

Details

Creating Real Audiences for Students with *Jennifer Hall* - 165

In this episode, Educational Technology Specialist Jennifer Hall joins to discuss ways for students to share their creations with an authentic audience. You'll also hear how to incorporate technology with digital tools and spaces for students to showcase and celebrate their work.

Link to live show notes: <https://classtechtips.com/2022/05/31/student-projects-165/>

Introduction

Hello there and welcome to today's episode of the Easy EdTech Podcast! If we haven't met before, my name is Monica Burns. I'm a former NYC public school teacher and I've been out of the classroom for a few years leading professional development for teachers, and writing about all things EdTech on my blog [ClassTechTips.com](https://classtechtips.com)

A quick reminder — head to my website classtechtips.com/podcast for all of the show notes and resources from today's episode, and if you're listening to this episode on a podcast player like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or Google Podcasts, you should see a link in the description that you can click on as you listen today with the show notes and all the resources mentioned in today's episode.

Promotion/Reminder

This episode is sponsored by EdTech Essentials: The Top 10 Technology Strategies for All Learning Environments, my newest book from ASCD. Readers will find timely, and accessible lesson ideas and strategies. EdTech Essentials shares ways to prepare students to be productive, responsible users of technology both within and outside the classroom. Find EdTech Essentials on Amazon, or head over to ClassTechTips.com to learn more and download the free study guide. A quick note about Amazon: If you search for me, Monica Burns, on Amazon you'll see some spicy books from an author with the same name as me – so if you head to my website, you'll find more information about the book and a direct link to find EdTech Essentials on Amazon.

Today's Intro

This week's episode is titled: Creating Real Audiences for Students with *Jennifer Hall*. *I'm excited for you to listen to our conversation around audiences and giving students an audience for their work. During the TCEA conference in February, Jennifer and I participated in a panel conversation where we talked about all things technology integration. And I wanted to bring Jennifer on the podcast to share more ideas around audience.*

Listen in to our conversation for some great ideas you can try out this school year!

Episode Transcript

Monica Burns:

Welcome to the podcast. I am so excited to chat about today's topic, authentic audiences, creating audiences for students. But before we dive into all of that, I'd love to just start off with having you share a little bit about your role in education, what your day to day look like?

Jennifer Hall:

Oh, okay. My my name is Jennifer Hall and I'm an educational technology specialist with Atlanta public schools. This is my eighth year in the role. I work in the office of instructional technology and work on behalf of the district. So I push into a number of schools throughout the district. Currently I'm assigned to middle schools and two high schools this year. That's new for me having another high school. So I'm getting used to that. I, I, I, my background is actually middle school. I was a middle school ELA teacher for 17 years before moving into my current role. And so I kind of spend one day a week at each of these schools providing technology training and supporting teachers and pushing into classrooms, whether it's face to face now or now with the magic of zoom pushing in and, and facilitating lessons for teachers. So that's, that's a little bit about me. It's I have a fun job because I get to help teachers use technology to enhance their lessons and engage their students.

Monica Burns:

That's fantastic. And I appreciate you sharing that too. We've had a couple episodes of the podcast, one with Rosie Fleming in March, where we talked about her role as an instructional technology specialist. So I always love starting with that question. So listeners, wherever they happen to be, you know, in their career, whatever their day to day looks like can get a sense of what, what other people are up to and, and what their kind of breakdown of time. It's like. So, you know, you mentioned the different places that you visit and inhabit and are able to work with educators and students in these different spaces. You know, and today we're talking about this topic of creating authentic audiences or creating audiences for students and all the things that they do. So what exactly counts as an audience for student work, who are potential audiences for students?

Jennifer Hall:

That's a great question. I think that oftentimes we think of the audience being the teacher and it needs to be way more than that as a former ELA teacher, that's great that a student wrote an awesome paper and I got to read it, but how other people need to be able to read it too and experience the, the student's creativity. So an audience might be in the classroom, but if you can go beyond that, it makes it even more impactful for students. So authentic audiences would be real world opportunities to showcase their work, maybe posting on a blog or on a website, or if it's in video sharing it out that way, or even doing fun things like, like you know, student showcases where students are showcasing their work and in an open house scenario or beyond that, I mean, I love that we here in the district actually have a lot of, we have a district technology competition. We just wrapped up. I was here today at one of my schools visiting and recognizing those students that competed in the technology competition and they went beyond and are even competing in states. So what they're doing with technology projects that it's going beyond just doing it for the sake of doing it, they're, they're getting the opportunity to showcase their creativity and their ingenuity beyond the classroom walls.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And I think that's really crucial today as we talk about audiences that beyond the classroom walls, whether it's a showcase or a competition, or having visitors come in or beam in right. Virtually to celebrate student work. So lots of different things there to unpack and, you know, audiences take so many different forms and you just mentioned a few great examples. Are there any examples that you've seen of really great audiences for student work? Maybe it was great because it was easy to connect to them or because students responded really positively. Any other examples to share?

