EDAiDER

Investigation of How UX Research Can Promote Activation, Engagement, and Completion in Online Courses

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Abstract

This UX research project investigates why many Swedish school teachers and staff members do not complete a self-paced AI education course offered by EdAider. Through 15 qualitative interviews with both teachers and principals, the study identifies core challenges including time scarcity, unclear relevance, digital confidence gaps, and insufficient leadership follow-up. Based on behavioral segmentation and persona modeling, the thesis suggests improvements to the course's onboarding, group-based engagement strategy, and follow-up routines. A kickoff redesign is proposed and an evaluation plan outlines how completion rates and login behavior will be tracked post-implementation. The findings support a human-centered approach to professional development and stress the importance of structured leadership support.

Keywords

UX research, AI in education, teacher professional development, digital learning, behavioral segmentation, design improvement

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1. Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisor, Sandra Thorén, my mentor at EdAider, Boris Kehr, and all participants who took the time to participate in interviews. Thanks also to my colleagues at EdAider for their support throughout the project.

2. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming how we work, learn, and organize public services—especially within the education sector. Teachers, school leaders, and other school staff face increasing demands to understand and navigate the opportunities and challenges of AI in pedagogical practice. In response to these needs, digital training programs have been developed to provide foundational knowledge on AI's role in education.

One such program is EdAider's self-paced AI training, aimed at school staff across Sweden. Despite being free of charge, nationally funded, and available online, usage data shows that many participants do not log in, do not start the course, or fail to complete it. These patterns mirror what previous research has shown about self-paced digital courses, where low activation and high dropout rates are common problems.

This thesis investigates why participation rates remain low in this training program, and how a UX perspective can be applied to better understand and improve the user journey. The goal is to develop design recommendations that make it easier and more motivating for school staff to complete the training—thus contributing to more effective AI competence development in Swedish schools.

3. Background

In recent years, Swedish education policy has placed strong emphasis on strengthening digital competence in schools. Government initiatives, strategies from the National Agency for Education, and regional programs have highlighted artificial intelligence (AI) as a priority area. The objective is to prepare both students and school staff for a future where AI will influence not only teaching but also school organization.

To support this transition, several national training initiatives have been launched, including EdAider's self-paced AI training for school staff. The training is free of charge, web-based, and developed in collaboration with researchers, teachers, and principals. It targets a broad audience within schools—from teachers and special education staff to student health personnel and administrative staff—and aims to provide a foundational understanding of AI and its application in school environments.

Despite the relevance of its content and accessibility, internal user data shows low activation and high dropout rates. In some municipalities, the majority of recipients have not even logged in, and among those who start the course, only a small percentage complete all modules. The reasons behind this remain unclear.

Similar patterns are well documented in research on digital learning, particularly within so-called MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), where completion rates are often low—sometimes below 10%. Several factors contribute to this: lack of structure and support, perceived irrelevance, technical barriers, and absence of social anchoring. These challenges are especially significant in time-constrained environments like schools, where staff rarely have the opportunity to seek out and complete voluntary digital courses without organizational support.

At the same time, a UX perspective is often lacking in the design of digital courses within the public sector. It is not always clear how users' motivational barriers, prior knowledge, and work context influence their learning journey. There is a need to combine UX methods with educational design to identify obstacles and improve the user experience.

Against this background, it becomes relevant to take a closer look at EdAider's training from a user-centered perspective, with the goal of understanding why school staff do not engage with the course—and how this can be changed.

4. Problem Statement

Although EdAider's AI training is free, digitally accessible, and designed to meet school staff's growing need for AI competence, user data shows that a majority of assigned participants never begin the course. Some receive the training invitation from their principals but do not even open the introductory email, while others log in but drop out during the initial modules. This indicates that obstacles to activation and engagement arise before users even interact with the actual course content—at what can be called the critical first touchpoint.

Several factors have been identified in interviews and data analysis as potential explanations:

- **Lack of perceived relevance:** The course is often communicated via email without personal introduction or context, making it easy to overlook.

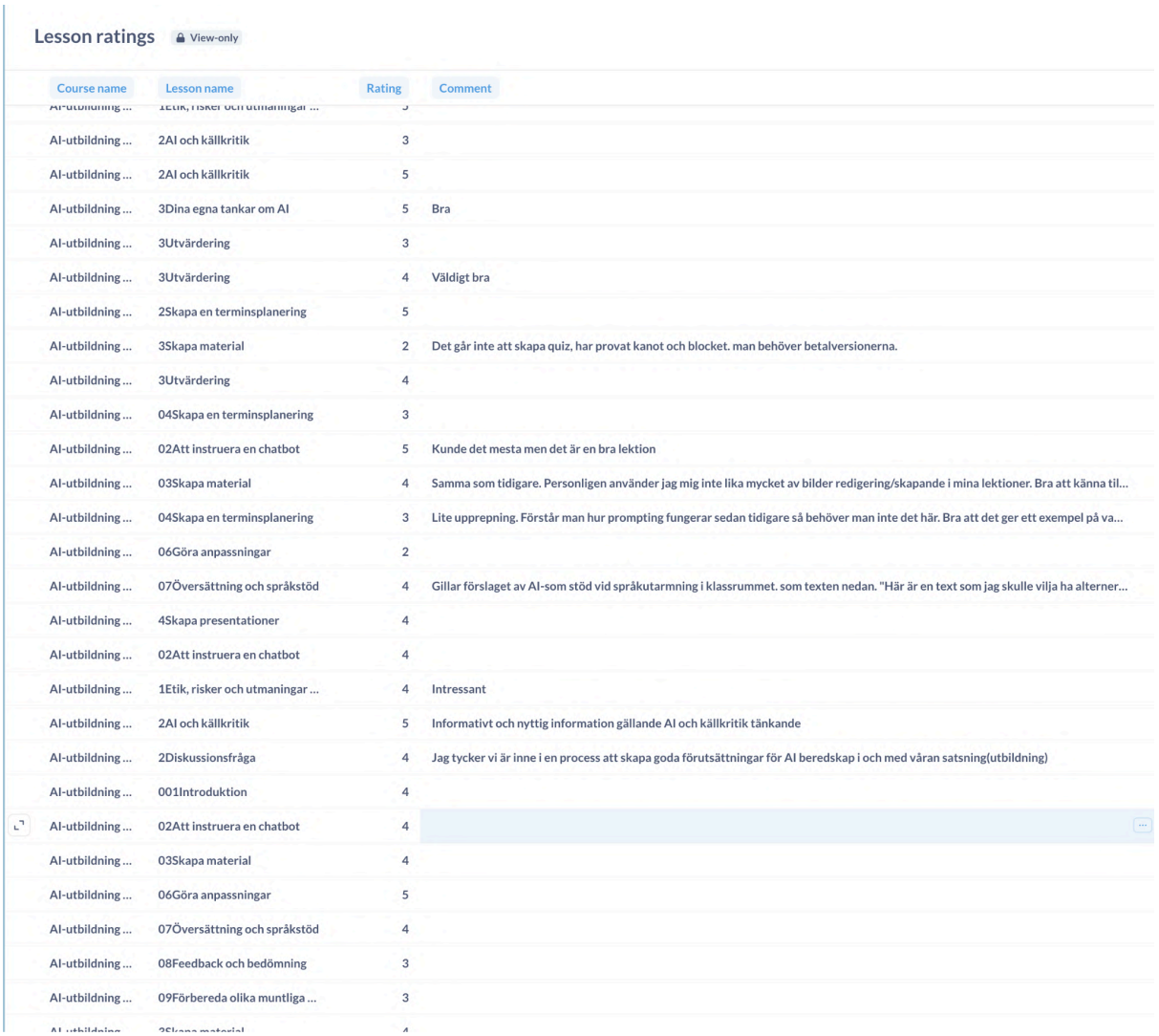
- **Time constraints and prioritization stress:** Many teachers report rarely having the opportunity to allocate time for self-paced training during their workweek, despite being interested.

