

What Makes Edtech Work for Students?

Grounded in student-centered research and inspired by the ISTE Seal Framework, these student usability features help educators evaluate whether digital tools support real learning. The areas below highlight what students say matters most when interacting with edtech.

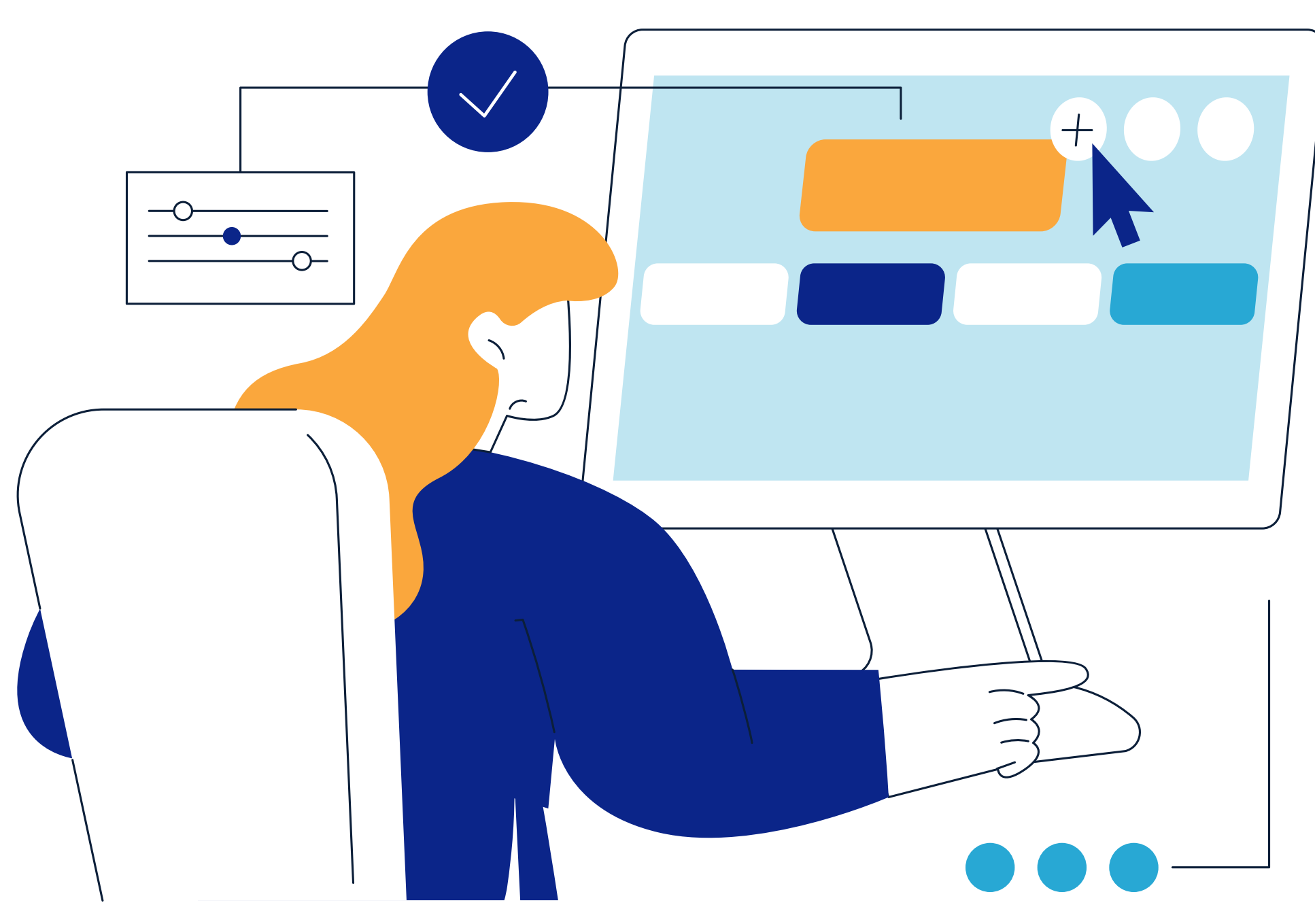
✓ Solid

Students emphasized the need for products that are easy to use and clearly support learning.

Students want:

- A clean, simple interface for accessing content, assignments, calendars and due dates
- Quick ways to find relevant content when needed
- A clear sense of their learning path, including what comes next and why
- A few adjustable features to customize their experience

"I don't often see edtech products show both the content and the due dates. I'd like to see when a reading is due and click to view the PDF."



