

Transitioning Teaching Skills into Edtech Products: Bridging the Gap Between the Classroom and the Marketplace

Musiliu Adekola ADEROJU

Department of Educational Technology
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
aderoju.am@unilorin.edu.ng

Mohammed Rabiu ABDULRAHMAN

Department of Educational Technology
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
abdulrahman.mr@unilorin.edu.ng

Ebenezer Sanya IBIRONKE

Department of Educational Technology
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
ibisanya2@unilorin.edu.ng

Abstract

The 21st century encourages teachers to adapt their talents to the digital world and create unique educational technology solutions as education evolves. This transformation into digital world not only increases the effectiveness of teaching methods but also offers profitable chances for educators to explore entrepreneurship. Using their classroom experiences, educators can discover market deficiencies and design educational technology solutions that address the different needs of learners. This paper discusses strategies for educators to effortlessly translate their teaching skills into the invention, promotion, and dissemination of educational technology (EdTech) solutions. By combining case studies and empirical research, this paper underlines the vital necessity of collaboration, technology literacy, and market analysis in effectively blending teaching expertise into the EdTech area. By examining the challenges and opportunities in this evolving field, the paper aims to equip educators with the knowledge and resources to foster creativity and excellence in modern teacher education.

Keywords: Edupreneurship, Edtech Innovation, Teaching Skills, Digital Learning, Technology Literacy, User-Centered Design

Introduction

Teaching skills and entrepreneurship are becoming more important in today's digital era, especially in the field of educational technology (EdTech). Educators have the dual job of presenting educational content and utilizing technology to improve learning experiences. The Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) (2023) defines educational technology as the ethical study and application of theory, research, and practices to advance

knowledge, improve learning and performance, and empower learners through strategic design, management, implementation, and evaluation of learning experiences and environments using appropriate processes and resources. This definition provides instructors with a special chance to apply their classroom knowledge and skills to create and share creative educational technology solutions. By acknowledging the worth of their teaching ideas in the business world, educators can contribute to the development of educational methods while pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities.

The education sector is constantly changing due to technological breakthroughs and shifts in societal demands. In the 21st century, there is an increasing need for cutting-edge educational technology solutions that can adjust to various learning styles, cater to personalized learning requirements, and promote active participation and cooperation among students. Entrepreneurship is generally viewed as a process of creating something new. Doing this involves a lot of time and effort devoted to ensure the tasks at hand and the resultant effects include monetary and personal satisfaction as well as independence. Entrepreneurship involves creation process, conscious devotion of time and effort, involves risk and has some rewards (Ojeifo, 2012). With the growing use of digital tools and platforms in education, educators need to adapt to this change and find ways to apply their teaching skills to create effective educational technology (EdTech) products that meet the changing needs of learners and educators (Fischer, Lundin & Lindberg, 2020).

Educators have a substantial amount of information and expertise acquired via their classroom interactions (Ariya & Mumini, 2022). Having direct experience provides them with significant knowledge about the difficulties and possibilities that exist in the field of education. By utilizing their teaching knowledge, educators may play a transformative role in the development of EdTech solutions that are anchored in pedagogical principles and guided by real-world classroom dynamics. Their unique perspective helps them to detect holes in the market and build creative solutions that address the demands of both students and teachers.

To successfully transition their teaching expertise into the development of EdTech products, educators must adopt strategic approaches to identify market opportunities and assess the needs of their target audience (Paley, 2021). This process involves conducting thorough market research, gathering feedback from stakeholders, and ensuring that the design and development of EdTech solutions remain user-centered. By aligning their products with the requirements and

preferences of end-users, educators can enhance the likelihood of adoption and success in the marketplace.

