KQED TEACH

Voices from the Field: Classroom Case Studies

August 2018

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Recommended citation: Burg, S., & Gurn, A. (2018). KQED Teach: Voices from the Field. San Francisco, CA: Rockman et al.

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This study, conducted by Rockman et al, looks closely at classroom pedagogy connected to and inspired by KQED Teach, a free online learning platform that invites educators to learn from and share with KQED and other educators about using digital media for learning. As a core component of KQED's audience-first strategy for change, KQED Teach aims to interact with and convene a diverse and growing user audience in productive ways.

Adopting a qualitative case study approach, this research study followed teachers, librarians, and educational technology specialists working in very different school-community contexts, in order to understand what and how they learned from the process of incorporating digital media literacy in the classroom. The six case studies (n=6) feature classrooms and schools from 5 districts in 3 states. In four cases, the teachers work with young people from historically under-represented groups in San Francisco, Oakland, and Oklahoma City. The classrooms diverge in access to digital media resources, instructional purposes, as well as teachers' and students' interests, background knowledge and experiences using or producing media.

Each case study focuses on one or more educators who made a conscious decision to experiment with digital media production in their teaching practice and who made use of KQED Teach resources in doing so. The case studies illustrate how KQED Teach supports active professional learning for educators looking to expand their instructional repertoire, serving as a catalyst to explore new pedagogical techniques.

The cases revealed positive impacts on teacher and student learning. Every case does not exhibit all of the issues we explored, though all cases highlight multiple, often intertwined impacts on learning. While acknowledging that no instructional innovation will be effective with all students all of the time, this study indicates that thoughtfully planned classroom media production can:

1   **Promote teacher learning and experimentation** - KQED Teach serves as a catalyst for educators to explore and discover a multitude of ways to enhance their practice. Teachers are becoming more comfortable experimenting with new digital media skills and methods in the classroom and with their peers.

2   **Shift the teacher/student relationship** - With many facets of digital media integration, teachers are learning right along with their students. Much of the work in developing media products for the classroom is student-centered. In this environment, teachers take on the role of observers or guides, and often learn valuable skills and knowledge directly from their students.

3   **Increase student engagement** - Students are increasingly motivated and gain stronger sense of empowerment by navigating the often personal and authentic nature of self-expression revealed in their digital media work—even more so when positioned as producers, rather than just consumers of media.

4   **Explore complex concepts** - Some academic concepts are difficult to explain or understand using only textual information. Incorporating digital media can illustrate abstract ideas, allowing teachers and students to both 'show' and 'tell.'

5   **Diversify tools for expression** - Students developing media products need to express their ideas with multimodal representations. Working through concepts using visual, audio, textual resources expands opportunities for communication.

6   **Expand purpose and audience for school work** - The act of creating digital media can help students establish or broaden the purpose of their projects and enhance their appreciation and understanding of audience.

7   **Enhance the quality of online public discourse** - Creating digital content for online environments helps students build skills to engage in public dialogue with diverse audiences

8   **Promote critical thinking and advanced research skills** - Planning and executing media provides students (and teachers) opportunities to pose real-world questions, contextualize content, conduct primary or secondary research, make inferences, and develop visual interpretations of disparate data sets.

9   **Promote social and emotional learning** - Media production establishes new criteria for self-expression and provides opportunities for students to develop confidence in their creative and technical abilities, reshape their approach to learning, and counter long held fixed or negative mindsets.

Digital media and technology are increasingly central to our personal and professional lives. Education institutions have perceived a growing interest to incorporate media to help young people develop the knowledge and skills they need for the digital age. More and more, educators recognize the necessity to adopt and integrate digital literacy practices in the classroom to enhance student learning. States and school districts have instituted programs to outfit teachers and students with digital devices and ensure that schools have access to the Internet. In recent years, Internet connectivity has dramatically improved in US schools.

While providing access to the Internet and information communication technologies is crucial, the mere presence of tech in schools does not determine the extent or quality of student learning that takes place. Thus, it is critical to examine digital media integration through approaches that capture actual instructional practices, while attending to the contextual nuances that shape classroom implementation and forms of student learning. This current study considered how and why teachers sought to incorporate media analysis and production in their instructional practice, and what sorts of learning transpired as a result.

Through multiple case studies, we document and analyze educators' uses of professional development and teaching resources offered via **KQED Teach**, KQED Education's online professional learning platform. Its purpose is to develop teachers' self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills to integrate media instruction in the classroom.

