

April 2025

GEORGEA PATHWAYS


M A G A Z I N E

Navigating Education & Tech Careers

Careers through VR

STEM Integration

Student Engagement In STEM



The Technology Association of Georgia Education Collaborative (TAG-Ed) strengthens the future workforce by providing students with relevant, hands-on STEM learning opportunities and connecting them to Technology Association of Georgia (TAG) resources.

Formerly the TAG Foundation, TAG-Ed is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization formed by TAG in 2002. Later, the organization's name was re-branded to TAG Education Collaborative to facilitate our role as the leaders for K-12 STEM education in Georgia.

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Adding educational technology and learning platforms into the classroom as a supplemental teaching technique has become an increasingly effective way to support student engagement, accommodate differing learning styles, and help educators develop adaptable lesson plans. These digital tools can enhance students' ability to learn in and out of the classroom and prepare them for the technologies they will likely encounter in higher education and future careers.

According to the Pew Research Center, around 92% of educators believe that technology has a positive impact on learning by increasing access to materials and helping students build essential digital skills. These benefits extend beyond the classroom, equipping students with competencies they'll need in an increasingly tech-driven world. By bringing these resources into the classroom or students' homes, education technology helps ensure that every learner, regardless of location or resources, has the opportunity to access high-quality, diverse educational content.

One of the most useful advantages of educational technology is its ability to personalize learning. Adaptive platforms can monitor student progress and adjust content in real-time, allowing educators to provide instruction that meets each learner where they are. This can be especially helpful in classrooms with varying ability levels or limited resources, where



individualized attention can be difficult to manage. These tools can make it easier for educators to provide differentiated instruction without adding to their workload.

These resources are not a one-size-fits-all solution to every educational challenge, but they can be helpful when implemented with purpose. They can assist educators in creating more engaging curriculums, connecting with more students, and supporting better learning outcomes. Additionally, educational technology can encourage students to take more ownership of their learning through interactive tools, immediate feedback, and opportunities for self-paced exploration. With the right approach, technology can be a powerful ally in creating more flexible and effective learning environments.

Larry K. Williams
President
TAG / TAG-Ed

Larry K. Williams serves as the President and CEO of the TAG and the TAG Education Collaborative. TAG-Ed's mission is to strengthen Georgia's future workforce by providing students with relevant, hands-on STEM learning opportunities by connecting Technology Association of Georgia (TAG) resources with leading STEM education initiatives.

Navigating Education and Technologies

By Wayne Carley

Traditionally, parents have taken the lead on guiding their children's academic path toward a variety of career choices. Understanding the current trends in tech careers and the educational requirements is no doubt critical for accurate parental navigation in cooperation with their children.

The navigation process consists of evaluation, assessment, consultation and resource discovery. Choices must be made regarding the appropriate program opportunities, budget parameters, regional availability and student interest level. Homework on this journey is necessary and encouraging with the continued growth of tech careers spanning dozens of specialties.

Third party guidance organizations continue to grow in popularity, providing the experience, up to date knowledge, and staff to direct a custom pathway for students and families. The combination of these organizations and personal diligence in digging through the up to date data will provide the best outcomes for families and the tech industries searching for the best talent.



For students and parents considering the career fields within technology, the search and evaluation usually begins with general information technology and software development career paths. This is the common launch point into tech fields to get started.

These include:

- **Software Developer/Engineer:** Designs, develops, tests, and maintains software applications.
- **Web Developer:** Creates and maintains websites and web applications.
- **Computer Systems Analyst:** Analyzes computer systems, identifies problems, and recommends solutions.
- **Database Administrator:** Manages and maintains databases.
- **IT Manager:** Oversees IT operations, including infrastructure, security, and staff.
- **Computer Programmer:** Writes and tests computer code.
- **Computer Network Architect:** Designs and implements computer networks.
- **Network Engineer:** Designs, implements, and maintains computer networks.

- **IT Technician:** Provides technical support and troubleshooting for computer systems and networks.

- **Quality Assurance Tester:** Tests software and hardware to ensure quality.

All of these listed are in great demand with a probability of expansion over the next decade. This can be reassuring in regard to job security and advancement opportunities.

Specialized Tech Roles:

- **Cybersecurity Specialist:** Protects computer systems and networks from cyber threats.