Jennifer Hall:

I think one and powerful tool that allows you to have a, a wider audience would be like Flipgrid because students can showcase and present via a Flipgrid and that can be easily shared out. I think that's pretty powerful. We did a film project before the pandemic and we actually had the parents come in for an open house viewing of the student films. And it was very authentic there for them to showcase and talk through the process of creating their film and what that was about. The, we also have done some other projects where students are doing peer evaluation, which is also a great opportunity for audience, cuz it's not just, I'm gonna watch this or I'm gonna read this, but also I'm gonna maybe provide some peer feedback and actually give some insight into, you know, did it work? Did it not work? What was meaningful from your projects? And so I think that that's another opportunity to, to make it authentic. It shouldn't just be check the boxes that completed the task, you know, see if it can be pushed further so that, you know, students can showcase the, that creativity.

Monica Burns:

That's such a great point because, you know, we could do a showcase or a celebration, but there's also that audience that might be along for the ride during the process. Who's giving feedback along the way, who is checking in with students who's really there and ready to support and celebrate, but also critique, you know, perhaps whether it's something like a shark tank type type of vibe or it's the peer feedback piece and, you know, talking about authentic audiences today, right? That's a really authentic piece of what happens when anyone is creating in a workforce or career connection, right? People are checking in and giving feedback and, you know, being an audience for the process, right. In addition to the celebration or the finished product, right. That comes at the end. And you know, you mentioned a bit about a, a film project and families, you know, being an audience. And I wanna make sure I really wanna talk today about one of the projects that you're working on your lights, camera action, Shakespeare, a film project. So tell us a little bit about this. Cause I think it's a, a great way for us to think about audiences in the context of work that you and your students are doing.

Jennifer Hall:

This is a passion project I've been working on for, for I'm gonna age myself since 2010. And when I was in the classroom, we, we, we started making Shakespeare inspired films. I taught gifted ELA middle school level and they read a middle school version of a Shakespeare play. And then we analyzed it for theme and plot and, and character motivation. And then we tried to put a modern spin on it. So we started filming those in the classroom many years ago with a point and shoot camera. And we used the old school Promethean board as the background. So literally it was like, if we say we were in the garden, we would, we would project a picture of the garden and be like, okay, act out your scene. And so that was something I did in the classroom and it got better every year because the, the idea was that students started doing kind of a competi within the school.

Jennifer Hall:

We did a, we did a Shakespeare film Fest while I was in the classroom and we filmed sixth, seventh and eighth grade did different plays for McBeth and Ello and Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. And they would, we run it like a true project based learning experience because they hire a director of the writers. They have the actors, they have the set people, everyone, and it's a great end of the year project. So we're, we're wrapping up the school year here. So we've just kicked, we've just kicked that off. But when I came outta the classroom, I had the opportunity to work with a number of schools. Okay. And it went from being my passion project to something I work on with the media specialists and teachers at other schools. And so prior to the pandemic, I I'd managed to get four middle schools that were participating and we made seven movies OK.

Jennifer Hall:

That were completely created by students. And from start to finish, they did all of the editing. They do, they do the writing, the performance and everything. And up to that point, we'd, we would have a Shakespeare film Fest. The students would watch each other. And to mind you, these are different schools. So they're across town. These are kids at don't know each other. So it makes it a really unique audience because they're both going through the process or all the classes are going through the process, but they get to view each others and actually evaluate the films. And it was quite an interesting experience the last cause you would think that they would vote for their film to be the best, but honestly they would, they had a critical eye and they would, they would analyze. And, and oftentimes it wasn't their favorite film.

Jennifer Hall:

Wasn't theirs. It was, they would like something from another class that was created. But the last year before the pandemic we actually had started doing parents were invited for the film Fest. So they got to come in and watch it. So I gotta give a shout out to one of my media specialists who was like, I'm gonna invite all the parents in the, and wanna come watch the movies. And they love that because it was even more authentic. But a funny story, since I support multiple schools at one of my schools king middle school, there was a, a, a young man that was in the movie and he was so excited about it and he starts watching it. And then he realized his dad is a coach at another one of my souls. And he had starred in the movie as well.

Jennifer Hall:

Neither, neither one of them had told each other that they were in this project and working on it. And how cool is that? That they got to watch. He was like, wait, that's my dad, wait a second. He's in the movie too. So for them, it, then it became just this kind of a cool experience. The principal gets involved at each of the schools and, and students take ownership in the process. And I love that. We started that with the parents coming in, and now that we're back, we took a hiatus due to the pandemic and we just started filming. I had brainstorming sessions with students yesterday, and it's great because it's students six, seven in eighth grade varying abilities. It's not just a gifted project. In fact, I've got an Esau class working on it as well. We've read McBeth this year and they're analyzing it and looking at themes and coming up with their stories.

