

# **A REVIEW OF THE EdTECH AWARDED PRACTICE WALL AND ESSENTIAL DIGITAL SKILLS (EDS) COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE REVIEW

## The EdTech badge scheme

The EdTech team at the ETF has developed a range of bite-sized online modules mapped to the Digital Teaching Professional Framework (DTPF) to support practitioners in developing their digital practice.

Training modules have so far been developed in four categories: Accessibility, Dealing with Difference and Diversity, Connected and Effective and Digital Teacher and these are available at three stages of personal development: Exploring, Adopting and Leading.

To complement this offer, a badge scheme was launched in early 2020 that aims to motivate teachers and trainers to critically reflect on the impact the modules have had on their practice and learners. The scheme also encourages practitioners to post their reflections and to develop and share teaching and learning resources in an online community of practice known as the EdTech Awarded Practice Wall (APW).

Practitioners who have already engaged with the scheme have the opportunity to become Super Contributors – practitioners who help foster an online community of practice by stimulating pedagogic dialogue on the APW - and Reviewers who assess Enhance badge submissions.

In 2021, the EdTech team secured funding from the Department for Education to support two rounds of Reflective Explorations projects that took place in February/March 2021 and October to December 2021.

## The Essential Digital Skills Programme

Launched in 2020, the Essential Digital Skills (EDS) development programme aims to support practitioners who are planning, managing or delivering essential digital skills courses based on the national standards or who wish to develop their own digital skills as a teacher or trainer.

The EDS professional development offer includes six elements to help build skills and confidence:

1. Interactive self-assessment tool to identify training needs and signpost relevant training.
2. Series of 20 short online learning modules with teaching exemplars and advice on teaching contexts, as well as digital badges to recognise achievement
3. Live online and face-to-face CPD events to build skills and confidence, particularly for teaching the most challenging aspects of the national standards
4. Online community of practice for sharing ideas, resources and practice from different teaching contexts
5. Multimedia CPD toolkit to help guide practitioners through the programme

## 6. Interactive game to help check skills and knowledge in a fun way

In September 2021, grants were offered to a small number of organisations to carry out Reflective Explorations projects.

The ETF's EdTech projects aimed to help teachers and trainers in six organisations to develop their digital pedagogy by engaging with EdTech resources on the ETF's [Enhance Digital Teaching Platform](#).

Six Essential Digital Skills Champions were appointed by the ETF's EDS team to lead a Reflective Exploration project to explore effective practice in delivering EDS qualifications and/or embedding EDS into the curriculum.

These EDS Champions have also led CPD sessions in the ETF's national EDS programme and posted on the ETF's Community of Practice for digital skills to share their experiences with colleagues across the sector.

To promote the benefits and impact of both the EdTech and EDS programmes on participating organisations, [case studies](#) have been developed and published on the ETF's website. <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/edtech-support/re-case-studies/> Further case studies will be published in April 2022.

### **Aim and objectives of the review**

The aim of the review was to draw together the learning from the EDS and EdTech communities of practice in order to make recommendations to the ETF for sustaining engagement in the communities after March 2022.

The objectives were to:

- compare and contrast the APW and the EDS Community of Practice
- suggest the value that the online communities bring, with a focus on engagement, facilitation, leadership and functionality
- identify any barriers to engagement
- assess lessons learned and propose next steps for sustaining engagement.

### **Overview of approach**

Data for the review was captured from the following sources:

- Telephone interviews with current users of the EDS Community of Practice and the APW (2 interviews)
- A review of recent posts, comments and resources on the APW and EDS Community of Practice
- Enhance moderator reports
- Representatives from the EDS team
- Representative from the Enhance team

## 2. ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

### Comparison of the Awarded Practice Wall and EDS Community of Practice

The communities of practice are key features of both programmes, providing an online space for practitioners and managers who have an interest in improving their digital practice.

Both online communities enable users to engage in professional dialogue beyond their organisation, offering the opportunity for practitioners who work in a range of contexts to reflect on their digital practice and share resources.

They have similar social media features that enable users to create profiles, 'like', bookmark, reply to posts and follow a peer. Both offer a facility to search for resources. They also provide an opportunity to share existing resources, as well as new resources that practitioners have developed or adapted.

