

# Mandatory use of technology in teaching: Who cares and so what?

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**Abstract:** Today's teachers are expected to use modern digital technology (DT) to optimise pedagogical effects. Singaporean policy makers have introduced directives to explicitly require teachers to apply DT in teaching. Inherent in such directives is an assumption that by requiring teachers to apply DT, they will perceive its value and use it in their teaching. This paper tests this assumption. Students in initial teacher education programs in Singapore responded to a survey on four variables about their use of DT: (1) compliance with requirements, (2) sense of competence, (3) perceived value and (4) frequency of DT application. Compliance was found to be negatively correlated with competence and uncorrelated with frequency, indicating that teachers who were more competent in DT were less likely to be compliant and those who were compliant may not actually apply DT in teaching. In contrast, both competence and value were positively correlated with frequency of application. Compliance differs for students in different programs and is higher for females. The results indicate that mandating use of DT may not be useful. A more productive approach may be to enhance the competence of teachers in DT so that they value its effectiveness and are confident to apply it in classroom activities. **Practitioner Notes:** What is already known about this topic There is a global trend that education authorities require teachers to apply educational technology in classroom practices. Requiring people to comply with directives from the authority may not always lead to conformity. Self-perception of competence has significant positive influence on human behaviour. What this paper adds Teachers who are more competent with DT are less likely to be compliant. Teachers who are compliant may not actually apply DT in teaching. It is essential for teachers to see the value of DT and build up their competence to use technology effectively. **Implications for practice and/or policy** Teacher educators need to reconsider their training approaches in order to cultivate positive attitudes towards DT and develop preservice teachers' competence in using DT for teaching and learning. School administration should strive to create a culture that values DT in teaching and learning. Teachers need to have successful experiences in DT application that in turn change their perceptions and classroom practices. © 2011 The Authors. British Journal of Educational Technology © 2011 BERA.

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