



Making the Case for Making

Sitting quietly at a desk and being lectured to while memorizing facts is not conducive to the constitutions of many learners. In fact, most children (and teachers) would prefer a more active and interactive approach to their education.

This is the spirit that has made the Maker Movement thrive: a highly participatory form of learning that encourages creativity and curiosity. In short, making transforms the learning experience for students.

Making also supports the cognitive development of students while fine-tuning motor skills.

A Maker Space is an area where students can take ownership of their learning. They can explore a variety of STEAM-related topics using real world tools and supplies: build and deconstructing their own creations and understanding of the world around them. It doesn't take much to get kids making. It could be circuit boards and 3-D printers, or simply LEGOs and cardboard. The process also reinforces student understanding of the Scientific Method.

Contrary to popular misconceptions, guidelines are indeed integral to Maker projects. While some students can indeed figure things out with minimal instruction, most need some kind of structure and guidance to get them making. Some students simply need examples of similar projects to get started. That said, there is always danger of "over-guiding," where students don't have the experience of making their own mistakes and leading their own unique journey of discovery. Focusing too much on standards and rubrics can drain all of the creativity out of a project.

It's a balancing act: some limitations and guidelines make students more creative, while too much freedom or too little can stifle experimentation. A Maker space thrives or perishes due to its atmosphere of imaginative play. Those that succeed become opportunities for students to discover, learn and grow.