



## Higher Education Teaching and Learning

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What makes the most impact on encouraging staff to use technology in their learning and teaching? I'd love to hear what people think.

Im doing some research for an MA, and Im keen to find out what encourages people - or discourages them - from using technology in their teaching.

Does it make a difference which institution you work for, and how much is spent on technology?

Myths abound about how great tech is and how it enhances your teaching, but does it?

Are many staff technically able to use technology well, or are they all novices?

Is it all just a cost saving exercise, leading to redundancy for teaching staff?

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Suzanne Poulter, Patrick Blessinger and 10 others like this

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Follow James

**James Lerch** • I am mainly a white (chalk) board teacher who believes that in math the students should write down every formula, process, procedure and example problem in their own hands. Two modalities of learning in this way. I enhance the class with videos showing the development of a certain concept or a complicated procedure on occasion.

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Follow William

**William Badke** • I think the most likely people to use technology are those who use technology in their own lives. Programmatic approaches where professors are mandated to use this or that technology in this or that way tend to fail. For those professors who need to use more technology but don't, setting up a large program for technology use is not likely to be well received. Training sessions and small first steps are much better. Adequate support of faculty wanting to advance technologically in the classroom is key.

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Follow don

**don arnoldy** • The answer to "what encourages people - or discourages them - from using [almost anything]?" is pretty much the same.

To get people to adopt any new thing, you have to find the WIIFM (What's in it for me). You have to show them how the new thing will provide value to them. In the case of educational technology, how can it help them teach their courses better, faster, or more easily? How does it improve student learning outcomes? Give them context—teach them how to integrate the technology into the work they do, not just instructions on how to work the technology.

There was a discussion in this group a few months back, [http://www.linkedin.com/groupitem?view=&gid=2774663&type=member&item=221003272&qid=6cf5172a-6c22-4f9b-9b70-d356796b76bd&trk=group\\_search\\_item\\_list-0-b-ttl&goback=gm\\_r\\_2774663](http://www.linkedin.com/groupitem?view=&gid=2774663&type=member&item=221003272&qid=6cf5172a-6c22-4f9b-9b70-d356796b76bd&trk=group_search_item_list-0-b-ttl&goback=gm_r_2774663) that might help you with your research.

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7



Follow Arthur

**Arthur Schneiderheinze, Ph.D.** • Don: I agree that you have to help the potential adopter find the "relative advantage" of using the technology, if they are initially hesitant. Sometimes, it is a matter of making information about the technology available. We (the Center for Teaching and Learning) hosts quarterly "show and tells" in which faculty sit in sometimes random sometimes self-selected groups and share something they are doing. We find some will quickly adopt an idea because it came from a peer, rather than from us. For some, we make it incredibly easy to adopt a technology (we find a way to remove all possible barriers).

For some, it requires challenging their beliefs about teaching. As James illustrated by saying "that in math the students should write down every formula, process, procedure and example problem in their own hands." For some students, probably tactile learners or maybe even visual learners, but these faculty will likely be slow to adopt a new technology or way of teaching because their belief system is so engrained. Nothing wrong with this! As someone who is trying to help faculty integrate technology using research-based instructional strategies, I wouldn't pressure these faculty to do anything they don't see value to—at least initially. :)

Of course, I would also want to know more about the impetus for encouraging faculty to

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use technology? Is it just for the sake of using technology? Is it to help reach a diverse student population? Is it to provide opportunities that weren't available before? And, what systems are in place to support that integration? It might be easy to encourage some faculty to use technology, but if the support systems are missing (pedagogical, technical, professional, etc.), the technology may become more of a hindrance to learning for the faculty member and the students.

I've conducted studies looking at how teachers adopt technology (technology linked to a particular instructional design model such as PBL), and found Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation work quite applicable. I've found some other factors in an educational setting that affect technology adoption, but it's a great theoretical framework to use to understand how to promote adoption and to understand why adoption occurs or fails.

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Follow Alan

**Alan Portman** • One thing is working for an institution/administration that "gets it." There is more than pumping wires and boxes into classrooms and demanding you "use technology". The support from above can be the difference between success and failure.