- **Data Scientist:** Analyzes large datasets to extract insights and make predictions.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Specialist:** Develops and implements AI systems.

- **Cloud Engineer:** Designs, implements, and manages cloud computing infrastructure.

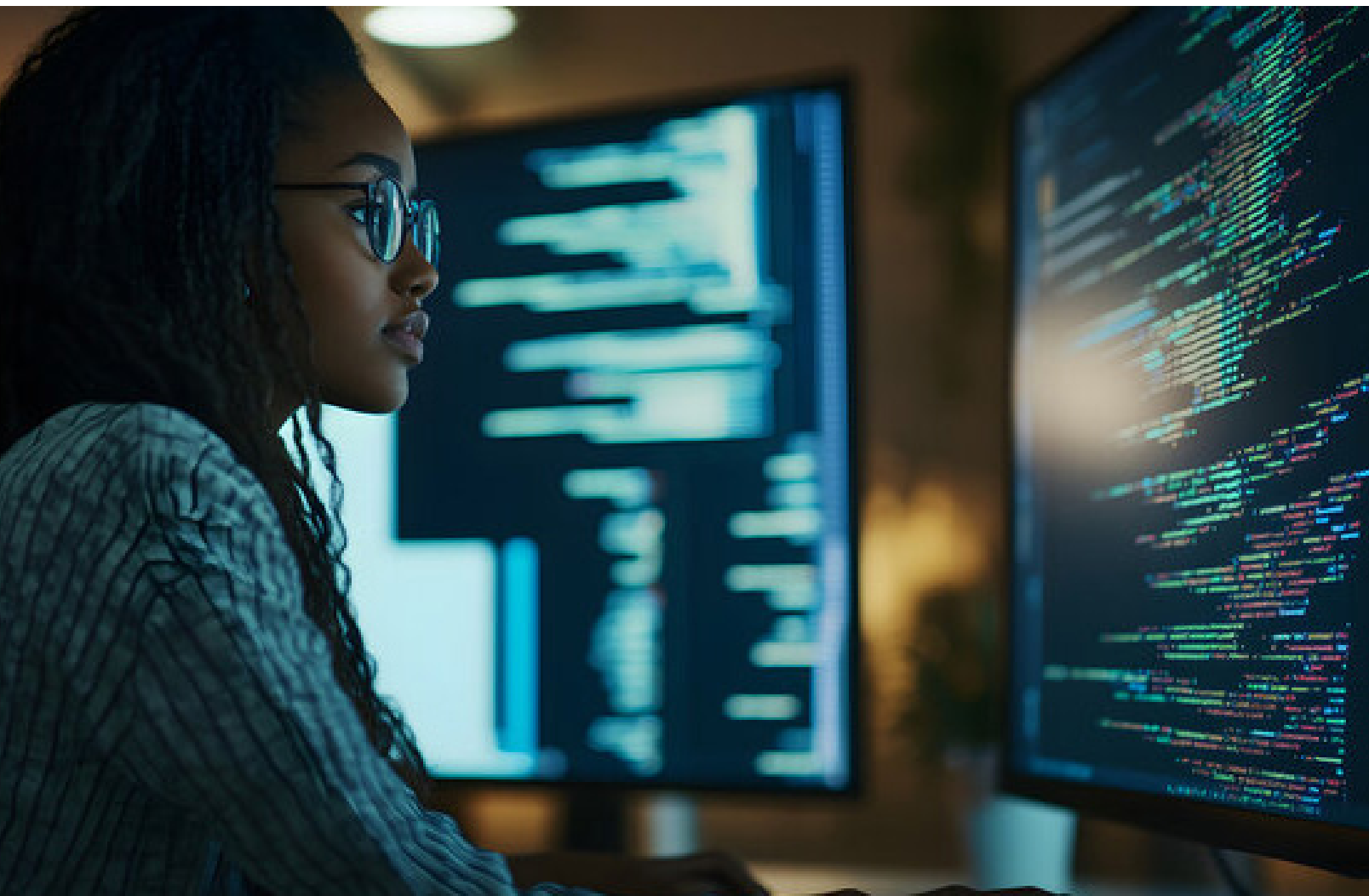
- **Mobile Application Developer:** Creates applications for mobile devices.

