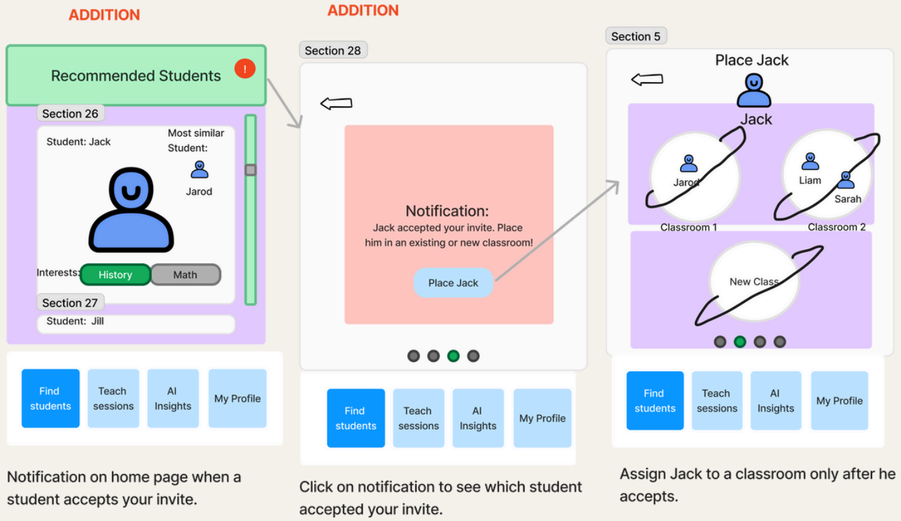


As a counselor, you can go to an explore page and see potential new students to work with.

You can click on the profile to learn more about the student's background.

You give a short pitch to the student to why they should work with you.

The message is sent and you will receive a message later about if the student accepts/ rejects your offer.



Notification on home page when a student accepts your invite.

Click on notification to see which student accepted your invite.

Assign Jack to a classroom only after he accepts.

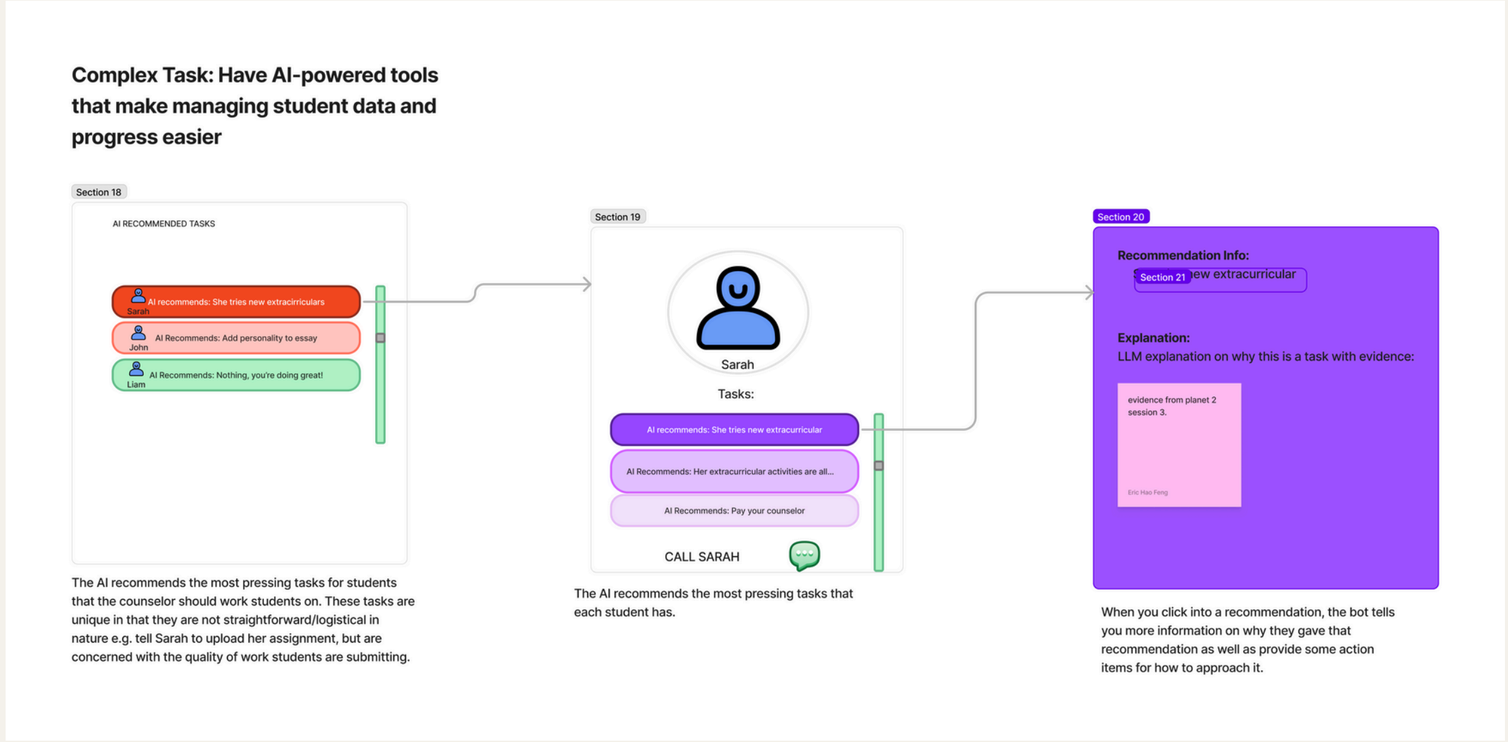
Major Change 2 - Actionable steps in complex task

Before

- In the complex task, counselors can view AI-generated insights about how they can improve student performance

Feedback

- Insights alone might not be novel and useful enough by themselves
- It would be better if the insights were accompanied by actional items (“next steps”) that counselors can follow up with right away



