

 Nudging 360°

Self-nudging toolkit for HE educators

Purpose of the Toolkit

The primary goal of this toolkit is to empower higher education (HE) educators by providing them with the tools, strategies, and insights needed to apply self-nudging techniques. By incorporating digital nudges into their daily routines, educators can improve their teaching practices, stay organized, foster student engagement, and prioritize their own professional development. The toolkit is designed to help educators take control of their digital workflows and adopt new technologies in ways that align with their teaching goals and institutional objectives.

Scope of the Toolkit

The toolkit will guide educators through key topics such as:

- Lesson planning and curriculum design using digital tools.
- Enhancing student engagement through interactive platforms.
- Efficient grading and student progress monitoring via automation.
- Self-nudging techniques to improve time management, professional development, and work-life balance.
- Promoting inclusivity and accessibility in digital teaching materials.

Additionally, the toolkit will introduce specific digital tools (e.g., learning management systems, feedback platforms, collaborative tools) that can assist educators in implementing these nudging strategies effectively.

What is Self-Nudging?

Self-nudging is a form of nudging that focuses on empowering individuals to create their own nudging systems. Unlike nudging directed at students or other stakeholders (where external forces influence behavior), self-nudging places educators in control of the triggers and reminders they use to improve their teaching practices. Self-nudging enables educators to:

- Set personalized reminders for tasks like lesson updates, grading, or checking student progress.
- Establish behavioral cues that encourage consistency (e.g., weekly progress reviews or material sharing deadlines).
- Use data dashboards and feedback loops to reflect on their teaching methods and outcomes.

Self-nudging encourages educators to take charge of their own behaviors and workflows by designing nudges that support their personal goals, instead of passively reacting to external nudges directed at others (e.g., students). This toolkit focuses on helping educators create actionable nudges within their own digital teaching environment, fostering autonomy and efficacy in their professional development.

Leveraging Digital Nudging Principles to Create Effective Self-Nudging Strategies

Digital nudging principles are grounded in behavioral science and designed to subtly guide individuals toward desirable actions. For higher education (HE) educators, these principles can be applied to craft self-nudging strategies that help improve teaching practices, personal productivity, and engagement with digital tools. Here's how educators can leverage these principles:

1. Choice Architecture

By designing environments that make desired actions easier, educators can nudge themselves toward productive behaviors. This can be done by arranging digital tools or organizing tasks in a way that minimizes friction and promotes action.

Strategy Example: *Organize your LMS dashboard to prioritize high-impact tasks like grading, feedback, or student interactions. Set commonly used tools (e.g., calendar, quiz tool) as easily accessible on the toolbar.*

2. Timely Prompts

The timing of nudges is critical for effectiveness. By setting up automated notifications or prompts at the right time (e.g., before class, after grading), educators can improve task completion and decision-making.

Strategy Example: *Use calendar apps or task management tools to send reminders to share lecture materials 24 hours before class or review student performance data after assessments.*

3. Simplification

Simplifying choices reduces cognitive load and makes it easier to perform desired actions. Default settings and pre-configured options can help educators streamline their processes.

Strategy Example: *Use templates for lesson planning or feedback that are pre-designed with engaging elements (e.g., polls, quizzes) and accessible formats (e.g., captioned videos).*

4. Feedback Loops

Feedback is essential to self-awareness and continuous improvement. Providing real-time or periodic feedback on performance helps educators track their progress and adjust accordingly.

Strategy Example: *Set up LMS dashboards to give real-time feedback on student engagement (e.g., attendance, participation) or completion rates, helping educators adjust their teaching methods.*

5. Commitment Devices

Educators can use self-imposed commitments, such as setting deadlines for task completion or publicly committing to professional development, as a form of self-nudging. These devices can help educators stay accountable to their goals.

Strategy Example: *Set a recurring task to complete professional development modules or share progress with colleagues in an online forum.*

6. Social Proof and Peer Comparisons

Seeing what peers are doing can encourage individuals to take similar actions. By comparing one's own behaviors with that of colleagues or departmental benchmarks, educators can nudge themselves toward more frequent or effective use of digital tools.

