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Nudge 2: Digital Professor of the Year

Tagline:

"Who's leading the digital revolution on campus?"

Target Behavior

In a world where digital transformation is reshaping industries, the classroom is no exception. The tools available today have the power to make lectures more dynamic, student interactions more meaningful, and the educator's workload lighter. Yet, the promise of these technologies often meets

hesitation—whether due to the fear of the unknown, the pressures of time, or simply a lack of recognition for taking that first bold step.

This nudge aims to rewrite that narrative. Imagine a university where digital innovation becomes the norm, where educators are celebrated not just for what they teach but for how they teach. The "Digital Professor of the Year" initiative is designed to inspire educators to embark on their digital journey, rewarding their efforts and shining a spotlight on the leaders of this revolution.

The behavioral shifts we aim to promote include:

1. **Increased Adoption of Digital Tools:** Encouraging educators to explore tools like *Prezi*, *Kahoot!*, and *LMS platforms* to make their teaching more interactive and effective.
2. **Engagement in Professional Development:** Motivating faculty to participate in training sessions, webinars, or peer-sharing workshops to expand their digital skillsets.
3. **Fostering Creativity in Teaching:** Empowering educators to experiment with innovative teaching practices that captivate students and make learning more impactful.
4. **Building a Culture of Collaboration:** Inspiring educators to share their successes and challenges, creating a community that learns and grows together.

Through competition, recognition, and peer inspiration, this nudge turns what might feel like a daunting transition into an exciting and celebrated journey.

Behavioral Change Sought:

This nudge is designed to shift educators' behaviors from minimal, baseline adoption of digital tools to **active, creative, and consistent use**, fueled by intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. It leverages **competition, positive reinforcement, and recognition** as behavioral drivers.

Psychological Insights:

- **Recognition and Reward:** Acknowledging educators' efforts taps into intrinsic motivators, such as the desire for competence and esteem, while external rewards (certificates, public acknowledgment) sustain engagement.
- **Social Comparison:** By ranking educators and publicizing their achievements, the nudge stimulates upward social comparison, motivating others to emulate high-performing peers.
- **Goal Gradient Effect:** Monthly milestones and an annual award create incremental motivation. Educators are more likely to persist when there are clear, attainable goals along the way.

Barrier Targeted:

- Lack of motivation due to insufficient recognition or rewards for efforts in digital innovation.
- Hesitation due to uncertainty about the tangible impact of digital tools on teaching quality or student outcomes.

Outcome of the Behavioral Change:

Increased creativity and innovation in teaching practices, with educators actively incorporating advanced digital tools. The recognition and prestige associated with the award amplify engagement across departments, fostering a long-term culture of digital excellence.

Nudge Description

Recognition is a powerful motivator. Educators who go the extra mile to innovate often feel their efforts are invisible. This nudge flips that experience by creating a visible, campus-wide platform that celebrates those who embrace digital transformation in their teaching.

At the heart of this initiative is a **dynamic leaderboard** that tracks educators' engagement with digital tools, their participation in workshops, and their contributions to digital teaching innovation. Each month, the leaderboard is updated, highlighting educators making the biggest strides. At the end of the year, the top performer is honored with the prestigious **Digital Professor of the Year** title at a celebratory event.

But the value of this nudge isn't just in the leaderboard or the award—it's in the ripple effect it creates. By showcasing real-world examples of how digital tools are enhancing teaching, it sparks curiosity, reduces hesitancy, and inspires action.

Examples of Benefits to Educators Highlighted in Messaging:

1. Saving Time:

- ✓ Message: *"Cut hours off your grading! Use Turnitin to provide automated feedback and free up your weekends."*
- ✓ Testimonial: *"Using automated tools changed my entire workflow. I have more time to focus on connecting with my students." – Dr. L. Wilson, Humanities.*

2. Improved Lecture Quality:

- ✓ Message: *"Turn your slides into a storytelling experience with Prezi. Transform the way your students learn!"*
- ✓ Success Story: *"My students said they'd never been so engaged in class. Switching to more visual, interactive slides made a huge difference!" – Prof. S. Ahmed, Biology.*

3. Engaging Students:

- ✓ Message: *"Keep your students on their toes with live polls and quizzes. Tools like Kahoot! make participation fun and easy."*
- ✓ Student Feedback: *"I look forward to lectures now. The quizzes make it feel like a game, and I learn so much more!" – Third-Year Student.*

4. Recognizing Excellence:

- ✓ Message: *"Step into the spotlight! Be crowned Digital Professor of the Year and inspire your peers."*
- ✓ Call-to-Action: *"Join a workshop, use digital tools, and climb the leaderboard today!"*

This nudge blends competition and community, ensuring educators feel seen, valued, and excited to take part in the digital teaching movement.