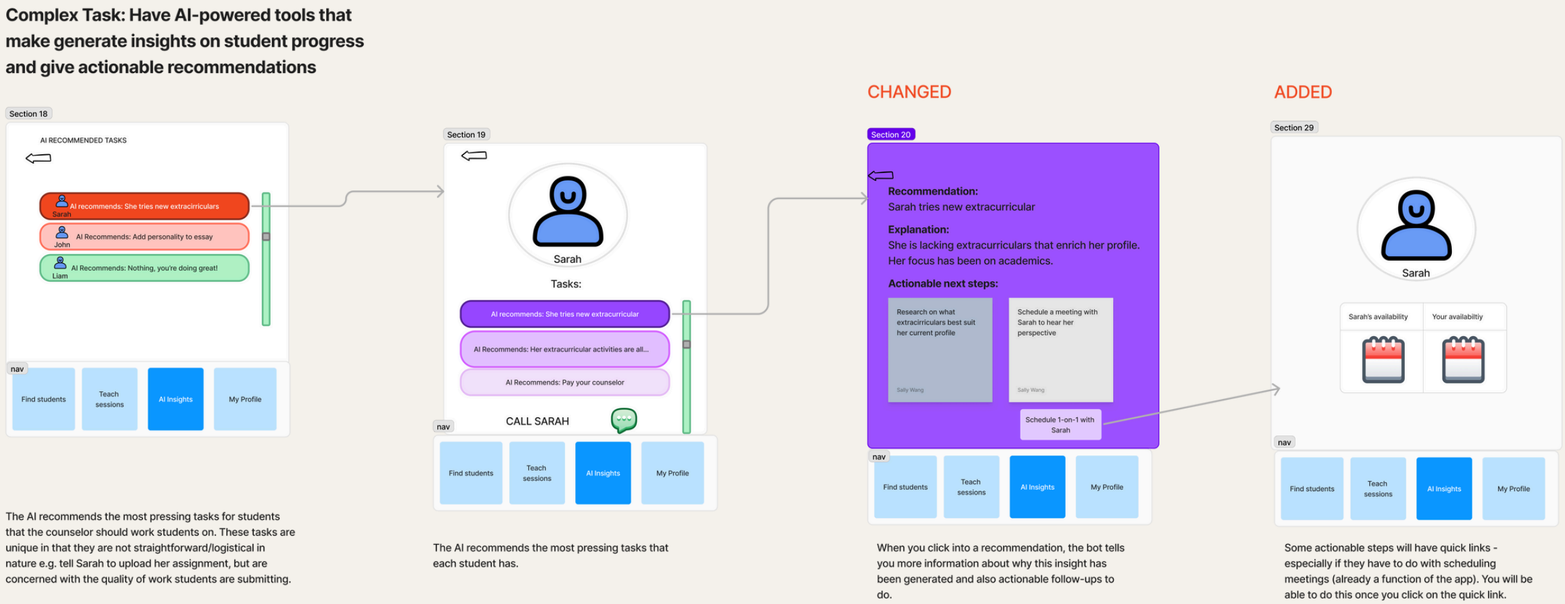
Major Change 2 - Actionable steps in complex task

After

- For each recommendation, we provide actionable next steps on top of an explanation of the recommendation

How change addresses usability goals

- This improves the “useful” usability goal as it gives the counselors concrete steps to take in order to improve the student’s performance
- By including quick-links for some next steps that can be done within the app e.g. schedule 1-on-1 meetings, the user experience is improved further



Major Change 3 - Creating an Async Collaboration Method

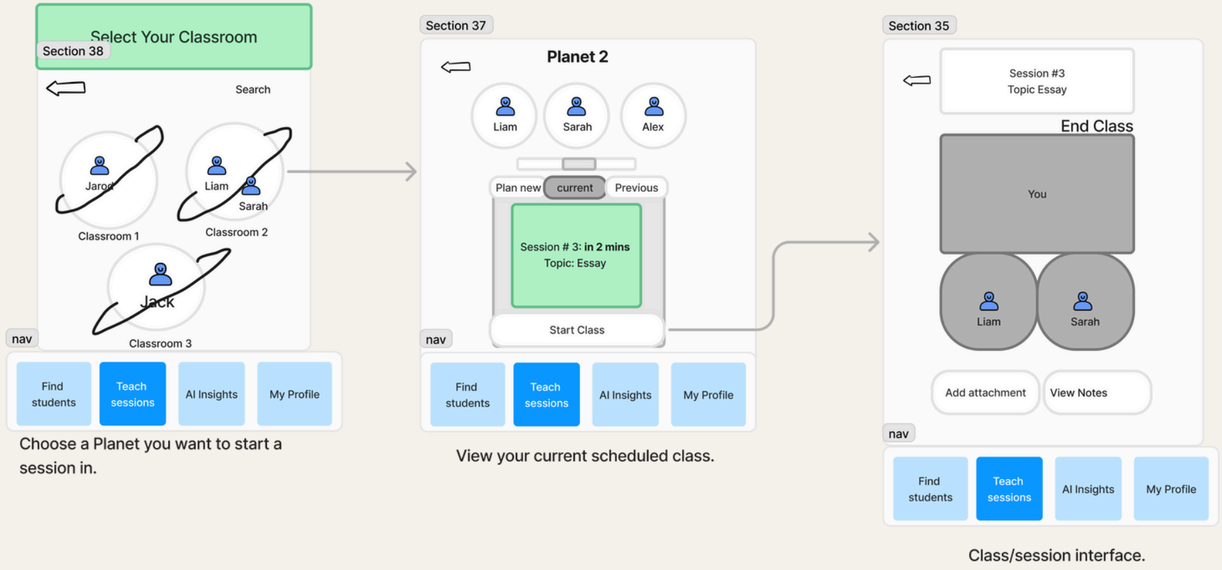
Before

- Counselors would wait until a scheduled meeting to work with their students.
- Students would share all updates and questions during scheduled live sessions.

Feedback

- Testers felt like they were limited to only short meeting times to work with their students.
- It would be overwhelming to try to answer everyone’s questions or provide resources if everything had to happen live.
- Users expressed needs of assisting students who wouldn’t be able to join meetings with microphone and camera access.

Medium Task: Teach students who they want to work with in app environment



Choose a Planet you want to start a session in.

View your current scheduled class.

Class/session interface.

Note: only the selected portion of the moderate task relevant to this major change is shown here due to the large size of the task.