- **Technology-related stress or uncertainty:** Some users experience a cognitive threshold when encountering new digital systems, even if the interface itself is user-friendly.

- **Procrastination effect:** Since the training is open for an entire year, it paradoxically encourages postponement—several users described that "it can always be done later."

At the same time, platform data and user ratings indicate that those who do complete the training find the content relevant, pedagogical, and meaningful. This suggests that the content itself is not the issue. Instead, the biggest obstacles lie in the communication, context, and initial user experience— in UX terms, the problems relate to onboarding, motivation, and expectation setting rather than interaction with the course content itself.

The problem occurring at the very first touchpoint is also confirmed by email data from Brevo. Although the welcome email was successfully delivered to almost all participants, only 13% opened it—but among those who did, 76% clicked through to the course platform. This suggests that while the email content is engaging, there is insufficient clarity, recognition, or motivation in its outer appearance. This initial barrier is analyzed in more detail in chapter 7.1.1.1.



Lesson ratings View-only

Course name	Lesson name	Rating	Comment
AI-utbildning ...	2AI och källkritik	3	
AI-utbildning ...	2AI och källkritik	5	
AI-utbildning ...	3Dina egna tankar om AI	5	Bra
AI-utbildning ...	3Utvärdering	3	
AI-utbildning ...	3Utvärdering	4	Väldigt bra
AI-utbildning ...	2Skapa en terminsplanering	5	
AI-utbildning ...	3Skapa material	2	Det går inte att skapa quiz, har provat kanot och blocket. man behöver betalversionerna.
AI-utbildning ...	3Utvärdering	4	
AI-utbildning ...	04Skapa en terminsplanering	3	
AI-utbildning ...	02Att instruera en chatbot	5	Kunde det mesta men det är en bra lektion
AI-utbildning ...	03Skapa material	4	Samma som tidigare. Personligen använder jag mig inte lika mycket av bilder redigering/skapande i mina lektioner. Bra att känna til...
AI-utbildning ...	04Skapa en terminsplanering	3	Lite upprepning. Förstår man hur prompting fungerar sedan tidigare så behöver man inte det här. Bra att det ger ett exempel på va...
AI-utbildning ...	06Göra anpassningar	2	
AI-utbildning ...	07Översättning och språkstöd	4	Gillar förslaget av AI-som stöd vid språkutarmning i klassrummet. som texten nedan. "Här är en text som jag skulle vilja ha alterner...
AI-utbildning ...	4Skapa presentationer	4	
AI-utbildning ...	02Att instruera en chatbot	4	
AI-utbildning ...	1Etik, risker och utmaningar ...	4	Intressant
AI-utbildning ...	2AI och källkritik	5	Informativt och nyttig information gällande AI och källkritik tänkande
AI-utbildning ...	2Diskussionsfråga	4	Jag tycker vi är inne i en process att skapa goda förutsättningar för AI beredskap i och med våran satsning(utbildning)
AI-utbildning ...	001Introduktion	4	
AI-utbildning ...	02Att instruera en chatbot	4	
AI-utbildning ...	03Skapa material	4	
AI-utbildning ...	06Göra anpassningar	5	
AI-utbildning ...	07Översättning och språkstöd	4	
AI-utbildning ...	08Feedback och bedömning	3	
AI-utbildning ...	09Förbereda olika muntliga ...	3	

Figure 1: Ratings per lesson segment in the AI course

Lesson ratings

View-only

Course name	Lesson name	Rating	Comment
AI-utbildning ...	1Vad är AI?	5	mycket intressant utvecklings information och syfte.
AI-utbildning ...	2Textbaserad AI	3	
AI-utbildning ...	2Dina egna tankar om AI	2	
AI-utbildning ...	3Viktiga AI-begrepp	4	
AI-utbildning ...	08Feedback och bedömning	5	
AI-utbildning ...	3Viktiga AI-begrepp	5	Bra basfakta.
AI-utbildning ...	2Textbaserad AI	5	
AI-utbildning ...	1Välkommen till utbildningen!	5	
AI-utbildning ...	2Dina egna tankar om AI	5	
AI-utbildning ...	10EdAiders AI-bibliotek: Me...	5	
AI-utbildning ...	02Att instruera en chatbot	5	
AI-utbildning ...	03Skapa material	5	Mycket bra, användbart.
AI-utbildning ...	04Skapa en terminsplanering	5	Perfekt.
AI-utbildning ...	3Ljudbaserad AI	5	Mycket inspirerande!
AI-utbildning ...	06Göra anpassningar	5	Mycket bra.
AI-utbildning ...	07Översättning och språkstöd	5	Bra.
AI-utbildning ...	08Feedback och bedömning	5	Bra.
AI-utbildning ...	09Förbereda olika muntliga ...	5	Bra tips.
AI-utbildning ...	10EdAiders AI-bibliotek: Me...	3	
AI-utbildning ...	5Videobaserad AI och källkri...	5	
AI-utbildning ...	1Välkommen till utbildningen!	3	
AI-utbildning ...	2Dina egna tankar om AI	3	
AI-utbildning ...	3Dina egna tankar om AI	3	
AI-utbildning ...	3Utvärdering	2	
AI-utbildning ...	1Etik, risker och utmaningar ...	5	
AI-utbildning ...	4Fredrik "Feke" Norman	5	
AI-utbildning ...	3Joel Rangsjö	5	

Figure 2: Ratings per lesson segment in the AI course

5. Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate why a significant portion of users do not start or complete EdAider's self-paced AI training for school staff, despite the course being free, easily accessible, and nationally supported. Using a UX research perspective, the study aims to identify the key barriers that affect activation, engagement, and completion—both on the individual and organizational levels—and to develop design recommendations that contribute to a more user-centered and contextually adapted educational experience.

More specifically, the study intends to:

- **Map user behaviors and drop-off points** through quantitative data analysis to understand when and where participants tend to abandon or fail to start.

- **Explore users' experiences, needs, and motivational barriers** through qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and personas.

- **Identify organizational factors** – such as the role of school leadership, lack of time, digital confidence, or unclear communication—that influence course completion rates.

- **Conduct a heuristic evaluation of the educational platform's interface** to highlight usability problems that may cause frustration or dropouts.

- **Propose and prototype an improved course structure and onboarding model,** based on user needs, behavioral segmentation, and the educational context in Swedish schools.

The overarching goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital education can be designed to foster higher activation and engagement among users in the public sector—particularly school staff. By combining UX methodology with a practical case from a real educational environment, this work also aims to demonstrate how research-driven design decisions can improve both the learning experience and completion rates in digital education.

6. Target Groups

The overarching goal is to contribute to a deeper understanding of how digital education can be designed to foster higher activation and engagement among users in the public sector—particularly school staff. By combining UX methodology with a practical case from a real educational environment, this work also aims to demonstrate how research-driven design decisions can improve both the learning experience and completion rates in digital education.

