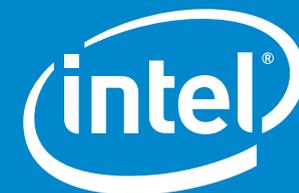




Creativity in K–12 education  
A powerful practice for today's learning

DELL EMC



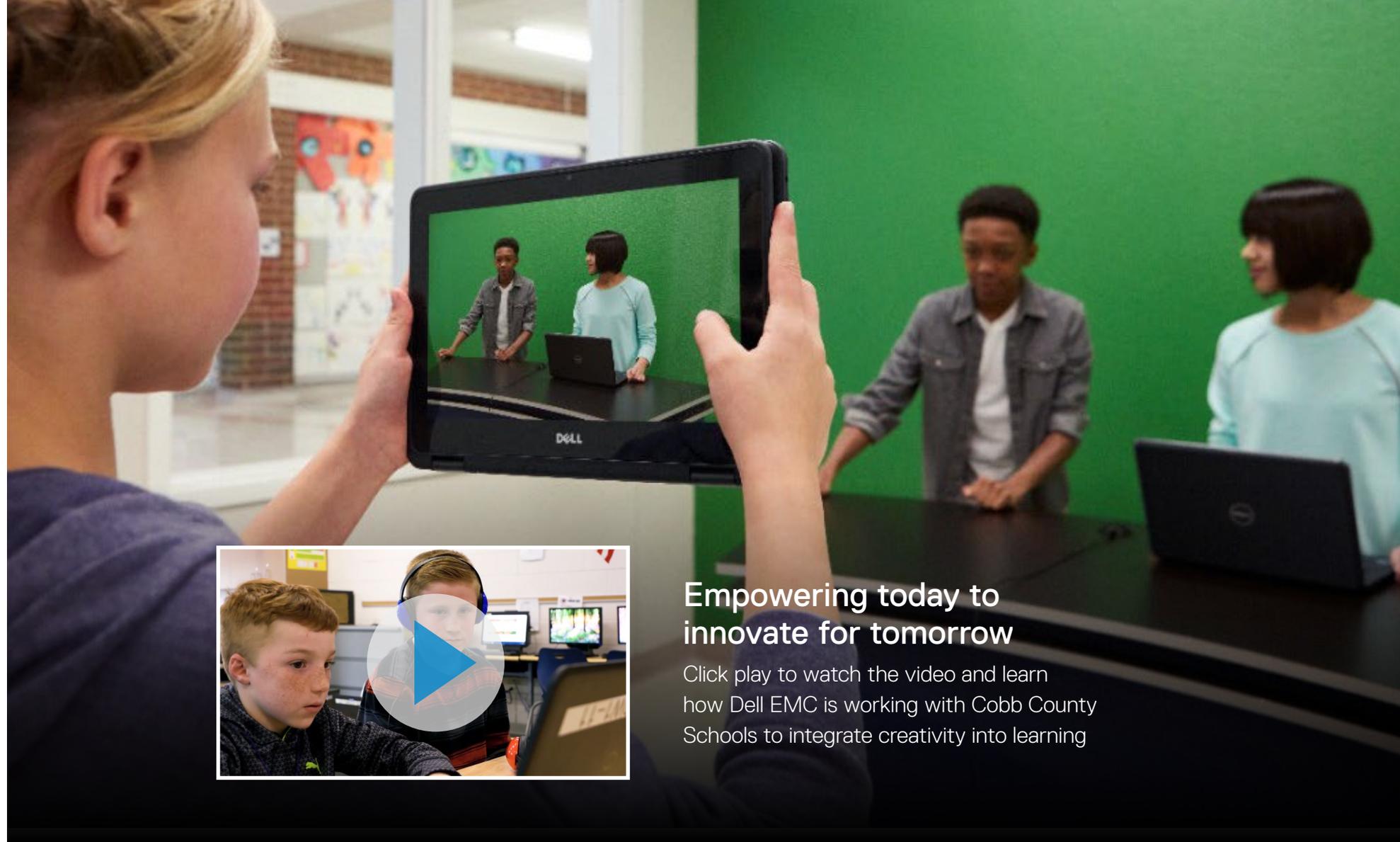
As they have done for generations, K–12 educators today aim to ready students for successful and satisfying lives and careers. For example, Mike Massa, the principal at Powhatan High School, which is part of Powhatan County Public Schools in Virginia, says: “The mission of the high school, ultimately, is to have students college- and career-ready upon graduation—to create, collaborate and critically think so that they’re prepared for wherever the world takes them.”

