

EdTech Logic Models

A practical guide to building logic models that help clarify product claims, strengthen reasoning, and guide proportionate evidence generation

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Introduction

This guidance has been published by the Chartered College of Teaching as part of the EdTech Evidence Board (EEB) project, funded by the Department for Education.

The EdTech Evidence Board aims to support those working in EdTech, and in education settings, to better understand the effectiveness of their EdTech products through the use of research and evidence. EdTech organisations will submit evidence for their product to the EdTech Evidence Board for review against the EEB evaluation criteria. In the long-term, the EdTech Evidence Board will provide public recognition of EdTech products that demonstrate they meet the required standard.

Throughout the early phases of the project it has become clear that having a clear and considered logic model is fundamental when it comes to understanding product effectiveness: where EdTech products have a well-defined logic model, suppliers are better able to communicate product claims, and perhaps most importantly, are better positioned to gather evidence that helps to demonstrate the product achieves what it sets out to do.

With this in mind, we have created this guidance to support EdTech suppliers to build effective logic models that help clarify product claims, strengthen reasoning, and guide proportionate evidence generation. Alongside this guidance, you can also access accompanying resources including a free EdTech Logic Model Builder digital tool, and an online course in Building EdTech Evidence.

You can visit our website (chartered.college/edtech-evidence-board-project) to find out more about the EEB project, view the EEB evaluation criteria, and register for updates on future opportunities.

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NEW EdTech Logic Model Builder

Our EdTech Logic Model Builder has been developed to help EdTech professionals create a bespoke logic model that supports a product's evidence base. The web-based tool - EdTech Logic Model Builder - is a free, industry-focused resource designed to help raise evidence standards across the EdTech sector.

- ✓ Clarify what your product is intended to do, for whom, and how change is expected to happen.
- ✓ Follow the on-screen prompts which work as a step-by-step guide, enabling you to articulate your thinking in a simple and focused way.
- ✓ At the end of the process, download a visual output of the bespoke logic model you have created.
- ✓ Use your logic model to drive evidence gathering and help users, investors and colleagues better understand your product.

Scan the QR code
to get started



Use the EdTech Logic Model Builder alongside this guidance to help you build a powerful logic model that will help clarify product claims, strengthen reasoning, and guide proportionate evidence generation.

What is a logic model?

In very simple terms, a logic model is a tool for thinking. Developing a logic model involves looking closely at your product, considering how you intend it to be used in education, and what you believe it can do. Completing a logic model can strengthen your product by clarifying its design and focus. It can also improve how confidently you communicate your product to potential investors, partners or schools.

Logic models are widely used in research planning and product evaluation as a way of making assumptions about projects and products explicit. They support clear thinking about how change is expected to happen (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, 'Logic Model Development Guide'). Logic models can help clarify the process needed to reach a stated end goal - in this case, the main aim of an EdTech product. As a result, logic models are often developed by working backwards.



Starting from the end goal can help us clarify the process needed to get there. Imagine setting off on holiday. In order to arrive at the airport calm and prepared, with bags packed and passports in hand, what needs to happen beforehand?

Thinking through these steps, and placing them in a logical order, improves our chances of arriving on time, and helps everyone involved understand the process.

The logic model process: step by step

We begin the logic model building process by helping you to establish, in the simplest possible terms, the intended outcome of your product: your core claim. From there, we think systematically about the steps, features and conditions that might support your users to move towards that outcome.

The process follows five steps, outlined over the following pages and followed in our digital EdTech Logic Model Builder. You are guided through each step, with reflective prompts and examples designed to help you clarify your thinking and ensure that you create a well-considered logic model that enables you to describe your product in a clear and logical way.

By the end of this process you will have a bespoke logic model like the one shown below.

