THE PRACTITIONERS' FIELD GUIDE FOR IMPLEMENTING EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Fostering motivation

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Fostering motivation

How can university teachers become and stay motivated to use educational technology?

A productive and imaginative use of educational technology depends largely on the people who use it and their motivation. Teaching staff's motivation to engage with educational technology is driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors: While extrinsic motivation can stem from the institutional environment, intrinsic motivation is driven by personal interest.

Cultivating extrinsic motivation, we found, was tied to recognizing and rewarding personal efforts with educational technology. Many of our respondents repeatedly emphasized the extra workload that accompanied using this technology.

> **Too much work and too little time**
> " … I'm not as active as these technology-savvy colleagues who are always trying things out, because as a mother of two children, I simply don't have the time to explore such things in my free time. I think this applies to all other colleagues with young children." (Professor at a university of applied science)

Teaching online, we found, also infringed upon teachers' personal lives beyond that of traditional classroom teaching, which made it hard to find a work-life balance.

> **No work-life balance**
> "… the dissolution of boundaries and the reconciliation [of work and social life]. So, when does work end? And when do I no longer have to be available?" (Instructor at a research university)

Acknowledging the additional workload was key in keeping motivation high among teachers. This compensation can be monetary, or the extra workload can be acknowledged through the reduction of teaching hours and/or efforts with educational technology could be counted towards tenure or promotion.

The need for compensation

"I think universities need to make sure that they do correctly recognize the amount of work that's involved in developing a new [online] course … [they] have a role to play in financially incentivizing it by ensuring that if we want new things to take place that will take financial investment … " (Faculty member)

Regardless of how it is structured, compensation should be transparent, comprehensible and commensurate with the invested work. Research has shown that supportive institutional policies may function to encourage motivation to explore educational technology. These policies can also establish an environment necessary for innovation creation. Moreover, such policies should not be competition-based but rather focus on recognition. Forming communities of practice that nurture collaboration instead of competition can also increase motivation.

In addition, streamlining bureaucratic procedures for using educational technology and offering ongoing support from administrators is linked to increased motivation. Essentially, management and faculty should work together as partners with transparent discussions about overcoming motivational barriers.

However, due to the personal nature of intrinsic motivation, these factors may be invisible to university management and difficult to disentangle. Our research indicates that personal interest in educational technology may be sparked through collegial networks, didactic and technical training and working as co-owners of technological developments with institutional leadership.

Fostering motivation means addressing both extrinsic elements – recognizing and rewarding efforts – and understanding the personal motivations driving teachers' interest in educational technology.

Data Dive: Where does intrinsic motivation to use educational technology come from?

Examples from a research university

Personal praise from students

"I get more or less direct feedback from the students for [online] interactions that we have. A "thank you very much" or another question. And in fact, some of the students are also very, very grateful. They get back to me and say, "Now everything has worked out."

Confident use of tools

"I have to say, once you master a few tools, that [didactic difficulties are] no longer an issue. These are tools that just really work as well as pencil and paper by now. … It's getting better and better, and of course with more complicated programs, you learn it bit by bit. So I can now say that I can make quite decent videos. Of course, it wasn't like that at the beginning. But it's a learning process."

Examples from a university of applied science

Exchange and cooperation

"We can exchange ideas relatively quickly. … Sometimes the scientific team comes and says: "Hey, I have an idea, could we somehow make a tutorial out of it or could we somehow produce some cool video or something on this topic." And that's often how these ideas develop and I think that's actually very cool because we just kind of help each other out."

Experimentation

"We are not so stuck in our ways, but have the freedom to think about what really makes sense here, or what could be exciting. … When someone says: "Hey, let's test this program, maybe it will be useful for us," then we actually don't have anyone who says: "No, we will not do that," but we simply try it out. And we try an exercise with it, and if it just isn't anything, then it isn't, but then we know."

Training opportunities

"[We] just check ourselves, what would be useful, what we would perhaps still be able to do in terms of technical know-how. And then we can actually choose relatively independently what kind of training really helps us."

DISCUSSION GUIDE: REFLECTING ON PERSONAL MOTIVATION
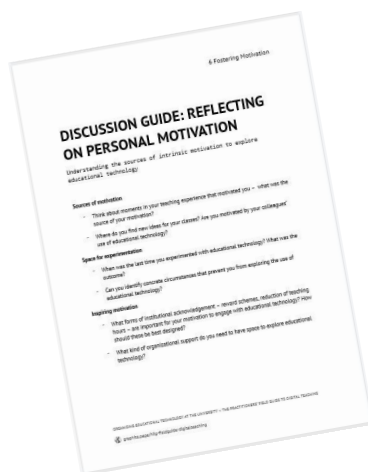
Sources of motivation
- Think about moments in your teaching experience that motivated you – what was the source of your motivation?
- Where do you find new ideas for your classes? Are you motivated by your colleagues' use of educational technology?

Space for experimentation
- When was the last time you experimented with educational technology? What was the outcome?
- Can you identify concrete circumstances that prevent you from exploring the use of educational technology?

Inspiring motivation
- What forms of institutional acknowledgement ─ reward schemes, reduction of teaching hours ─ are important for your motivation to engage with educational technology? How should these be best designed?
- What kind of organizational support do you need to have space to explore educational technology?