Jennifer Hall:

So stay tuned. There will be some movies coming from some awesome students this year, but I I'm excited because I house 'em on my website and share out. So they actually have the

opportunity to showcase those videos. And it's, it's sparked a lot of interest from other, you know, schools that I work with. They're like, we can't do a whole movie, but maybe we do a scene. So I'm working on scenes of the Tempest with a high school school. So it just the video piece, nowadays kids love video. Like they consume like, like crazy TikTok and Instagram and all of that. So for them to be the creators of content is super powerful.

Monica Burns:

Oh gosh. Yeah. And just, you know, so much you said there too, even just about that audience that might be within a district, you know, if you are in a big district, right. You don't know all the kids in your own middle school when you're in eighth grade, let alone all the kids at the other four or five middle schools. Right. So I love that idea of leveraging the community, right. Your district, right. You have this built in audience kind of all the time, whether its first graders creating something for the 10th graders to watch, right. Or vice versa or across districts and you know, something you said that I think is really important to kind of come back to was that your students didn't necessarily vote for their own in this particular

project, they were ready to critique. Right. Whatever anyone else had made.

Monica Burns:

And I think that's a really important point about the audience when you take on that role of a creator, right? You a much more discerning consumer, right. You know, what must have happened in that movie clip, right. Or whatever your YouTube video you come across later on. So I really appreciate you mentioning that piece cuz I think it's a, a crucial part of, of audience when we talk about why we want that to happen for students to now, you know, as we're thinking here about this particular project and the celebrations that you've done, have you seen audiences leverage in other subject areas or with other educators that you support throughout your work? I mean, I love this project that you're leading and I'm curious if you've seen audiences that are maybe surprising or unexpected and like a math or science or social studies or one of the other subject areas that you might peek into or get a window into.

Jennifer Hall:

So I love, I love that I actually was meeting with my change of day, we were talking about an upcoming project I'm working on with, it's a lesson for sixth grade science and we're talking about weather and erosion again, I'm a former ELA person, so I'm not the science expert, but I'd partner with the teacher and she's like, all right, what are some things we can do to bring in some interesting tools to engage them? And so the students are actually going to be create models of what an erosion using Tinkercad. And so we were talking about so leveraging 3d

design and then there's a new feature in Tinkercad that lets you do augmented reality. And we're like, okay, so that's cool. So that's them seeing their own design and analyzing it. So we talked about how they could screen record what they're going to do and talk through that process of the weather and erosion and with the 3d model on an iPad and stuff.

Jennifer Hall:

And then we're gonna upload those to flip grid so that we can share that out. So other one, so it's not just in the classroom gets to see their designs, they can share it out. And so a wider audience. So that's kind of something we're looking at doing for this science lesson posts spring break in a few weeks. So I think, and I'm working with a high school ELA class tomorrow and the kids are going to be creating PSA about current civil rights issues. And so we're, we're using Flipgrid as the tool, but the goal is for them to share out what they think are current civil rights, struggles and issues that we need to be aware of. And those video as they create them are going to be shared beyond their classroom. Ideally it it's a partnership with a couple of ELA teachers, so it will be cross teaming with them sharing out their videos.

Jennifer Hall:

And then we're, we're talking about what does the audience look next? So right. This is the beginning stages. And first lesson is tomorrow and I'm, I'm kind of excited to see what they create, but you're right, it's the opportunity not just create something for the sake of a grade and for the sake of, you know, just checking the box, if, if, if it can be something that can be impactful beyond that. And I love what you mentioned about the different grade levels. I I'm thinking the civil rights project from doing with the ELA teacher would be great for me to be able to share it with the E the middle school teachers I'm working with. This is a high school project, but it'd be like, Hey, this is what the high schoolers are talking about with the middle schoolers. I think it's gonna be a possible partnership that we can, we can work on. So again, that's, sometimes you have to build your audience. Sometimes it's automatically there. But just looking for opportunities since I do work across across different schools and even in our district, we have clusters. So there's like the high school that feeds to the, the middle school feeds too. I can, you know, do a little bit of connecting there with, with authentic audiences as well.

