

Beyond The Product

Implementing EdTech in Schools



Educational innovation is often discussed in terms of products.

New platforms, new tools, new technological possibilities. Yet across public education systems, experience points to a consistent truth: **technology alone does not create impact.**

What ultimately determines success is not only what is introduced into schools, but how it is introduced, supported, and sustained over time.

Implementation, therefore, is not a technical afterthought. It is a strategic, system-level capability.

Planning for Reality, Not for Ideals

Many implementation efforts fail not because their vision is flawed, but because they are designed for idealized schools rather than real ones.

Effective implementation begins with understanding reality: teachers' workloads, leadership capacity, organizational structures, existing practices, and daily constraints.

Primary research with teachers, ICT coordinators, school leaders, students, implementers, and EdTech companies revealed recurring challenges: heavy teacher workload, lack of a defined implementation leader within schools, and a persistent gap between introducing new tools and supporting new pedagogical practices.

These challenges point to a deeper systemic issue. Schools are often treated as passive clients of innovation, rather than as active agents of change.



Implementation as a Process, Not an Event

A central shift in thinking is recognizing that **implementation is not a launch. It is a process.**

Successful implementation treats change as iterative and adaptive, allowing learning from the field to shape decisions along the way.

Technology is only one element in this process. Pedagogy, people, and organizational conditions ultimately determine whether technology creates value in practice.



Asking the Right Questions Early

A structured implementation process is guided by a small number of foundational questions:

- What is the **purpose** of the pilot?
- What do we want to **learn** from implementation?

- What needs to be included in the **work plan** to achieve that purpose?
- And what does **scale** look like over time?

These questions create alignment between vision, planning, execution, evaluation, and future growth. They also help systems make deliberate choices about focus and sequencing, rather than attempting to address everything at once.

Clarity of purpose, for example, enables systems to select contexts where early learning can focus on pedagogy and implementation, not basic readiness issues.



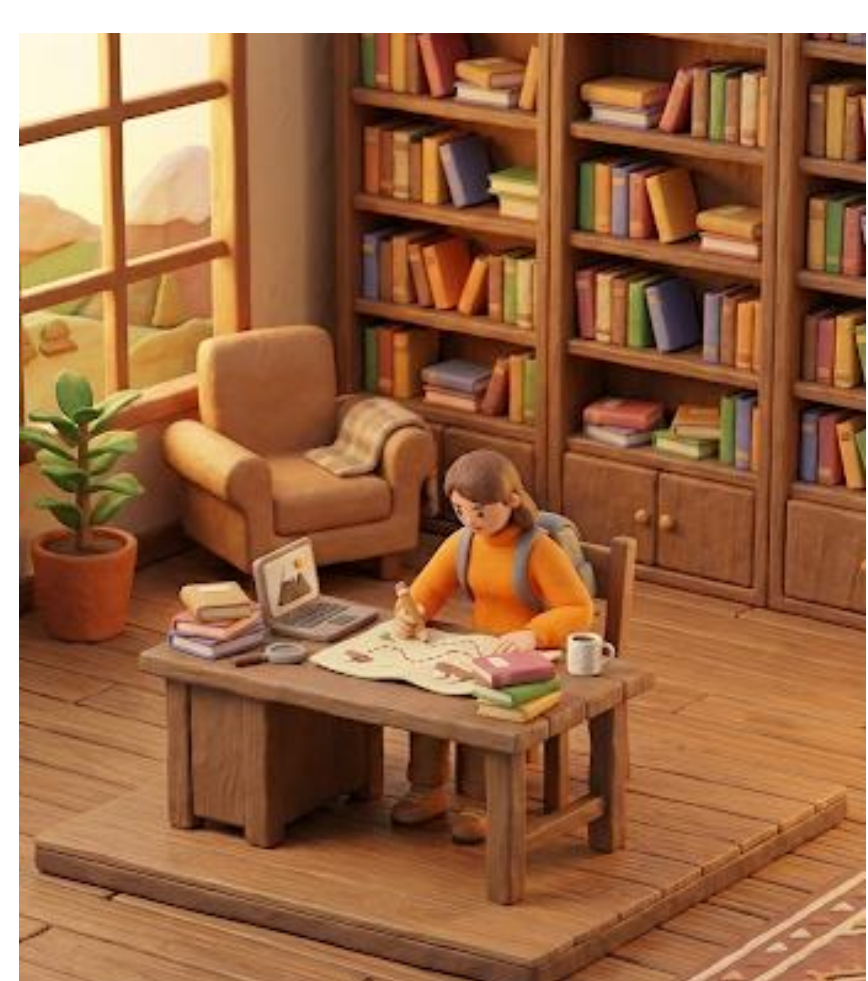
Implementation as a Learning Capability

Research findings should translate directly into implementation design.

Rather than assuming teachers will independently adapt tools to their practice, effective implementation emphasizes enabling conditions: clear school-level ownership, engaged leadership, dedicated time for implementation-related work, and ongoing techno-pedagogical support.

These structures reflect a simple but powerful principle: adoption happens when people feel supported, not managed.

When teachers are positioned as partners, with agency, guidance, and realistic expectations, implementation becomes more sustainable and meaningful.



From Research to Support Structures

Implementation is inherently non-linear.

It requires continuous feedback, iterative adjustment, and decisions grounded in real use rather than initial assumptions.

Learning during implementation is not a side effect of the process; it is the process.

This perspective reframes evaluation as well. Instead of asking only whether a tool "works," evaluation focuses on understanding conditions, constraints, and emerging patterns that can inform improvement and future scaling.



Designing for Scale from the Start

Scaling educational innovation is not simply doing more of the same.

As programs grow, support models must evolve, local leadership becomes more central, and partnerships, particularly with local authorities, play a critical role.

Early implementation decisions shape what will be possible later.

Investing in people, structures, and learning processes from the outset enables systems to preserve core principles while adapting to greater scale and complexity.



Turning Innovation into Sustainable Change

In public education systems, the greatest risk is assuming that good technology will implement itself.

Effective educational technology implementation requires planning for reality, investing in human and organizational capacity, and treating implementation as a system-level capability.

When implementation is designed intentionally, human-centered, structured, and scalable, innovation can move beyond vision and become sustainable change in practice.