Nudging Techniques

1. Social Comparison

Social comparison is a powerful motivator because people naturally measure their progress against that of their peers. In the context of the "Digital Professor of the Year" nudge, this involves creating opportunities for educators to see and aspire to the achievements of their colleagues.



- **How It Works:**
 - Display a **leaderboard** prominently in faculty areas, showing real-time progress such as digital tool usage, workshop attendance, or innovative teaching practices.
 - Share **success stories** in newsletters or emails, such as:
"This month, Dr. Emily Carter climbed the leaderboard by incorporating interactive quizzes in her lectures. Her students rated these sessions 25% more engaging!"
- **Why It Works:**
 - ✓ Seeing the recognition their peers receive triggers a desire to achieve similar success.
 - ✓ Social validation reinforces the importance of digital innovation in teaching.
- **Example Callout Message:**
"Prof. Davis is leading this month's leaderboard by integrating collaborative tools in all her classes. Could you be next?"

2. Incentive Framing

Framing rewards in a way that makes them both prestigious and achievable creates excitement and aspiration. This technique ties recognition to personal and professional growth, encouraging educators to engage with the program.

- **How It Works:**
 - ✓ Position the **Digital Professor of the Year** award as a significant achievement.
 - ✓ Use phrases like:
"This is your chance to join the ranks of our most innovative educators and inspire the next wave of teaching excellence!"
 - ✓ Offer **tangible rewards** that signal prestige, such as certificates, public recognition at an event, and opportunities to present innovations to leadership or peers.
- **Why It Works:**
 - ✓ People are motivated by the idea of being celebrated, especially in a way that enhances their reputation and career prospects.
 - ✓ Combining prestige with attainability keeps educators engaged throughout the process.
- **Example Callout Message:**
"Be the face of digital teaching innovation this year. Join the ranks of previous winners and inspire your peers at the annual awards ceremony!"

3. Positive Reinforcement

This technique focuses on acknowledging and celebrating small wins, which sustains engagement and builds momentum over time.

- **How It Works:**
 - ✓ Highlight **monthly achievements** on the leaderboard or in campus newsletters, such as:
"Congratulations to Dr. Lee for her creative use of augmented reality in architecture courses this month!"
 - ✓ Use micro-rewards, such as digital tool licenses, gift cards, or feature articles on the university website, to recognize contributors.



- ✓ Provide **personalized feedback**, encouraging educators to continue their efforts:
“Your participation in last month’s workshop helped you move up the leaderboard. Keep it up!”
- **Why It Works:**
 - ✓ Celebrating incremental progress keeps the end goal manageable and reinforces a sense of accomplishment.
 - ✓ Frequent recognition builds confidence and motivation to keep improving.
- **Example Callout Message:**
“This month, Dr. Brown boosted her student engagement scores by using gamified quizzes. What will your next digital achievement be?”

4. Commitment and Consistency

Encouraging educators to stay engaged over time helps them develop habits that align with the nudge’s goals. Regular updates and communication are key to maintaining momentum.

- **How It Works:**
 - ✓ Update the leaderboard **frequently** to reflect the latest achievements, ensuring it remains relevant.
 - ✓ Use **reminders** to encourage consistency:
“You’re halfway to your next milestone! Attend this week’s workshop to earn more points on the leaderboard.”
 - ✓ Reinforce progress over time, such as through cumulative rewards or tiered recognition systems:
“Reach Gold Tier by participating in at least three workshops this semester!”
- **Why It Works:**
 - ✓ Small, consistent actions feel manageable and lead to larger behavior changes over time.
 - ✓ Seeing progress builds a sense of accomplishment and reinforces ongoing engagement.
- **Example Callout Message:**
“Your journey to becoming the next Digital Professor of the Year starts now. Earn points by attending workshops, using new tools, and inspiring your students!”