Previous evaluation revealed that KQED Teach participants possess a broad range of expectations, goals, skills and knowledge, which mediate teacher's pathways into and through KQED Teach (Burg & Gurn, 2017). This study extends prior findings by investigating the learning processes and products of classroom-based digital media projects inspired by KQED Teach.

We highlight both successes and obstacles faced by teachers when incorporating media in the classroom, identifying promising instructional strategies and unpacking teacher and student learning that transpired. Through these case studies, we ask readers to consider the ways that media integration challenges prevailing assumptions about curriculum and instruction and expands the notion of literacy, such as reading and writing, to encompass multiple forms of media beyond print.

As KQED Teach continues to grow, it is essential to understand participants' motivations, and the impact of associated professional development (PD) on curriculum, instruction, and student learning and engagement. In order to provide in-depth illustrations of how educators experience KQED Teach, resulting classroom practice, and the contextual factors shaping implementation, we adopted a case study approach (Yin, 2009). Case studies offered a holistic strategy to analyze teacher perceptions and practices in the context of classroom interactions.

Rather than seek out the best or worst case scenarios, we utilized a purposive sampling strategy to recruit educators that planned to incorporate a new media project or activity in the classroom, based on something they learned or adapted from KQED Teach. By examining how experience with KQED Teach influenced adoption and implementation of digital media in practice, we sought to develop meaningful stories about KQED Teach's impact on curriculum and instruction. In addition to teacher practice, we also examined the impact of these KQED Teach-inspired lessons and activities on students' skills, knowledge and attitudes towards digital media. We paid close attention to educators and students from the four out of the six cases representing traditionally underserved populations in San Francisco, Oakland, and Oklahoma City.

The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used to analyze sources of data, including observation field notes, lesson plans and materials, student media products, and extended interviews with teachers, school leaders, and district administrators. We examined relationships between teachers' beliefs, background knowledge, and teaching contexts on digital media integration. Focusing on the perceptions and experiences of educators and their students, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. *What factors enable or inhibit teachers to implement digital media in the classroom?*

2. *What additional forms of support or professional learning do teachers need to successfully implement digital media in the classroom?*

3. *What impact does exposure to KQED Teach have on both teachers' instructional practices and student learning?*

Research Sites of Practice

Case	Location	Media Focus	Content Area	Grade
1	Okemos, MI	Podcasting & Digital Storytelling	English Language Arts	High School
2	Ross, CA	Podcasting	Performing Arts	High School
3	Oakland, CA	Digital Maps	Social Studies	Elementary
4	Oklahoma City, OK	E-Portfolios & Digital Yearbooks	Career & Technology Education	Middle & High School
5	San Francisco, CA	Digital Storytelling	Library; English Language Arts	Elementary & Middle
6	San Francisco, CA	Podcasting	Ethnic Studies	High School

Experience	English, Literature & Creative Writing Teacher, 13 years
Students	Grades 9-12
Media Techniques	Podcasting & Digital Storytelling
KQED Teach courses	Podcasting with Youth Radio

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Increase student engagement
- Explore complex concepts
- Diversify tools for expression
- Expand purpose and audience for school work
- Promote social and emotional learning

Veteran English teacher, Dawn Reed, has completed a number of KQED Teach courses including those on "Making Infographics," "Podcasting with Youth Radio,"Finding and Evaluating Information," and "Using Media as Core Text." In her teaching, Dawn has expanded on reading strategies derived from KQED Teach to draw connections to other specific online skills, such as digital reading annotation and communicating through podcasts and webinars. Dawn came to KQED Teach with a wealth of experience in the use of digital media to enhance writing and communication. Her experience in KQED Teach courses broadened her repertoire, especially in thinking how to stimulate online student conversations in order to optimize their learning.

KQED Teach was fantastic for thinking about the questions and the role of reading online, how that conversation is different, and for giving students some different models of analyzing and commenting on digital material. A trained civic discourse in those spaces can be really tricky for a lot of students, to read it and then to know how to answer it themselves. When I took the KQED courses, I found it very helpful for a few

reasons. It helped me hone certain skills and put me back into the role of student and composer, as a writer, which is really important. I liked that element of it. - Dawn Reed

Podcasting Project

Based on the model from This I Believe, a program that engages youth and in writing and sharing brief essays about the core values that guide their daily lives, Dawn's had students in American Literature create podcasts focusing on an individual theme that expressed a deeply held personal belief.

Dawn worked with students on the technical aspects of podcasting, navigating different software programs and demonstrating how to record audio tracks. Students were challenged not so much by the technology, but in negotiating what to post online. The personal and very public element of this project forced students to think about how much of

themselves they were willing to share. Students also explored whether they were comfortable with peer review, specifically critiquing each other's work.