Despite sharing several characteristics, there are some notable differences in the two communities, and these are summarised in the table below.

	<b>Awarded Practice Wall</b>	<b>EDS Community of Practice</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The aim is to encourage practitioners and managers to critically reflect on the impact the training has had on their/their team EdTech practice.</p> <p>It also enables registered users to be able to view reflections from other practitioners or managers and interact with the reflections through a range of social media features.</p> <p>The long-term aim is to build a sustainable self-developing sector in EdTech through effective community metacognitive practice and peer support.</p>	<p>Offers peer support as practitioners and managers learn about the new EDS standards and delivery of the qualifications.</p>
<b>Audience</b>	<p>Two types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Registered Practitioners and managers</li> <li>- Those who have completed or are keen to complete a 2-3- star badge</li> </ul>	<p>Registered practitioners and managers.</p> <p>Some may have engaged in the EDS programme via EDS modules and CPD and/or may be planning or delivering EDS courses. Any teacher improving their digital skills</p>
<b>Sign up/log in</b>	<p>Accessible via log in only to registered users. These may be practitioners or managers</p>	<p>No requirement to log in to view posts; users need to sign up and log in if they wish to respond to or create posts, receive alerts or share resources</p>

<b>Facilitators</b>	Three Super Contributors post comments and questions to foster pedagogic dialogue on the Wall. Engagement is also stimulated by comments posted by the EdTech team (EdTech Reviewers, Head of EdTech & Digital Skills).	Six EDS Champions who led CPD sessions in the EDS programme post on the ETF's Community of Practice to share their experiences with colleagues across the sector to stimulate engagement. In addition, the delivery partner is supporting moderation/engagement.
<b>Engagement</b>	Engagement with the APW is voluntary, and was a mandatory element of participation in the most recent Reflective Explorations programme.	Engagement in the CoP is voluntary, and was a mandatory element of participation in the most recent EDS Champion and Reflective Explorations programme.
<b>Quantitative impact</b>  Posted comments  Unique visitors	<p>Between March 2020 and January 2022, 168 distinct users' badge reflections have been shared on the AWP (av. of 8 per month).</p> <p>Between October to December 2021, there were 32 badge reflections submitted on the AWP, attracting an average of 10 posted comments on reflections per month.</p> <p>There was an average of 113 unique visitors per month between January 2020 and April 2022.</p>	<p>Between April 2021 and March 2022, 124 users posted comments, averaging 10 per month.</p> <p>There was an average of 310 unique visitors per month between July 2021 and March 2022.</p>
<b>Qualitative impact</b>  Social Purpose  Knowledge sharing  Peer support	<p>AWP users engage in online discussion to improve their practice, having been motivated to try out new practices/resources introduced in the EdTech modules</p> <p>APW reflections for Adopting and Leading badge submissions suggest that new digital practices and knowledge have been developed as a result.</p> <p>Support is provided in the online community primarily by practitioners/managers who have engaged in the badge scheme, ie they share a common structured professional development experience, that enables them to critically reflect on the impact of any new pedagogical approaches/resources on their learners.</p>	<p>EDS CoP users engage in online discussion to improve their practice, having been inspired by content in the EDS modules/webinars.</p> <p>Focus is on sharing resources and pedagogical approaches.</p> <p>Peer support is provided by teachers/managers wishing to share pedagogical experiences/digital resources, the majority of whom may have engaged in EDS programme activity (eg webinars, modules).</p>

Although there are some significant differences in the features of the two communities of practice, they share a broad common purpose which is to provide a supportive environment in which practitioners and managers can come together from the wider FE sector to collaborate and develop their confidence and digital skills

In view of this shared purpose, consideration should be given to merging the two communities.

## Engagement with the Communities of Practice

### The Awarded Practice Wall

A core feature of the APW is a facility to be able to comment on reflections, for example: <https://enhance.etfoundation.co.uk/awardedpractice/view/186/optimising-learning-opportunities-for-each-learner>

Most comments tend to be constructive and supportive, and some of those who have posted comments also share resources or provide links to relevant resources.