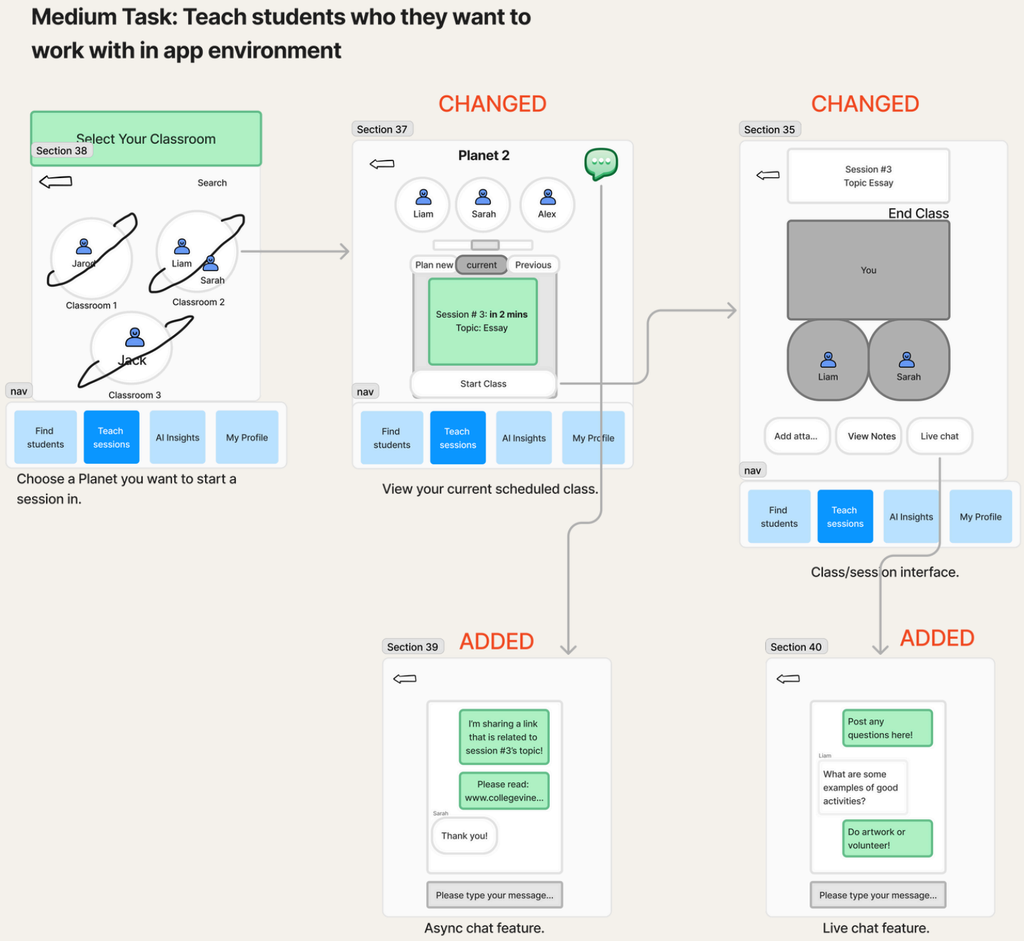
Major Change 3 - Creating an Async Collaboration Method

After

- We decided to add two places where counselors could chat with their students: one in the classroom interface and one during live meetings.

How change addresses usability goals

- The ability for counselors to chat with their students beforehand addresses our helpfulness goal since it allows counselors to communicate in an asynchronous manner.
- This new feature is also intuitive because it would exist in almost all frames of the moderate task, making it clear and easily accessible.



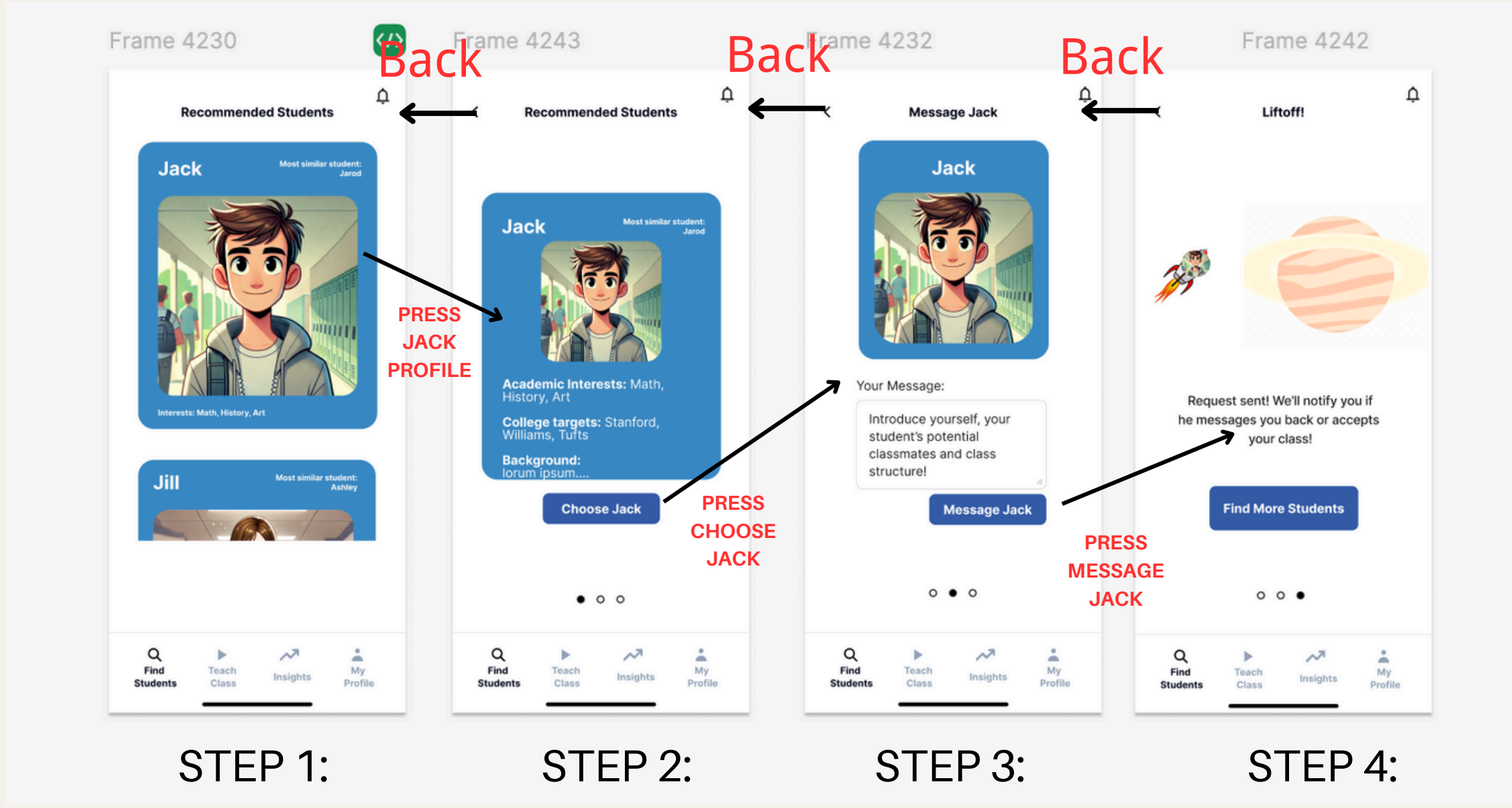
Note: only the selected portion of the moderate task relevant to this major change is shown here due to the large size of the task.