- **Computer Hardware Engineer:** Designs and develops computer hardware.

- UX/UI Designer: Focuses on the user experience and user interface of digital products.
- DevOps Engineer: Bridges the gap between software development and IT operations.
- Data Analyst: Collects, analyzes, and interprets data to identify trends and patterns.
- Machine Learning Engineer: Develops and implements machine learning models.

Entry-Level Tech Jobs:

- Technical Support Specialist: Provides technical assistance to users.
- Junior Software Developer: Assists senior developers in software development tasks.
- Help Desk Analyst: Provides technical support to users via phone or email.
- Computer Network Technician: Assists in the maintenance and repair of computer networks.



- **Data Analyst:** Analyzes data to identify trends and patterns

Finding the best education program for your interests in your region is abundant and can be affordable. Keep in mind that many companies offer apprenticeships and additional training after you've established yourself within their tech workforce. Getting in the door is often the first step in exploring and pursuing your chosen path....for the moment. You can always change direction as you wish from the beginning, throughout your career.

With bachelor's degrees becoming less vital for a rewarding tech career, the reduced debt and training duration have become very attractive to fast track our youth into their preferred career. Keep in mind that salaries continue to be more lucrative with higher levels of education, but getting started has never been easier. The sheer volume of companies across a wide array of industries who are seeking numerous levels of tech expertise is exciting and encouraging. Though competition for these positions remains aggressive, the volume of opportunities allows for inclusion.

Not every pending graduate is attracted to careers in technology. For those that are, it's never too early to start your homework on the details of specific

tech careers to evaluate the realities of each potential pursuit. If sitting behind a desk all day isn't your cup of tea, you need to know that now and focus on those tech fields that keep you on the move. Travel may certainly be possible in many areas with companies boasting of locations across the country or globe that need tech talent with that flexibility.

Be prepared for continuing education requirements as companies and technology continue to expand and innovate, requiring you to maintain pace with changes. There will certainly be new applications, problems to solve and upgrades in hardware, software and interaction. Flexibility and willingness to adapt are attractive qualities when considering applicants for tech positions of all types. As you start your navigation through the current sea of tech opportunities, be sure and look in all directions while scanning the horizon for what interests you most right now and in the near future.





TAG-Ed
Education Collaborative

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Strategies

For Increasing Student Engagement In **STEM**

By Dr. David Thomascall

One Monday morning, just before math class, a student excitedly told me how he had spent his weekend mastering a wall jump in Rift Runner. He described the hours of trial and error—adjusting his timing, testing different approaches, and refusing to give up until he finally nailed it. This kid was an average math student—he completed most of his assignments and did okay on tests. But hearing him break down a complex in-game challenge, I realized something: he had all the problem-solving skills needed for excelling in math.

He was using reasoning, logic, and persistence. The difference wasn't ability—it was engagement. Gallup's research shows that as students move toward high school, engagement in learning drops dramatically, with only a third of high school students reporting high engagement. This decline is especially concerning in STEM, where curiosity and perseverance are essential for problem-solving and innovation. Just as students become capable of grasping complex STEM concepts, many disengage from the learning process.

The good news? Teachers can shift this trajectory. By fostering collaboration, celebrating student work, encouraging content creation, and tapping into our own interests, we can re-ignite student curiosity and engagement in STEM.

Collaboration Every Thursday after school

I open the computer lab weekly for students to participate in Minecraft Club. The moment I unlock the door, a wave of students rushes in, excited to build, explore, and problem-solve together. Students team up to build structures, tackle challenges, and solve problems together. They share ideas and learn from each other—I only step in if someone has trouble getting into Minecraft. They trade tips, troubleshoot glitches, and adjust their strategies as a team. If I ever have to cancel a session, they're genuinely disappointed—not just because they love the game, but because they love playing together.

When students work together, something clicks. They explain concepts to

each other, which deepens their own understanding. Group discussions spark new ideas, and working as a team makes problem-solving feel less intimidating.

I've seen students who struggle with confidence in class take the lead in collaborative projects, guiding their peers through tricky challenges. When a student asks me a question, I don't always answer right away. Instead, I look for another student who can help. This approach builds a culture of shared learning—where students rely on each other, take ownership of their knowledge, and stay engaged because they're part of something bigger than themselves.