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**Pen Lister** • Some great input - thanks. I especially like the comments from Alan, and will follow up "Rogers' Diffusion of Innovation work" referenced by Arthur. I hear what you're saying, James, but are there newer/other ways of achieving this physical interaction with knowledge to help understanding? Nothing wrong with writing things down, of course, but maybe we could be utilising interactive technology to build on that, especially in group environments.

I do think it depends a lot on institutional buy in, and then, the reason for that buy in can vary dramatically between different universities (the WIIFM argument applies right from top (management) level down I think). I also don't necessarily believe that tech is the answer to all current university woes - even though some would see it as that (i.e. MOOC hysteria).

I'm quite keen to find out how different disciplines might see this, as I think it varies radically between subject areas.

1 month ago



Follow Keir

**Keir Thorpe** • During 2001-9 when a key focus of my work was encouraging academic staff to adopt new e-learning and pedagogic approaches, I found that only one thing actually counted. They only wanted to hear stories of projects at the same institution and in subjects cognate to their own. If the reports were from other institutions even if in exactly the same subject or were from their own university but in a different discipline, the technology would be dismissed as inappropriate and unlikely to work with their students. Any learning technologist/educational developer needs a bag full of appropriate stories. Naturally the attitude overlooks students whose programmes take them across subject, school and even discipline lines. Obviously it was a challenge to find appropriate stories, it was very 'chicken and egg'. People willing to take the leap without such foundations were very limited so you tended to find that the 'second ripple' was in whichever subject area they were in but not far beyond that.

The hostility to 'not invented here' was incredibly strong as was the belief that a subject's students were utterly unique even to those in cognate areas. This extended as far as barring them from attending generic induction events for fear of them being 'contaminated' or 'misled' by non-subject specific approaches, for example to referencing and academic writing. There are differences but they are often exaggerated as a way to avoid engaging with something new. Of course there are other tools for this such as what I termed the 'RAE/REF shield' which is a kind of 'Get Out Of Jail Free' card for any academic who is reluctant to engage with a new initiative.

This difficulty in spreading new approaches presents a real challenge when you have an externally or even internally funded development project. It proves very challenging to spread an innovation even to different departments in one school, beyond the small group which has already signed up to the project. In addition, if just one or two staff who were particular enthusiasts move on, then even in that initial department, the support for the approach can quickly die. I cannot count how many times I have witnessed this occur. It is incredibly disheartening to have to report back to the learning and teaching fund providers or to JISC saying that another project has withered.

If you were able somehow to win over a new group of staff to try out the new approach or technology, then ironically it was 'war stories' that they wanted to hear. They wanted to find out precisely what had gone wrong for anyone who had used it before. Of course, supplying such information could lead them to changing their minds about engaging. However, they were very eager to minimise risk. This again presents a real challenge because even introducing a well-tested, successful technology to a new subject or new set of staff, is always going to have some risk and may go wrong. Risk aversion can actually make it go wrong. Staff can be overly hesitant in introducing the technology and this is quickly communicated to students who then avoid using it because they feel it is not a solid approach and may be withdrawn soon after. Too often the hesitancy becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Institutional buy-in is vital but too often this does not percolate down to the 'front line' of lecturers using the technology on a day-to-day basis. Some keep on with it but they become perceived quite quickly as eccentric and thus the technology itself as somehow peculiar and then the dreaded word 'inappropriate'. Students have input too and often do not like to be encouraged to use something they see as too worthy even though it provides greater learning opportunities than the latest smartphone or particular app that they would prefer and insist we must be engaging with. This attitude I summarise with reference to students even being unhappy in using their university assigned email

address but it goes further.

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Follow Keir

**Keir Thorpe** • The one thing that encourages the adoption of a new technology or application is fear. If staff think that there is going to be a major difficulty for the university and in turn for themselves, then they will adopt something new, even if only temporarily. This was strongly demonstrated at the start of the decade when everyone rushed to find tools that would allow attendance monitoring of international students in order to comply with UKBA (UK Border Agency) requirements. Once they knew UKBA staff could march into a university and demand to see their records on the attendance of international students there was a sudden focus that had probably not been witnessed for a long time. However, even then academics pressed that the greatest training and actual day-to-day use of such applications, was concentrated on administrators with their engagement kept to a minimum. Maybe this is why so much discussion about MOOCs has focused on fear factors with all the claims that they will destroy conventional universities. Those promoting MOOCs seem to have learnt that this is a more effective tool for encouraging the adoption of an application than pointing to the positive aspects.