There has been a significant decrease in the number of posted reflections between January and March 2022 (5 reflections), compared with October to December last year (31 reflections) when the Reflective Explorations projects were running, and when it was mandatory requirement to post reflective comments.

It is also worth noting that no comments have been posted by Super Contributors since April 2021. This suggests that once a Super Contributor badge has been awarded (after 10 comments have been posted), there is insufficient incentive to continue to add comments on the APW.

A recent review of EdTech awarded practices<sup>1</sup> commissioned by the ETF noted that there has been a moderate amount of activity on the APW since its launch with 40 reflections having more than one comment and a further 59 having one comment.

The review concluded that:

*'The Awarded Practice Wall has some useful resources and reflections and provides good functionality for building a sustainable and engaging digital community focused on sharing ideas around EdTech and learning from each other. It is arguable though that it currently has not met its potential.'*

The review also noted that since the launch of the APW, 168 distinct users have submitted reflections for 2- and 3-star badges (with 171 2-star badges and 21 3-star badges currently shared on the Awarded Practice Wall), representing a small percentage of all those who are using the EdTech site.

In terms of visitors to this area of the site, an analysis of social analytics data indicates that there have been 3064 unique visitors to the APW between Jan 2020

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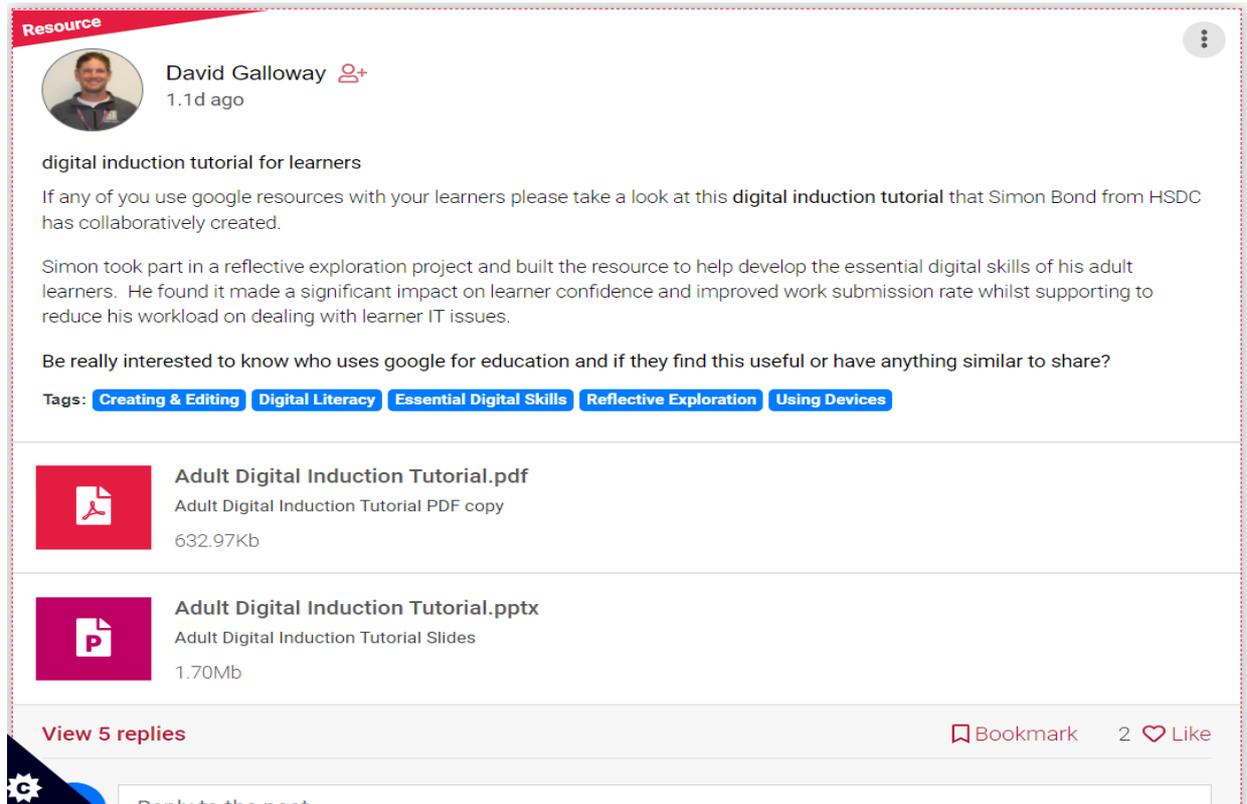
<sup>1</sup> Review of EdTech Awarded Practice, Peter Kilcoyne, 29.1.22

and April 2022<sup>2</sup>.

