Enhancing The Classroom Experience Through Moderated Chat

Research Renegades Informatics
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Problem
In lectures with hundreds of students, it is difficult for them to actively participate. A possible solution to this problem is to use a chat system alongside lecture in which students can ask each other questions and discuss the lecture topic during class. Such systems are promising but not yet fully effective.

Research
What We Did?
- Surveyed 149 students
- Interviewed 6 students in person (2 from each user type)
- Met with CSSS and research experts to synthesize data

Findings
How We Can Help
“"My voice is never heard”
BackChat lets you voice your opinion
“"Too shy to speak”
BackChat takes away the pressure
“"My students aren’t engaged”
BackChat facilitates engagement

Solution
BackChat is a student-influenced academic backchannel (a moderated chat to be used alongside lecture) that aims to increase student performance, participation, and satisfaction in large lecture classes.

Evaluation
After user-testing our prototype in an academic setting, BackChat proved to be:
- Simple and easy to use
- Effective at reducing noise
- A tool that facilitated better student engagement
- Faculty approved (Mike Eisenberg)