

The Power of Teacher Created Content



Teachers across the United States are increasingly using online curriculum to enhance students' classroom experiences and improve learning outcomes. Recognizing student needs, interests, and preferences, teachers utilize digital content to transform their instructional practices, sometimes creating, modifying, and sharing their learning materials.¹

The increased use of technology in the classroom has spurred the creation of teacher-made lessons. Teachers know their students better than any publisher. While commercially created content may cover the majority of information, it may not take into account students with special needs or different learning styles.⁴

Empowering teachers to engage in the development of content – including tutorials, videos of instructional practice, and formative assessments – holds real promise for improving student learning experiences and teacher effectiveness. Unlike traditional textbooks and other printed materials, teacher-created content is updated in a more timely manner and better targeted to meet specific student needs – enabling and stimulating flexibility, creativity, and collaboration and allowing for an educator influenced system of ongoing improvement and enhancement.

How Students Benefit from Teacher Created Content

Most findings suggest that students are big winners when teachers create class content. One of the key benefits is that teachers create “context related” resources for their students. Teachers know the student's learning environment, previous lessons, classmates, class emphasized vocabulary—so a teacher can create resources, such as lesson videos, situated in the student's specific learning context.³ For example, if a few students are behind in a certain area, teachers can create specific problem sets for those students while allowing other students to move ahead.

Sometimes, purchased material can have a bland “designed by committee” style that students find boring, so when teachers create their content they can make the material more interesting and engaging.

When teachers create content with cloud-based tools such as Jupiter iO, they are empowered to move learning online for their students. It also gives teachers the opportunity to make learning fun. When teachers create content, students win. Students can complete the teacher-created interactive lessons and exercises, quizzes, and district benchmark assessments on computers, tablets, or smartphones.

Further, students benefit more from a teacher's understanding of their unique weaknesses and strengths and areas of need with regards to comprehension and content understanding. When teachers create content tailored specifically to the specific needs of the individual student and class, individualized instruction ensures that students who have learning difficulties, or those who struggle in a specific subject matter, will not be “left behind” from their peers. Teachers can tailor content to address areas of confusion or build off areas of strength that might be systemic in their classes.

Finally, students benefit from interacting directly with the source of the course content. If a student has a question regarding any of the course resources, they have the ability to ask questions of their teacher, who has an intimate knowledge of the course's content.

How Teachers Benefit From Creating Their Content

What is the benefit of teachers who create original content for the classes they teach? One of the obvious benefits to teachers is the satisfaction they have with the work they have created, especially knowing that, as studies suggest, students tend to learn better with contextualized content. Teachers also tend to capture their “best work,” when they create original content. A teacher who creates their content has the option to tailor the lessons and exams to the students in her classroom. Examples include adding pictures or diagrams, enlarging print or leaving extra space between sentences to allow for easier reading.

Retaining and reusing teacher-created content is another benefit to teachers, in that teachers can leverage their work from one school year to another. If they find some students are still confused or have unexpected questions, teachers can easily modify and improve their content for the next term. Also, they can modify their content to keep up with changing learning standards and practices as needed.

Creating digital resources, in particular, allows teachers to keep track of their best ideas throughout the years of their teaching experience. Solutions like Jupiter iO help teachers plan, organize, deliver and store their classroom content.

If a teacher creates a lesson that proves to be highly beneficial to students over the years, they can then share this material with other teachers. There are places such as the Jupiter EdStore where teachers can post content they have created, for free or to sell. By posting material in this manner, teachers can reach a wider audience, and have the possibility to make a difference in the lives of students across the globe.

How Schools Benefit from Teacher Created Content

Schools also benefit from teacher-created resources and content. Over time, a school can develop a resource pool across all of their academic staff – reducing reliance on outside content providers. Schools also benefit from resources that are more focused toward the needs of their student body. Synergies can develop for students that have resources systematically aligned to their school’s scope and sequence. Jupiter iO provides a straightforward reporting feature for administrators to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of the teacher-created content.

Opposition to Teacher Created Content

There are possible problems that can arise when teachers create their content that should be addressed. The most prominent opposition is the question of ownership. If teachers create content within a school-owned LMS, is it the property of the school or the teacher? The same question can arise when considering if content created on a school-owned computer is technically under the ownership of the school. As reported recently by the New York Times, some critics are aghast at the idea of websites that provide an online marketplace for teachers to sell original classroom materials, namely lesson plans, to other teachers, citing ethical pitfalls and implying that such a practice somehow cheapens the profession.²

With teacher-created content, it can be difficult for districts to regulate what is taught in the classroom. Also, when teachers create their content, they might miss certain objectives that are required for the Common Core, leaving students unprepared for standardized tests.

Opportunities with Teacher Created Content

Teachers can utilize many innovative methods to make content more relatable to students. While it is important to have a serious tone to most lessons, occasionally making content entertaining can help students develop a love of school and learning. One example is to create content based games to stimulate learning. To help learn vocabulary words, teachers can create fun songs to sing along to, and post them online for students to memorize.

Sometimes, teacher-created content differs from how parents learned when they were in school. Using an LMS may be beneficial for communicating with parents about the new and exciting things their students are learning in class so that parents may be better able to assist their students with homework and projects.

Many learning management systems, such as Jupiter iO, give teachers the option to create their tests, quizzes, exercises, and tutorials, including images and videos so that a teacher does not need to be a programmer to create their content.

The technological revolution is bringing many changes to education such as new and unique approaches to students learning outside of the more traditional school structure. Teacher-created content that implements the use of learning management systems and other forms of technology is one of the most rewarding. The extra time required to create lessons and exams pay off with more accurate assessment of knowledge. With these benefits in mind, teachers can more accurately monitor student learning and progress.

RESOURCES

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