6.1 Primary Target Group: Course Participants in the School System

The primary target group consists of the school staff in Sweden who are offered EdAider's digital AI training. This includes:

- Teachers in elementary schools, high schools, adult education, and SFI (Swedish for Immigrants)
- Special education teachers and student health staff
- Student support staff, study counselors, and resource teachers
- Administrative school staff (in some cases)

These users are the primary end-users of the training, and their needs, behaviors, and obstacles are at the core of the study's investigation.

They are expected to complete a flexible online course without scheduled time, often in parallel with their regular work duties. There is significant variation within the target group in terms of:

- **Digital experience and technical competence**
- **Motivation and understanding of AI's relevance in their professional roles**

- **Access to organizational support and follow-up**
- **Time available to prioritize professional development**

This variation makes it especially important to design the training to be inclusive, user-friendly, and sensitive to context.

6.2 Secondary Target Group: Implementing Stakeholders

The secondary target group consists of actors responsible for decisions, implementation, and dissemination of the training. These individuals greatly influence users' ability to start, engage with, and complete the training. The group includes:

- **School leaders (principals, assistant principals)**
- **Organizational developers and pedagogical leaders**
- **ICT strategists and digitalization managers**
- **Municipal education administration staff**
- **EdAider's internal course development and product teams**

This target group plays a central role in:

- How the training is communicated to staff
- How expectations are set (mandatory/voluntary, timelines, purpose)
- What leadership and support are offered during the course
- How the course is implemented alongside other school development efforts

The study therefore aims not only to understand the user experience from the individual perspective but also to identify organizational and structural factors that affect course implementation. The results can serve as decision-making support to improve activation, engagement, and long-term competence development in school organizations.

7. Methods

To investigate why many participants do not start or complete EdAider's self-paced AI training, I applied a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. The goal was to identify where in the user journey obstacles occur—and why. The work followed an iterative, user-centered design process inspired by design thinking, with a particular focus on the empathy phase.

Through data triangulation, I combined objective platform data, email statistics, user interviews, surveys, behavioral segmentation, user journeys, and heuristic evaluation. This methodological blend provided both breadth and depth—allowing for insights that neither data nor interviews alone could have fully captured.

This chapter first presents quantitative analyses of user behavior, email open rates, and session data, followed by qualitative methods such as interviews and surveys. It then describes how the results were used to map user types, visualize user journeys, and identify improvement areas in the platform's UX and UI.

7.1 Quantitative Methods

7.1.1 User Data Analysis

To understand user behavior around the AI training, I analyzed quantitative data from the platform's analytics tool, Metabase. The purpose was to identify where participants tend to get stuck, how far they progress, and how engagement varies across municipalities and schools.

Collected data included:

- **Login frequency:** The number of users who logged in at least once after being granted access to the course.

- **Module progression:** How far each user progressed—whether they completed only the first module, started but dropped off midway, or reached later stages.

- **Completion rate:** The percentage of users who fully completed the course, marking all sections as done.

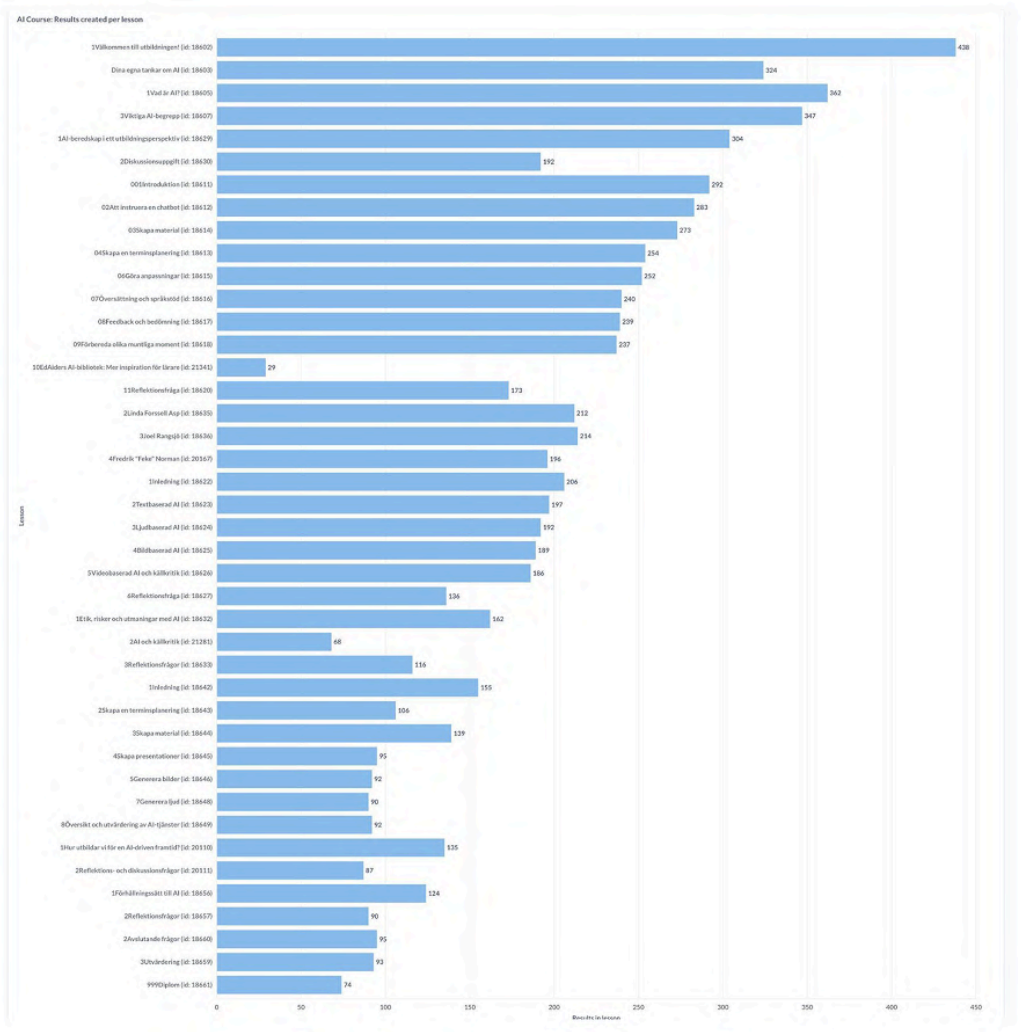


Figure 3: Completion statistics per lesson in a municipality

Inter-Municipality Comparison

Data were gathered from a selection of municipalities with varying results. The analysis revealed clear differences in user behavior:

- Some municipalities had a high percentage of fully completed courses.
- In others, dropouts were more frequent, with many users stalling after the first reflection module.
- A third group showed extremely low activity, where many users never even logged in.

These differences served as the basis for selecting interview participants. By comparing schools with different outcomes, I was able to identify organizational and communication factors that influence completion rates.