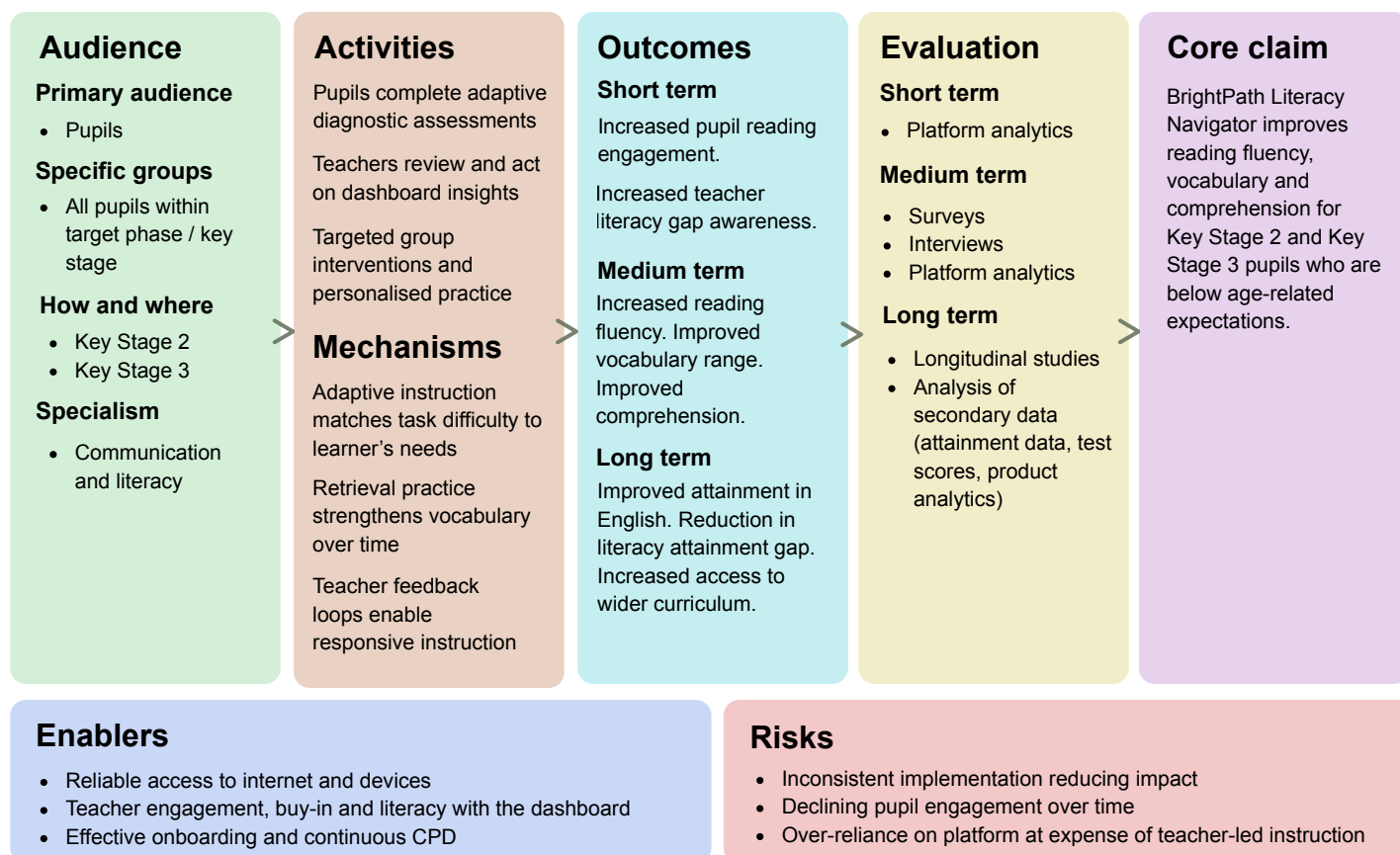


Figure 1. Example of a basic EdTech logic model, built using the EdTech Logic Model Builder digital tool.

Step 1: Identifying your core claim



The first step in developing a logic model is identifying your core claim: what you believe your product does.

Many EdTech products are flexible, and teachers and learners often find creative and unexpected ways to use them. Even so, most tools and platforms are designed with a particular intention in mind. This may be an intended outcome, or a pedagogical problem.

In logic model terms, this intention is your **core claim**.

Core claim

What our
product does

A strong core claim will be:

- concise
- specific about what your product actually does for educators
- honest and plausible (not overly ambitious)



*Perhaps your product helps learners with retrieval practice?
Makes marking easier? Helps to narrow attainment gaps?*

If your product operates as part of a wider platform, this step may feel more challenging. In this case, it can be useful to initially focus on a key aspect of your product and start there.

Over time, you should return to this step and refine or extend your core claim. Rather than perfect, your claim should be clear, transparent and specific enough to guide the rest of your thinking.