Showcasing work in my seventh-grade computer applications class, students design and create their own video games using Scratch coding, graphic design, 3D modeling, and video production. The project builds up to an exciting finale—an interactive arcade where we invite another class to play and experience the games.

This showcase is more than just a final step; it's a powerful motivator. Knowing their peers will play their games pushes students to refine, debug, and polish their work—not for a grade, but because they want their classmates to enjoy what they've created. When they see others engaged with their games,



they feel a real sense of accomplishment. That moment—when students see their work being used, read, or played by others—is transformative. Whether it's creating a video game, writing a newspaper article, or building an escape room challenge, having an audience makes learning feel real. It shows them that their work matters.

This recognition fuels a deeper investment, encouraging students to take ownership, make improvements, and push their creativity further. Showcasing also invites feedback—through peer reviews, teacher comments, or public presentations—helping students grow while celebrating their achievements. The result? More confidence, more motivation, and a lasting passion for STEM.

Content Creation One is one of my favorite projects and is an “All About Me” poster. Students start with a picture of themselves, remove the background, and add a speech bubble with a favorite quote. Then, they select a background that reflects their personality and surround their picture with images that showcase their interests. It's a simple introduction to photo editing and design principles, but more importantly, it gives students a chance to express who they are.

Because the project is personal, they

take ownership—tweaking colors, adjusting layouts, and making sure every detail reflects them.

The result isn't just a poster; it's a window into their world. Whether students are making videos, coding simulations, or writing explanations, content creation pushes them beyond passive learning. They have to break down ideas, refine their messaging, and ensure accuracy, reinforcing their own understanding in the process.

Figuring out how to communicate complex ideas also strengthens problem-solving skills and creativity. And when they get to share their work—whether with classmates, teachers, or a broader audience—it builds confidence, makes learning feel real, and sparks a deeper connection to STEM.

A kid explaining Newton's laws in a stop-motion video isn't just memorizing facts; they're bringing the concepts to life. Lean into your own interests When I was in sixth grade (many years ago), a group of college students visited my class to teach us how to make claymation films. I was mesmerized—watching still images come to life felt like magic.

My fascination with animation never faded, and over the years, I've introduced my students to different techniques, helping them use animation



respond with energy and deeper engagement.

Passion is contagious.

When students see that learning isn't just about memorizing facts or meeting standards—but about curiosity, creativity, and discovery—they invest more in the process. This is why teachers need the freedom to design lessons that reflect their interests instead of relying solely on scripted curricula. Engaged teachers create engaged students. And when teachers and students connect through real conversations and shared excitement, learning becomes more meaningful—and more fun.

as a tool to explore ideas in their own creative ways. They've animated the circulatory system with stop-motion, illustrated meiosis through frame-by-frame drawings, and turned the water cycle into a moving story. Even abstract math concepts, like proportions, become more concrete when students bring them to life through animation.