## The EDS Community of Practice

Comments and posts on the EDS Community of Practice discussion wall are informative and helpful.

Users frequently signpost others to useful resources or events (see example below<sup>3</sup>)



The screenshot shows a post from David Galloway, dated 1.1d ago. The post is titled "digital induction tutorial for learners" and contains the following text: "If any of you use google resources with your learners please take a look at this digital induction tutorial that Simon Bond from HSDC has collaboratively created. Simon took part in a reflective exploration project and built the resource to help develop the essential digital skills of his adult learners. He found it made a significant impact on learner confidence and improved work submission rate whilst supporting to reduce his workload on dealing with learner IT issues. Be really interested to know who uses google for education and if they find this useful or have anything similar to share?". Below the text are five tags: "Creating & Editing", "Digital Literacy", "Essential Digital Skills", "Reflective Exploration", and "Using Devices". The post includes two file attachments: "Adult Digital Induction Tutorial.pdf" (632.97Kb) and "Adult Digital Induction Tutorial.pptx" (1.70Mb). At the bottom of the post, there is a "View 5 replies" link, a "Bookmark" icon, and a "Like" icon with a count of 2. A reply input field is partially visible at the bottom.

Currently there are 146 visitors, with 124 users who post<sup>4</sup>.

However, as with the APW, this number of visitors is a small percentage of those people visiting but not posting (2795 unique users between July 2021 and March 2022<sup>5</sup>)

In conclusion, there is a need to consider:

- how to maintain user engagement and interest once projects have completed
- how to convert those visitors who are browsing into active community residents who post comments. (<http://daveowhite.com/vandr/>)

<sup>2</sup> ETF Social Analytics data for the APW, 1.1.20 - 11.4.22

<sup>3</sup> Accessed from the [EDS Community of Practice](#): 15.3.22

<sup>4</sup> Data provided by EDS team for the EDS Advisory Group meeting : 11.2.22 (updated 16.2.22 by LW)

<sup>5</sup> ETF Social Analytics data for EDS Community of Practice, 7.3.22

## What is the perceived value of the communities of practice?

To gain an insight into the perceived value of the communities of practice and any barriers to engagement, one-to-one telephone interviews were conducted with two managers who had regularly engaged with either the APW or EDS Community of Practice. Each of the respondents had recently contributed by posting comments and/or sharing resources.

Both thought that the communities of practice offered significant value to managers and practitioners, by providing an opportunity to **network with colleagues** from other organisations to share ideas and resources.

One also felt that the **availability of modules and badges** added further value:

*There are incentives for anyone who is engaging – they take the modules, earn badges and get credibility. (EDS CoP user)*

The communities of practice were thought to provide an opportunity to not only share resources, but to also **develop and try out new pedagogical approaches**. This suggests that the value of these communities extends beyond participation, offering the **potential to change practice**, with teachers trying out new ideas, tools and resources they have learned from the community with their learners.

In terms of functionality, one of the respondents noticed that there had been some changes to the EDS Community of Practice that had **improved the user experience**:

*Recently I've seen an improvement, so when I log in, I know there's been some changes – I like that I'm reminded about the pages I've bookmarked, if people are following me and how many likes I've had – I think all that is really good, if somebody's replied. (EDS CoP user)*

## What barriers were encountered?

Both respondents felt there was a general reluctance for practitioners to engage with external communities of practice and this was mainly due to a **lack of time** owing to the demands and pressures of their day-to-day roles.