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Marion  
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**Marion Sadoux** • I agree with many of the comments made above in relation to the what's on it for me... When designing training sessions for language teachers The most common stumbling block was the notion that using technology meant more work for no more pay. realising that something could be rendered more efficient in terms of teaching and learning or course administration with technology was a very important adoption factor. Showcases - the peer to peer dimension - also work extremely well as it has a non threatening aspect to it and it usually makes people think about how they could use what they have seen so the emphasis is on inspiration not perspiration! but the one thing I have found to be most useful is using the technology for learning and embedding content into it. For instance, when delivering a session about the use of onlinediscussion tools to enhance teaching and learning in languages, I used the discussion tools to deliver the session - this way, through a first person experience of the tools, teachers had a lot of fun, realised they were actually interacting far more than in a traditional development workshop and built their confidence in how to use the technology. In the following weeks I saw quite a few colleagues teaching in computer rooms and getting their students to interact online....

The key thing is to start with the pedagogy though and particularly to look at areas that are currently problematic to then find the tools to enhance or displace traditional practice. Sadly in most Universities training is focussed on the functionalities of the tools, many lecturers leave the room bored, do not use the tools soon enough to remember how they worked and then give up altogether at the next attempt. As one colleague once told me "no one likes to feel stupid" and this is often the outcome of such training.

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Marion  
Unfollow

**Marion Sadoux** • Sorry what's in it for me!!!!

1 month ago • Like



Follow don

**don arnoldy** • Marion-

You've hit on something very important... "the one thing I have found to be most useful is using the technology for learning and embedding content into it." This is especially true when teaching teaching methodologies.

The method by which they are taught has more weight than the method that they are taught. Imagine sitting through a 2-hour Powerpoint lecture on the value of problem-based learning, then being given a multiple-choice test to see if you "got" it! Which methodology is being reinforced?

--don

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Follow Ellen

**Ellen McMahon** • In addition to "what's in it for me?" the real question is "what problem are you trying to solve?"

Technology needs to make something better - and from a learning and teaching perspective the first thing it needs to do is enhance learning in some way. The second thing is to make some tasks easier helping us use time and energy better.

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Follow Lyn

**Lyn Alder** • Using technology involves four things.

1. Finding the right technology, learning how to use the software or hardware, embedding the content into the program and then will it work on the system I am required to use in the classroom.

2. After all that time and energy, excitement and frustration will it achieve what I want it to achieve. Will the learning happen?

3. Trust.... Trust in the network, hardware, in my skills at execution at the time I need it.

Personally I find Trust is my biggest part.

4. **Time and labour**..... Using the right technology takes time... Sometimes it is just easier to go back to old habits.

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Follow Joseph Bernard

**Joseph Bernard Mohan** • Teaching when it causes learning is TRUE TEACHING. A teacher who is passionate about "causing" learning in students would do everything within his/her power (and that includes the use of technology) to drive learning. In other words, the issue is one of teacher motivation.

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Follow Aimee

**Aimee Zhang** • I found some of my colleagues are not willing to take high technology tools in teaching because of the worries on technical problems during access. Training and better technical support would be helpful in this case.

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Marion  
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**Marion Sadoux** • Yes Aimee this is a problem I have also encountered with some colleagues. For instance when in meetings it was discussed that it was important to use the VLE in face to face sessions too, some colleagues raised the fear of finding themselves in a classroom where the data projector does not work - it then transpired that they did not report malfunctions...

Another thing I encountered is that a number of colleagues feel very worried about having to improvise or use different tools when the technology is failing - something which of course can happen. So in addition to training and technical support, the ability to teach flexibly or have a back up plan is also important.

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Susie

**Susie Macfarlane** • Great discusjsion, thanks you.

It is interesting we say "technology for teaching"... I wonder if linking these two challenging and time consuming activities is ideal?

