How to design
more impactful edtech:
using levels of evidence to guide
vision, investment, & roadmap

Why invest in research?
Design and evolve your edtech to be impactful

1. Investing in efficacy research saves you time and money
   it drives customer-centered decision making, less design churn, and faster product-market-fit

2. Selling with evidence is more compelling than selling features and widgets
   outcomes are what your customers and users ultimately care about

3. Honesty is fundamental to building trust with your customers and retaining them
   exaggerate evidence and claims now and nobody will believe you when you need them to

4. Learners have one chance with their education
   you owe it to them to build products that will help them to achieve their best

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smart decisions for edtech growth

Levels of evidence:
what competitive claims do you want to make?

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Competitive claims

E. Explain
explain why benefits realized

"*learners perform better on Assessment A than similar peers as a result of using our Product in a variety of classes and institutions*"

D. Cause
claim benefits due to product

"*learners who use our Product perform better than similar peers using [competing] Product Y on Assessment A at Institution P*"

C. Correlate
show benefits tied to use

"*learners who use our Product more perform better those who use it less on Assessment A*"

B. Test
illustrate use & engagement

"*learners using our Product say that feature A is engaging and feature B is critical to their goals*"

A. Design
claim design is evidence based

"*our Product is based on learning science research A and/or historical insights B*"

Levels of evidence:
what research is required to enable competitive claims?

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Research to invest in

execute longitudinal studies or RCTs to explore if outcomes repeat in multiple contexts and why

E. Explain
explain outcomes due to product

execute quasi-experimental efficacy studies to isolate the impact of your product

D. Cause
isolate outcomes due to product

explore correlations of pre-/post-course exam scores with product usage and performance

C. Correlate
explore usage vs. outcomes

combine exit surveys of perceptions and impediments + product data of actual use

B. Test
test actual use & engagement

use user research to identify customer goals + learning research as foundations for design

A. Design
design for empathy & impact

Levels of evidence:
how should I plan my roadmap and research e.g. year 2?
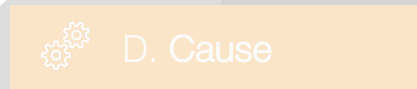
Research to invest in

Competitive claims

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than similar peers as a result of using our Product
in a variety of classes and institutions"*

execute quasi-experimental efficacy studies
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*"learners using our Product say that feature A is
engaging and feature B is critical to their goals"*

use user research to identify customer goals
+ learning research as foundations for design

A. Design

*"our Product is based on learning science
research A and/or historical insights B"*

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Thank you!