Medium-fi task flows

SIMPLE

Find students who

counselors want to work with



STEP 1: CHOOSE STUDENT

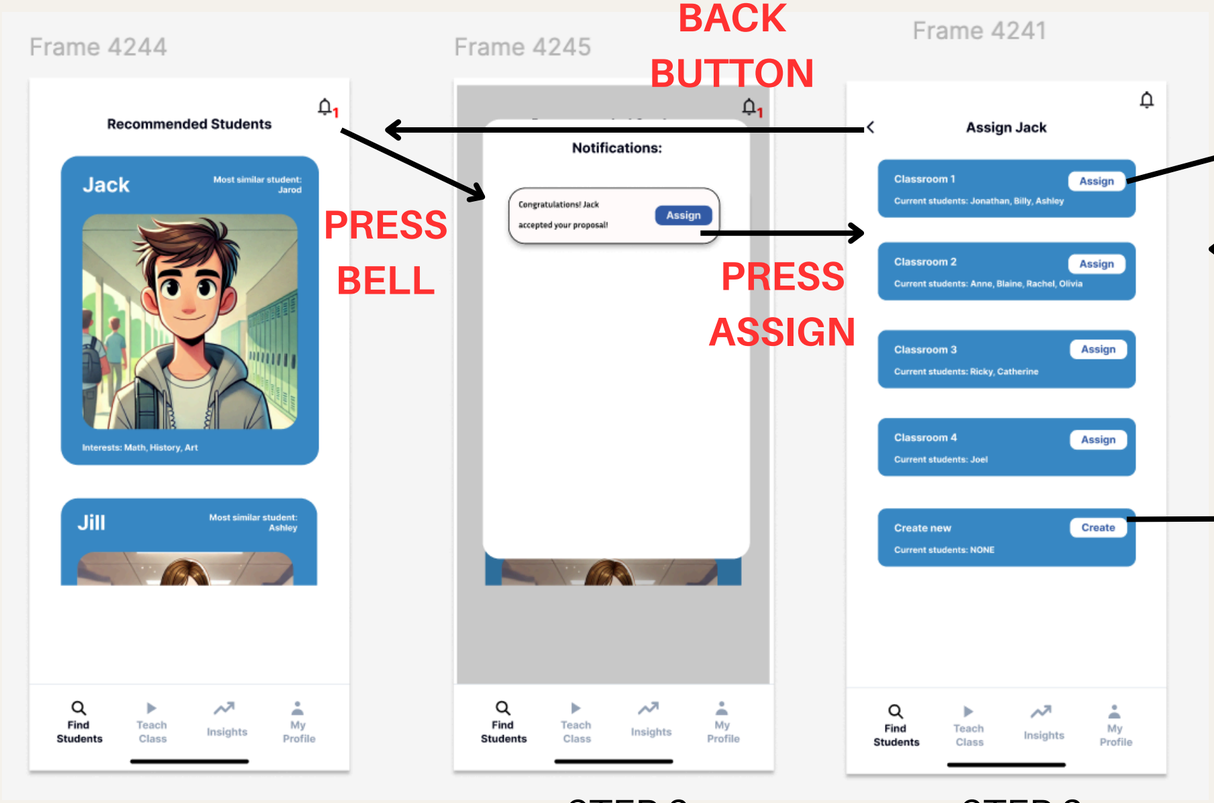
STEP 2: READING ABOUT STUDENT

STEP 3: PITCH TO STUDENT

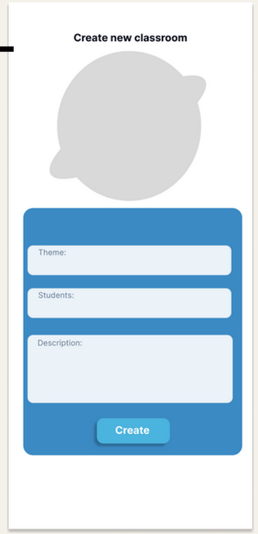
STEP 4: SEND REQUEST

SIMPLE

Find students who counselors want to work with (P2 when Student Accepts)



STEP 4A:
CLASSROOMS VIEW
(MORE DETAIL IN MEDIUM TASK)



