

Chapter 13

Leveraging Content Creation to Boost Student Engagement

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ABSTRACT

Communication and the desire to engage with others is at the core of what makes us human. We love to tell stories, share ideas, and have our voices heard. The process of developing these skills is part of what will make us successful friends, family members, colleagues, and even future innovators. With this in mind, the process of exploring content creation skills in the K12 space will allow us to help our students nurture and develop core skills that will make them more active participants in classroom learning while preparing them for a future that will expect content creation and various forms of communication skills to be what proficient in Microsoft Word was to the resumes of yesteryear.

INTRODUCTION

Communication and the desire to engage with others is at the core of what makes us human. We love to tell stories, share ideas, and have our voices heard. The process of developing these skills is part of what will make us successful friends, family members, colleagues, and even future innovators. With this in mind, the process of exploring content creation skills in the K12 space will allow us to help our students nurture and develop core skills that will make them more active participants in classroom learning while preparing them for a future that will expect content creation and various forms of communication skills to be what *proficient in Microsoft Word* was to the resumes of yesteryear.

Content creation and communication skills can be broken into four main themes:

- Visual communication
- Storytelling and public speaking
- Experience design
- Writing

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By designing learning experiences that encourage students to develop content to showcase their learning in line with these themes, they will gain high demand future work skills that will provide new avenues for how they present learning and express their understanding of content. This diversification of evidence of learning will give students a chance to personalize learning without sacrificing academic quality, and by doing this starting in early elementary, teachers can help students establish a culture of learning that embraces project work beyond traditional presentations and essays. The following chapter will help guide you in developing a deeper understanding of various themes of content creation, how it empowers students and boosts engagement, as well as examples of how it can be applied successfully in the classroom.

When exploring the themes of content creation, let's first analyze some key 21st-Century competencies that are directly tied to creating quality and engaging content. Viewing content creation through the lens of these competencies will help students refine and improve the various methods of communication involved in creating content. These are just 4 of the 10 future of work skills that the World Economic forum imagines will redefine the skillset landscape by 2025.

Furthermore, by educators understand creativity and it's role in child development and student learning we can overcome many obstacles in which creativity is looked at as disruptive, and going against school policies (Kettler, Lamb, Willerson & Mullet, 2018) in a way that is looked at in with a negative lens. Their research also states that many educators, even those who value the trait of creativity, do not feel it is their role in helping their students nurture this capacity. As you will see from the strategies and approaches outlined below, not only is it imperative that we as educators teach our students how to develop their creativity capacity, it is important for us to evaluate and hone our own creativity skills as well.

THE FUTURE OF WORK

Analytical Thinking and Innovation

By challenging students to analyze and interpret various forms of content to understand their underlying message, meaning, inference, and relationships. This of course to helps our students develop a deeper understanding and application for style, usage, and purpose to influence and improve their processes of communication. Many times what is lacking to promote engagement involves both the input and output of skill acquisition. If educators are open to exploring content mediums beyond the canon of literature and imagining creative methods of communication, students can be given a new type of learning experience that will promote curiosity and involvement that may lack in traditional modes and methods of learning.

Creativity, Originality, Initiative

Creativity challenges a person to invoke meaning and purpose in their work. For young learners, creativity must be viewed not just as an act of creating but the mental process involved in finding connections between ideas and expression. As students find new ways of communicating and expressing ideas, they can develop their creative process of making something that others want to engage with and bring value to others. This mindset also address the many barriers that school put in front of teachers ranging from curricular coverage and high stakes testing to a lack of resources. This perception from educators prevents

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