Video in the Classroom: A Tool for Learning and Creating Content

There are a variety of technologies found in today's modern classrooms that aim to improve the experiences of both teachers and students. These technologies range from the very simple to the highly complex. Video as a learning tool is one such technology that is uniquely positioned at the intersection of accessibility and affordability, often requiring minimal equipment and providing measurable results. Here are some resources educators and students can use to get the most out of video in the classroom.

Why Video?

Video is an exceptional learning tool from an educator's perspective, as it can better engage visual learners, encourage students to participate in problem-solving activities, and bring accessibility to complex concepts. In addition, using video to teach can provide students with a higher degree of media literacy and offer a way for them to discover the world beyond their peripheral.

Students enjoy working with video because they can easily make connections between topics, use their creativity, and often find themselves more enthusiastic about subject matter.

Using video in classrooms isn't tech-heavy or expensive—another draw, especially in the field of education. In fact, oftentimes only a recording device like a webcam (or even a smartphone camera), a computer, and online editing/hosting software are required to get started.

Resources for Teachers

Teachers have the difficult yet rewarding challenge of presenting information in a way that best reaches and intrigues young minds. Here are some resources for educators looking to use video to help accomplish just that:

- Create an introductory video to play on the first day of class and encourage students to do the same, bypassing typical icebreakers while getting a feel for their existing technological skills.
- Create YouTube playlists to recommend additional resources to students.
- Record lessons, making them available online for students who missed class or who need additional instruction.
- Use video and other multimedia resources to supplement lesson plans, especially when the subject matter is difficult to conceptualize. For example, play content from PBS Learning Media's Library if you're working through a Shakespeare unit high school literature class. Or, try WatchKnowLearn.org to help teach an elementary science class the names of different dinosaurs.
- Use video to capture stop-motion stories to help students work their way through the different elements of a narrative.
- Rather than compose a research paper on a topic, encourage students to create and present a how-to or synopsis video instead.
- Additional resources: Visit howstuffworks.com for educational science videos, go to explore.org to allow your class to watch live animal cams or check out teachertube.com, a YouTube-like site for teachers.

Resources for Students

Video can be just as empowering to students as it is to educators. Here are a few ways students can create content while engaging with video in the classroom:

- Create personalized 'virtual field trips' based on locations or activities of interest.
- Make slideshows of list items, like vocabulary words or historical dates, so they're easier to memorize.

- Record science experiments or book reports, then edit the footage before presenting it to classmates.
- Keep up on current events by creating weekly briefs or student-produced news shows to boost media literacy and hone technology skills.

Today's students are members of a digital generation, and equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate it beginning at a young age is not only appropriate but also necessary for lifelong success. Incorporating video into classrooms as both a teaching tool for educators and a student vehicle for content creation is a smart, cost effective move for modern schools.