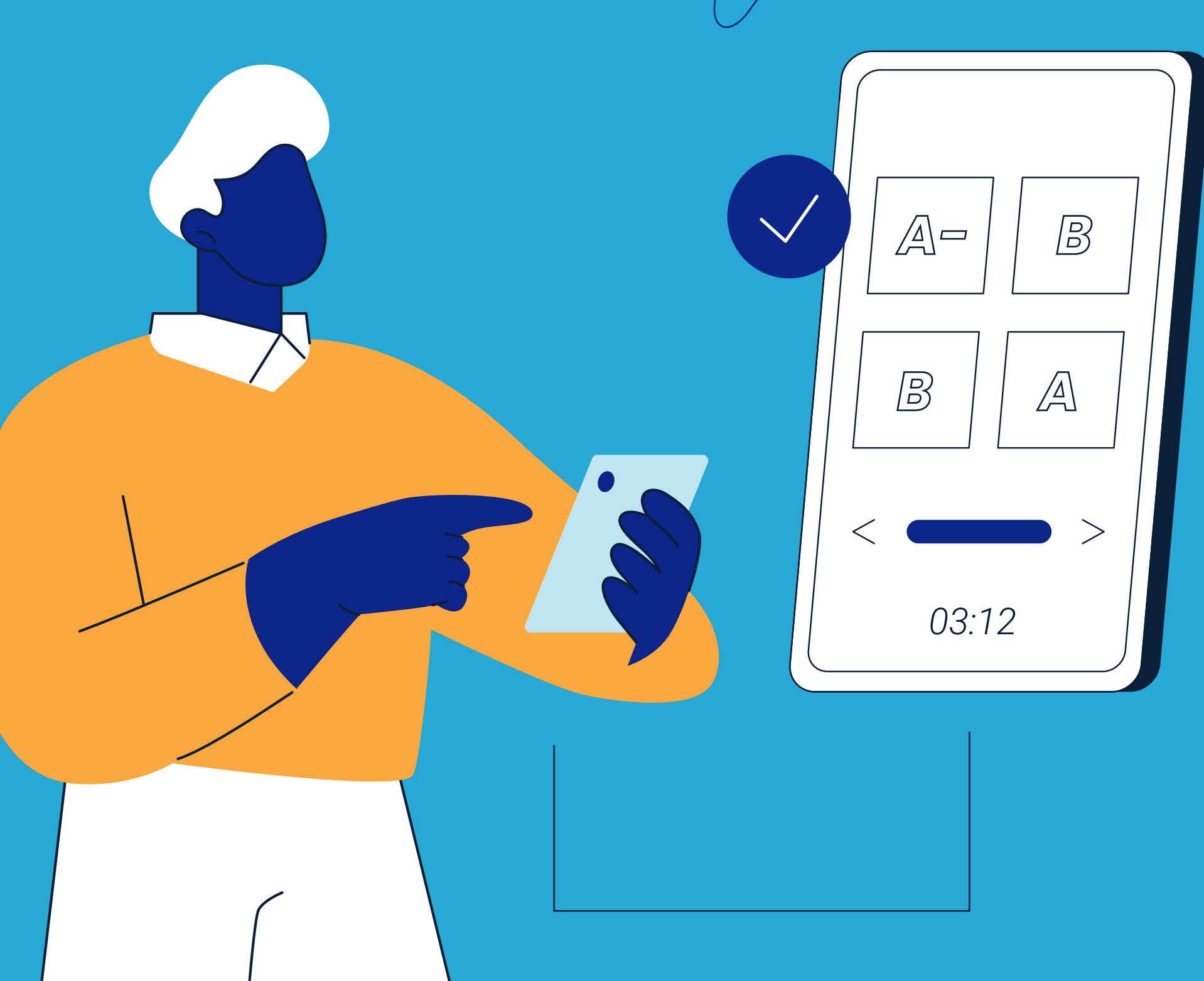
"I use [my phone] to check grades. I don't use it to do homework. I get distracted on my phone. When I'm on my computer, I can focus."

✓ Simple

Students said more features don't always make learning easier. They prefer products that let them focus without distractions.

Students want:

- Responsive design for laptops and tablets, with basic phone functionality for checking schedules and content
- Products that let them learn independently
- Minimal use of chatbots, especially ones that don't work



✓ Relatable

Students want products that feel relevant to their lives and support collaborative learning.

Students want:

- Features that support collaboration both online and in person
- Language and examples that reflect students from many backgrounds

"Instead of just watching videos or doing exercises solo, it'd be great to have spaces to connect with classmates or [others] learning the same stuff, share tips and help each other in real time."



✓ Accessible

Students want products that adapt to their needs, not the other way around. Accessibility features should be easy to find, optional and built in.