Dawn had her students approach the podcast first as a written essay, to develop a coherent theme, goals, objectives, arguments, and then refine through drafts and revisions. Using a peer-review process, posting online comments about classmates works, and reading comments about their own, helped students develop skills to have productive conversations online. Every student uploaded their digital work to an online portfolio, and reviewed three other classmates' essays.

The combination of podcasting and the nature of *This I Believe* made **student writing** acutely personal. Students were thoughtful about using words that accurately reflected who they were, contributing to a new found appreciation of the spoken word essay.

> *It's (podcasting) definitely a lot more powerful in some ways, because the spoken word can hold certain values you might not be able to express in writing, so I'm really excited to be able to share that with my audience, through my voice. - Student*

Students thought differently or more intentionally about one's personal voice by engaging in online public discourse and applying new forms of self-expression.

> *Podcasts help the writer think about what they're really saying, by making it more impactful and meaningful for people who are listening to it. - Student*

> *I think that podcasting gives the writer a stronger more genuine voice by helping the reader or listener understand the tone of what they're writing. - Dawn Reed*

Dawn's Creative Writing students participate in **digital storytelling through essays incorporating audio, images and video**. Students found that incorporating digital media into their stories freed them to be creative and expressive storytellers.

> *I think more than just storytelling, you're not focusing more on the showing, you're focusing more on the telling, and having pictures really expresses it. - Student*

By contemplating the connections between one's writing and use of digital media, Dawn's students thought about how use of a video, still, or audio clip reflected who they were as individuals. Students admitted that they did not put as much thought into posting a photo or video on their Instagram or Snapchat accounts as they did when integrating media into an equally public online essay. Dawn believes this is all part of the learning process when forming and negotiating different kinds of online identities.

> *The role of being a digital citizen, what does that mean? How do we build professional identity in an online space? Students have been putting things out there online for a while now, but these kinds of projects are so different because it is so personal, so it is about the working with students to try to find a balance in these negotiated spaces. - Dawn Reed*

Dawn has successfully introduced multiple types of digital media into her classes by starting small. Through a deliberate and incremental process, Dawn has developed complementary methods for incorporating different types of media into writing and literature projects.

Experience	Acting and Theater Teacher, 22 years
Students	Grades 9-12
Media Technique	Podcasting
KQED Teach courses	Podcasting with Youth Radio

Maura Vaughn, Director of the Theater Program at Branson School, first used KQED Teach when learning how to take photos with her phone as part of the 2016 Winter Break 5-day Photo Challenge. Following her exploration into digital photos and Instagram, Maura became interested in using podcasting as a communication tool for students.

Maura credits the Make and Share in KQED Teach's "Podcasting with Youth Radio" course as being instrumental to develop and upload her first podcast. Even though the final result was imperfect, she came away with a greater appreciation of the ways podcasting could be integrated into her practice. By posting her work to KQED Teach's community forum, she was able to connect with and learn from a larger educational community.

> When I found that KQED had a course on podcasting I thought I have to go and learn it and let it sink in for a while before I can use it. I went and I got as far as I could. I realized that there were all kinds of places to put this (podcasting) and that it wasn't hard to do. The great thing was figuring out how to

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Shift the teacher – student relationships
- Increase student engagement
- Explore complex concepts
- Diversify tools for expression
- Expand purpose and audience for school work
- Enhance the quality of online public discourse

> upload my own podcast, but then even though I didn't really like what I uploaded it didn't matter. I learned how to do it. The other thing I learned is there's a whole community of educators out there who are interested in sharing on a larger level, which I think is really cool. - Maura Vaughn

Podcasting Project

Maura introduced podcasting into the student rehearsal and performance of *Noises Off* to provide opportunities for the performers to reflect on how they approached the play at different points in time (e.g., assess their performances, talk about character objectives, motivation, etc.). The podcast would also serve as a vehicle for students to educate peers, faculty, and parents about the process of preparing and performing a play.

Maura emphasized that podcasting would be collaborative, and that she would be learning along with her students. Through the podcasting process the students would not only explore their characters, but also their roles as teachers and facilitators.

> I don't have a vested interest in the product looking exactly the way I want it to. The vision isn't mine. It really is something the kids and I create together. I also think that it's really important that the kids watch that I'm also trying to learn. They know more than I do and we all know that. - Maura Vaughn

The **shift from teacher to learner/participant** allowed Maura to explore and reflect on her own teaching practice, and the nature of the relationships and communication with her students.