Monica Burns:

Yeah. And I think sometimes we take for granted that everyone knows what's going on in different places, especially if we're the person who's like tuned in right. Or moving around. So I think it's great

even just for building that community or that collegial among colleagues, right. To just let them know what's happening in different spaces. And, you know, as you were mentioning the public service announcement, right. The screencast, which is really great for tutorials too, it's, you know, a nice reminder that the audience could be one that is entertaining right. Or informing or persuading and just anchoring it in those kind of text types or authors purpose, I think too is, is something that can really just, you know, I think would resonate with an educator. Who's trying to think through like the why behind this for them right. In their particular environment. And you know, that gets to this next question. I wanna ask you, you know, sometimes, especially this school year, right. Especially, you know, all the school years, but especially right this school year, you know, if someone's listening today and thinking, this sounds great, but an audience first student work is maybe one more thing. Right. Or, you know, what is some reason, are there reasons that you would, you would suggest that they do consider this? Like, is it, is there something there that maybe we haven't talked about yet or that you wanna circle back to?

Jennifer Hall:

Well, I would say that there's a number of, of opportunities. We've talked about flip grade, cuz there's so many right. Ways you can have Flipgrid pals where you can connect across the district, across the country, across the world. And you can do fun, you know, like Skype in the classrooms, another opportunity to have, you know, guests come in, but also have people see what your students are doing. I, I think that it shouldn't be one more thing because it's, it's building a culture of, of I guess the best way I wanna say it, it amplifies student voice, obviously, because they're seeing that it's not just I'm doing this for the teacher. It empowers them, it, it, so I think it's something that's meaningful that maybe a teacher thinks it's one more thing to do. But in the long run, if you make that first initial investment in like pick and it doesn't have to be every single thing you do in the classroom, there's certain things that you can showcase.

Jennifer Hall:

I used to have my students do a lot of writing in my ELA class and there were certain projects that it was like, okay, this is where we're going to showcase this. We're gonna do a reading. We're gonna invite our, your, the students in the other class to come in and, and we can do a read through of your write. We didn't do it at every time for every project. We did it for certain things, but definitely take the opportunity to showcase that. Cuz you never know what that, what, how meaningful that experience will be for that student. The lights, camera action project. It, it was kind of kismet or serendipitous. The day that I kicked it off a few weeks ago, I

ran into a young man at one of my schools and he came up and I say, young man, he's actually a grown man.

Jennifer Hall:

And he says, he pulls down his mass. He's like, I don't know if you remember me. And I was like, you look a little bit older than the last time I saw you. And lo and behold, when he was in eighth grade, he participated in the Shakespeare project. This was something that he remembered. He's a sophomore in college now that he remembered me from that learning experience. And so you just never know that doing something, especially at PBL where you're building in that audience piece, that you're designing for a, a, a final product that is going to, to be shared is, is very, very powerful. And that just made my day cuz I was like, I can't believe that on the day I'm kicking this off. It was just like fortuitous. I was like, this is awesome. So I, I would hope teachers don't think of it as one more thing, but think of it as an investment in, in building that that, that culture in your classroom that students understand that, that there is audience, there's, there's a power in that

Monica Burns:

That is so powerful and what a fun thing to happen, right. Just to reinforce, especially, you know, on a busy day, I'm sure. Right. Of, you know, this is worth it, right. It's worth all the energy and all the things, you know, that go on behind the scenes when you're kicking off something big like that. Well, you know, Jennifer, this was so actionable for listeners, so many great ideas and things to consider around, choosing an audience, thinking about what a big or small kind of project might be. And I wanna make sure everyone listening in knows where to connect with you. We'll put some links of course, in the show notes. So if you're listening in now you can click in the description, but let us know where can people connect with you? Can they learn more about your work?

Jennifer Hall:

Awesome. Thank you. If you are on Twitter, you can connect with me @apsitjthat's for Atlanta public schools, instructional technology gen, that everybody's like, it's absent. What is that's it gen? And on Instagram it's techtips411 and I also have a website techtips411.com that I, I put share a lot of resources there. And if you're into YouTube and you like the visual stuff, you can check out the YouTube channel Tech Tips 411 that has tons of resources there as well. And you can see some of the students videos and stay tuned for those that are, that are coming soon.

Monica Burns:

Oh, well fantastic. Thank you so much for your time today.

Jennifer Hall:

No, thank you. I, I appreciate this has been great to chat with you about this. Thank you so much.

So let's make this EdTech easy...

First, choose an upcoming project.

Next, identify a small or big audience.

Then, look for audiences in your school community.

Finally, encourage students to share their work.

Remember, you can find the shownotes and the full list of resources from this episode including all of the ways to connect with Jennifer Hall on classtechtips.com/podcast and finding today's episode #165!

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Outro

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Episode Resources

- Check out Jennifer Hall's [website](#) and [YouTube](#)
- Follow Jennifer Hall on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Learn more about [Lights, Camera, Action! Shakespeare Project](#)
- [Tinkercad](#) (3D design tool)
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