Three foundational pillars underpin the effective production and commercialization of EdTech products: collaboration, technological literacy, and pedagogical integrity (Aithal & Maiya, 2023). Collaborative relationships allow educators to draw on diverse skill sets and perspectives, fostering innovation and creativity in product development (Kelly, 2020). Collaboration is a cornerstone for educators venturing into the development and commercialization of EdTech products. Effective collaboration brings together diverse expertise, enabling the creation of innovative and impactful solutions. Educators can partner with technologists, designers, researchers, and business professionals to bridge gaps in knowledge and skill sets. For instance, while educators contribute their deep understanding of pedagogy and classroom dynamics, technologists can provide the technical expertise needed to design and implement functional digital tools. Collaborative efforts also encourage creative problem-solving by integrating multiple perspectives, which can result in more user-friendly and effective EdTech products (Akpan, 2020). Additionally, partnerships with schools, educational institutions, and other stakeholders ensure that solutions developed by teachers are aligned with real-world needs, enhancing their relevance and marketability.

Technological literacy equips educators with the skills necessary to effectively utilize digital platforms and applications (Haleem et al 2022). Educators aiming to succeed in the EdTech landscape must take technological literacy as important aspect of their personal development. This pillar involves understanding and utilizing digital platforms, tools, and programming concepts to create effective technology-driven solutions. Technological literacy not only enables educators to engage with software developers and designers more effectively but also empowers them to make informed decisions about the functionality and usability of their products. For instance, familiarity with learning management systems, mobile app development, and data analytics can help educators design tools that are both innovative and practical. Professional development programs, workshops, and online courses can play a critical role in equipping educators with these technical skills (Chanda et al 2024). By staying abreast of emerging technologies and trends, educators can ensure that their products remain relevant and competitive in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Pedagogical integrity ensures that EdTech solutions adhere to sound educational principles and practices, aligning with the overarching goals of teaching and learning (Abshire, 2024). This

pillar emphasizes the importance of aligning technology with the goals of teaching and learning, ensuring that products enhance rather than hinder educational outcomes. Educators bring a unique perspective to EdTech development, rooted in their understanding of how students learn, what motivates them, and the challenges they face. By incorporating evidence-based teaching strategies, such as active learning, formative assessment, and differentiated instruction, educators can create tools that are not only innovative but also effective (Rajaram, 2021). Maintaining pedagogical integrity requires a commitment to ensure that the products meet the needs of both educators and learners designing solutions that prioritize learning outcomes and improving performances over commercial success.

This research seeks to explore how educators can effectively transition their teaching expertise into the creation and commercialization of EdTech products. By leveraging their unique pedagogical insights and classroom experiences, educators can identify market gaps, design user-centered solutions, and contribute to the advancement of education through innovative EdTech tools. The study provides a comprehensive framework that integrates key strategies such as collaboration, technology literacy, and market analysis to guide educators in navigating the challenges and opportunities of EdTech entrepreneurship.

Moreover, the research emphasizes the importance of aligning EdTech solutions with pedagogical principles while addressing the practical demands of the marketplace. Through the analysis of case studies and empirical evidence, the study highlights the transformative potential of educators as EdTech innovators. It also offers strategies to foster creativity, professional development, and entrepreneurial success. Ultimately, this work aims to empower educators to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of education through innovation and entrepreneurship.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid growth of educational technology (edtech) presents both opportunities and challenges for educators. A significant gap exists between the classroom and the marketplace, attributed to issues such as the mismatch between educational needs and technological solutions, lack of technical skills among educators, and the complex process of transforming pedagogical knowledge into commercial products (Lacatus & Staiculescu 2016).

One major issue is the misalignment between what educators need in the classroom and what edtech businesses deliver. Technology developers often lack a comprehensive understanding

of pedagogical concepts and the challenges teachers face, leading to low adoption rates and underutilization of potentially useful technologies. Teachers, who are specialists in pedagogy, curriculum design, and student evaluation, often lack the technical skills needed to build or execute complex technological solutions.

Transforming educational information into commercially viable products is a complex process that requires understanding educational content, instructional methods, product development, user experience design, market research, and commercial strategy. This complexity can discourage educators from pursuing edtech innovations and restrict the flow of useful knowledge from the classroom to the market.

Conceptual Considerations

Conceptual considerations are crucial to ensuring a comprehensive and insightful study on factors involved in the transition process where educators can transform their teaching skills into EdTech products. These considerations include the integration of relevant theoretical models, understanding the interplay of various factors in the transition process, and addressing the unique challenges faced by educators in EdTech entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial intention/mindset is key to educators being able to transform their teaching experiences into marketable products. The Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM) provides a foundational framework for understanding the motivations and perceptions that drive educators towards EdTech entrepreneurship (Krisakorn et al 2018). These perceptions shape an educator's motivation and confidence to engage in EdTech ventures and are influenced by various personal and social factors.