> I think podcasting teaches me about how I teach, the places where I will lean in more easily and that I won't. It also allows me to go back to my own curriculum but also allows the students to take more responsibility and risk. I also think it allows us to tell stories in a more authentic and a more intimate manner. - Maura Vaughn

The podcasting process was **student-centered**. By putting students in control Maura became more of an observer at a critical juncture in students' learning about themselves and the play, allowing them to conduct reflections together without her help.

Students commented the podcasts helped them develop a deeper understanding of their characters, and their relationships with other members of the cast. They acknowledged that being able to articulate their thoughts in this manner was an important skill to have both at school and elsewhere.

> Podcasting was a good exercise for me to try to take a step back and define what I'm doing in language that I think everyone could understand, whether or not they've taken a theater class, been in the theater before, or watched theater. - Student

> Podcasting helped teach me how to listen, because that's something that's very easy to lose once you get caught up in your screens just reading or sending texts. I think it makes me try to slow down. A lot of times I can rush through things and really make a conscious effort in making sure that what I want to say is what I want to say and be as articulate as possible. - Student

As a direct result of Maura's podcasting project, other Branson faculty have introduced podcasting into their curriculum.

Next semester Maura is planning to appoint a social media representative for each of her beginning, intermediate, and advanced acting classes to create short media pieces on various platforms about a particular play, performance or theater in general. Maura is also working with a number of students to develop a class on social media literacy.

Noises Off Student Podcast

Podcast #1 – Givens: Developing Characters

Podcast #2 – Dialects

Podcast #2 – Wrap Up: Challenges and Surprises

Experience — Technology Lab Coordinator, 13 years

Students — Grades K – 5

Media Technique — Digital Mapping

KQED Teach courses — Making Infographics, Interactive Maps, & Interactive Timelines

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Increase student engagement
- Explore complex concepts
- Diversify tools for expression
- Expand purpose and audience for school work
- Promote critical thinking and research skills

Helene Moore was first introduced to KQED Teach in 2016 as a member of an elementary school-teacher cohort supported by the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and KQED. She has provided informal PD on KQED Teach to other OUSD computer lab instructors through in-person and online presentations. She has completed multiple KQED Teach courses, in addition to accessing assorted content from other course modules.

Helene introduces young children to technology through project-oriented work. She has had students as young as 1st grade publish short books and calendars. By incorporating their writing and art into final published pieces, students begin to see technology as an enabling tool for learning and enjoyment.

Interactive Mapping Project

Helene conceived a digital mapping project, entitled Indigenous California with two 4th grade classes. The project was designed to complement the 4th grade curriculum on present day Native American tribes in California. To begin the assignment, students were asked to write at least two paragraphs about a tribe of their choice. One paragraph had to contain facts about the resources used by the tribe in the past, the other to describe at least one environmental or cultural project that the tribe is involved in today. Students then created a Google My Map about the tribe using information from their research and any appropriate links (audio, video, still, etc.) found online that supported the students' ideas. Information from each student map was imported centrally to **an interactive map** that included locations of all the tribes.

The multilayered elements of this project encouraged students to adopt new methods for conducting research in a digital media environment, such as learning how to judge and assess the quality of online information, and spending more concentrated time actually reading or viewing content. The

deeper the students dove into the content, the more they began to see connections between content areas and how to apply what they learned to the essays and the maps they were creating

The more they did research the more it became like a connection of maps to maps. They loved doing this because it also became kind of a detective game, like for example finding native vs. non-native plants. The maps became a place for organizing their thinking, and contextualizing and understanding all of this new information they were discovering.

Students were encouraged to add digital media, such as photos and short videos. As a result, they learned how to create hyperlinks, and understood the importance of providing sources for accessed digital content.

They're learning how to create a link for a source. Through the digital mapping exercise, they can see how many tribes there are around the US and the densities in different areas. The other goal was for students to appreciate that these tribes are living, that people are still doing their culture and they're environmentalists. Rather than going to Wikipedia, students are able to go to the tribe's website and other resources to see what they are actually doing.

Helene credits KQED Teach with helping her appreciate the power of digital mapping, especially through the incorporation of digital data. She feels that projects like this are extremely relevant and appropriate for the middle elementary grades, when students are beginning to develop basic digital literacy skills. Helene has even improved her own practice, and become more efficient working with students in the lab.

Once I got more comfortable with the maps and the data part of the maps I sensed it could be pretty powerful. Using new tools and methods I was able to combine the classes. In the past, it was very tedious to do that. That was something that I definitely learned through Teach. The Native American project really worked because of the mapping.