I am starting to adopt a more person- (rather than teaching-) focussed approach. So providing my colleagues with experiences in which they can develop their digital literacy without specifying the context in which it might be used. As they integrate the practice, they are generating their own ideas about how they might apply it in their teaching, research and more generally.

More ownership this way, and wonderful to see!

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Follow David

**David Albrecht** • You can't force other people to do anything they don't want. Other than making use of new hardware, and new digital/social technologies, I wouldn't create an atmosphere of expecting others to do what I would wish them to. In higher ed, that is a sure fire way to disfunctionality.

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Follow Mike

**Mike Bell** • Why would you want to encourage people to use technology? There is precious little evidence that it enhances learning. If they want to use it, fine, but if not, and their results are good, their students happy and they enjoy their work, leave them alone. If you are going to try something new, why not try something with a proven high effect-size?

You may like to join The Evidence-Based Teachers Network. <http://www.ebten.org.uk/>

1 month ago • Unlike

2



Follow Alp

**Alp Oran** • First, I think that if faculty are provided the right context, there would be greater 'buy-in' to adopt newer technology, but only if the strengths and weaknesses of that technology are explained clearly in that particular context.

As an example of a context that would promote technology integration: This past school year was an unusual year for me in that I had a significantly higher than normal number of students with learning differences (once referred to as learning difficulties); our university provides psychometric assessments to ascertain if a student has a learning difference and then informs the relevant teaching staff of any special needs for that student (ex. extra time for an exam).

After reading a book dealing with the need to recognize the neurodiversity of the student population and the importance to integrate varied teaching styles to address a wider audience (Neurodiversity in Higher Education by David Pollak, 2009), I came to appreciate that the technological tools ALREADY exist (hardware and software) to improve teaching. Not all students like to or can write to the extent that maybe the professor expects. Likewise, not all students are visual learners. Technology exists to address all of these issues.



BUT that being said, I must mention that my integration of technology in the classroom has been mostly on my own initiative. **Our university is great about integrating the latest gadgets into their classrooms; often the IT department at our institution updates the systems in our classrooms at least once a year with a major overhaul once every 5 years.** The problem is that the teaching staff are ignorant of these changes (hardware and software). It can be a couple of years before a professor learns and adopts a new technology to its fullest potential and sometimes the training is minimal at best.

One last problem that I have discovered is that even when I was formally trained to use the technology (ex. smart podiums), the **previous lecturer may have adjusted the podium in a way that rendered it ineffective.** So frustrating! So I found myself wasting my time re-booting the system and verifying that the device was working before having a chance to prepare my lecture and classroom exercises.

**So my solution: I acquired a portable laptop** with a tactile screen with a fully integrated system that need only be plugged into the podium. No muss, no fuss. With the tactile peripheral, I can write my notes on the screen, use any additional peripheral devices (ex. clickers), record my lectures (audio and video), etc.

As an additional demonstration of what one can do: **my office has no chalk board but it does have large tactile computer screens for students to draw, write, or edit documents that I can then manipulate with my tactile laptop in real-time with the students.** I can draw or animate processes directly on the different screens (for visual learners) and at the same time orally describe the process (for the non-visual learners). Using an over-the-counter microphone, I record all my conversations so, like my lectures, if a student wants the audio (or video but not in my office), they can have a copy and later do voice-to-text conversions at home. Or I will do it for them.

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**Pen Lister** • Ok Alp. What are you teaching (subject area/discipline)? And what do you mean by 'smart podium'? You sound pretty savvy when it comes to tech, so this is very thought provoking. Give me a few more details to understand what the context is.

Mike, I totally get the issue around whether it actually enhances learning, its part of what has motivated me to 'delve deeper' into this whole issue. Too many presumptions around TEL, though I am a tech person, I'm sceptical about some of the 'imagined' benefits, but need to hear what others experience.

Susie, I really believe that ownership of any teaching method is what makes it really succeed, regardless of tech, but I'm trying to see how the landscape is for what students might expect as digital citizens (if they are that, which is still in flux). Establishing the relevance to your own teaching practice is vital to any meaningful use of any tech, otherwise its just a 'token' add on.