Students want:

- Narration functionality that is off by default but easy to turn on
- Multiple languages available
- Reduced language demands so learning math is about those subjects, not literacy

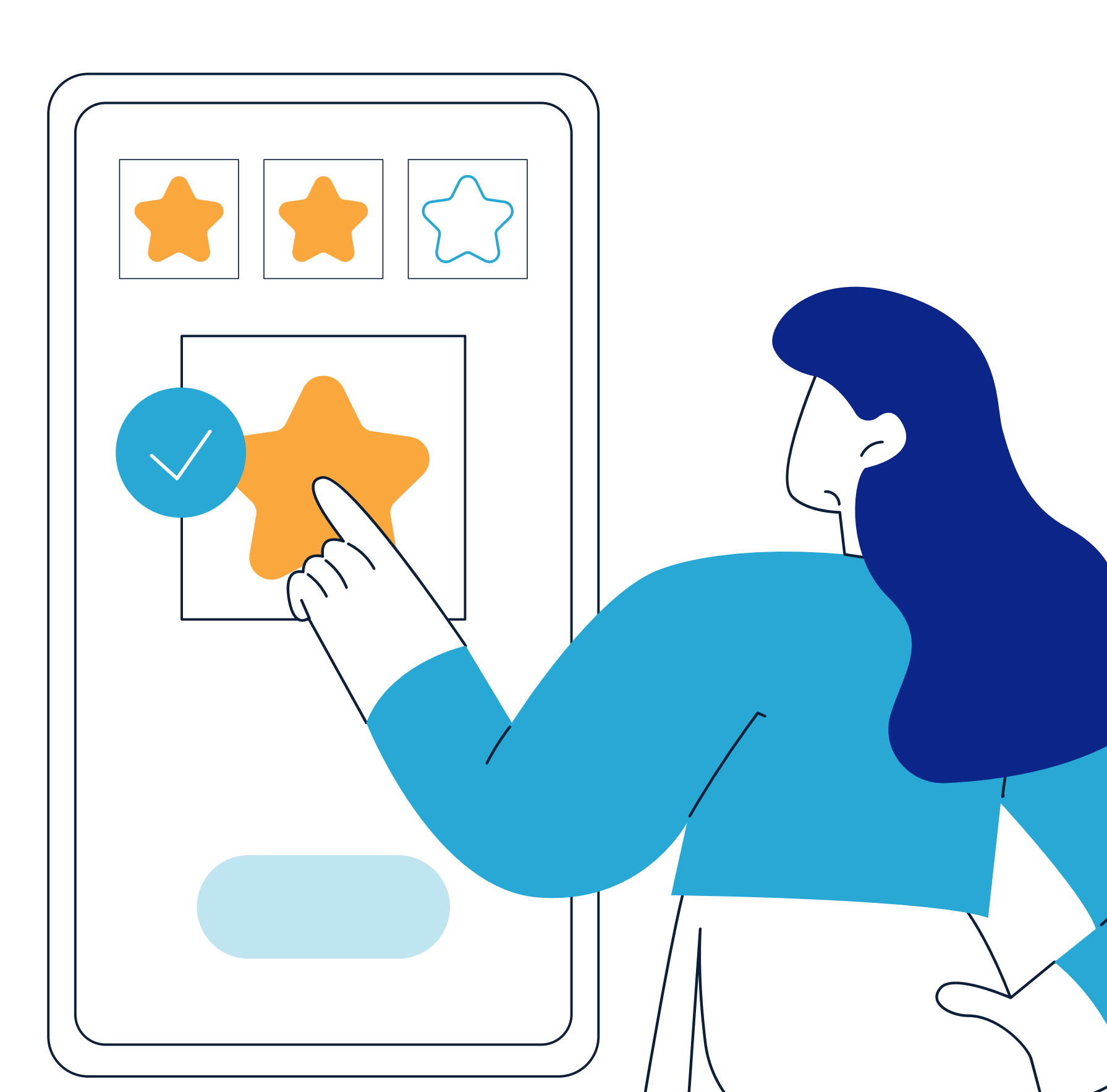
"Sometimes the formatting of content is weird, so it's nice to be able to adjust it to my liking."

✓ Engaging

Students want products that motivate learning and reward effort. Engagement comes from feedback that is timely, relevant and supportive.

Students want:

- Different types of feedback (automated, teacher-mediated, AI-assisted) that fit the specific learning context
- Feedback that is personalized, actionable and constructive
- Selective use of incentives like badges, points or gamified elements
- Features that surprise or delight without distracting



"Badges and points should be there, but not too much gamification because it's distracting. If I had an avatar, I'd be more focused on making my avatar better than the actual learning."