*Staff feel they don't have the time to engage in anything more than what they're doing already – there's a lot of stuff going on – it's not actual training, but the demands of the job – just working under too much pressure already – they don't have the time. (EDS CoP user)*

For those who had engaged, a further issue was a **lack of incentive to return** to the site:

*We put stuff up there, but it's enticing us back that's the challenge. It has to be*

*of value for us to go back to it, because in the cut and thrust of FE, especially the place I work in, time is really precious, I have a hundred odd things to do a day, so it would need to be worth my time really to be using it. (APW user)*

Allied to this, it was felt that there was a **reliance on facilitators** (such as Digital Champions) to incentivise practitioners to engage with the community and co-ordinate the activity.

*The onus is on having me as a Digital Champion and if I'm no longer involved and supporting EDS going forward, then that activity could stop (EDS CoP user)*

Significantly, the user of the APW had only engaged with it because it was a **requirement of the Reflective Explorations project**.

*We were told we had to do modules, badges and put stuff on the wall. I did what I was told to do. To be honest I haven't gone on the Wall since, so that's probably the issue that now the projects have gone, we'll need to be drawn back in again really. (APW user)*

There was also a perception that users were not aware of the benefits of the Community of Practice, because their organisation place **emphasis on the completion of modules**, rather than engaging in professional dialogue.

*I know from a practitioner who is a digital tutor – the only thing she did on the platform was complete the modules because she was requested to do so by another organisation – they were all told to do the modules. But it wasn't anything more than that – didn't have any more meaning than that. (EDS CoP user)*

**Trust** also emerged as a value during the discussions, and it was felt that some practitioners may be reluctant to engage in an online community as comments could have repercussions if they 'speak their mind'.

It was also suggested that there may be some confusion about the Community of Practice **target audience**, which may be preventing some practitioners from engaging.

*It's not just a place for managers, but it's also a place for practitioners and their managers and I think that's a misunderstanding. (EDS CoP user)*

There was some criticism of the **functionality** of both sites, with both respondents finding the communities of practice 'overwhelming'.

*It's really busy – I know that you can do a search and filter and there's a lot of information on there, I don't feel it is very well organised. It's only good for those who actually like to explore a lot of detail. (EDS CoP user)*

## How can engagement with the communities of practice be sustained?

It was felt that there needed to be an **immediate ‘reward’** for users, to persuade them to be regular users.

*We want it to hook us straight away. I have to be persuaded that I need the Awarded Practice Wall in my life and that will help me as an FE professional to do my job more efficiently .... and that’s a challenge. (APW user)*

Both respondents felt that practitioners could be encouraged to regularly visit the communities of practice, if they were a **source of useful resources, as well as ideas** for solving digital problems they were encountering.

*To entice me back, it would have to become my go to place to look for resources and digital solutions. At the moment, I don’t have a go to place, I go to many different places – what it needs to pop up a bit a more. We know it’s there, we know the platform’s there, but it needs to play a more active role in my life, like a newsletter. It could be split up into pedagogy, digital education, digital hardware – with links in an email and I’ll think ‘I’ll go to that wall to look at other people’s best practice that I could benefit from’. I’m a bit of a magpie really. If it’s shiny and looks good and I think it’s going to be useful, I’ll be in there, but it does have to attract me. It has to be something that’s really attractive and it’s going to save me time. (APW user)*

*Resources are something that everyone wants – that is an incentive in itself. Building resources takes so much time and energy. If the platform provided resource packs, that would be a real incentive – a selection of resources that support EDS with ESOL learners, with other areas. Maybe you could say people can access the resources if they put something back – they have to do something. (EDS COP user)*

One respondent thought that there needed to be a performance related incentive to encourage practitioners to engage in these communities. This comment indicates that there may be tensions for users in some organisations where approaches to professional development tend to be top down, rather than practitioner-led.

*I feel it should be mandatory for practitioners to engage. The government have an agenda, but I think they need to go one step further. I do think that providers need to really focus on making sure that there is some sort of performance management for staff – they need to be judged and measured on targets. That would make a huge difference if that was part of their performance review. (EDS COP user)*

There was also agreement that **facilitators and leaders** needed ‘key figures who are engaging and bringing others in’ to incentivise practitioners to engage in the communities.