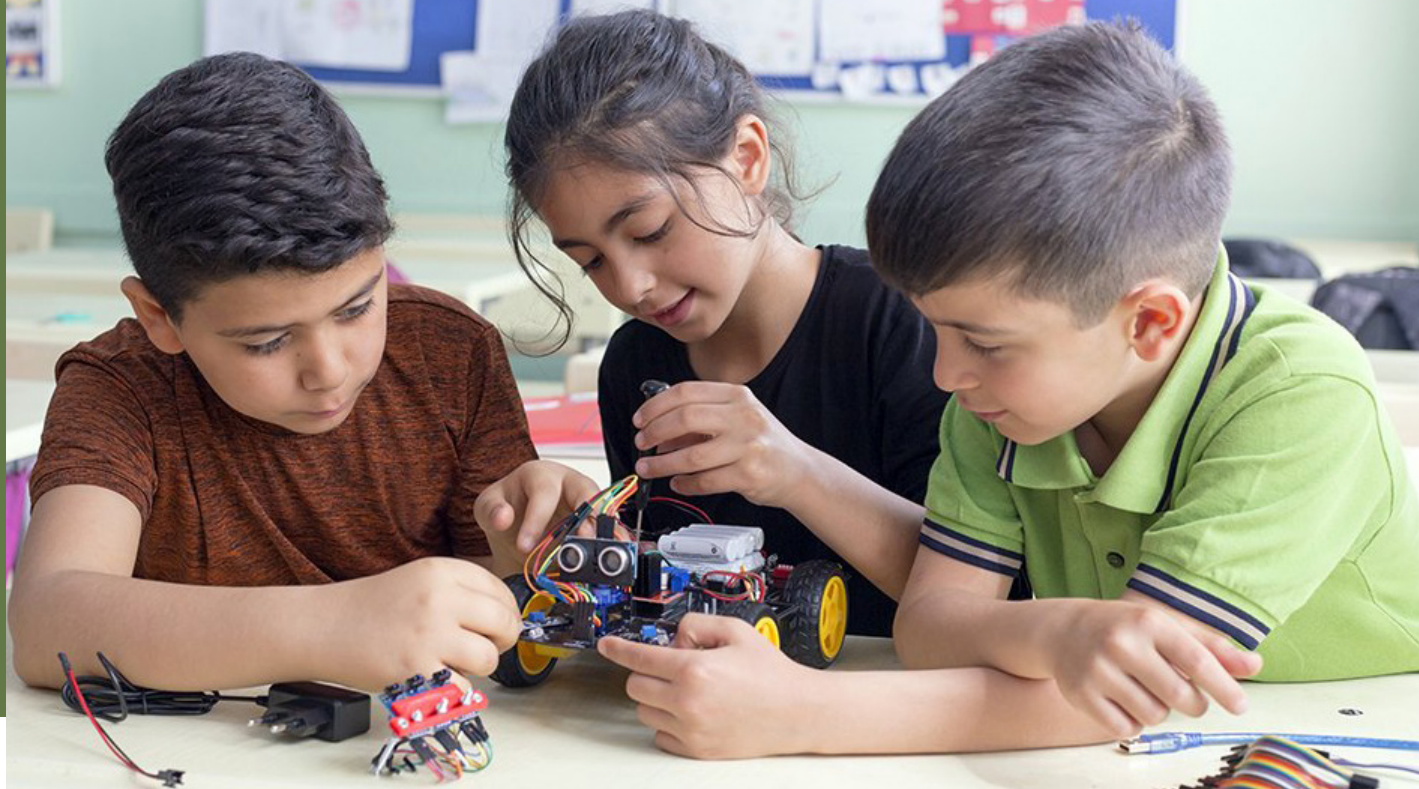
My enthusiasm sparks their curiosity, and the process challenges them to break down complex ideas, think critically, and tell stories that make learning stick. Bringing personal passions into the classroom transforms STEM learning. Whether it's incorporating gaming, music, or storytelling, when teachers share what excites them, students

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To Increase Student Engagement,
Focus on Motivation

29 Strategies to Increase Student
Engagement

Focus on Student Engagement for
Better Academic Outcomes



Unlocking Potential: The Transformative Power of STEM Integration in Elementary Education

by Shelly A Munoz

In today's ever-evolving world, educators face the challenge of preparing students for the complexities of tomorrow. As we navigate through an era defined by rapid technological advancement and global interconnectedness, the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education has become increasingly evident. STEM skills are not only crucial for success in the workforce but also for fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and innovation in everyday life. As we navigate through complex global challenges and innovations, cultivating a strong foundation in STEM

from an early age is paramount. One of the most effective approaches to achieving this lies in the integration of STEM principles across all subjects, particularly in elementary education.

Children are born with an innate sense of curiosity, awe, and wonder about the world around them. From the moment they enter the world, they are eager to explore, experiment, and discover. This natural inclination towards exploration and inquiry provides a perfect opportunity to foster STEM engagement from an early age. By tapping into children's innate curiosity and providing

them with opportunities to explore STEM concepts in a hands-on, experiential manner, educators can ignite a lifelong love of learning and discovery.

From observing the stars in the night sky to marveling at the intricacies of a spider's web, every moment presents a chance to cultivate children's curiosity and inspire them to ask questions, seek answers, and make sense of the world through a STEM lens. By nurturing children's natural curiosity and sense of wonder, educators can lay the foundation for a lifetime of STEM engagement and exploration.