STEP 4B:
CREATE NEW CLASSROOM

STEP 1:
NOTIFICATION APPEARS

STEP 2:
SEE WHICH STUDENT ACCEPTED

STEP 3:
ADD STUDENT TO CLASS OR MAKE NEW CLASS

MODERATE

Create and navigate the classroom environment

Part 1:“Scheduled” tab flow

Part 2: “Previous” tab flow

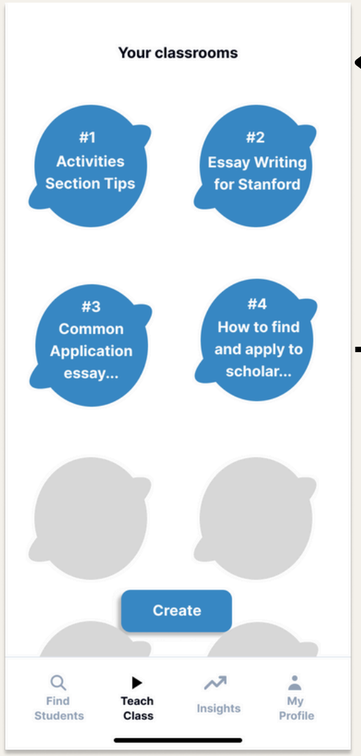
Part 3: “Create New” tab flow

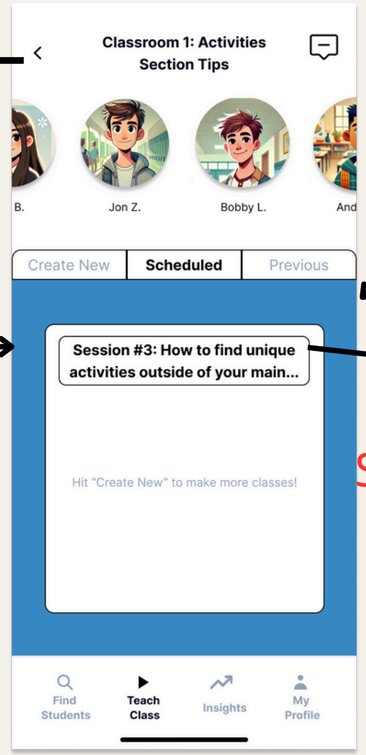
Part 4:“Chat” flow

START:
PICK YOUR CLASSROOM

MODERATE

Part 1:"Scheduled" tab flow

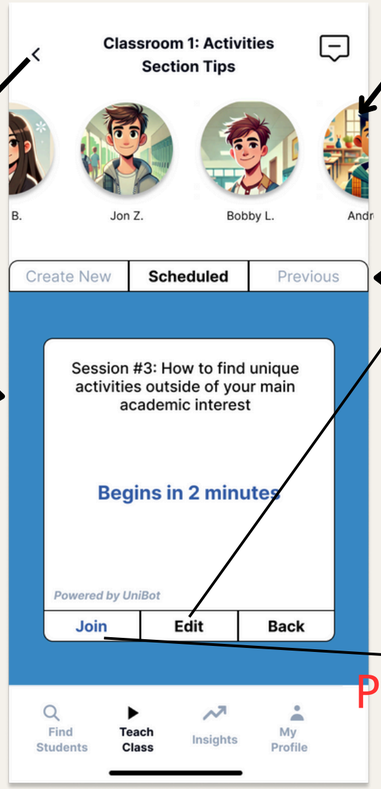




START:
PICK YOUR CLASSROOM

Press Session #3

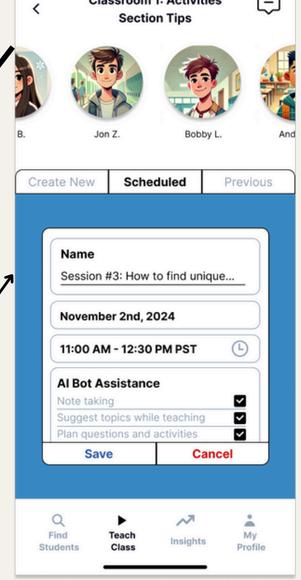
Back



STEP 1:
SELECT YOUR
SCHEDULED CLASS

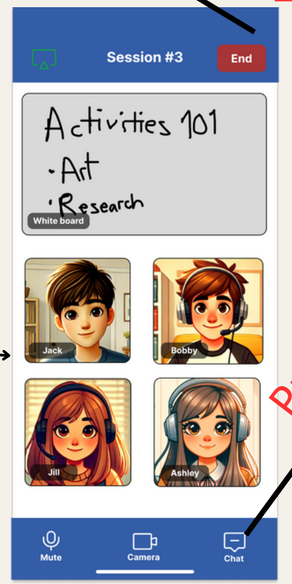
Press Edit

Back



STEP 2: EDIT YOUR CLASS INFO

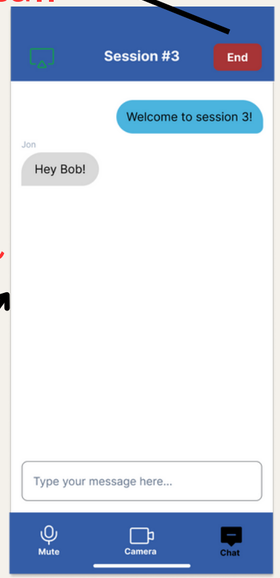
Press Join



STEP 3: JOIN
CLASS MEETING

Leave call

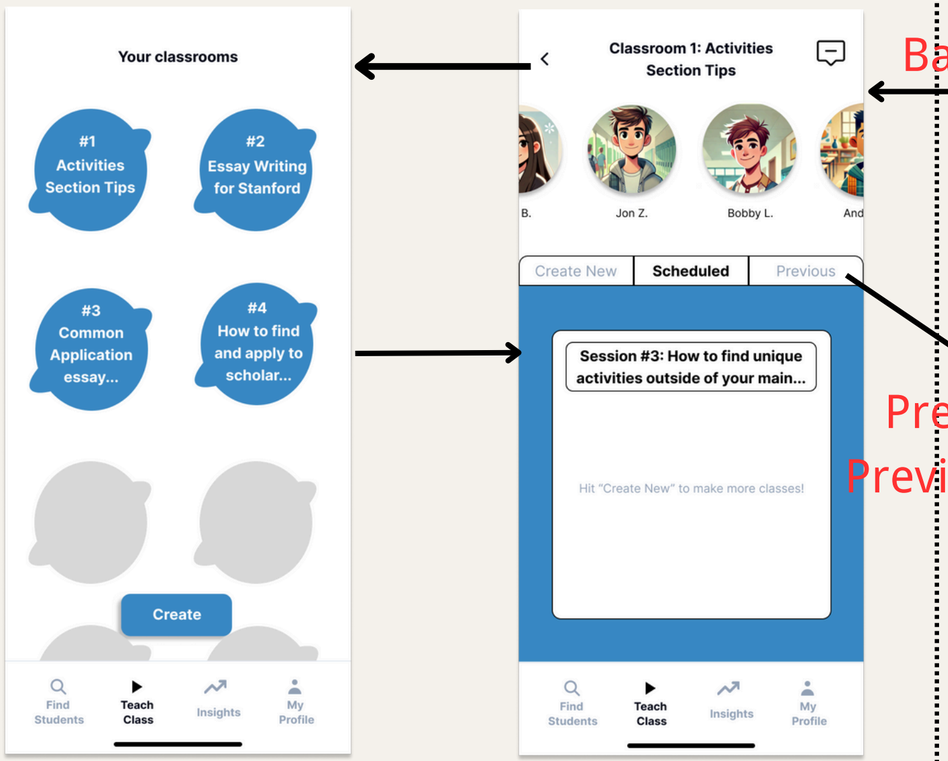
Press Chat



STEP 4: CHAT LIVE
WITH STUDENTS

MODERATE

Part 2:“Previous” tab flow



START:
PICK YOUR CLASSROOM

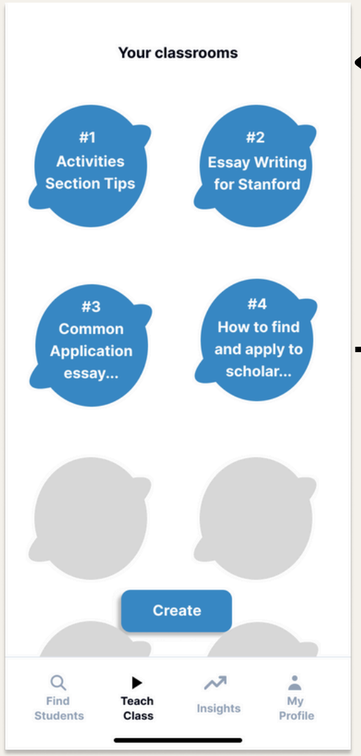
STEP 1:
LOOK THROUGH PREVIOUS LESSONS

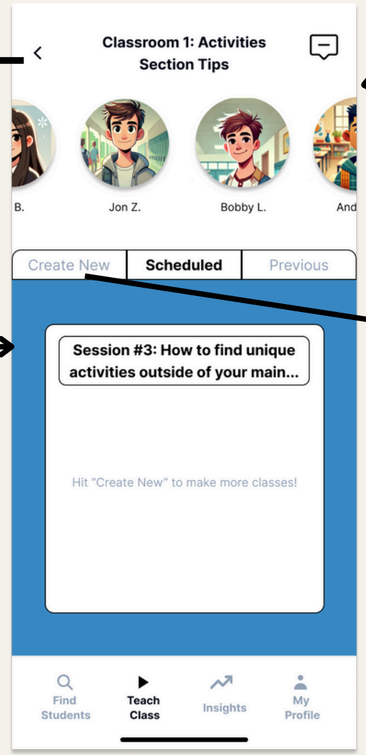
STEP 2:
READ THROUGH YOUR NOTES

STEP 3:
READ THROUGH AI BOT’S NOTES

MODERATE

Part 3:“Create New” tab flow

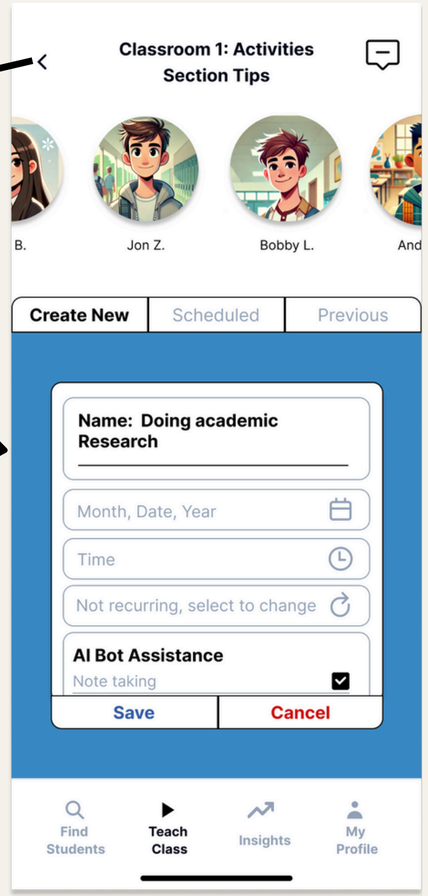




START:
PICK YOUR CLASSROOM