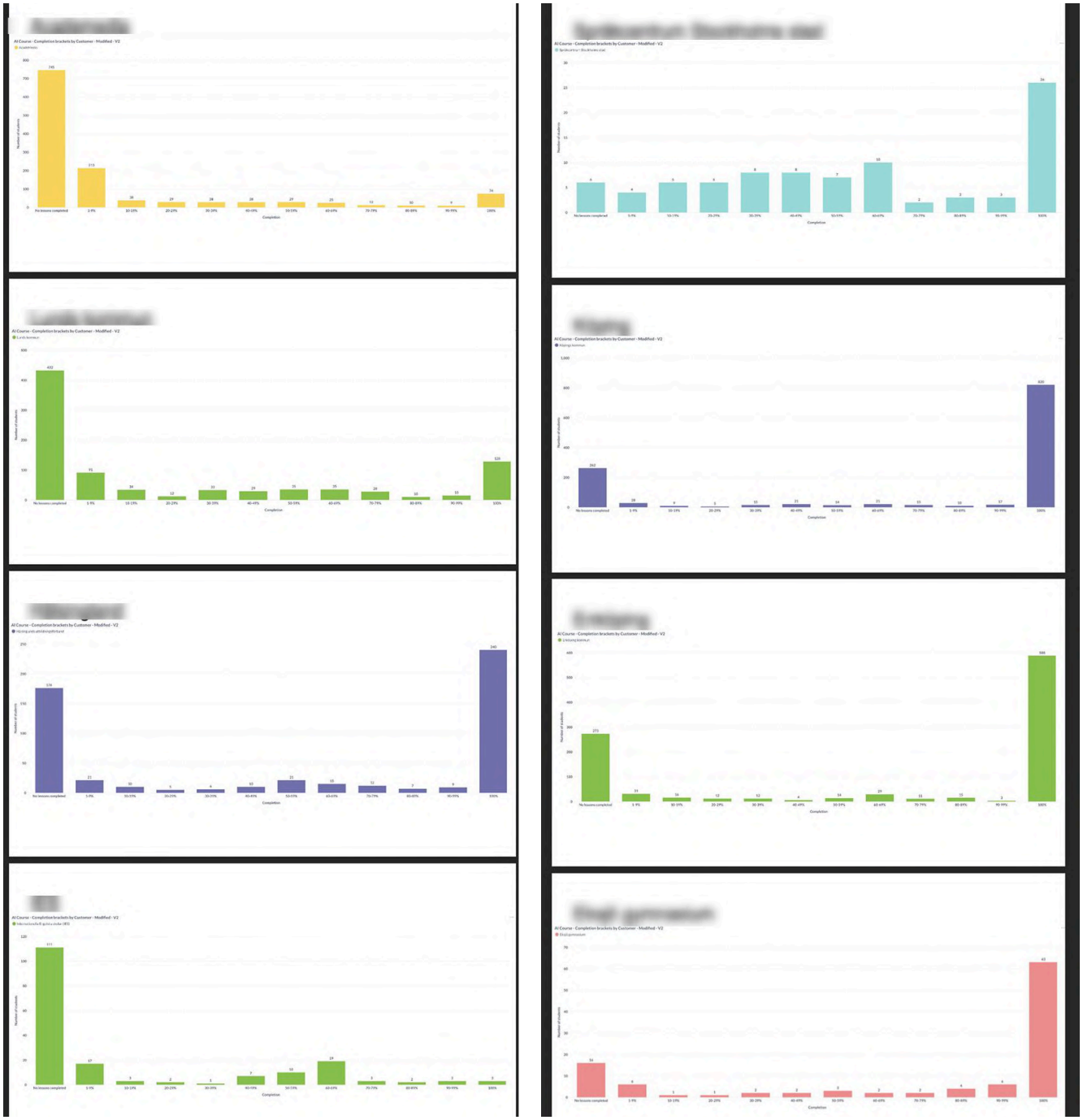


Figure 4: Completion statistics across different municipalities

Behavioral Data Analysis with Metabase

To deepen the understanding of platform behavior, I used Metabase to analyze user interaction data stored in the backend. This included:

- **User activity patterns**: Identifying how users engaged with different features, how often they logged in, and their progression through the course.

- **Drop-off points**: Highlighting where users tended to disengage or stop using the platform, helping to pinpoint usability issues or content bottlenecks.

7.1.1.1 In-depth Analysis: The Role of Email in Activation

A central observation in this study is that a large number of users never open the welcome email that contains the registration link for the course. This means that activation fails at the very first contact point—before the user even encounters the platform.

Several hypotheses were formulated early in the project to explain the low open rate and lack of logins. Through a combination of email statistics from Brevo and user data from Metabase, some of these hypotheses were ruled out while others remained possible explanations.

Two main areas were analyzed:

1. Communication Issues Within the Email Content

No technical issues with email delivery were detected—the emails were successfully delivered in 99.7% of cases, without being flagged as spam. Nor was there clear evidence in the data that the email content itself was confusing or created uncertainty about what was expected.

2. No Clear Barriers in Onboarding — Email Opening is Critical

Data shows that the onboarding and login flow works well for those who actually open the email. Out of 4,137 emails sent, 4,126 were delivered—representing a 99.7% delivery rate. This means that technical issues such as spam filters or incorrect addresses were not a relevant problem.

Despite this, only 553 emails were opened—a 13% open rate—indicating that the major drop-off occurs right at the first encounter with the course. However, of those who opened the email, 421 users clicked through, corresponding to 76%, suggesting that the email's content was engaging and action-oriented.

Further user data shows that the majority of those who clicked not only logged in but also completed at least one lesson. This means that the onboarding experience—from click to course start—contains no obvious barriers. On the contrary, it works efficiently for those who reach the content.

The problem, therefore, is not within the interface or the login process—but in the fact that users never open the email and therefore never enter the functioning UX flow.

Cut off	Total	No sign-in	Single sign-in		Users not engaged
No	13624	5483	2222		57%
1 week	9664	1737	2058		39%
2 weeks	9196	1626	1829		38%
4 weeks	8712	1608	1547		36%

Figure 5: Statistics from Brevo

Date	17 - 30 mar			
	Email			
Campaign	Sent	Delivered	Total opens	Clicks
	Brevo			
Welcome email	4137	4126	553	421
		99.7%	13%	76%

Figure 6: Statistics from Brevo

Summary: The Problem Occurs Before the UX Flow

The analysis shows that the biggest dropout happens before the user even takes the first step into the course experience. The technical solutions work—emails are delivered 99.7% of the time, and the onboarding flow works smoothly for those who click through.

However, the course reaches the user without sufficient context, recognition, or perceived relevance, causing the first contact to often be ignored.

Even though 76% of those who opened the email clicked through—a very strong result—only 13% of recipients actually opened it. This demonstrates that while the email content itself is of high quality, the initial threshold lies in building trust, clarity, and interest already in the email's sender, subject line, and context.

7.1.2 Survey

A survey was distributed to a larger selection of course participants in order to validate and complement the interviews. The survey included respondents from 5 different schools. The results revealed several important insights:

- **Time constraints** were the most widespread obstacle to course completion.

- **Insufficient information:** Many respondents were unclear about the course's purpose, content, and whether participation was voluntary or mandatory. Some stated that they had not received any information at all.

- **Low priority for training:** Many respondents indicated that professional development, particularly self-paced training, was not being prioritized in their current work routines.

Figure 7: Survey responses from a school

7.2 Qualitative Methods

7.2.1 Interview Study

A total of 15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and school leaders from various school types and municipalities. The selection was based on Metabase data and aimed to cover the following user types:

- Those who never logged in
- Those who logged in but dropped out early
- Those who completed about half of the course
- Those who completed the entire training

Additionally, principals from schools with varying completion rates were interviewed: some with high completion rates, others with low, and some where participants stalled midway. The interviews lasted 20–30 minutes and were conducted digitally.