However, many K–12 teachers no longer feel that the traditional practice of delivering content to students is effective. They look for ways to increase student engagement and they focus teaching and learning more on individual students’ talents, interests and learning styles. As they reconsider what effective K–12 education should look like, creativity becomes a critical skill and a key enabler of learning across all subjects.

## Why is creativity important?

Creativity promotes student engagement, as Sarah Drake, a teacher of 7th and 8th grade language arts at Cobb County Schools in Georgia, explains: “Creativity and innovation are important to highlight in a classroom because when you allow students the freedom to create something and to express it in a visual manner, then they’ll own it.”

What’s more, fostering student creativity can balance the content-based knowledge acquisition that is still highly emphasized in many schools. It’s an outlet that helps students develop skills and dispositions in an authentic, meaningful manner. That kind of learning can be immensely important in preparing students for a rapidly changing world where jobs and opportunities may be different from what they are today. Cristin Kennedy, director of instructional technology at Cobb County, says, “It’s important to nurture creativity and innovation in students, our next generation. We don’t even know even what their jobs will be, so we really need to work on creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication.”



### Empowering today to innovate for tomorrow

Click play to watch the video and learn how Dell EMC is working with Cobb County Schools to integrate creativity into learning

*“Creativity and innovation are important to highlight in a classroom because when you allow students the freedom to create something and to express it in a visual manner, then they’ll own it.”*

**Sarah Drake**

7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts Teacher, Cobb County Schools in Georgia



## Broadening the scope of creative application

Whereas creativity was once encouraged in subjects like art or music, today it is becoming part of the classroom culture in all areas of learning. Many teachers, principals and educational planners are accepting the challenge of becoming more creative themselves and are quickly moving from experimenting to developing best practices and deploying proven tools to foster students' creativity. In classrooms, teachers look to enhance the learning environment. They help their students change their understanding of received concepts and, for example, communicate messages such as:

- New ideas are always worth sharing and hearing, because they provide opportunities for learning and experimentation.
- Mistakes help students move on and grow through experience. They are not to be feared or seen as reasons for embarrassment.

## Creative teachers rely on such practices as:



Brainstorming



Collaborative problem-solving



Allowing students to create their own ways to demonstrate their learning



Combining subjects like science and art to stimulate creativity



*“It’s highly rewarding when I can allow myself to let go of control of the classroom and give that control back to the students. It’s rewarding because I see that they are empowered to be self-directed and successful. I get to learn right along with them—my favorite part.”*

**LaChaka Tatum**

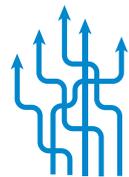
Science Teacher, Cobb County Schools in Georgia



## The changing teacher role

In the creative classroom, teachers become collaborating partners who encourage curiosity and bring context and perspective to students’ learning activities. They help students ask the most fruitful questions and help them use learning and communication tools to perform research and to collaborate with their peers in other classrooms, other schools or even other countries. Instead of standing in front of the class, teachers move around the room, and may work with small groups or individual students.

Describing changes in her role, LaChaka Tatum, a science teacher at Cobb County Schools, says, “It’s highly rewarding when I can allow myself to let go of control of the classroom and give that control back to the students. It’s rewarding because I see that they are empowered to be self-directed and successful. I get to learn right along with them—my favorite part.”