Back

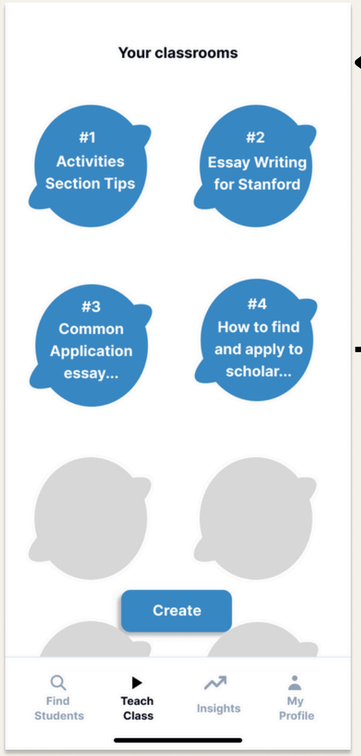
Press Create New

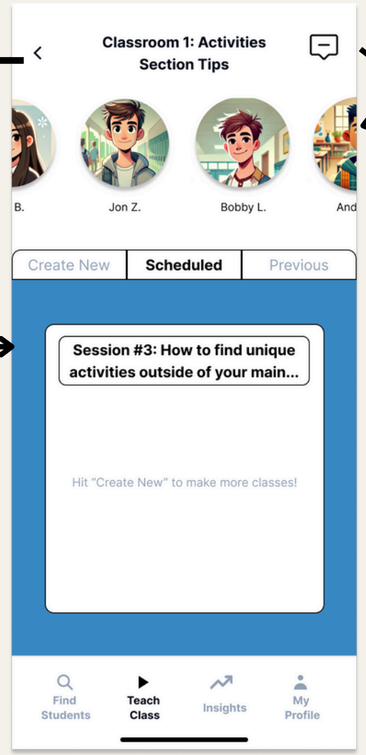


STEP 1:
CREATE A NEW LESSON

MODERATE

Part 4:“Chat” tab flow

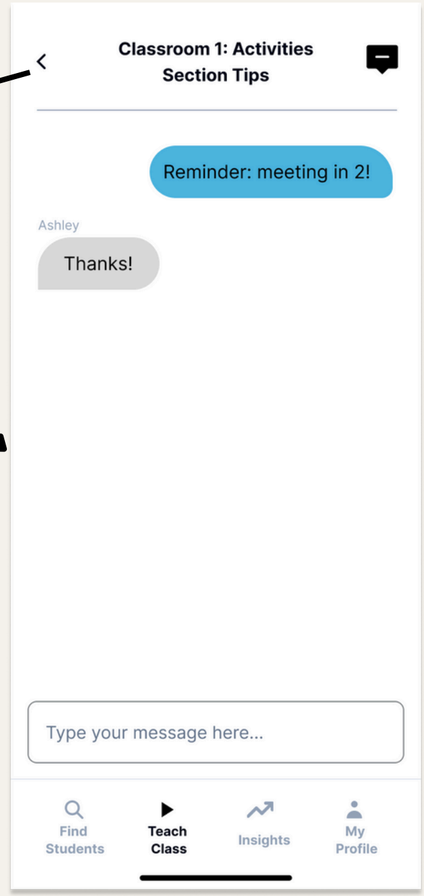




START:
PICK YOUR CLASSROOM

Back

Press Chat icon



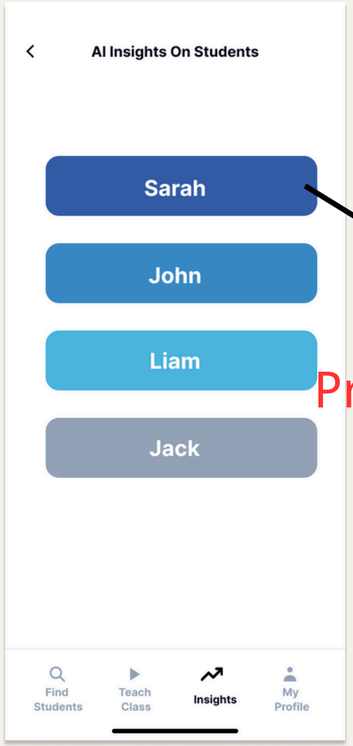
STEP 1:
OPEN AND INTERACT
WITH STUDENT ASYNC

COMPLEX

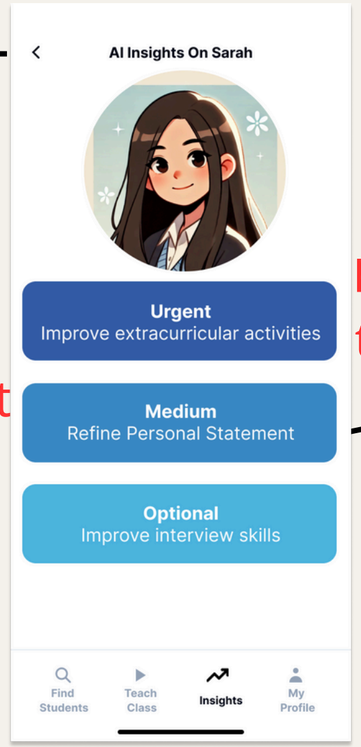
AI insights and recommendations

Back

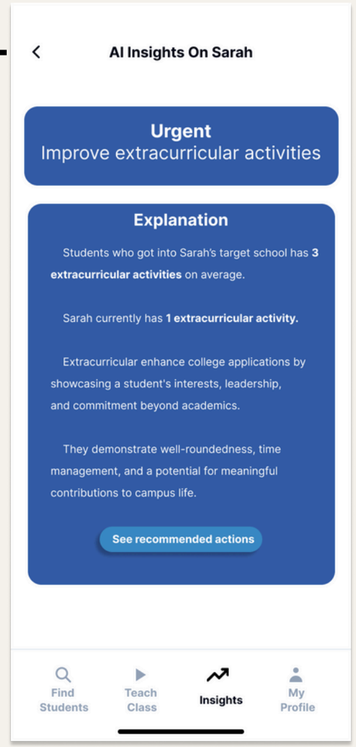
Back



Press student name



Press one of the insights.



STEP 1:
CHOOSE
STUDENT

STEP 2:
CHOOSE
ONE OF
THE INSIGHTS

STEP 3:
GET THE DETAILED
EXPLANATIONS

COMPLEX

AI insights and recommendations

STEP 3:
GET THE DETAILED EXPLANATIONS

STEP 4:
SEE RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

STEP 5:
SEE MORE RECOMMENDATIONS

STEP 6:
SUGGEST TO STUDENTS

Prototype implementation

Prototyping Tools - GoodNotes

Pros

- Simple to use and easy learning curve.
- Convenient for collaboration, since you can share your notes or export designs quickly.
- Great for drawing, sketching, and organizing ideas.

Ideation, low-fidelity sketching, and rapid iteration of early task flows

Cons

- Lack visual design features, such as vector tools, component libraries, or reusable assets.
- No collaboration features for real-time editing.
- Limited support for platform-specific features, meaning we can’t use interactive mobile layouts.
- Limited color, font, and icon options.

Prototyping Tools - Figma

Pros

- Enables reusable components (such as buttons and icons) for consistency and building complex interfaces.
- Plenty of free templates, artwork, and fonts to customize our vision.
- Contains platform-specific tools to mimic the mobile app experience.

Medium-fidelity prototyping and creating our mobile app screens

Cons

- Steep learning curve when trying to design an app.
- Complex logic that makes it difficult to fix errors and correct small issues, and can be overkill at times.
- Limited video and audio capabilities.

Prototyping Tools - ChatGPT

Pros

- Cost and time efficient, reducing the need to draw scenes or find real people.
- Consistent aesthetic across different generations, i.e. all students are created in a similar cartoonish style.
- Creates diverse and inclusive artwork representing a wide variety of users.

Generating artwork and photos of people

Cons

- Often misinterprets our requests even through repeated conversation.
- Challenges with complex UI elements since the images are static and not easy to customize.

