SESSION #5
MEDIA CREATION WITH
ADOBE SPARK

Connectivity
TRANSCRIPT

PRESENTER:
MICHAEL COHEN

Welcome to another session at Connectivity 19. Today, we're going to talk about empowering students in media creation using Adobe Spark and I want to ignite that spark. Not just in our students, but in ourselves as well. I want to model that so that our students understand how design and media creation is a method of powerful communication and storytelling. A little bit about me; my name is Michael Cohen. I'm known as the tech rabbi. I am a designer, I am an educator, and I like to consider myself a creativity instigator. I have the opportunity to showcase and share creative capacity building across the world and I am excite to once again share with you in the short time that we have together. A lot of the mindset and approach is found in my book, Educated by Design, including some hands-on strategies to build out that creative capacity and of course, there is some serious dedication to the power of creativity and content creation software, including Adobe Spark. So you can scan the screen right now, check out that QR code, check out the book, and let me know what you think.

So I was told that creativity isn't a job and this happened in kindergarten. It's a bit early on, but what I realized is I have to make it my job to be creative. I have to make it my job to dispel the myth that creativity is this way of expressing yourself through some sort of skill set. When we think of creativity, we think of oh, I'm not artistic, I'm not musical, I'm not good at cooking, at least I'm not a chef, and in reality, it's about how we see the world. Media is everywhere. We have to empower our students to be creators, and the reason for this is we have to differentiate ourselves.

So I want to promote as much visual expression and visual problem solving as possible because I believe that it makes learning visible, it makes learning memorable, and it amplifies learning. And if you need some research for what I'm saying, look no further than Dr. Richard Mayer, multimedia learning theory, multiple decades of research that spoken word, which is something we do quite often, and written text, words on a screen, words on a board, they actually knock the brain out. Bam! Not a single piece of information internalized, so hopefully our students take good notes, right?

Or, we leverage visuals and imagery to create an imprint, an artifact in the memory of our audience to connect to the words in which we are saying. Now, that doesn't mean don't ever have text on the board, but when I think of how I grew up, information's being disseminated looks something like this; cram as much information as you can on the board, on the slide, on the PowerPoint slide, and if you're trying to be fancy, just change the color and make the text a little playful, and it's just overwhelming. And

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there's plenty of conversation in industries about how important visual communication is, and that's doesn't mean that it's being good at drawing. Although doodling is becoming a really powerful method of communication that's in the reach of everybody.

Adobe Spark is an absolutely incredible suite of apps I've been using Adobe products since 1999 when I was high school. It was so difficult; the entry point, the method, and the workflow of trying to create content. Years later, I realized I was doing things in two, sometimes three times the length that was required just because I didn't have things like YouTube and I didn't have things like Google to figure out and find resources on how to learn. What's really cool about Adobe Spark is you just get in and you start creating. It's using the power of how far technology has advanced, but it's also using AI to help with color matching and photo matching and we're going to see that, and we're going to deep dive into this. So I have some really great resources here that have been curated. Some of my own lessons and as well as some incredible educators around the country, around the world, you can break down by grade level, by discipline. I also have a playlist, and you have this resource so you can download this resources and get all of these right away. I have a YouTube channel with all tutorials; how to design, not just for teachers, but for students in mind as you introduce the different ways in which this platform can be applied as well as those introductory tutorial lessons.

So what we want to do is we want to design, we want to document, we want to discover. I have a really cool project that allows us and challenges us to look at the world around us and really fuse it together in creative ways, inspired by an incredible art director, combophoto is his Instagram handle. But I want to start with something that we can actually work on right now together. And also, use it as a opportunity for us to reflect on our experience during this conference, but also a great way to start the year for how our students might imagine themselves and where they'd like to be as far as the learning in our classroom. So we're going to create this [triptic 00:05:10]. Once upon a time, there was a blank teacher, everyday blank until one day blank, because of that blank until finally blank.

I just want to show real quick a couple other ideas before we do the final hands-on process, which is some really powerful lessons both how we introduce the lesson, how we engage our students in that lesson, and then how students can create products that definitely up the ante when we think of traditional worksheets and traditional ways in

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which we are having students document and present learning. I have students that have actually created content, and then printed it out. Not leaving it in the realm of digital, but going analog and using Adobe to create really striking and powerful presentation posters. We have solar system projects, we have animal projects, we have famous figure projects, and right now we're going to get into Adobe Spark. So let's get going.

You have a finished product. Sometimes it's really easy to work backwards instead of work forwards. So what I want to show real quick is I want to get into Adobe Spark so Spark.Adobe.com is the URL up here. You log in with your Google apps for education account. If you have a school account and you're able to also create an Adobe login or use your personal account, but one of the important things is that use your Adobe education, you get a premium member. And you get in here, and you can organize these by post, page, and video because there are two other platforms that are super powerful. You can organize them as posts. You can start from scratch by just clicking the plus sign, getting inspiration, and just having students say, find one of these and recreate it, replace the images, replace the text, change the colors, or you just start from scratch and you can create that graphic. You start from scratch, you pick your size. I love the square Instagram shape, it's just easy. And then royalty-free. This is what's super important. You can actually pick a photograph and then download it and use it in other presentation because this is all royalty free.