## Environments to let learning flow freely

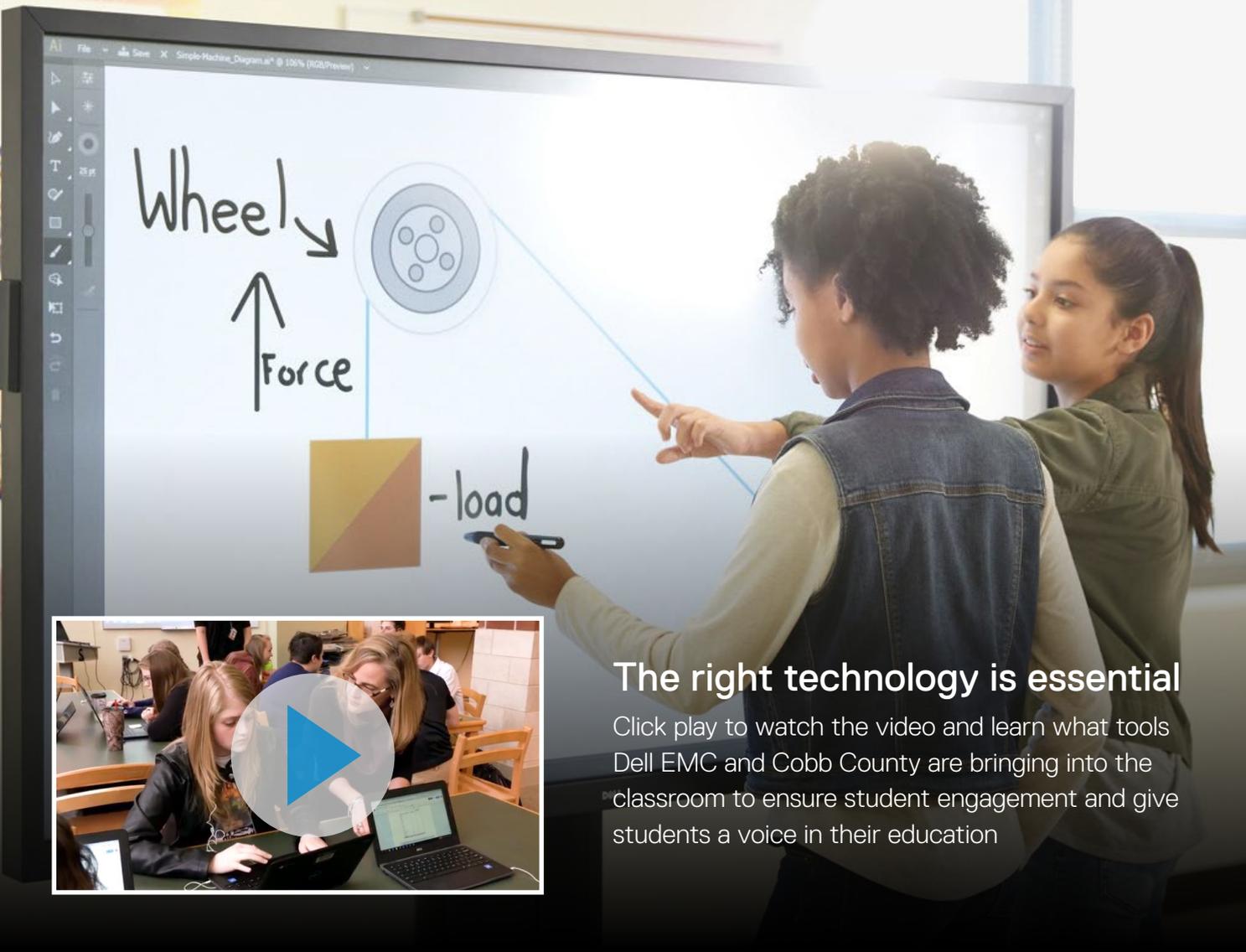
It takes the right tools to make creative learning productive and focused. A survey in THE Journal finds that 81 percent of teachers, administrators and educational technologists use digital tools to enable student creativity. In addition to the mobile devices that many students and teachers have, school districts often use a mix of digital devices with software like Google Classroom or Google G Suite for Education, video equipment and monitors, and such nondigital tools as wallboards, markers and crayons. Frequently, they also replace the standard classroom furniture with a variety of flexible, less-confining seating options.

Depending on where they are in their creative journey, some school districts furnish dedicated spaces where students and teachers can take innovative, explorative learning in many directions. Melissa Glanden, librarian at Powhatan High School, says, “Our Learning Commons is a flexible space. We have plenty of seating for group work. We have a production studio with a green screen. We also have a maker space, which houses 3D printers, digital cutters, anything you want to be creative. The space is flexible and can meet whatever needs teachers and students have.”