Helene adapted the Indigenous California mapping project for a group of 5th grade students to complement a school wide activity to reduce global plastics. Similar to the first project, students conducted online research for information describing actions or policies to reduce plastic use around the world. After summarizing their research, students created a Google My Map that included a marker indicating the locations of the action or policy.

Students from both projects shared their work with teachers and peers. Students were particularly proud at having their projects publicly accessible online.

Next school year, Helene plans to work with teachers to facilitate more digital mapping projects across the school.

I'm going to be working more with the teachers next year, because they are not doing as much technology in their classrooms. The kids pick it up pretty quickly. Teachers can really help students with are their reading and research skills.

Next year, Helene plans to take KQED Teach courses on digital portfolios and podcasting.

Supporting Struggling Students and Social Emotional Learning

Experience — Consumer Science and Career & Technology Education, 12 years

Students — Grades 7-12

Media Technique — E-Portfolios and Digital Yearbooks

KQED Teach courses — Digital Portfolios, Making Infographics, & Communicating with Photography

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Increase student engagement
- Diversify tools for expression
- Expand purpose and audience for school work
- Promote social and emotional learning

Carrie Snyder-Renfro teaches at Oklahoma Centennial School, located in an inner-city community marred by long-term poverty. 46% of Centennial students have at one time been homeless. Students are exposed to gang activity, and come from families facing extreme poverty. 97% of students are eligible for free and reduced meals. Many of Carrie's students can only read at a 2nd or 3rd grade level.

Carrie is an active KQED Teach user. She has completed several courses, including, "Communicating with Photography," "Making Infographics," and "Digital Portfolios with Maker Ed." She has also implemented content and methods from a variety of other KQED Teach courses.

Carrie has incorporated skills and knowledge gained from KQED Teach to instruct students in **e-portfolios**, a requirement of students enrolled in the career and technology program. During the 2016-17 school year, Carrie's students learned about basic photography as a tool for incorporating academic and personal content into their e-portfolios.

I designed this course to link directly to state curriculum standards and graduation requirements in Oklahoma. The school administrators were very pleased. They said it was brilliant having [students] learn photography for portfolios. We don't have photography in our school so they're not going to learn it any other way. It was a positive overall.

For the 2017-18 school year, Carrie planned to expand her e-portfolio course to include the use of infographics. Unfortunately, due to a series unanticipated events, including a 3-week state teachers strike, combined with student academic issues, **things did not turn out as expected**. Her students struggled with instruction, and in particular digital media, on a basic level. Given the social-emotional and academic challenges facing many students at Centennial, Carrie was never be too sure how academically prepared they will be.

My expectations were that the students would be able to produce a digital website using their own branding infographics. This year this group of students had a massive struggle with technology. Usually, I'm able to get a lot of them. I always have high expectations. I'm not sure what happened.

Despite exposure to different forms of digital media (e.g., YouTube), many of her students could not compose basic sentences. To successfully incorporate digital media into their academic activities, these students needed reinforcement and practice of basic reading and writing skills.

I asked myself how could I get them to where they want and need to be? To help them understand and process digital media skills I incorporated videos but I also need to do more screencasting type of things (i.e. video tutorial with screenshots). The way they learn is watching on YouTube and Google. They're very visual, but they're illiterate.

Next semester Carrie plans to introduce more basic methods to help students process and practice digital media skills necessary to build e-portfolios. While believing she may have expected too much this past semester, she learned from the experience.

It didn't go the way that I wanted. I started too far ahead. My students couldn't find themselves. I tried to have them do infographics about their branding, paths in life and potential careers. Doing it digitally some of them have special learning considerations that made the project too much. Next year, I'm going to start with index cards and have them map it out, then convert it into something digital.

Despite a turbulent semester, Carrie successfully applied digital media to improve student self-image and esteem. Many of her students struggle with pronounced social-emotional learning (SEL) issues. They exhibit fixed mindsets and lack confidence in their abilities. Carrie believes that digital media can be a tool to counter negative messages.

I'm trying to get the students a way to find their voice and they don't even know how to identify their voice. This has a lot to do with social emotional learning. I needed to find ways to address it more. I need to deal with trauma and SEL.

Due to budget constraints, Centennial hadn't produced a student yearbook in years. Even when published, many students either could not afford or expressed no interest in owning one. Carrie surmised that involving students in production of a yearbook could help them develop a more positive self-image and sense of community.

