

A PRODUCT VISION

AI Can Teach Anything. So why do students still quit?

Rethinking online education in the AI era

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Students don't buy lessons. They buy a better future.

While teaching coding across multiple cohorts, I noticed one pattern: students who shared weekly project milestones publicly were noticeably more likely to complete the course than students who progressed privately. Observational, not experimental — but consistent enough to become the hypothesis every feature here is built to test.

Every successful learning product should constantly remind learners who they are becoming, not only what they are learning.

Teaching coding was the first time I realized students weren't struggling because information was missing. They were struggling because belief was.

Turning a belief into something I can test.

HYPOTHESIS

Helping learners build a professional identity earlier will increase long-term engagement.

I believe this is a good hypothesis, not a proven fact. Everything that follows is designed to test this hypothesis, not prove it.

NORTH STAR

Learner Momentum: how consistently a student is building visible proof of progress, not just logging in.

If Career Identity shows no measurable effect on Learner Momentum after 8 weeks, the hypothesis is wrong — I'd retire it, not iterate on it.

These are the questions I'd want real users to answer, not assumptions I'd answer myself.

Real product work is messy. Everything else in this deck is confident on purpose, these three questions aren't answered yet, and I'd rather say so than fake certainty.

Does identity actually improve retention?

The observation is correlational, I haven't ruled out that identity-sharing is a symptom of already-engaged students, not a cause.

Is mentor intervention the right mechanism?

A human nudge might annoy students who'd recover on their own, or miss the ones who wouldn't.

Will students actually publish publicly?

Many beginners are embarrassed. This might need a private-to-public path, not a publish button.

Four product bets. One learner journey.

Not four separate products, four connected moments in the same story, in the order a student actually experiences them.



01 Career Identity

Gives students a picture of who they're becoming, before lesson one.

First test: Day-1 activation vs. control



02 Skill Tree

Turns the syllabus into visible, leveled-up progress.

First test: Week-4 retention



03 Portfolio Companion

Turns each milestone into public proof — Draft → Private → Peer → Public.

First test: opt-in rate before publishing volume



04 Learning Pulse

Catches disengagement before a student disappears.

First test: mentor act-vs-ignore rate on alerts

IDENTITY → PROGRESS → PROOF → INTERVENTION

Where I'd start, and what I'd skip.

BUILD ORDER — WHY THIS SEQUENCE

1 Career Identity

Activation determines whether any later feature gets a chance to matter.

2 Skill Tree

Cheapest first experiment, curriculum only, no new infra.

3 Portfolio Companion

Compounds visible progress into proof, once milestones exist.

4 Learning Pulse

Needs the most historical data — most valuable once others run.

WHAT I SAID NO TO (YET)

AI Interview Coach

Doesn't address the core activation problem.

Gamification / badges

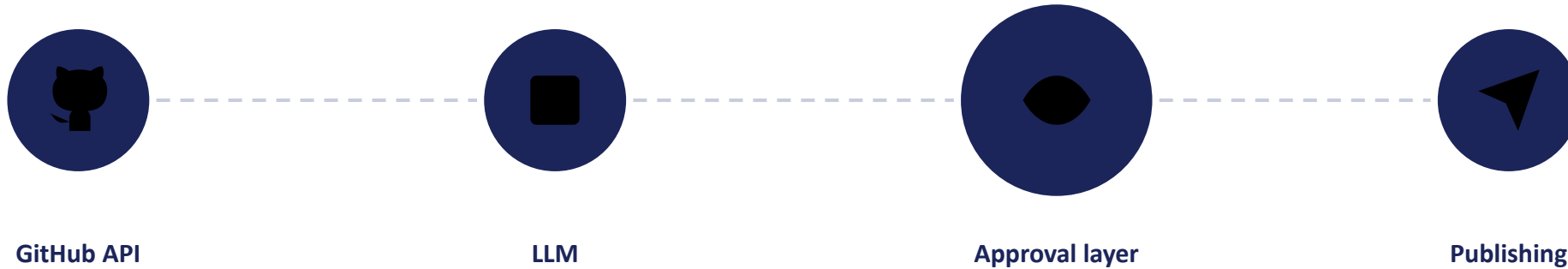
Risks rewarding activity over identity.

AI Tutor

Not sufficiently differentiated from ChatGPT itself.

Thinking like an engineer, not just a PM.

THE PORTFOLIO PIPELINE, END TO END



THE DECISION I'D FLAG EARLY

Publishing stays asynchronous

GitHub rate limits and LLM latency shouldn't block a student's workflow, so publishing runs in the background while the student keeps working.

One number I'd watch above all.

NORTH STAR METRIC

Learner Momentum

A rolling measure of how consistently a student produces visible proof of progress: milestones shipped, artifacts published, mentor check-ins, not just logins. Tells me whether they're becoming who they came here to become, not just whether they showed up.

PER-FEATURE METRICS

Career Identity

CORE METRIC

Day-1 Activation Rate

Complexity: Low–Medium

Skill Tree

CORE METRIC

Week-4 Retention

Complexity: Low

Portfolio Companion

CORE METRIC

Weekly Active Users

Complexity: Medium

Learning Pulse

CORE METRIC

Churn / Drop-out Velocity

Complexity: High

Why the advantage compounds instead of erodes.

OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, and Perplexity could all ship a “career identity” feature tomorrow. Here’s the moat that holds regardless.

Mentor relationships

A generic AI can't replace a mentor who has watched a student struggle for eight weeks and knows what will actually land.

Earned artifacts

Our portfolio proof comes from real milestones in a real curriculum. A chatbot can write a post; it can't ship eight weeks of projects.

Switching cost

Momentum, cohort history, and mentor context compound over months. A general assistant starts from zero every chat.

AI has already won the battle for information.

The next generation of education companies won't compete on content. They'll compete on who their learners become.

Somewhere today, a student is questioning whether they're capable enough.

Technology alone won't change that.

But thoughtfully designed products might.

OBSERVATION → INSIGHT → HYPOTHESIS → STRATEGY → EXECUTION → MEASUREMENT