The EEM posits that individuals' responses to external events are influenced by their perceptions of the available alternatives. Two key perceptions are highlighted: perceived desirability and perceived feasibility. Perceived desirability refers to the degree to which an individual is attracted to becoming an entrepreneur, reflecting their personal preference for entrepreneurial behaviour. Perceived feasibility, on the other hand, is defined as the degree to which individuals believe they are capable of starting a business (Alhaji et al, 2022). For educators, perceived desirability reflects their interest in pursuing EdTech entrepreneurship, often influenced by their recognition of unmet needs in education or the potential for innovation in teaching practices. Perceived feasibility relates to educators' confidence and self-efficacy in leveraging teaching expertise and market insights to create viable EdTech products. For instance, an educator

identifying a gap in tools for personalized learning might feel motivated (desirability) and capable (feasibility) to develop a solution, such as a mobile platform for adaptive learning.

EEM illustrated in Figure 1 shows how entrepreneurial knowledge can transit into an entrepreneurial intention through the EEM. The model highlights the importance of fostering both intrinsic motivation and external support systems, ensuring educators are both inspired and equipped to innovate in the rapidly evolving EdTech space. Krisakorn (2018) explained that perceived desirability refers to the degree to which an educator finds EdTech entrepreneurship appealing, driven by their personal attitude and perceived social norms. Personal attitude reflects an educator's intrinsic motivation to solve educational challenges and create impactful solutions. This positive attitude often stems from a belief in the transformative potential of their ideas and the satisfaction of contributing to innovation in education.

Perceived social norms, on the other hand, pertain to the influence of societal or peer expectations on an educator's entrepreneurial intentions. Support from colleagues, administrators, or professional networks can significantly enhance the desirability of pursuing EdTech ventures. For example, an educator encouraged by peers to commercialize a classroom innovation may feel validated and motivated to take the entrepreneurial leap. A supportive ecosystem that fosters a culture of innovation and collaboration is essential to reinforcing these positive social norms and encouraging educators to explore entrepreneurial opportunities (Alhaji et al, 2022).

Perceived feasibility addresses the educator's confidence in their ability to succeed in EdTech entrepreneurship, with self-efficacy playing a central role. Educators with high self-efficacy are more likely to view entrepreneurship as achievable, even when faced with challenges such as limited technical expertise or financial constraints. For instance, a teacher confident in their ability to collaborate with developers and translate pedagogical insights into functional EdTech solutions is more inclined to pursue entrepreneurial ventures. Enhancing self-efficacy through professional development, mentorship, and hands-on experience with technology can empower educators to overcome barriers and take actionable steps toward their goals.

