

# Reconfiguring teachers' time

Educational technologies are often promoted as time-saving, however the reality is more complex. Technology in some cases does make organisation and resource preparation more efficient, yet it can also make some activities more time consuming. Significant teacher time is invested in managing devices, developing an understanding of the tech, preparing backups in anticipation of technical failures, and compensating for the shortcomings of the technology while teaching. Ultimately it may be more useful to focus on how teachers work is reconfigured by technology, as opposed to understanding it as time saving.

"... some of us have used AI for just generating maths questions on a certain topic. We do find it quite tricky for it to be able to differentiate between different abilities which is where a member of staff's expertise then comes in. Cos if you ask uh, AI to give you 10, uh, expanding quadratics or binomials uh questions. It'll give you 10 and the difficulty might all be the same or it might be wildly different between them and it's just knowing my class are never gonna access these seven, they can only do these three and knowing where that lies."

[Teacher, School Purple]

"I think Educake is good for just monitoring homework. Erm, Educake comes with a bank of questions which you can use [...] But those questions don't always match up with the content that you're teaching erm, so I think if we had all the time in the world, use Educake, create the questions yourself because that's a feature that you can do and then you can set that homework."

[Teacher, School Purple]

"I think workload-wise, if it becomes something that relieves too much of the workload, I worry how far we'll try and push it to the point where teaching is just anybody in a room reading off a slide that's been created by something else."

[Teacher, School Purple]

"... once you put the tech in there, it's no longer a triangulation. There's another point in that process. Um, another lens through which we are experiencing things. Um, I've got to tell the student what to do and the computer what to do. You know, I've got to try and get, and, and really you start asking yourself, well is it, is any of this worth it? Should we just turn that off? And, and shall I just tell you the thing? I'm, I'm here, shall I tell you the thing that, that I'm telling the computer to tell you? Is it an unnecessary extra step?" [Teacher, School Blue]

# Teacher autonomy and expertise

Teachers' understandings and preferences for using tech are varied. Teacher training, support networks, and adequate resources are important to support tech use in the classroom. Teachers' autonomy in deciding what technologies to use in their classrooms and how to use them vary significantly. Inevitably, what tech is used and how it is used (re-)configures the teacher's role and what it means to be a teacher.

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"I needed much more time, much more high-quality training, um, in order to properly prepare for its [Lexia's] implementation. I think it's useful to them now. I don't, I think it was useful to them at the start, but of limited use. I think it's much more useful to them now, because I have been on a learning curve with them."

[Teacher, School Purple]

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"I think it's important for the teacher also to learn how to use them because it, they're so great but a lot of the teachers really struggle and sometimes it can really disrupt a class if they don't know how to use them the right way."

[Student, School Yellow]

"... a lot of my colleagues when I speak to them found that technology is just an extra step or an extra layer, they see it as more work, versus for me it lessens my load. So I think better professional development in technology would make a big difference to that perception."

[Teacher, School Yellow]

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## Questions for discussion

- How can teachers' work be better supported through EdTech design?
- What are the additional skills/support structures that would allow more equitable use of EdTech?