Limitations and Trade-offs

Can’t simulate an actual class being run with real-time AI assistance

We can’t integrate real student and counselor information in our profile building process

We were limited by time and couldn’t build out the student’s POV of our tasks

There are no video or audio components to demonstrate our video meeting features

We don’t have data from colleges, which would improve AI insights and student matching

Wizard of Oz Features

- We simulated a student accepting our counselor’s request to work together, even though this isn’t guaranteed.

- We added mock “previous” classes that the counselor completed to demonstrate the ability for them to re-visit lessons in our moderate task.

- We created multiple classrooms and showed that our counselor is fairly active on our app, which also gives enough information for the AI insights to work with.

Hard Coded Items

- Our counselor selected AI help to be active in our moderate task, allowing it to generate content for their classroom.
- We created our own students and their profiles so the counselor would have people to match and work with.
- All the “AI” insights and messages/notes written by the counselor are pieces of content we wrote to demonstrate functionality.

Appendix

Major Change 4 - Scheduling multiple meetings

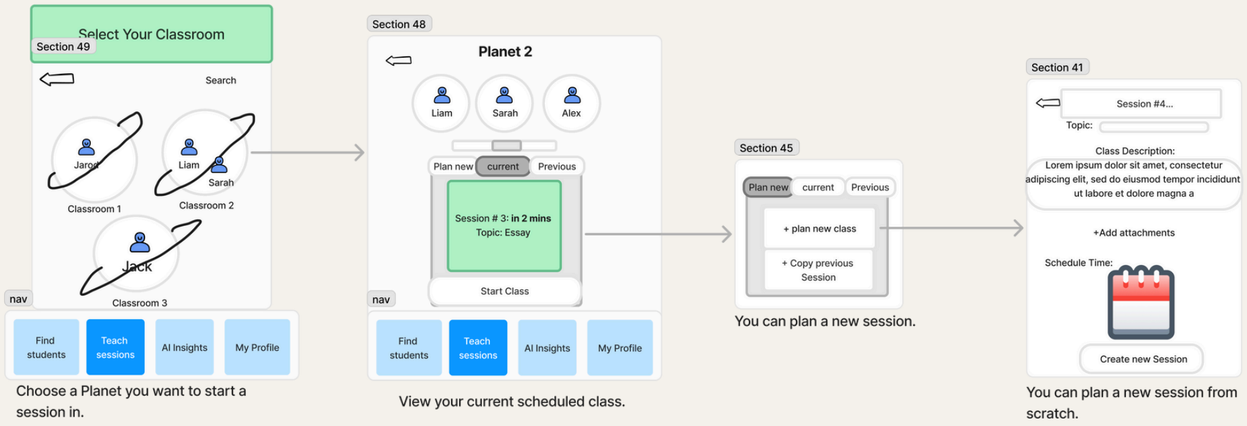
Before

- Counselors could only create and access one upcoming meeting at a time.

Feedback

- Testers voiced concerns that by only having one current scheduled meeting, it would give students too short of a notice to plan and prepare.
- Users expressed the need of planning multiple meetings in advance, and possibly even making them recurring.
- During studio, a peer was confused as to why there was only one session at a time when they would want to plan multiple.

Medium Task: Teach students who they want to work with in app environment



Note: only the selected portion of the moderate task relevant to this major change is shown here due to the large size of the task.

Major Change 4 - Scheduling multiple meetings

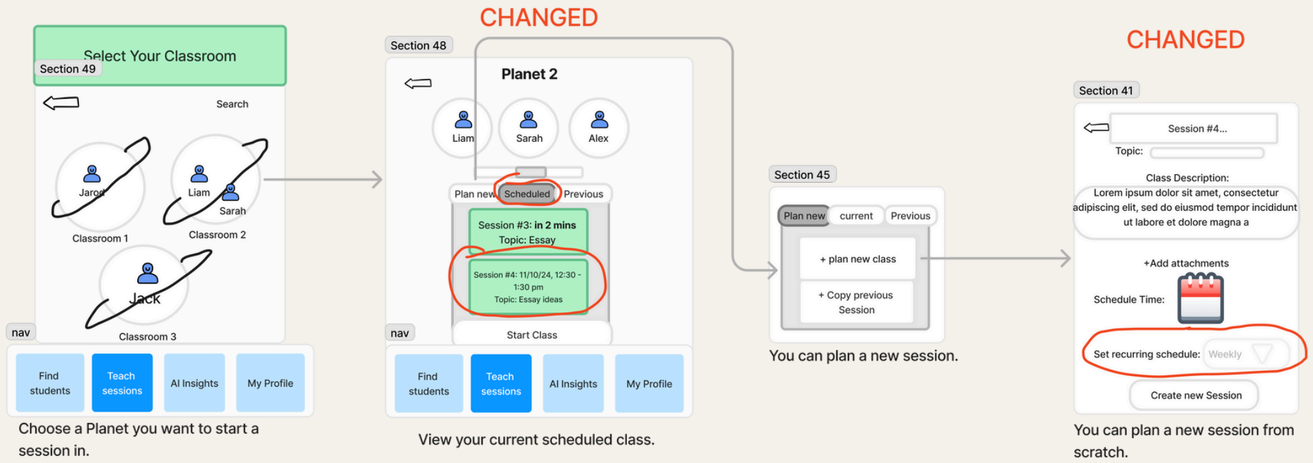
After

- We decided to change our “Current” meeting tab to “Scheduled,” and added the ability for counselors to schedule as many meetings as they wanted.
- All future meetings would be displayed in the “Scheduled” tab.

How change addresses usability goals

- The new design is intuitive because when you clicked “New,” counselors would’ve expected to be able to schedule as many meetings as they want.
- It didn’t make sense to have one scheduled meeting a time and be blocked from creating new ones.
- This is also helpful because it gives counselors additional ways to plan their classrooms and work toward long-term success with students.

Medium Task: Teach students who they want to work with in app environment



Note: only the selected portion of the moderate task relevant to this major change is shown here due to the large size of the task.

Figma Prototype Link

LINK

Figma Prototype Walkthrough

1. Overall Flow
    a. Includes onboarding process (sign up/log in)
    b. Can travel between different tasks
2. Three Task Flows

Website

LINK