Here’s the improved version of the nudge based on your feedback, introducing a more **discursive and narrative style** in the *Target Behavior* and *Nudge Description* sections, and adding depth and detail to the other sections for enhanced clarity and engagement:

Expected Outcomes

1. **Broader Digital Tool Adoption:** More educators integrate tools into their teaching.
2. **Increased Training Engagement:** Faculty participation in workshops and training sessions rises.
3. **Innovation in Classrooms:** Educators use creative approaches that captivate students.
4. **Stronger Collaboration:** A community of educators emerges, sharing practices and insights.

Here's the improved version of the nudge based on your feedback, introducing a more **discursive and narrative style** in the *Target Behavior* and *Nudge Description* sections, and adding depth and detail to the other sections for enhanced clarity and engagement:

Challenges and Mitigations

1. Perception of Unfairness

Challenge:

Some educators may view the competitive aspect of the leaderboard as unfair, especially if they feel that the criteria disproportionately favor certain disciplines or individuals with prior technological expertise. This perception could lead to disengagement or resistance, undermining the campaign's objectives.

Mitigation:

- **Transparent Criteria:** Clearly define and communicate the evaluation metrics, such as digital tool usage, workshop attendance, and student feedback. Make these criteria accessible to all participants through a dedicated webpage or guide. For example, divide categories by teaching format (e.g., online, hybrid, face-to-face) to ensure equity.
- **Regular Feedback:** Provide monthly updates or individual progress reports to participants, outlining their standing and offering constructive suggestions for improvement.
- **Multiple Avenues for Success:** Recognize diverse contributions by introducing awards for different categories, such as "Best Innovator," "Most Improved," or "Student Choice." This ensures that educators with varying expertise levels and teaching contexts feel included and valued.

2. Fear of Privacy Intrusion

Challenge:

Educators may be concerned about the tracking mechanisms used to monitor their participation and tool usage, fearing that their data might be misused or that their performance might be judged unfairly.

Mitigation:

- **Anonymized Tracking:** Use aggregated or anonymized data to evaluate leaderboard standings. For example, rather than naming participants, the leaderboard could display codes or pseudonyms, with only the participants knowing their identities.
- **Opt-In Mechanisms:** Allow educators to voluntarily participate in the initiative rather than mandating inclusion. This approach respects personal choice while ensuring that those involved are fully aware of and comfortable with the tracking methods.
- **Transparent Communication:** Regularly explain how data is collected, stored, and used, emphasizing the confidentiality of the process. Offer live Q&A sessions or informational materials to address concerns and build trust.

3. Sustainability of Interest

Challenge:

Interest in the leaderboard may wane over time, especially if the same participants consistently dominate the rankings or if the initiative feels repetitive.

Mitigation:

- **Fresh Content and Themes:** Regularly update the leaderboard with new challenges or themes tailored to the academic calendar. For example, introduce a “Midterm Mastery” challenge focusing on assessment tools or a “Creative Classroom” challenge highlighting innovative uses of multimedia.
- **Gamification Elements:** Add interactive features, such as bonus points for completing surprise challenges or collaborating with peers. This can keep participants engaged and encourage friendly competition.
- **Broader Integration:** Tie the initiative to campus-wide events or long-term goals, such as professional development credits or departmental awards, creating a sense of purpose and continuity.
- **Highlight Success Stories:** Share monthly or quarterly case studies showcasing how participants improved their teaching or impacted student outcomes through digital tools. This narrative approach can inspire others and rekindle motivation.

Resources Needed

Tracking and Analytics Tools

- **Purpose:** These tools monitor digital tool usage, workshop participation, and engagement with leaderboard activities.
- **Features Needed:**
 - **Data Collection:** The ability to track metrics such as attendance at training sessions, frequency of tool usage (e.g., LMS logins, quiz completions), and qualitative feedback from students.
 - **Anonymization Options:** Ensure data privacy by allowing opt-in tracking and anonymized reporting where necessary.
 - **Reporting Dashboard:** A user-friendly interface for administrators to visualize and export performance data.
- **Examples:** Tools like *Google Analytics*, LMS-integrated analytics (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard), or custom-built dashboards designed by the university’s IT team.
- **Cost Considerations:** Depending on the tool’s complexity, this could involve subscriptions or internal development costs.