Using the application Picaboo with student photos taken by Carrie, students produced their own customized yearbooks, applying digital photography and e-portfolio skills Carrie had adapted from KQED Teach.

They cropped photos using technology tools. They did all kinds of cool things, and the yearbooks got printed. They were excited and proud. They were showing them off to everyone and having kids sign them. This came from the experience I had learning about digital portfolios.

Through a simple application of digital media, Carrie's students developed a sense of pride. They began to understand the importance of digitally capturing their academic achievements, and the use of digital artifacts to enhance their learning.

Experience
Veteran teachers and librarians, 3-25+ years. First-time leaders of classroom media production projects

Students
Elementary grades. Culturally and linguistically diverse youth.

Media Technique
Digital Storytelling and E-Portfolios

KQED Teach courses
Media Foundations, Video Storytelling Essentials, & Digital Portfolios

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Shift the teacher – student relationships
- Increase student engagement
- Diversify tools for expression
- Expand purpose and audience for school work

In the fall of 2017, KQED and SFUSD's Department of Technology (DoT) launched the second year of collaboration to provide SFUSD educators year-long blended learning on digital media literacy. Participants, organized as cohorts, followed preselected KQED Teach modules related to digital storytelling, meeting in-person and submitting monthly assignments. Although KQED has long offered resources and opportunities for Bay Area educators, this marked the first formal partnership with SFUSD to build teacher capacity to use digital media.

The cohort began with 25 participants. However, time, competing demands, disinterest in monthly "homework," and other constraints whittled the group down to less than a half dozen. While the PD program failed to foster large-scale collective activity, four participants completed classroom digital media projects that had a positive impact on their own, their peers', and/or students' learning. One librarian said:

> At KQED and with DoT, I gained confidence in my ability to use tech tools in any project.

Participants felt that KQED Teach provided an engaging space to explore professional learning. One librarian described the importance of KQED Teach's underlying respect for educators:

> The subtext of the KQED is respect, intellectualism, and a real appreciation of anyone who's watching. Those are the production values that go into a KQED Teach lesson, and that makes me feel as an adult student that I'm being respected and that my level of understanding is okay.

KQED Teach promoted teacher learning and experimentation to enhance instruction, regardless of their background experience.

Participants found KQED Teach courses well-crafted with scaffolds to support learning new tools. By breaking down the media making process into manageable steps, course modules created a pathway to integrate media. One teacher explained:

> I wanted to learn how to implement digital storytelling. Going through the modules

gave me the tools to do it myself…and how to break down the process for students.

Partnering Encourages Teachers to Persist

The PD experience worked well for those four participants who found a **thought partner** to check in, brainstorm, plan, and give and get feedback beyond the monthly PD sessions.

Two librarians signed up together based on a shared passion for student-centered inquiry. Recognizing digital media as a tool to advance inquiry, the pair explored:

What would the library program look like if we put the students' interests at the center?

Using knowledge gleaned from KQED Teach courses on video storytelling and e-portfolios, one librarian **developed a multimedia website** that documents student-centered experiments in six SFUSD school libraries. These included student-led book clubs, newsletters, presentations using Shadow Puppet and i-Movie, as well as Genius Hours, a concept adapted from Google that provides students a choice in what they learn during a set period of time in school.

Although SFUSD libraries typically have ample media resources, the librarians discovered that students needed instructional support to apply those online and material resources to inquiry thinking. On their own, a 5th grader may not be able to articulate a question, identify and evaluate appropriate sources of information, interpret findings, or communicate results. The librarian leading the project said:

There is this assumption that kids are born with tech ability. That's so far from the truth.

A second pair, a librarian and teacher from the same school, independently decided to collaborate on a project. The librarian said,

"Essentially, I thought how I could utilize the 5th grade library time to integrate media" into their class projects. Using Storybird, they launched **online student book projects** to write fantasy stories and garner inspiration by selecting illustrations in the site's database.

After the teachers first learned the tools themselves, students perused the StoryBird site to find up to 30 images they liked and could use to tell a story. Next, students wrote a longer story and plotted the narrative on a story arc. Individual student conferences were held to ensure that each student met basic requirements of story structure and detail prior to recording and producing the stories on the website. Much of this work took place offline, honing stories and developing content to be edited online.

Throughout the project, the team observed **students engaged and motivated to write**.

Getting kids to write this much during library is a real challenge. It can be a struggle, but they're much more motivated using this technology.

The teacher and librarian differentiated their tasks to support the student learning process, setting expectations and helping youth to navigate both content and technical aspects of their projects. Students were provided resources to express choice and voice in creative writing. The pair plan to develop this project by promoting peer collaboration to respond to one another's writing.