Strategy Example: *Set up peer benchmarking within departments to compare usage of digital tools like interactive quizzes, material sharing, or student feedback systems.*

Categories of Digital Nudges for HE Educators

Here's a breakdown of the different types of digital nudges that educators can use to improve their teaching, productivity, and student engagement:

1. Reminders

Reminders are one of the simplest and most effective forms of nudging. They provide timely cues to trigger an action that might otherwise be forgotten or delayed.

Examples of Reminders:

- Task Reminders: Notifications to upload course materials, create assessments, or provide feedback to students.
- Time-Based Reminders: Prompts to start grading assignments or preparing for upcoming lessons.
- Behavioral Nudges: Notifications to incorporate interactive tools during lectures or conduct check-ins with students.

Use Cases:

- Set automatic notifications before each class to remind you to upload any required materials.
- Schedule reminders to review student participation data at the end of each week.

2. Default Settings

Default settings help simplify decisions by providing pre-configured options that are aligned with best practices. This reduces decision fatigue and encourages the adoption of desired behaviors without requiring extensive setup.

Examples of Default Settings:

- Lesson Plan Templates: Pre-configured lesson templates with interactive elements, multimedia, and clear learning outcomes.
- Automated Feedback: Default feedback comments for commonly repeated grading issues (e.g., "Great job! Remember to work on X for improvement").
- Accessibility Defaults: Automatically enabled closed captions or text-to-speech for all video content.

Use Cases:

- Utilize default LMS settings that automatically make shared materials accessible to all students.
- Preload quizzes and assessments with a default feedback loop that releases comments automatically after grading.

3. Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback mechanisms offer immediate insights into how well tasks are being performed. For educators, feedback can be provided in real-time on student performance, engagement, or the effectiveness of teaching methods.

Examples of Feedback Mechanisms:

- Performance Dashboards: Real-time data visualizations of student engagement, attendance, or grades.
- Analytics Prompts: Periodic nudges to review progress toward learning outcomes or compare student results with past cohorts.
- Student Feedback Loops: Automated prompts encouraging students to provide feedback after each class or assessment.

Use Cases:

- Set up weekly dashboards that show student progress, helping you adjust your teaching style or focus on areas where students struggle.
- Send post-assessment surveys to students, asking for feedback on the clarity of the content or difficulty of the exam.

4. Social Comparisons

Social comparisons allow educators to see how their behaviors or practices stack up against their peers. These nudges can be particularly motivating by creating positive pressure to keep up with or exceed peer performance.

Examples of Social Comparisons:

- Peer Benchmarking: Comparing how often digital tools (e.g., quizzes, polls) are used relative to other educators in the department.
- Leaderboards: A visual leaderboard showing which instructors have the highest student engagement rates or feedback completion.
- Shared Best Practices: Highlighting peer successes in faculty meetings or newsletters, promoting the adoption of similar digital tools.

Use Cases:

- Use an internal platform to see how many instructors are actively using the LMS for interactive lessons and compare your own usage.
- Regularly review peer feedback data to see if your teaching practices align with department-wide or institution-wide trends.

5. Gamification

Gamification involves introducing elements of play, rewards, or competition into the teaching environment. This encourages educators to adopt new behaviors by making them more engaging and rewarding.

Examples of Gamification:

- Streaks and Badges: Earn badges or maintain streaks for consistently sharing materials, grading assignments on time, or using digital tools.
- Milestones and Rewards: Set personal teaching milestones (e.g., completing three new interactive lessons per semester) and reward yourself when they are met.
- Challenges: Participate in faculty challenges (e.g., "Who can get the most student feedback this month?") to keep engagement high.

Use Cases:

- Introduce a badge system for using interactive teaching methods consistently.
- Set personal goals for completing professional development tasks and reward yourself for reaching milestones.

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