*I don't think they can sustain themselves on their own. I think there needs to be someone promoting it and monitoring it. You are relying on people to keep going back to it, with the best will in the world, FE is mad. It's not for the faint hearted – you need someone saying 'have you thought of this – these resources are here, this might help you as you move forward. A digital strategy, techniques in your organisation. (APW user)*

One respondent considered that there was a need for the ETF to build more awareness of the value of communities of practice by developing organisational case studies that demonstrate the impact of external communities of practice on teachers' digital practice.

### **What has been the learning from the Communities of Practice and what are the features of successful learning communities?**

*Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Lave & Wenger, 1998).*

Although this review has been small scale, some key themes have emerged. This section will explore what has been learned from successful communities in relation to these themes that may help to inform the process for helping the APW and EDS Community of Practice thrive in the future.

#### **Theme 1: Social purpose**

Although practitioners and managers who engage in the online communities are from a diverse range of further education settings, it could be argued that they all share a concern or passion for improving their digital practice and are seeking ways to improve it by interacting in the online communities. To an extent, this would seem to chime with Lave and Wenger's characteristics of communities of practice where participants have a strong sense of purpose<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Theme 2: Knowledge sharing**

A key role of both communities is to share existing knowledge, as well as resources. There is evidence that the practitioners engaging in the EDS and APW communities are sharing resources and practice. Significantly, a number of the APW reflections demonstrate that new practices and knowledge have been developed as a result. Lave and Wenger consider that the sharing of experiences is important but

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<sup>6</sup> Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press

emphasise that effective communities of practice also innovate and share problems, 'inventing and creating new practices and knowledge, developing a 'collective and strategic voice'<sup>7</sup>. Arguably, however, changes in practice take time, and it would be useful to conduct further research to explore the extent to which changes in practice are being sustained at an organisational level and are leading to improvements in learner outcomes.

Members of both communities value the opportunity to share resources and indeed identify this benefit as a way of enticing them back into the community in the future. A study carried out by the US Department of Education<sup>8</sup> that explored features that were most strongly associated with 'value creation' suggested that having access to high quality content and well-designed tools that could be adapted were considered important by community members. Interestingly, the study also proposed that members also strongly valued structured activities that were moderated and time-bound, a feature that is exemplified by the EdTech badge scheme.

In view of these findings, consideration could be given to providing differentiated resource banks, and the ETF team may want to consider introducing more structured activities to sustain engagement.

### **Theme 3: Collaborative culture**

It is evident from reviewing posts, comments and reflections that the communities of practice provide opportunities for participants to work collaboratively to improve practice. A recent ETF study that explored the experiences of Advanced Practitioners during the pandemic highlighted that online communities were important in fostering a sense of care and professional dialogue between the practitioners<sup>9</sup>.

Comments by one respondent, however, suggest that practitioners may experience tensions when attempting to bring any new learning from the external community of practice into their own organisation, particularly where there may be top-down approaches to quality improvement dependent on accountability and performance management.

Allied to this, trust is a value that is central to fostering collaborative cultures<sup>10</sup> and a recent study concludes that leaders have a crucial role in creating a culture based on

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<sup>7</sup> Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press

<sup>8</sup> US Department of Education (2014) Exploratory research on designing online communities of practice for educators to create value <https://www-data.fi.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/28144849/Exploratory-Research-on-Designing-Online-Communities-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> ETF (2021) Advanced Practitioners during COVID, Thriving or Surviving? 2021 <https://www.etf-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ETF-AP-Thriving-Research-Report-31.01.22.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Smith, R. and O'Leary, M. (2015) Partnership as cultural practice in the face of neoliberal reform, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 47 (2), pp.174-192.

agency and trust that is necessary for this approach to be effective<sup>11</sup>. Time was also found to be critical factor, highlighting possible further tensions within providers between practitioners and their managers, where there are increasing demands on time that are a result of funding pressures.

#### **Theme 4: Support**

It is evident when analysing the trends in participant engagement that facilitators and leaders (Digital Champions, Super Contributors and EdTech reviewers) play a crucial role in stimulating and cultivating the activity to ensure that practitioners derive the maximum benefit from their participation and according to Wenger-Trayner, they should be 'recognised for the role they play'.<sup>12</sup>

Consideration could also be given to providing opportunities for members to play a role in community leadership, since research<sup>13</sup> has suggested that this is a feature strongly associated with value creation in a community of practice.