So you click your picture, you click next, and you dive in. I'm going to go backwards and just get back to clicking the edit of this design that I already created which is once upon a time, there was a energized teacher. And what I have here is I chose three photographs, and one of the things that I pick up on, and not everybody notices is sometimes you search a word. I searched energy in this case. And these pictures are actually sort of connected in color, which I was really fascinated by that. I was able to pick those, but that those were all within reasonable order in the search, that the blue from this volt picture and the blue from this light socket on the light bulb, and the blue in this cityscape. It all kind of connected. So you can pause this video at any time and play catch up. Right now, get in there, choose a couple photographs, choose two, choose three, choose four, whatever your heart desires, and then we're going to move forward.

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So right away, when you make a design, a text box pops up. It's usually something that's a little bit plain, a little bit I think just tame, and you're able to right away create and design and move around. And what we're going to do is we're going to take a look at all of these different features here. So you have your text, right? And you can actually add a secondary text by clicking on the secondary text and then clicking a word. And you can actually change the color of that. You can even change the font of that if you wanted to and get that font to pop out a little bit if you want to. I don't always change the font because I find that sometimes it's a bit overwhelming when you have a lot of different fonts on the screen, but you can literally click and you could actually select a number of different ...

So you have the ability to add that secondary text in. You can go over and you can change the color of that. Maybe you get a color that kind of pulls from the light bulb energy and that luminescence there. You can actually go in and say, you know what? I'd like to maybe make that color a little bit more intense and a little bit more tint of a yellow maybe, right? And there's ... you just move this around. You can eye drop this. If you're familiar with hex codes, you can actually put in the code of the color that you want. But if you go over here and you click, you could actually tap into using the eye drop and say, you know what, I really like this color right here. Or maybe that color doesn't have enough pop, so maybe I need to make it just a little bit darker. But the design actually, in the AI background, it actually scans all of this and it tries to come up with colors that match and work together. I think that's really something that's really nice.

Now, there is a shape that you're able to bring in and default. The shape is actually going to be a square, right? The square is, I believe, this one here. You can undo that and you can block it out and then actually go in and you can set up effects instead. And there's shadow, there's outline, there's all these ones that you can experiment in and then work around. But it's just really quick to be able to say you know what? I don't like any of this text, so I don't like that text. And just add another text box right away. It's going to keep in the theme, which is something that's really nice so you don't have to go and create things every time.

So you actually go to effect here, and you can say, you know what? No effect. I just want to have the classic design that is something over here. Right? It's the square and you can go over and you can take a look at the color and the design of that. You can

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change the opacity. You can say, you know what? My color's here, I don't know what happened with that brown, but this gray-ish, green, it's just not working. So you can go and you can click on it. You can change it to gray. You can save it. You can make it bigger and you can just block it off. Be like, I don't like that text. Or you can say, you know what? I really did like that text and just click delete and move on.

So you have the ability to manipulate the text and do some really powerful things. You can upload your own fonts if you are an edu user or a paid user with the premium features. So I have some hand-drawn fonts that I've added in, but it has a great list of fonts. You're not going to really run out of powerful fonts here and it's just something that I think is pretty powerful and your ability to get fonts and if you have Adobe apps for education, the full suite version, you're actually able to browse their font kit library and add even more fonts.

So you get in here, and you can change a lot of different pieces of the design process and you can click on the pictures, and you can move them around and make them smaller or larger. You can rotate pictures. You can scale the pictures as well, and try to come up with something that's more of a powerful look. But whatever it is that you do, whether it's using contrast with the filters, you can do color fill as well, and change that in and just get rid of it. If you're like, oh no, this isn't working, click undo, right? And you're good, you're safe.

The final piece is these really cool icons. You just click and you add. You can add icons, you can add photos, you can add text. So I add icons and you're able to pick. I chose excited, energy, battery charge, all these words that connected to energize and energy, and then I was able to just literally duplicate them. You can hold down shift and actually select multiple, and then click duplicate, and then you can move those around. You can decide, maybe, you would like to make them have a lower opacity, right? And so some cool things like that. It's really up to you to decide how it is that you go about it, but you should just know that there is a method and a process that something really powerful to create striking visuals that will just introduce your students to get comfortable to the idea of how can I say something, say something meaningful, and find color and imagery and iconography that is going to promote it and support it, and not ... if you don't like something, that you can always just get rid of it because there's never a permanent piece in the design process. You can always review, reflect, and revise.

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So thanks so much for watching this. Hopefully you find this meaningful. Please stay connected with me. I'm on Twitter, I'm on Instagram, I'm on YouTube, I'm on Facebook. Whatever it is, reach out and let me know what you think. If you want to get connected, it's all about building that community around building creative capacity. So, thanks so much for participating in this session today ...