The interviews focused on:

- Motivation and expectations
- Experience of the course's communication and structure
- Leadership support and organizational conditions
- User experience and technical obstacles

Lack of Perceived Value and Context — A Repeated Pattern

A clear pattern that emerged in multiple interviews was that the training was often introduced without sufficient context or connection to daily school life. Many participants did not understand why they were taking the course or what it would actually offer them. This led to uncertainty, low motivation, and in some cases, complete disregard for the course.

Quotes like:

"We haven't received any information about this at all."
"I got an email, but couldn't find it again—and never got a reminder."
"I did the course, but during the discussion questions I had no one to discuss with — that part felt empty."
"I don't think anyone else in my work group even knew it existed."

… illustrate how the absence of clear communication, reminders, and peer context created obstacles both before and during the course.

Several respondents described that there were no common starting points, no expectations from leadership, and no dialogue about the course's purpose. In such cases, the training was easily postponed, forgotten, or perceived as low priority.

Conclusion from the Interviews

Many participants found the course content relevant and interesting—once they actually started. But without a clear framework explaining why, how, and with whom the course should be completed, the barrier to starting or completing remained high. This highlights the importance of connecting the course to both individual and organizational needs—and of building social and collegial structures around digital learning.

The insights were used to formulate behavioral segments, create personas, and identify design needs.

7.2.2 Behavioral Segmentation and Personas

Based on the interviews, three central user segments were identified:

1. **Motivated Pioneers** – self-driven, digitally confident users
2. **Externally Driven Participants** – complete the course upon request, require structure and leadership
3. **Hesitant Users** – do not start or drop out of the course

For each segment, a persona was developed with:

- Typical motivations
- Common obstacles
- Contextual needs

Jobs-to-be-Done Persona

In addition to the behavioral personas, one persona was created using the *Jobs-to-be-Done* framework to highlight functional, emotional, and social drivers related to AI in teaching.

Primary job to be done:

- Create engaging and effective lesson plans with the help of AI tools.

Related tasks:

- Generate customized exercises and tests for different skill levels.
- Simplify administrative tasks like grading and documentation.
- Explore new pedagogical methods supported by AI.

Motivators:

- Increase student engagement and learning outcomes.
- Save time on preparation and administration.
- Stay updated with modern teaching methods.

Obstacles:

- Limited technical knowledge of AI tools.
- Fear that AI may replace traditional teaching methods.
- Lack of time to learn and implement new tools.

Usage scenarios:

- Use AI to create reading comprehension exercises tailored to students with different needs.
- Automate quiz and test creation with AI support.
- Receive lesson structure suggestions based on specific subjects or themes.

7.2.3 User Journey Map

A user journey map was created to visualize the user's path from the first contact to either course completion or dropout. The map was based on interview data and quantitative analysis, identifying key stages such as:

- Receiving the introduction email
- First login
- Reflection exercises
- Technical or cognitive barriers
- Final motivation

This mapping served as a foundation for improvement proposals related to onboarding, communication, and course structure.

7.3 Heuristic Evaluation

Because the project was broad and required a holistic perspective, I chose to supplement my analysis with a heuristic evaluation. Heuristic evaluation is a qualitative method used to identify usability issues in interfaces and digital systems. One or more experts review the product against established usability principles (heuristics) to identify barriers that may negatively affect the user experience.

Through this method, I identified several UX and UI-related issues in the current version of the platform. These shortcomings may contribute to users losing engagement and choosing to discontinue the training.

Identified Problems:

1. **Oversized Accessibility Menu**

   The accessibility menu occupies a disproportionately large space in the interface, which disrupts user focus and creates visual overload. Since the menu remains visible during navigation, there's a risk that users unintentionally overlook content—for example, skipping certain lessons. This can lead to confusion and negatively affect the pedagogical structure.

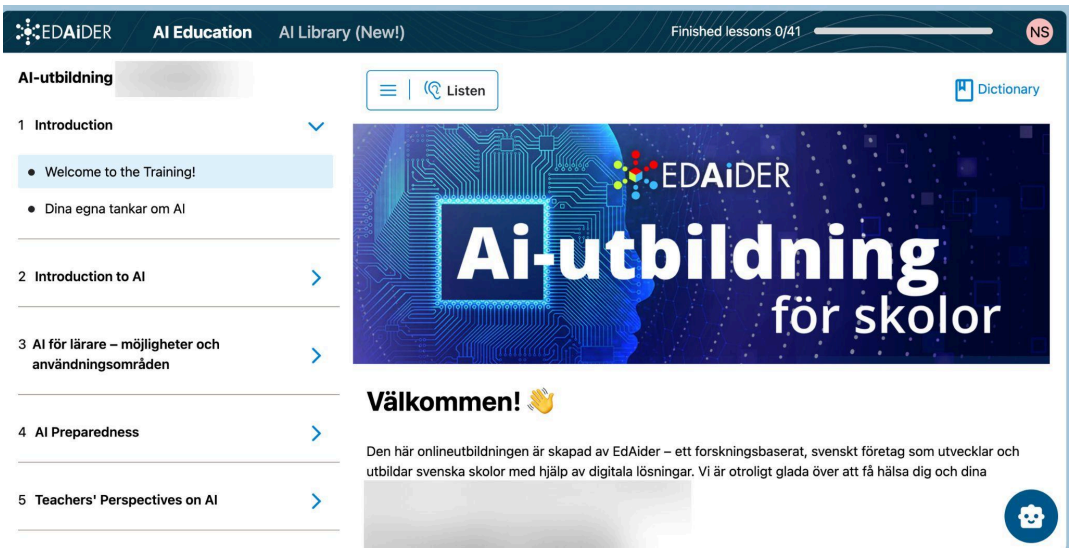


Figure 8: Current platform

Suggestion: The menu should initially be open (in accordance with accessibility standards such as WCAG), but users should then have the option to minimize or hide it. This balances accessibility with a more focused learning environment. The suggestion is based on insights from 10 A/B tests where a collapsible menu resulted in better usability.