As SFUSD continues efforts to become a 'digital district,' media literacy will remain key to student learning, and professional collaboration key to educators experimenting with digital media in teaching.

Experience — Ethnic Studies teachers, 8-20+ years. First-time leaders of podcasting projects

Students — High School. Culturally and linguistically diverse youth.

Media Technique — Podcasting

KQED Teach courses — Podcasting with Youth Radio

Impacts reflected in this case include:
- Promote teacher learning and experimentation
- Promote critical thinking and research skills
- Explore complex concepts
- Diversify tools for expression
- Increase student engagement
- Expand purpose and audience for school work

In 2017, SFUSD's Department of Technology (DoT) introduced Ethnic Studies teachers to KQED Teach's "Podcasting with Youth Radio" and "Making Infographics" as key media literacy resources. One DoT presenter said:

In the digital age, [students] need to understand and learn how to analyze different kinds of digital texts, and how to create their own. KQED Teach provides in-depth resources to give students opportunities to become not only critical consumers, but also producers of digital media.

Podcasting Promotes Critical Youth Inquiry

Nearly a dozen Ethnic Studies teachers experimented with podcasting to explore the socio-cultural dynamics shaping young people's everyday realities. This case study included 3 district staff and 3 classroom teachers, two of whom were shadowed over the course of 5 months. One teacher said:

I want [students] to see this class as a learning lab about life. I'm not here to give them knowledge or tell them how to think about the world or act. I'm here to help them learn new tools to make sense out of the

world. I want them to come away better able to analyze what's going on in their own lives and their communities, and to see themselves as active agents of change.

In one classroom, students created podcasts on the formation of their identities, providing a **creative way to explore students' "everyday history"** in context.

In another classroom, students worked in teams to produce original songs using Logic Pro, which were incorporated into podcasts related to the driving question, *How can communication systems help build solidarity and resistance movements?* The podcasts served as a **summative assessment on learning** throughout the semester, which focused on the role and impact of radio, cell phone, and fiber optic networks for social change through study of the El Salvador Civil War and the Black Lives Matter movement.

In preparation for podcasting, students read literature, watched videos, and held discussions about how cultural, political, and economic systems influence their lives. *"We've got to know how to think for ourselves so we're not just controlled by the media and messages we see,"* said a student. One teacher told students how podcasting offered a tool to deepen this work:

Through your interviews and the podcasts, you're developing your voice and learning to express yourself within the world. You're also teaching me and each other about your experiences and ways of seeing the world.

While most students remained engaged in the challenge, there are also **anxieties** associated with recording and disseminating one's voice.

When I heard my voice on the podcast, I was like, no! But after you hear it a bunch of times, you get used to it. - Student

Teachers also encountered **challenges** related to students' digital media experiences.

You can see the digital divide in my class. Some students have a computer at home, or they have access to one. A lot of them have their own cell phones. I love how the podcasting can basically be recorded on a smartphone. Some students don't have any access except when they come here.

Teachers possessed varying media skills, which at times meant diving into the unknown.

Some of my students know so much more about technology than I do. I tried to learn how to use it first, but they had to help me.

In addition to relying on media savvy students, teachers also **partnered with outside experts**. In one class, volunteers from 826 Valencia visited weekly during ideation and writing phases of the project. The coordinator said:

When making media, you need to revise, edit, and keep making things better. It's valuable for students to get feedback and learn skills to improve their writing.

In another class, SFUSD DoT staff led introductory lessons to teach technical basics and storytelling essentials. Students analyzed Youth Radio podcasts and were guided through the process of pitching ideas, identifying interview subjects, creating interview questions, editing audio, and adding narrative and sound effects. The classroom teacher observed, *"[Students] were able to build their confidence and achieve some mastery of the technology."*

The teachers needed to adjust initial timelines, which were too short, and scaled back some curricular expectations to focus on developing questions, doing interviews, and learning digital tools such as WeVideo. In particular, students needed help to condense their interviews and to distill the most relevant parts of the story.

The act of interviewing family or friends sparked conversations about family histories, relationships, and "*stories about the past that I never heard before*."

Podcasting offered bilingual students a chance to express themselves in English and their home language. *"It was easier to do the interview in Spanish. It made it more personal."*

The personal and interactive nature of podcasts **increased student engagement** and enhanced presentations. A teacher explained,

When you do student presentations in class, it can be hard to maintain everyone's attention. The podcasts were very engaging for the audience, not just the presenters.