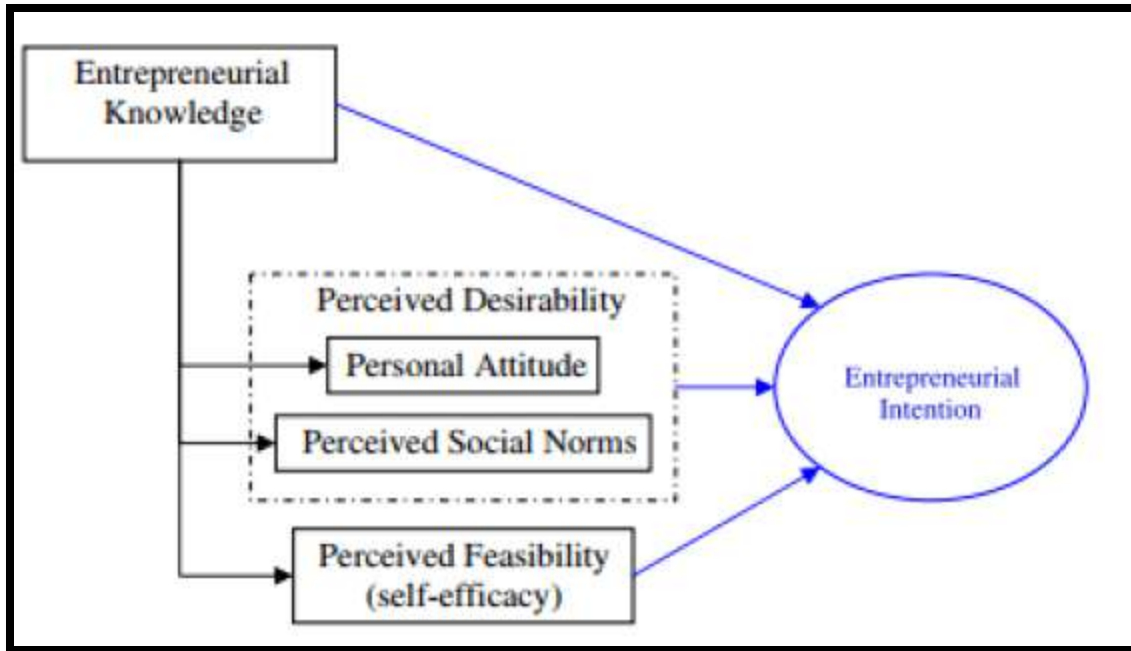


Figure 1: Entrepreneurial Event Model

Source: Krisakorn et al (2018)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) complements the EEM by emphasizing three factors that influence entrepreneurial intention: perceived behavioral control, attitude toward entrepreneurship, and subjective norms. Educators perceived behavioral control is shaped by their technical skills and understanding of the EdTech market, which can be enhanced through targeted training (Rehman et al 2023). A positive attitude toward entrepreneurship develops when educators see the potential impact of their products on teaching and learning. Subjective norms, such as encouragement from peers or institutional support, further influence their decision to pursue EdTech ventures. For example, an educator with a strong belief in their ability to design engaging learning apps, coupled with support from colleagues, is more likely to transition successfully into EdTech entrepreneurship.

Educators have deep expertise in teaching methodologies, curriculum design, and student assessment, which is crucial for developing effective EdTech products that enhance learning outcomes. However, they may lack the technical skills needed for EdTech development, making professional development in technology vital. Understanding the EdTech market, including trends and user preferences, is essential for creating commercially viable products. Teachers' unique perspectives on pedagogy, student engagement, and curriculum design can significantly inform

the development of practical and innovative educational tools, particularly in instructional design, student engagement, and assessment mechanisms.

Transforming Teaching Expertise into EdTech Innovations: Key Areas of Focus

Educators possess unique insights into teaching methodologies, student engagement, and curriculum design, which can be leveraged to create impactful EdTech products. However, transitioning these skills into innovative solutions involves navigating several key areas, each presenting distinct challenges and limitations. By leveraging on strengths, educators can bridge the gap between classroom expertise and EdTech innovation by transforming their teaching skills into EdTech products in these areas:

1. Instructional Design and Content Creation

One of the most accessible avenues for educators is developing instructional content, such as online courses, e-books, and educational resources. Platforms like Udemy, Coursera, and Teachers Pay Teachers offer opportunities to monetize these efforts. However, the challenges in this area include the saturation of online content, making it difficult to stand out in a competitive market. Additionally, creating high-quality content requires significant time, effort, and technical expertise in areas such as video production, instructional design, and user experience. Funding constraints may also limit access to professional tools and resources needed for polished content creation. Scalability is another concern, as educators must balance their teaching responsibilities with the demands of maintaining and updating their content to stay relevant.

2. Educational Software and Applications

Developing software solutions, such as interactive learning apps, assessment tools, and educational games, offers immense potential for innovation. These tools can address specific needs, such as personalized learning, gamification, or data-driven assessments. However, the challenges in this area are substantial. Building software requires technical skills that most educators may lack, necessitating collaboration with developers and designers, which can be costly. Securing funding for development is often a major hurdle, as creating even a basic app can require significant financial investment. Additionally, scalability becomes a critical issue—while a small pilot project may succeed in a single classroom, scaling the product for broader adoption often involves complex technical, logistical, and marketing challenges.