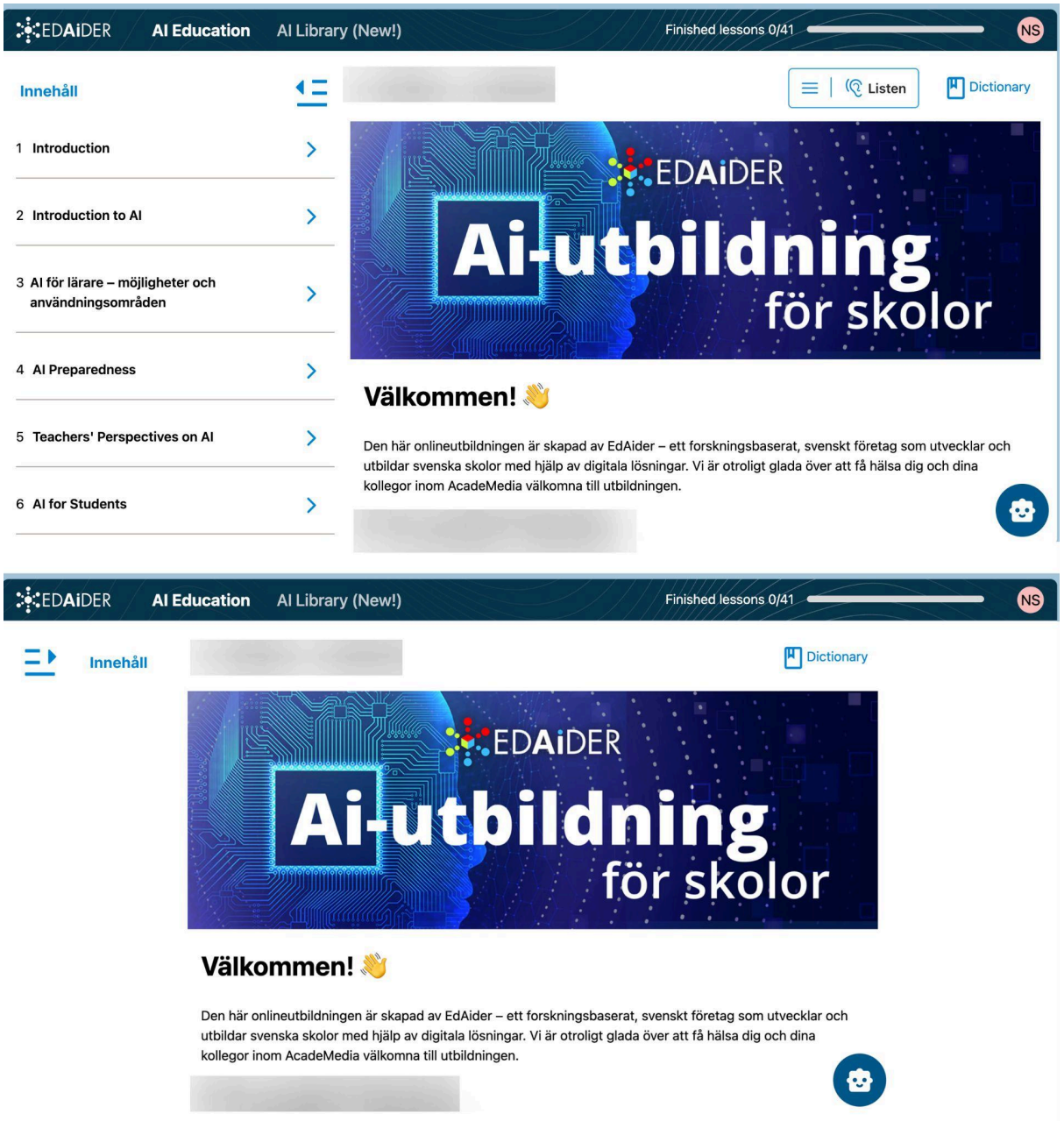


Figure 9: Design proposal

2. **Overlapping Lesson Content, Duplicate Lesson Titles, and Language Inconsistency**

   Several lessons have identical or very similar titles and partially overlapping content, which complicates navigation and creates unnecessary repetition. This increases the risk of users getting lost and reduces the sense of progression.

   Additionally, the platform defaults to English even when users select the Swedish version, resulting in a mixture of Swedish and English within the interface. This can appear unprofessional and create uncertainty about the course's quality.

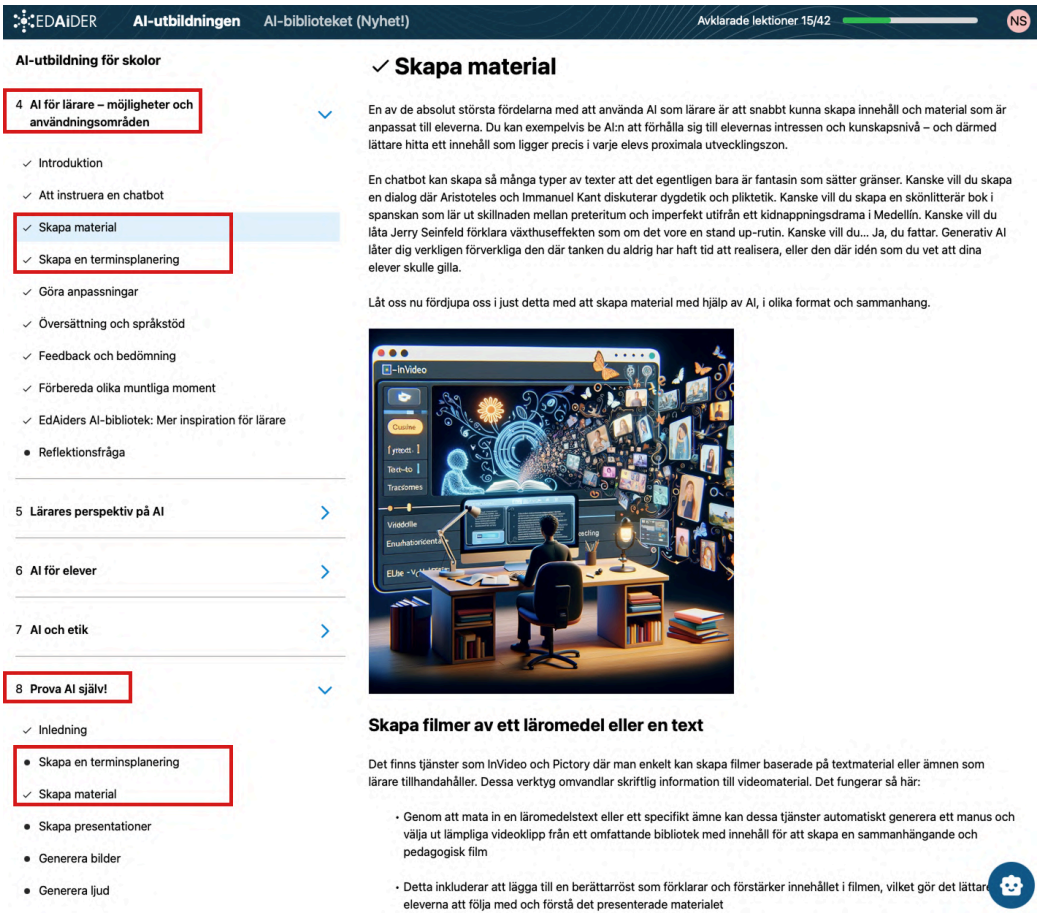


Figure 10: UX-related issues

3. **Complex Questionnaires with High Interaction Friction**

Some reflection questions are unnecessarily long and cognitively demanding. Each answer submission requires navigating to a new page and manually returning to the previous page. This interaction friction creates frustration and may lead users to abandon the platform.