David, its possibly not about 'forcing' people to do things they dont find relevant or useful, but maybe its about introducing them to IDEAS about what they could do, to really get more to happen with the students they teach. This is different in every scenario, tech is only ever a tool, not a kind of magic trick. Its about practical ideas, not 'we must use some fancy tech because we must'.

1 month ago



Marion  
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**Marion Sadoux** • David, whilst I agree with you that **forcing approaches and tools on colleagues is something which rarely gives positive results,** there is the important issue of the student expectations and learning style. When students get very **disparate experiences indifferent modules,** they tend to be dissatisfied and to complain. I have often come across **students** who were **complaining about the lack of resources on the VLE for certain modules** - a few years ago this only tended to happen when students had had an exceptionally positive experience in a previous module, but this is gradually **becoming an outright expectation.** I don't think that Universities can remain places where A and B just teach how they see best fit, but instead **T&L plans have to be developed at course level and institutional level....** Arguably this is **part of the marketisation and branding of Higher Education,** but when this is done openly, consultatively and from within a genuine community of practice, it has enormous benefits. **I don't think that at £9,000 per year we can have any complacency about T&L ...** Technology has a lot to offer in enhancing the experience and the access to those with learning -and life style -differences...

1 month ago • Like



Follow  
B.S.Thandavesw

**B.S.Thandaveswara Basavapatna** • **A proper blend of technology with teaching is essential.** Teacher while teaching also **should learn and update their knowledge** and as well the development in other peripheral areas. This statement is based on my own teaching and research experience of plus 40 years in engineering. **Some of the technologies enhances the presentation and improves communication**

1 month ago • Like



Follow Alp

**Alp Oran** • Yes I agree with David that no one should be forced to work with technology (although I guess we need to clarify that we are talking about modern tech since a pen and paper are forms of tech). **My only point is that technology, if used properly, can be more inclusive and if we have the opportunity to be more inclusive with our teaching practice,** then should we not aspire to change our methods. Of course, if 100% of your students are happy with it, then congrats.

As for the lack of evidence that technology promotes learning as stated by Mike, well I would have to look at those studies to see how they measure learning and whether the

tech was used appropriately. Clickers have been shown to provide constructive feedback and increased student engagement assuming of course the lecturer addresses the feedback in the appropriate manner. If the lecturer is merely using it as a gimmick without responding to any gaps in understanding exposed by clicker-based questioning, then it is expected that neither class exam performance nor student engagement will go up.

In my experience, for those students who have made their learning differences known to me, they all have voiced their appreciation concerning the choices in format and the ability to review material at their discretion through services provided by me on the learning management system (Blackboard Vista) = tech. The consequence is that they stay on with the course and continue to learn (whereas perhaps in the past they would have dropped the course and their learning would have ended). Since introducing greater choices in format through tech, the students who have been most affected are those that have been traditionally on the lower end of the grade scale; they are catching up to their peers. Plus my retention rate has increased, dropping from 16% to about 8% by the official drop date for a class of about 80-100 students. Well, arguably I have increased learning just by retaining more students because now more students are being educated even if the level of learning on a per student basis is the same (based on the exam performance for example).

Just to highlight the point in a more explicit example, consider this scenario:

A 70% final average for a class of 60 students vs. a 70% final average for a class of 100 students.

Yes, if I were to base learning on the final average then on the surface there is no difference between the two classes. If I were to base learning on the number of students being educated through to completion of the course, the latter demonstrates greater learning than the former. By including inclusive practices (which can be accomplished with and without tech), the latter situation should be possible. Most studies and reviews that I have read base their assessment of learning gains on exam performance but this is too limiting.

My 2 cents.

1 month ago • Like



Follow Lauren

**Lauren McCrea** • Check out Alan Levine's blog:  
<http://cogdogblog.com/2013/05/23/the-things-we-talk-ourselves-out-of/>

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Follow Mace

**Mace Mentch** • First of all it has to be a bottom up, not a top down process. It shouldn't be imposed on the faculty by the powers that be. More importantly, however, is that technology must be seen as being useful and it must be as easy to use as a toaster. Finally, if you show them that it will solve a problem that they are having with teaching and learning, they will be more likely to use it. See the Technology Acceptance Model, TAM (Davis, 1986) and User Acceptance of Information Technology (Venkatesh, V., Morris, M.G., Davis, F.D., and Davis, G.B., 2003).