3. Blended Learning Solutions

Blended learning models that combine traditional classroom instruction with online components are increasingly popular. Educators can design and package these models for adoption by schools and institutions. However, the implementation of blended learning solutions often faces resistance from stakeholders unfamiliar with or skeptical of technology-driven approaches. Funding for infrastructure, such as devices and reliable internet access, is another common limitation, particularly in underserved regions. Moreover, ensuring scalability requires significant planning, as blended learning solutions must cater to diverse educational contexts and adapt to varying levels of technological readiness among institutions.

4. Assessment and Feedback Mechanisms

Innovative assessment tools, such as adaptive learning systems and real-time feedback platforms, can transform how educators evaluate student performance. These tools provide data-driven insights that inform instructional decisions and enhance learning outcomes. However, challenges in this area include the complexity of designing algorithms that are both accurate and equitable. Funding for research and development is a major limitation, as creating robust and reliable assessment tools often requires collaboration with data scientists and software engineers. Privacy and data security concerns also present significant barriers, as educational institutions and users demand assurances that sensitive student data will be protected. Scalability is another challenge, as these tools must function effectively across diverse educational settings with varying levels of technological infrastructure.

Steps to Transition from Classroom to Marketplace

1. *Identify a Niche and Validate the Idea:* To begin, conduct thorough market research to identify gaps in the current EdTech offerings. This involves gathering feedback from potential users, including students, parents, and fellow educators, to ensure the idea addresses real needs and has a strong foundation. Additionally, perform a competitive analysis to understand the strengths and weaknesses of existing products, which will help in identifying areas for improvement and differentiation.
2. *Collaborative Development/Form Partnerships:* Collaborate with technologists, designers, and other educators to co-create EdTech solutions. This interdisciplinary approach ensures that tools are pedagogically sound and technically feasible. Also, engage Participatory

Design by involving students in the design process to ensure that the technology meets their needs and preferences.

3. *Professional Development:* Through continuous learning, Educators should engage in professional development to stay updated on the latest EdTech trends and tools. Workshops, webinars, and conferences can provide valuable insights. Educators should join Peer Learning Communities of practice where educators can share experiences, challenges, and successes in integrating technology into their teaching. This is needed so that the educator can seamlessly build the idea into product.
4. *Develop the Product:* Collaboration is key at this stage. Work with developers, designers, and other experts to transform the idea into a tangible product. Teachers bring essential pedagogical expertise, while developers contribute the technical skills required for implementation. Employ an iterative design and testing process: create prototypes and conduct pilot tests to gather user feedback. This feedback is crucial for refining and improving the product before its final release.
5. *Create a Prototype and Test:* Before full-scale implementation, educators can develop prototypes of their EdTech solutions and conduct pilot tests in their classrooms. This allows for feedback and iterative improvements. Use surveys and focus groups to gather input from users, which can inform further development and refinement of the technology.
6. *Create a Business Plan:* A solid business plan is essential for the product's success (Amit & Zott, 2020). Start by determining the revenue model—options include one-time purchases, subscription models, freemium models, or in-app purchases. Next, develop a marketing strategy to effectively reach the target audience. This can involve utilizing social media, content marketing, and forming partnerships with educational institutions to promote the product. Engage with school leaders and policymakers to gain support for EdTech initiatives. Their backing can facilitate resource allocation and strategic alignment
7. *Launch and Scale:* Careful planning and execution are vital for the product launch. Ensure that all promotional materials and channels are prepared to maximize visibility and impact. Post-launch, provide excellent customer support and maintain an open feedback loop. This ongoing engagement with users will help in continuously improving the product and addressing any issues that arise, paving the way for future growth and scalability.

Navigating Barriers in EdTech Entrepreneurship

Transitioning from teaching to EdTech entrepreneurship presents unique challenges that educators must overcome to succeed. These obstacles include balancing teaching responsibilities with entrepreneurial pursuits, securing funding, keeping up with technological advancements, and ensuring widespread adoption of their solutions. While these challenges are significant, many educators have successfully navigated them through innovative strategies and collaborative efforts.