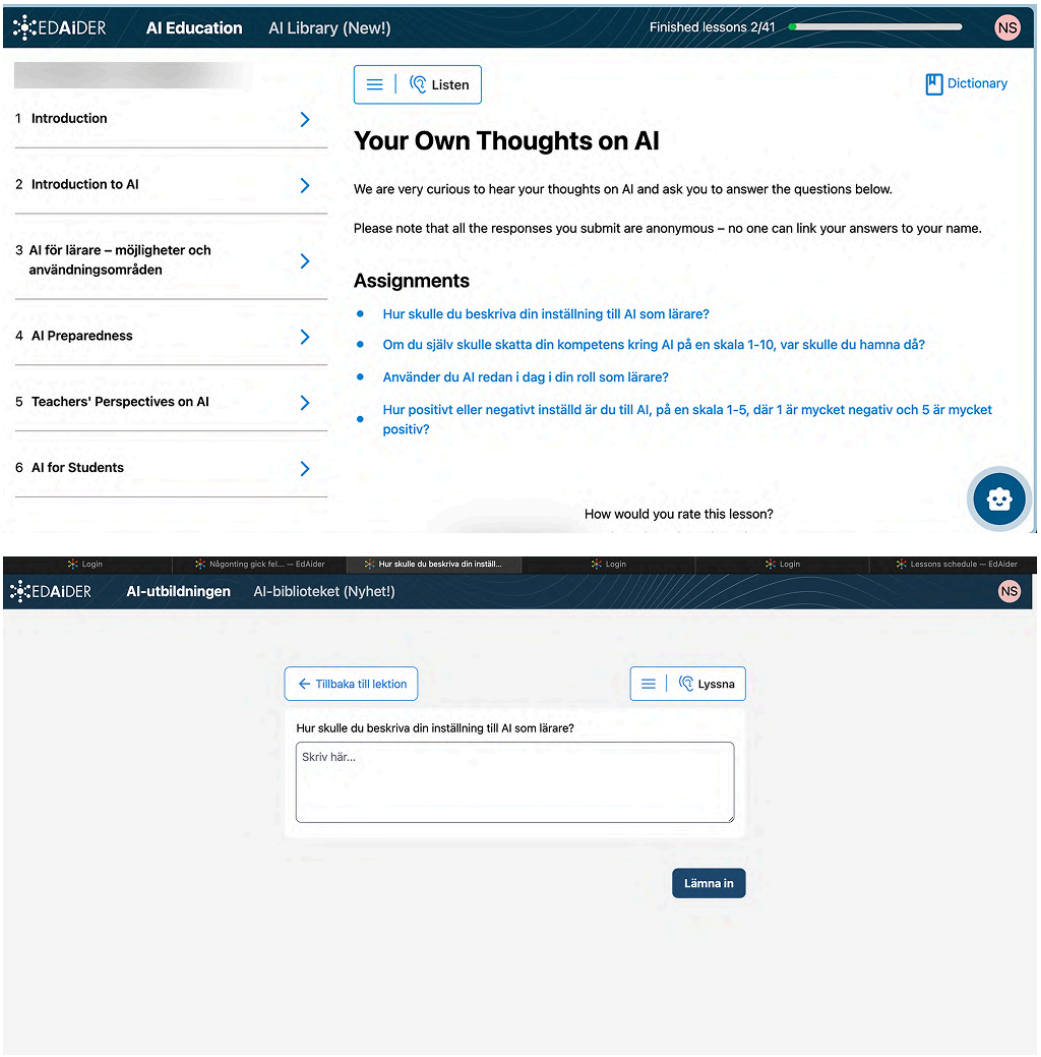


Figure 11: UX-related issues

Suggestion: Split questions into shorter formats or consolidate them at the end of the course to avoid disrupting the learning flow. Platforms like LinkedIn Learning successfully apply this solution.

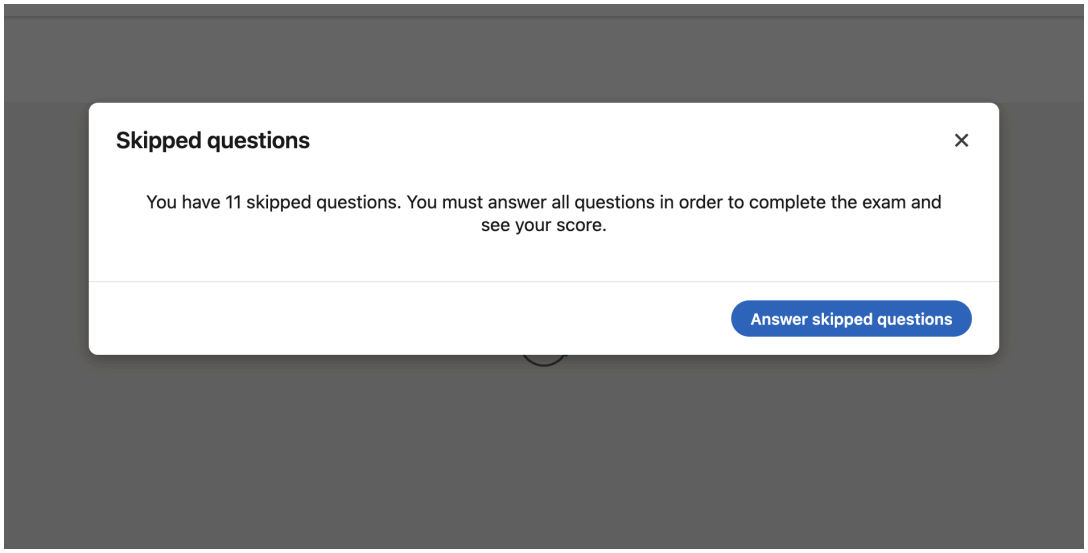


Figure 12: Design proposal

4. **Videoanvändning och återvändsgränder:**

   While video segments are engaging and can increase interest, users lose focus if directed toward external video suggestions (e.g., from YouTube).

   A concrete usability issue arose during testing: When a video embedded via Vimeo ends in fullscreen mode, the navigation bar disappears. The user ends up at a “dead end” with no visible close button, forcing them to replay the video to regain navigation. This friction risks breaking the learning journey entirely.

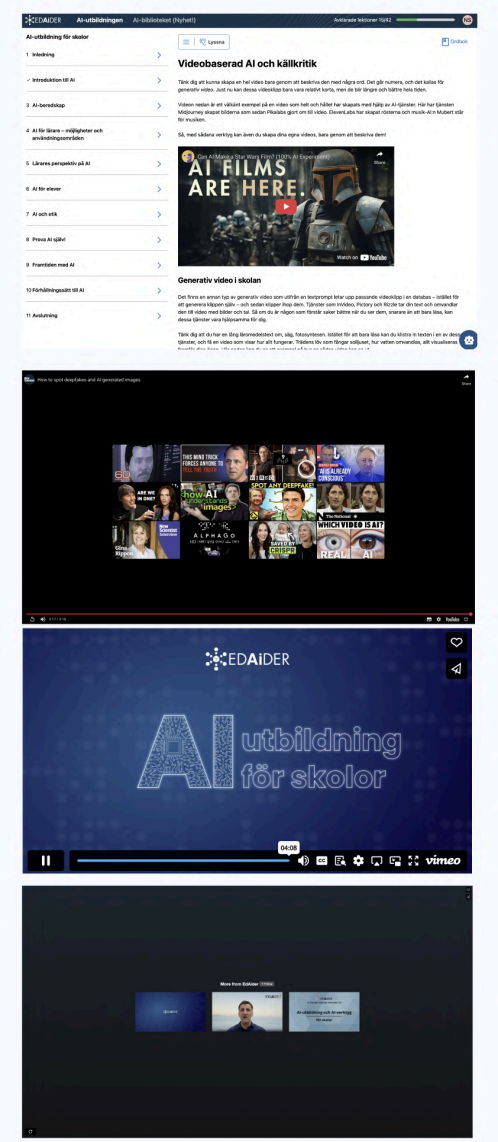


Figure 13: UX-related issues

7.4 Summary of Methods

The methods chapter shows that the issue of low course completion is not primarily due to the course content itself, but rather to shortcomings in communication, expectation setting, and context. The analysis clearly indicates that the largest obstacles arise even before users log in—particularly in how the introduction email is perceived and how the course is locally anchored.

