MESSAGING & POSITIONING STRATEGY

Naming the Category

How I built a B2B messaging strategy for an AI-powered education platform

Client details withheld under NDA. Category, audience, and process shared with permission.

The Brief

The client had built an AI-powered coding education platform for schools, colleges, and universities. The product was strong. Teachers who used it liked it. But the market didn't have a clear place to put it. It read as another EdTech tool, or worse, as another AI tool, in a category where both words already carried some fatigue and some fear.

My brief was to build the messaging house: the positioning, the category, the audience architecture, and the language, that would let the sales and marketing team speak with one voice across a genuinely complicated buying group.

How I Came to This

I started where I always start: with the people the product actually has to work for, not the feature list. I ran structured conversations with the founder and the product team to understand what problem the platform solved on its best day, then tested that understanding against how computing teachers actually described their own frustrations: too many disconnected tools, not enough visibility into what students were really doing, and real anxiety about AI arriving in their classroom before anyone had made it safe.

That last point was the pivot. Every early conversation about the product led with AI, because AI was the newest, most fundable part of the story. But every teacher conversation led with worry. Those two things were on a collision course, and no one had named it yet.

The Insight

The product's instinct to lead with AI was working against it. In a category where AI adoption is tangled up with safeguarding, data, and trust, leading with the technology made the platform sound like exactly the kind of tool a cautious school leader should be wary of.

> *“It is not an AI platform. It is a teaching platform that uses AI responsibly, where it adds value.”*

That single reframe became the spine of the entire messaging house. Once AI moved from the headline to a supporting detail, the platform could be positioned around what schools actually wanted to buy: control, visibility, and consistency, with safe AI as one proof point among several, not the whole pitch.

The Category Move

Rather than compete inside “coding platform” or “AI tool”, both crowded and both slightly distrusted, I named a new category built around the actual job the product was doing: an operating system for how computing is taught, spanning secondary school through to university. This did two things at once. It gave the sales team language that made competitors look partial by comparison, and it gave the product room to grow into adjacent features without needing a new positioning exercise every time.

Building for Three Buyers at Once

The hardest part of this brief was that the messaging had to work for three different people reading the same page: the classroom teacher, the head of department, and the school leader signing off on budget and risk. Each one was buying the same product for a different reason.

Audience	What they actually need to hear
Classroom teacher	Support every student, without more admin on top
Head of department	Consistent teaching quality across the department, without added complexity
School / trust leader	Adopt AI with confidence, without new safeguarding or compliance risk

Writing this as one shared “we help X do Y so they can Z without W” structure, run separately for each audience, meant every stakeholder in the buying chain could see themselves in the message without the copy contradicting itself between pages.

Closing the Competitive Argument

The final piece was giving the sales team language for the four kinds of alternative a prospect was likely already considering: coding platforms, general LMS systems, generic AI tools, and cobbled-together multi-tool workflows. Each one solves a fragment of the problem. None combine coding, assessment, feedback, classroom visibility, and safe AI in one place, built specifically for how computing is taught. Naming that gap explicitly turned a vague sense of “we're more complete” into a specific, repeatable argument.

Status

Delivered under a client engagement. Full detail, including the client's name and go-to-market specifics, is withheld under NDA. What's shown here is the strategic process and the frameworks I built, shared with the client's permission.