Step 2: Audience and context



Once you have identified your core claim, the next step is to consider who your product is for and where it is intended to be used. In logic model terms, these are described as your audience and your context.

Logic models are most helpful when they are precise, so this step helps by narrowing down where and for whom your product is most likely to work well.

In education, likely audiences might be:

- learners (perhaps of particular ages or stages)
- teachers (perhaps of particular subjects or phases)
- school leaders

Remember: Context matters. A product designed for Key Stage 4 is unlikely to be helpful in Reception. And just because your product works well in a maths classroom doesn't mean this translates to the geography classroom. When it comes to context and audience:

- avoid claiming universality (be specific about where your product is intended to work)
- consider product strengths and weaknesses in different contexts
- if you don't yet know enough about the strengths and weaknesses of your product for different contexts and audiences, think about how you might find this out.

Ask yourself: *In which contexts does our core claim feel more plausible - and where does it feel more fragile?*

Step 3: Activities and mechanisms



How does your audience, in your context, move towards the intended outcome you have described? This question sits at the heart of the logic model and helps us to uncover how a product is working. In logic model terms, you are now ready to identify your activities and your mechanisms.

Activities describe what users actually do when the product is used well. They are observable actions - not product features.

For example, activities might include:

- learners completing practice tasks
- teachers reviewing or responding to student work
- data being used to inform next steps



*A helpful question to ask is:
If I observed a class or teacher
using this product, what would
I actually see people doing?*

Mechanisms describe how the activities in your logic model are reasonably expected to lead to the changes behind your core claim. They are the processes through which your product is expected to influence teaching or learning.

For example, a product might work because it relies on the following mechanisms:

- Increases opportunities for practice
- Facilitates timely and specific feedback
- Enables teachers to complete tasks more efficiently

Ultimately, activities and mechanisms should make assumptions about product use and help explain why a core claim is plausible rather than aspirational.

Step 4: Enablers and risks



This step grounds your logic model in a real classroom context. You will consider the conditions required for your product to work as intended, and some of the real-world factors which might get in the way.

Enablers are the conditions needed for your activities and mechanisms to function as expected. They do not cause change by themselves, but they make change possible.

Risks are factors which could limit, distort or prevent a product from working as intended.

Common enablers often include:

- Access to appropriate technology or infrastructure
- Teacher confidence or familiarity with the product
- Compatibility with curriculum

Potential risks might include:

- Inconsistent or superficial use
- Increased, rather than decreased, teacher workload
- Unintended consequences for particular groups of pupils

Making enablers explicit helps clarify where a product is most likely to be effective and under what conditions. Identifying risks supports a more honest and responsible understanding of how your product works in real settings. Together, they strengthen your model and help to avoid over-claiming.



Helpful questions to ask at this stage are:

1. *What needs to be in place for our activities to happen in the way we expect?*
2. *What could reasonably prevent our product from working in a real world setting?*

Step 5: Indicative outcomes

In this step, we'll start to think about how we might see whether your product is working as intended.

Indicative outcomes help you to clarify what success might look like over time and what you need to evaluate to demonstrate that success. We are now moving closer to our core claims.

Remember: educational change is complicated, and it rarely happens all at once. For this reason, it's helpful to look at potential indicators of success in terms of short-term outcomes, medium-term outcomes and long-term outcomes. Presenting your indicators in this way helps you avoid jumping too quickly to long-term impact.

Short-term outcomes

Short-term indicative outcomes are immediate or early changes you might expect to see once the product is in use. They are often closely linked to the mechanisms in your logic model.

Example short-term indicative outcomes

Increase in learner awareness or understanding
Teachers have better awareness of learner misconceptions

Evaluating short-term indicative outcomes

Once you have identified your short-term outcomes you may also want to begin thinking about how you might evaluate these outcomes.

For short-term indicators of success, you will be looking for early signals that the product is being used as intended and that initial changes are beginning to occur.

This evidence can be helpful for early validation and product iteration.

*The type of evidence you gather will vary depending on the nature of the indicative outcomes, but common evaluation methods at this stage might include: **usage or engagement data, user surveys, teacher interviews.***

Medium-term outcomes

Medium-term indicative outcomes seek to describe changes that build on early shifts and become visible over a longer period of sustained use.