Leaderboard Displays

- **Purpose:** Showcase real-time rankings and encourage friendly competition among educators.
- **Options for Implementation:**
 - **Digital Screens:** Install monitors in high-visibility areas, such as faculty lounges, coffee rooms, or administrative offices, to display leaderboard rankings and monthly highlights.
 - **Online Dashboard:** Create an easily accessible web or intranet-based leaderboard for remote access.
- **Key Features:**



- Customizable display templates that update dynamically with new data.
- Highlight individual achievements (e.g., “Most Creative Use of Digital Tools” or “Top Workshop Attendee”).
- Compatibility with both physical and online platforms.
- **Cost Considerations:** Reusing existing displays reduces costs; alternatively, purchasing new monitors and software licenses might be necessary.

Award Budget

- **Purpose:** Fund monthly and annual recognitions, ensuring tangible rewards to sustain educator motivation.
- **Breakdown:**
 - **Monthly Recognitions:** Allocate small budgets for tokens of appreciation, such as gift cards, certificates, or professional development vouchers.
 - **Annual Celebration:** Budget for event logistics, trophies or plaques, and potentially larger prizes (e.g., conference sponsorships or tech equipment like tablets).
- **Sustainability:** Seek sponsorships from technology vendors (e.g., Microsoft, Google, or EdTech companies) or allocate funding from professional development budgets.

Communication Materials

- **Purpose:** Keep educators informed and engaged with the initiative through targeted messaging.
- **Formats:**
 - **Newsletters:** Regularly highlight leaderboard updates, success stories, and upcoming workshops or events.
 - **Social Media Campaigns:** Leverage platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, or internal university channels to share updates and recognize educators.
 - **Posters and Flyers:** Physical materials in faculty areas to complement digital outreach.
 - **Promotional Videos:** Short clips showcasing educator testimonials or event highlights, shared via email or campus websites.
- **Design Requirements:**
 - Consistent branding to ensure the initiative feels cohesive.
 - Engaging visuals and clear calls-to-action, such as QR codes linking to resources or workshop sign-ups.
- **Cost Considerations:** Low-cost design tools like *Canva* or professional graphic design services may be utilized depending on the university’s resources.

Examples

Here are examples of universities worldwide that have implemented similar initiatives recognizing excellence in digital teaching, aligning with the concept of the "Digital Professor of the Year" nudge.

Each example highlights innovative strategies and their impact on fostering digital transformation in education:

1. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT): Teaching With Digital Technology Awards

MIT recognizes faculty members who excel in using digital tools to improve teaching and learning. The awards are based on student nominations, celebrating educators who integrate technologies such as live coding, augmented reality, and interactive videos into their courses. Notable examples include professors who adapted hands-on lab experiences into virtual formats and developed creative assignments reflecting real-world contexts. These awards emphasize innovation, adaptability, and engagement, showcasing the transformative potential of digital education.

Website: [MIT Teaching with Digital Technology Awards](#); [MIT News](#) ; [MIT Open Learning](#) .

2. University of Michigan-Dearborn: Distinguished Digital Education Award

This award honours faculty who enhances student engagement and learning through digital tools in online, hybrid, or face-to-face settings. Winners are recognized for presenting content in diverse ways, fostering active learning, and using assessments effectively. Recipients also contribute to advancing digital pedagogy. For example, Dr. Lee Freeman was recognized for his innovative approaches in management studies, demonstrating the impact of creative digital strategies on student outcomes.

Website: [University of Michigan-Dearborn Digital Education Awards](#) .

3. University of Utah: Online Excellence Awards

The University of Utah celebrates faculty and staff who excel in developing online education infrastructure and innovative pedagogy. During the pandemic, faculty adapted to online formats creatively, such as using collaborative platforms and interactive digital assignments to maintain student engagement. These awards highlight educators who have established themselves as leaders in online teaching innovation.

Website: [University of Utah Online Excellence Awards](#); [Academic Affairs](#)

4. Northern Illinois University (NIU): Certificate of Excellence in Online Teaching

NIU's awards recognize faculty members who demonstrate outstanding online teaching practices. Honorees are praised for engaging students through innovative tools and fostering a dynamic virtual learning environment. This initiative has helped normalize the use of digital tools across departments, supporting a culture of continuous improvement in online education.

Website: [NIU Online Teaching Awards](#); [MIT News](#)

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