Short-term funding or 'stop-start' funding may prevent a continuity of support and sustained impact. In addition, whilst effective facilitation is important, it would seem from respondents that members of the communities need to see the immediate benefits from participation if they are to keep returning to the communities.

To better understand the motivations of FE teachers and trainers in engaging in online communities and how their needs could be met, it would be useful to undertake some research with practitioners who are current users of the APW and EDS Community of Practice.

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<sup>11</sup> Further Education Trust for Leadership (FETL) (2019) *The role of leadership in prioritising and improving the quality of teaching and learning in further education*. Project report for FETL. London: FETL <https://fetl.org.uk/publications/the-role-of-leadership-in-prioritising-and-improving-the-quality-of-teaching-and-learning-in-further-education/>

<sup>12</sup> Wenger-Trayner, E & B (2015) Introduction to communities of practice (2015) <https://wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>

<sup>13</sup> US Department of Education (2014) Exploratory research on designing online communities of practice for educators to create value <https://www-data.fi.ncsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/28144849/Exploratory-Research-on-Designing-Online-Communities-FINAL.pdf>

### 3. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This brief review of the Awarded Practice Wall and EDS Community of Practice suggests that both communities are bringing an immediate value to practitioners and managers by providing online spaces to network with colleagues from other organisations to reflect on their practice, as well as to share ideas and resources.

The reflections by participants of the EdTech badge scheme indicate that practitioners are translating new digital knowledge into practice, and in some cases, there is evidence of changing classroom practices.

The findings indicate, however, that there is a reliance on facilitators (Digital Champions, EdTech reviewers, Super Contributors, delivery partners) to incentivise engagement with the communities and to champion and co-ordinate the activity. There is therefore a risk that activity and interest in the communities will decline if these facilitators are no longer available.

The study also indicates that there are a number of potential barriers to engaging in the communities, and these include:

- insufficient time, due to the demands and pressures of practitioners' everyday roles
- a perceived lack of incentive to return, particularly if practitioners are unable to see an immediate benefit
- a lack of understanding and awareness of the benefits of engaging with the community
- a reluctance for practitioners to engage due to fear of repercussions if comments were perceived as critical of their organisation
- tensions between a practitioner-led culture that is fostered in the communities and a more top-down approach to professional development experienced by some practitioners in their organisations
- confusion about the audience, whether the communities are for practitioners or managers (or both)
- the functionality, in particular the content, that may be perceived by some as 'overwhelming'

## **Recommendations**

To sustain engagement in the communities of practice, it is recommended that consideration is given to the following suggestions:

### **Short term**

1. continuing with the use of facilitators (Digital Champions, Enhance reviewers and Super Contributors) to engage practitioners and stimulate activity; providing an incentive for Super Contributors to continue posting comments (APW)
2. continuing with Reflective Explorations projects to stimulate participation, developing case studies that demonstrate the impact of external communities of practice on teachers' digital practice
3. addressing functionality issues, eg reviewing how content is presented so that it appears less overwhelming and helps to shape members' perceptions of its community values (particularly EDS)

### **Medium term**

4. merging the two communities, due to the overarching shared purpose, removing any barriers to entry, such as registration to the EnhanceDTP.
5. establishing the communities as 'go to places' for resources and ideas, developing resource repositories and structured activities to maintain regular user engagement and interest once projects have completed (particularly for EDS)
6. developing strategies for converting those who are browsing (users) into active members who post comments, helping to build their confidence in public sharing, fostering a sense of trust
7. making clearer the relationships between the modules, games, various activities on the sites
8. developing a communications strategy that clearly articulates the communities' purpose and the benefits of participating

### **Longer term**

9. developing a robust process for quality assuring resources that EDS and APW members upload to the community
10. undertaking some research with practitioners who use the communities of practice to better understand the motivations of FE teachers and trainers in engaging in online communities and the value that the community could add to teachers' practice.