Example medium-term indicative outcomes

Improved accuracy in learner's work
Reduced persistence of common misconceptions
More targeted use of interventions

Evaluating medium-term indicative outcomes

Once again, with your medium-term outcomes you may want to think about potential evaluation methods.

For medium-term indicators of success, you will be looking to understand whether early changes are being sustained, and how context, enablers or risks may be shaping indicators.

This evidence supports product refinement and more confident claims.

*The type of evidence you gather will vary depending on the nature of the indicative outcomes, but common evaluation methods at this stage might include: **comparisons of pupil work over time, classroom case studies, follow-up interviews or focus groups, correlational studies.***

Long-term outcomes

Long-term indicative outcomes tend to describe broader or more sustained changes that the product is intended to contribute to, often shaped strongly by context and wider influences.

Example long-term indicative outcomes

Improved attainment or progress
Increased independence or resilience
Sustained changes to teaching practice

Evaluating long-term indicative outcomes

Again, it is helpful to consider here how you might evaluate these outcomes in the long-term.

When it comes to long-term indicators of success, it's important to remember that these outcomes are likely to be influenced by a number of factors beyond the product alone. For this reason, evidence should be interpreted cautiously.

Nonetheless, this evidence can be helpful for understanding how the product may be contributing to longer-term goals.

*The type of evidence you gather will vary depending on the nature of the indicative outcomes, but common evaluation methods at this stage might include things like: **attainment or progress data over longer periods, comparisons across cohorts and settings, qualitative evidence from multiple stakeholders.***

Top tips for effective evaluation that supports product claims

- ✓ **It's important to remember that indicators are not promises.** A common pitfall is to treat indicators as claims that must be proven immediately. Instead, they should be understood as reasonable expectations based on your logic model.
- ✓ **Different types of indicative outcomes can require different kinds of evidence.** The examples provided here are illustrative rather than exhaustive, and should be interpreted in relation to your specific product and context.
- ✓ **Evaluation is most helpful when it focuses on understanding the contribution a product is making to education** rather than attempting to prove any simple cause and effect relationships. Thinking about evaluation in this way helps ensure that evidence gathering remains proportionate and purposeful.
- ✓ **Not every claim we make about our product requires the same type or depth of evidence,** and different questions can be useful at different stages of product development and maturity. A strong logic model supports proportionate evaluation, helping teams decide what evidence is useful now, and what may be more appropriate at a later stage.

Logic models as a live document

Along with the EdTech Logic Model Builder, this guidance is intended to support your thinking, help you make reasonable claims about your product and develop a meaningful approach to evidence generation.

You should now have the initial workings of a logic model that reflects the outputs of this process.

It's good to remember that logic model development is rarely linear, and revisiting earlier steps, refining assumptions and adjusting claims is a normal and productive part of the process.

Make sure you use your logic model as a live document, revisiting and iterating it regularly as you gather evidence and iterate your product.

Other resources you may be interested in...

Building EdTech Evidence

A free online course and certification designed for individuals working in EdTech organisations

School decision-makers increasingly expect to see clear, credible evidence about what EdTech products are intended to achieve and how impact is demonstrated.

This short course will support you to **build evidence that builds trust in your product**.

From proof of concept to proof of impact, you'll learn how to use and gather evidence to have even more impact in your role.

What will you learn?

- ✓ use research and literature to **strengthen product credibility**
- ✓ become familiar with key **evidence building approaches and terminology**
- ✓ develop a **logic model** that helps to communicate the evidence-base for the product(s) you work with
- ✓ plan and begin to build an **evidence portfolio** for a target product.

Plus: Complete a short multiple-choice quiz to get formal certification for your learning.

Scan the QR code or use the link below to find out more and join the course



Who is this course for?

This online course is suitable for anyone working in EdTech looking to build their expertise and confidence levels around evidence-gathering.

- Keen to strengthen your sales pitch?
- Want to make evidence-based improvements to a product?
- Are you refining an early-stage product **or** looking to substantiate a product that is mature within the marketplace?

Whatever your context, this course will provide you with the knowledge and resources to gather evidence that builds trust in your product.

Keep in touch with the EdTech Evidence Board to:

- Get access to tools to help you generate evidence
- Review our recently published EdTech Evidence Evaluation Criteria
- Hear about future opportunities

chartered.college/edtech-evidence-board-project/edtech-resources/



Chartered College
of Teaching

The Professional
Body for Teachers

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