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Follow Mike

**Mike Howarth** • Hi Pen

I am just working on a series of workshops for staff at University College, London and you are welcome to assess at the schedule of activities illustrated by sketchnotes that I have developed with Paul Walker of the Centre for Advancement of Learning and Teaching.

The main theme is the similarity between existing professional education media skills of the BBC broadcaster and existing methods used by academics and grafted one onto the other to develop media savvy teaching. There is no need to encourage just how to work more efficiently, more powerfully and be a more effective educator (with greater options for employability). The tool (which is not that important) is the an iPad Mini as video camera and editor. The process contains the true value for the educator. We make and then talk afterwards.

1 month ago • Unlike

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Follow Brig

**Brig Lavanina** • Any technique which is accepted by students for better learning is good. At undergraduate level in medical education contemporary methods are good which can be mixed with technology for demonstration purposes. How to draw diagrams in a simple way is by black/white board, Subsequently teacher can use blog to answer students queries.

1 month ago • Unlike

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Follow Michael

**Michael Hargreaves** • As a part-time university lecturer and developer of a website used by students to format assignment sources into reference lists I have found this discussion most enlightening.

If I were looking to conduct a formal research project on the questions that you raise, I would look at the influences of age, gender, qualification level, personal use of technology, prior experiences, institutional pressure, peer pressure, and student pressure. Most, if not all, of these issues have been raised by other contributors.

I would also recommend reading Geoffrey A Moore's Crossing the Chasm, which charts and explains how technologies are adopted, to complement those authors recommended by others in this forum.

1 month ago • Unlike



Follow [ahmad](#)

**ahmad baloch** • Use of technology is an added facility to learning provided it is suitable to taught discipline and is in proper and functional form. Its use is encouraged.

1 month ago • Like



Follow  
Wilhelmina  
Zaragoza

**Wilhelmina Zaragoza Atos** • As technology evolves one may ask why was technology invented? I do believe that it is for the betterment of the human person whether the user or the provider. For what outcome? Learning? How is learning measured? By an exam? That is cognitive? But a person is more than cognitive. So how do use evaluate the outcome of technology with the other dimensions of the human person?

1 month ago • Unlike

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Follow  
Wilhelmina  
Zaragoza

**Wilhelmina Zaragoza Atos** • Who creates your career ? Are you a person who waits for the opportunity to come or do you look for it? Who/what are your drivers? The path may be straight or spiral or even cyclical but if the energy is not enough to push it in the direction it points you may arrive too tired or too confused so confused you may have missed it.

1 month ago • Like



Follow [Sonu](#)

**Sonu Sarda** • I reckon encouraging staff to use technology could be accomplished, to some extent, by the following:

- 1) Lead by example
- 2) Sharing Good Practices
- 3) Any PDP /In service training workshops must incorporate ample use of technology to make staff learning experience interesting. Once they experience its effectiveness they will be able to relate well to the benefits of technology -be it for teaching or for other professional tasks. This would include 'WIIFM' in practice, as suggested by Don.

1 month ago • Like

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**Pen Lister** • Re Geoffrey A Moore's Crossing the Chasm, it appears (on first glance) to be based somewhat on Rogers Diffusion of Innovation, but I will research further.

Some excellent new points being made here - I especially like the one about "So how do use evaluate the outcome of technology with the other dimensions of the human person", though in truth I must stay focussed on my original question of what motivates and encourages - I think more research around institutional policy and budget allocation may prove as significant as any personal motivation from the teaching staff themselves. I know that positive peer pressure can be a great encourager, but my view at this point is that the perceived ideal of more technology in L&T may itself be misleading, hence interest in perceived actual effectiveness. (The study here isn't about measuring effectiveness, but may well cover imagined or perceived effectiveness amongst those whose input I can gather, including those partaking in this thread).

Also v interested in Mike Howarths work - more info if possible please - inbox if necessary.

Thank you again all for continuing this thread - I will be 'sorting and categorising' responses and will share that here in due course for further input!

1 month ago

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