**Student centered.  
Teacher facilitated.**

Click play to watch the video and learn how common, flowing working spaces tend to students different needs.



### The right technology is essential

Click play to watch the video and learn what tools Dell EMC and Cobb County are bringing into the classroom to ensure student engagement and give students a voice in their education

*“All the different projects we have make us think at a higher level and use our creativity to see what possibly the answer could be.”*

#### Student

Palmer Middle School, Cobb County Schools in Georgia

## Incorporating student voice and choice

In many school districts, teachers encourage students to make their voices heard and exercise their choice in creative learning. Melissa Morse, director of instruction and innovative practice at Cobb County Schools, says, “Students need to decide how they are willing to produce and show mastery of their learning.”

The variety of creative projects can include creative peer collaborations, presentations and video productions to demonstrate learning, cross-grade mentoring and other endeavors. A student at Palmer Middle School in the Cobb County school district says, “All the different projects we have make us think at a higher level and use our creativity to see what possibly the answer could be.”

[Click here to read the student voice and choice white-paper >](#)

## Overcoming resistance to creative learning and measuring its results

As K–12 learning culture gradually changes, educators and school districts encounter some common challenges to adopting more creative approaches, such as:



- Overwhelming emphasis on standards and testing in many districts
- Lack of time and budget
- Aversion to perceived risk
- Resistance from educators and administrators who feel that the school system is not ready for this change

To counter some of these arguments and overcome shortages of tools and resources, proponents of increased creativity in learning often point out that creative learning does not mean abandoning grades and diligent monitoring of learning outcomes. Creative teachers find many ways to assess learning and enable students to gauge their progress:



- Use learning rubrics to document student accomplishments
- Invite peer and student feedback
- Develop new models for demonstrating learning, including physical and online conferencing
- Provide student feedback by means of digital tools

In creative projects, some teachers have found that they can have better outcomes when students have firm spending restrictions and schedules that help them focus their efforts.

## Combining educational expertise and technology tools

Digital technology provides critical learning enablement in many creative classrooms. Tatum says, “Technology not only engages our students as digital-age learners, but it also enhances their learning. They can have experiences that they wouldn’t have otherwise.”

Cobb County Schools and Powhatan County Public Schools use Dell desktop and mobile laptops, tablets, and 2-in-1 computers with Intel® processors in their creative classrooms. Kennedy says, “Students have Dell Latitude 3380s. We picked those because of their durability and the Intel Core™ i3 processors. We chose very large hard drives, and we use touch screens for the laptops and desktops because that’s what our students are most comfortable with.”

A Cobb County student at Palmer Middle School describes one of the creative projects for which the right technology is essential: “We wanted to build a toy for kids who have cerebral palsy. We built a puzzle using the app SketchUp on the Dell computers. That way, we could 3D-model the different parts and then we assembled them to make the puzzle.”

For teachers, Dell EMC educational thought leadership and expertise can be as helpful as computers and monitors in developing their own resourcefulness and implementing creative learning in their classrooms. “I really like the partnership with Dell EMC because I’m learning and becoming more accomplished as a coach and a leader, using Dell EMC consulting services,” Kennedy says. “I’ve taken advantage of educational strategists and consultants at Dell EMC to develop the instructional technology team, which helps us boost competency levels and become better mentors in the classroom.”

*“Technology not only engages our students as digital-age learners, but it also enhances their learning. They can have experiences that they wouldn’t have otherwise.”*

**LaChaka Tatum**

Science Teacher, Cobb County Schools in Georgia



## Fostering creativity and innovation in the classroom

Click play to watch the video and learn how students are discovering and collaborating thanks to teachers utilizing Dell EMC technology in the classroom



## Next steps

Dell EMC is firmly committed to supporting creative, competency-based, student-owned learning that can take place anywhere, anytime. To explore how we can help you bring creativity to teaching and learning:

- Contact us and find out more about Dell EMC educational solutions at [www.dell EMC.com/k12](http://www.dell EMC.com/k12)
- Learn more about Dell EMC Professional Learning Services at [www.dell.com/professionallearning](http://www.dell.com/professionallearning)
- Connect with us Twitter at [@DellEMCedu](https://twitter.com/DellEMCedu)
- Watch more [Dell EMC Education videos here](#)