1. Balancing Teaching and Entrepreneurship: Balancing the dual roles of teacher and entrepreneur can be daunting, as both demand substantial time and energy. Successful educator-entrepreneurs often address this challenge by building supportive teams and leveraging collaboration. For example, an educator who developed a widely-used classroom management app partnered with a software developer to handle technical aspects while they focused on the pedagogical design. By delegating tasks and prioritizing effectively, the educator maintained their teaching role while advancing their entrepreneurial venture. Educators can also explore time management tools and seek administrative support to carve out dedicated time for their entrepreneurial projects.

2. Securing Funding and Resources: Funding is one of the most significant barriers for educators entering the EdTech space. However, many have successfully secured financial support through grants, crowdfunding, and partnerships. For instance, a teacher who created an interactive science app for middle school students launched a crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter. By showcasing the app's potential to improve science education, they raised enough funds to develop and market the product. Similarly, some educators have accessed grants specifically designed for educational innovation, such as those offered by educational foundations or government programs. Partnering with EdTech incubators or accelerators can also provide funding, mentorship, and access to networks that can help educators scale their ideas.

3. Keeping Up with Technological Advancements: Staying abreast of rapid technological advancements is another challenge. Educators often overcome this by investing in professional development and forming strategic collaborations. For example, a group of teachers who lacked coding skills partnered with a local university's computer science department to develop an AI-powered tutoring tool. This collaboration allowed the educators to focus on the tool's pedagogical aspects while benefiting from the technical expertise of the university team. Additionally, online

courses, workshops, and webinars on emerging technologies provide accessible avenues for educators to build their technical literacy and stay competitive in the EdTech landscape.

4. *Achieving Scalability and Adoption:* Scaling an EdTech product from a single classroom to a broader market can be challenging due to varying educational contexts and resource availability. One notable success story is that of an educator who developed a blended learning model for rural schools. By partnering with a nonprofit organization, they adapted their solution to different settings and secured funding to provide necessary infrastructure, such as internet access and devices. To ensure adoption, they conducted pilot tests, gathered feedback from teachers and students, and iterated on their design. This user-centered approach not only improved the product but also increased its relevance and acceptance in diverse educational environments.

Conclusion

The integration of teaching expertise into EdTech entrepreneurship has the potential to revolutionize education by creating tools that are both innovative and rooted in real-world classroom dynamics. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the strategies outlined in this study, educators can transform their insights into impactful solutions that meet the evolving needs of learners and teachers. This journey not only empowers educators as innovators but also enriches the educational landscape, fostering creativity, excellence, and equity in 21st-century learning.

This study underscores the importance of three foundational pillars—collaboration, technological literacy, and pedagogical integrity—in navigating the EdTech entrepreneurial landscape. Collaboration enables educators to combine diverse skill sets and perspectives, fostering creativity and innovation. Technological literacy equips them with the skills needed to design and implement effective digital solutions, while pedagogical integrity ensures that these solutions remain grounded in sound educational principles. Together, these pillars form the foundation for successful EdTech ventures, bridging the gap between classroom expertise and the marketplace.

Recommendations

To empower educators and maximize the impact of their contributions to EdTech, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educators need access to continuous professional development programs that focus on technological skills, entrepreneurial knowledge, and EdTech market dynamics. Workshops, online courses, and mentorship programs can equip educators with the tools they need to design, develop, and commercialize EdTech products.
2. Establishing collaborative networks that connect educators with technologists, designers, business professionals, and other stakeholders is essential. Such ecosystems can facilitate knowledge exchange, reduce development costs, and accelerate innovation. Partnerships with schools, universities, and EdTech companies can also provide educators with the resources and support needed to scale their solutions.
3. Governments, educational institutions, and private organizations should create grant programs, seed funding opportunities, and incubators specifically tailored to support EdTech innovation by educators. Crowdfunding platforms and venture capital can also play a role in addressing financial constraints.
4. To ensure the success of EdTech products, educators must prioritize the needs and preferences of end-users—students, teachers, and institutions—through user-centered design approaches. Conducting thorough market research, gathering stakeholder feedback, and iterating on prototypes can help create solutions that are both effective and widely adopted.
5. Teacher training programs should integrate modules on EdTech innovation and entrepreneurship. By equipping educators with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate the EdTech landscape, these programs can prepare them to be active contributors to the future of education.

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