At the same time, both data and interviews confirm that the course works well for those who actually get activated. The UX design challenge is therefore to lower the barriers at the first contact point, build trust, and create an onboarding experience that gives participants a sense of support, context, and purpose.

These insights form the foundation for the design proposals presented in the next chapter.

8. Development

The project originated from a concrete and somewhat unexpected problem: a significant share of EdAider's AI training participants had never even opened the welcome email containing the registration link. This raised important questions about how the course was being introduced, communicated, and prioritized—not only by the end users (teachers and school staff) but also within the organizational context surrounding them.

From Technical Assumptions to Behavioral Patterns

In the initial phase, the focus was on identifying possible technical or content-related shortcomings in the course. But as the work progressed—and as quantitative data from the email platform (Brevo) and platform usage statistics were combined with qualitative in-depth interviews—it became clear that the challenges were primarily behavioral and organizational.

The problem was not poor content but rather *how* and *when* the course reached the users—and under what circumstances.

Segmentation as Strategy

A key insight was that users could not be treated as a homogeneous target group. By identifying and analyzing different behavioral segments — for example, “passive observers,” “enthusiastic completers,” and “starters who fail to finish” — it became possible to understand their varied needs, motivations, and obstacles. This segmentation laid the foundation for developing targeted improvement proposals.

Additional Insights from Interviews

During the interviews, several teachers expressed that it would be more beneficial to conduct the training early in the school year. At the end of the year, workload often increases with grading and administrative tasks, making it harder to prioritize the course. Scheduling kickoff and course start at the beginning of the fall semester is therefore considered likely to increase both participation and completion.

Design of a New Structure: Three-Step Course Model

Based on interviews, behavioral analysis, and insights from previous EdTech research, a new concept was designed to improve onboarding and course engagement. The solution involves restructuring the training into three distinct stages:

1. **Gemensam Kickoff (fysisk eller digital):**

   An inspiring introduction session where the principal or another leader guides the staff, explains why the training is important, what it offers, and how it will be completed. Participants get to reflect, ask questions, and set personal goals. Support materials have been developed (presentation, demo videos, templates, and moderator guide) that schools can use independently of EdAider’s staff. The kickoff aims to reduce uncertainty, build motivation, and create a sense of collegial commitment.

2. **Individual Work (2 Months):**

   After the kickoff, participants have two months to complete the training. This limited time frame was chosen because the previous one-year deadline encouraged procrastination. During this period, users are encouraged to test AI tools in practice, generating immediate value and

increasing daily relevance. Visual progress, personal goals, and reminders are used as nudging elements.

3. **Joint Wrap-up:**

   After the deadline, participants gather again for a group follow-up. They discuss what they've learned, how it has affected their work, and how AI can be used going forward. This social feedback loop helps consolidate learning, inspire colleagues, and spread good examples throughout the organization.

Leadership's Role in Ongoing Follow-up

In addition to participating in the kickoff, school leadership (e.g. principal, digitalization manager, or ICT strategist) is recommended to actively monitor course progression during the education period. Through regular check-ins—such as in staff meetings—leadership can provide support, make progress visible, and help participants maintain engagement until course completion.

UX Improvements in the Platform

Alongside the kickoff structure, several concrete UX problems on the training platform were identified. For example, the oversized accessibility menu caused navigation difficulties. Improvement proposals were developed based on user testing and heuristic evaluation:

- the ability to minimize the menu after first interaction
- improved visual hierarchy
- better navigation logic.

These changes aim to reduce cognitive load and make the platform more user-friendly.

9. Results

We expect that the share of users logging into the course platform will increase as the course now begins with a joint kickoff session, either on-site or digitally. This joint start is designed to build confidence, reduce uncertainty, and provide group-based support, which can contribute to greater self-confidence and motivation. Additional motivational factors are introduced as participants share experiences through testimonial videos from colleagues.

We also anticipate increased engagement due to the introduction of a clear two-month deadline combined with active leadership follow-up during the course period. The combination of structured leadership and a defined timeframe reduces the risk of procrastination.

During the kickoff session, participants will be introduced to AI through practical examples and test exercises. An inspiration video will demonstrate how AI can be used in teaching to save time and streamline daily work. It is also emphasized that students are already using AI tools, meaning teachers need to be prepared and familiar with these tools in order to meet students where they are.

Since the wrap-up includes a reflective discussion about what participants have learned, we expect this to create a strong incentive for participants to actually complete the individual work.

The pilot version of the new course model will be tested on June 12 in collaboration with one school, providing an opportunity to evaluate and adjust the design based on users' actual experiences.

10. Reflection

The project gradually evolved into an in-depth UX study focusing on motivational factors, digital pedagogy, and organizational implementation within the school context. The work has shown how complex challenges in digital education often lie beyond the course content itself and instead concern how the course is introduced, anchored, and experienced by users.

By combining user data, interviews, behavioral segmentation, and heuristic evaluation, I have gained a broader understanding of how UX methodology can help solve strategic challenges in educational environments. The work has also provided insights into the importance of understanding users' everyday reality,

context, and social surroundings—especially in the public sector, where digital initiatives often clash with organizational structures and time pressures.

The most rewarding part has been seeing how a user-centered approach can lead to concrete design proposals that not only strengthen engagement but also create conditions for long-term competence development. The project has thus not only led to a deeper understanding of users' needs but also demonstrated how design can be used as a tool to influence systems and culture.

11. Conclusion

This thesis shows that the low completion rate in EdAider's AI training is not primarily due to the course content or technical quality, but rather to insufficient activation, low motivation, and weak organizational anchoring. A significant portion of teachers never even opened the initial welcome email—indicating that the problem arises before the learning journey even begins.

By combining user data analysis, in-depth interviews, behavioral segmentation, website analytics tools, and heuristic evaluation, the study identified both external and internal barriers. These include lack of time, uncertainty about the course's value, technology anxiety, low leadership prioritization, and the absence of social learning contexts.

The study resulted in a concrete, user-centered design proposal: structuring the training into three clear phases—a joint kickoff, an individual work period with a deadline, and a concluding wrap-up session. This model aims to create social context, increase accountability, clarify the course's purpose, and reduce procrastination. At the same time, platform improvements are proposed, such as easier navigation, visual progress indicators, and onboarding elements that highlight value and motivation.

To increase course completion, the following are particularly important:

- A clear group start in staff teams or via a digital kickoff
- Internal leadership anchoring through active involvement from principals or ICT support
- Visual and pedagogical reminders of the course's value and next steps

- Adaptation to varying digital skill levels among teachers and schools

Additional insights from interviews include:

The timing of the course start is crucial. Several teachers prefer the training to be offered early in the school year, when workload is generally lower. It is also recommended that the course material be supplemented with inspiring testimonial videos where teachers share concrete examples of how they have used AI in their teaching to boost motivation and contextual relevance. A more active follow-up responsibility from school leadership during the course period could further improve completion rates.

The proposed interventions should be tested with A/B experiments during the fall of 2025 to measure their impact on activation and completion. Further research could focus on how the training affects long-term AI engagement and actual changes in teaching practice.

The conclusion is that effective digital competence development requires more than good content — it requires a pedagogically and UX-strategically designed user journey where every step, from the initial invitation to course completion, builds trust, motivation, and empowerment.

Central to this are also the right timing for course start, concrete examples from other teachers, and active leadership support both at the start and throughout the course period.

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