KQED launched KQED Teach to build teachers' abilities to leverage digital media for learning. This study examined how educators are using KQED Teach's resources and tools to inform their instructional practices. Using qualitative case studies, this research explored the ways that educators sought to incorporate digital media in the classroom.

The participating educators possessed a range of background experiences with digital media, though no participants considered themselves educational technology experts. Recognizing the role that technology can play in facilitating learning, these educators wanted to learn new techniques. The rapid pace of change in the digital media space has created opportunities for educators themselves to become active participants in the learning process right along with their students.

Through these case studies, we portray how KQED Teach serves as a kind of catalyst for educators to explore and discover a multitude of ways to enhance their practice. As we reported in our initial evaluation study, educators access KQED Teach content in many different ways, depending on need and interest. Educators looked at KQED Teach as a resource for methods to refresh or adapt existing digital media activities in the classroom, or to introduce entirely new approaches for students to enhance their literacy and comprehension skills.

By experimenting with different digital media techniques in the classroom, these educators have grown more confident and comfortable in their own skills and abilities, motivating them to expand on what they've learned through continued professional development, or introducing new digital media-rich activities or classes in their schools. Their activities have had a cascading effect on colleagues and students alike.

In one school, for example, a single podcasting experiment in a theater course led to the proliferation of podcasting in other subject areas. In another, 5th grade students adapted a 3rd grade digital mapping project on indigenous Native Americans to develop visual presentations on the impact of global plastics. One SFUSD librarian's development of a multimedia website to document student-centered approaches helped to promote student-driven projects in six school libraries. District-level support for media integration in SFUSD encouraged ethnic studies teachers to adopt podcasting as a culturally relevant tool for youth expression and an alternate form of assessment for learning.

The continuing and often rapid evolution of digital media tools and platforms provides opportunities for rich collaborative learning interactions among students, and between students and educators. These learning opportunities offer students the chance to produce content in new ways, explore innovative methods of self-expression, and build deeper knowledge of complex topics.

Student-centered learning is at the forefront of what we're witnessing in the classroom. In these new digitally rich environments, educators are less 'the sage on the stage,' more frequently taking on the role of mentors or guides and pushing students to experiment and take control over their own learning.

Through experiences with diverse digital media formats, students are discovering the complexities and nuances of language, and the connections among written, verbal, and visual communication. When creating content for online consumption, students are becoming more thoughtful and deliberate in the words they choose, and the types of media they incorporate. Students are beginning to understand that participating in a digital space reflects who they are as individuals, and requires a certain level of responsibility with respect to public discourse in online environments.

By sharing their thoughts and feelings through digital storytelling, students are being given a structured springboard for personal agency, which empowers their thinking and heightens their means for creative expression. As importantly, students often struggle with how much of their feelings and emotions they are willing to share, or what topics are appropriate to explore in a public space. We've seen students express deep and highly personal responses to death and dying, as well as address the uncertainties and complexities of school and family life.

Tools, such as digital mapping and infographics, help students develop and enhance their visual literacy and improve research skills. Students are learning to present data in more compelling graphical ways, as well as uncover and analyze trends and relationships that may not have been readily apparent had visual methods not be used. Students are also adopting more sophisticated methods of online research through search and incorporation of visual source material into their projects and presentations.

The many digital tools and methods introduced by teachers in our case studies, and influenced and refined by their use of KQED Teach, have provided students a foundation for self-expression that enhances their social and emotional mindset. Students are proud of the content they produce, excited to share their work, and eager to explore new and different ways to creatively incorporate digital media in their lives.

Students who lack basic written and comprehension skills may struggle to create products or communicate in a digital space. Teachers cannot assume that the facility with which young audiences use selected digital media in their personal lives will automatically translate to the classroom. Digital acumen requires command of critical reading and writing skills that teachers need to reinforce with students as much as training them how to crop a photo or produce a podcast. Teachers also need to understand that students' home and social environments and their digital media experiences may influence student behavior and relationships with others in both physical and virtual spaces.

Success often starts with failure. Learning something new is messy, uncomfortable, and often riddled with confusion, especially in the beginning. When attempting to integrate media making into the classroom, the path may be full of obstacles. This is part of the learning process. Educators and students must accept that many early creations will not work out, or will look or sound different than anticipated. By participating in rich professional learning environments like KQED Teach, teachers are actively creating classroom conditions that encourage students to take risks in their writing and making. Embracing the awkwardness of innovation can help educators and young people transform obstacles into creative potential and learning moments.