One approach that has gained traction in recent years is the integration of STEM principles across all subjects, particularly in elementary education. By breaking down traditional disciplinary boundaries and weaving together concepts from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics with other subjects such as English language arts, history, and the arts, educators create rich learning experiences that engage students on multiple levels.

STEM integration involves interlacing STEM concepts seamlessly into various disciplines, breaking down traditional subject silos and fostering interdisciplinary connections. This approach not only enriches students' learning experiences but also cultivates crucial skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration, which are essential for success in the 21st-century workforce.

Transdisciplinary education, endorsed by the Department of Education, redefines traditional learning paradigms by transcending disciplinary boundaries. It champions an approach that integrates knowledge, skills, and perspectives from various fields to address complex, real-world challenges. In this framework, students are encouraged to collaborate, think critically, and unleash their creativity as they navigate multifaceted topics that span multiple disciplines. Rather than compartmentalizing



engineering design principles, and mathematical reasoning into everyday learning activities, educators empower students to see the relevance and interconnectedness of STEM in their lives.

Whether analyzing historical events through a scientific lens, designing multimedia presentations that incorporate mathematical models, or using technology to research and communicate findings, students engage in authentic, meaningful learning that prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of the future. Moreover, STEM integration fosters a culture of creativity and innovation by encouraging students to approach problems

knowledge into distinct subjects, transdisciplinary education fosters interdisciplinary connections that mirror the interconnected nature of our world. By embracing transdisciplinary approaches, educators equip students with the essential skills and insights needed to thrive in the 21st century—a world that prizes adaptability, problem-solving, and collaboration across diverse domains.

Moreover, this approach nurtures a broader perspective and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of knowledge, empowering students to navigate an ever-evolving global landscape with confidence and agility.

At the heart of STEM integration lies the recognition that real-world contexts provide the most powerful learning experiences. By embedding scientific inquiry, technological tools,



from multiple perspectives and to draw upon diverse skill sets to find solutions.

Through hands-on projects, inquiry-based investigations, and collaborative activities, students develop the confidence to take risks, the resilience to persevere in the face of challenges, and the adaptability to iterate and refine their ideas—all essential attributes of successful innovators and problem solvers.

By embracing a holistic approach to education that values creativity, innovation, and inclusivity, we can empower all students to reach their full potential. Some ways that this can be achieved include:

- **Hands-On Learning Opportunities:** STEM integration often involves providing students with hands-on, experiential learning opportunities. These can include activities such as conducting science experiments, building engineering projects, coding and programming exercises, and using technology tools for research and presentation.

These hands-on experiences not only deepen students' understanding of STEM concepts but also foster a sense of curiosity and excitement about learning.

- **Cross-Curricular Connections:** In

addition to integrating STEM principles into core subjects like math and science, educators can also explore connections with other disciplines such as language arts, social studies, and the arts. These cross-curricular connections help students see the relevance of STEM in various aspects of their lives and the world around them.



- **Problem-Based Learning:** STEM integration often involves using a problem-based learning approach, where students are presented with real-world problems or challenges to solve using STEM principles. Problem-based learning encourages critical thinking, collaboration, and innovation.

- **Teacher Professional Development:** Effective STEM integration requires ongoing professional development

and support for teachers. By investing in teacher professional development, schools and districts can ensure that educators have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to effectively integrate STEM into their teaching practice.

- **Community Partnerships:** Engaging with the local community can enhance STEM integration efforts by providing students with access to real-world experts, resources, and experiences.

Furthermore, integrating STEM into elementary education not only enhances academic achievement but also has profound implications for addressing longstanding equity and diversity issues in STEM fields. Research shows that elementary students who are immersed in a highly effective STEM program are more likely to continue with that interest throughout their educational journey.

By providing all students, regardless of their background or prior exposure, with equal access to high-quality STEM education, educators can help bridge the gap and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable STEM workforce. This proactive approach not only cultivates a diverse talent pool but also fosters a culture of innovation and creativity, where individuals from all backgrounds can contribute their unique perspectives and talents to tackle complex challenges and drive meaningful change.

In conclusion, STEM integration across all subjects holds immense promise for transforming education and preparing students for the demands of the 21st century. By embracing a holistic approach to education that values creativity, innovation, and inclusivity, we can empower all students to reach their full potential and contribute to a brighter future for themselves and society as a whole.



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English Class is STEM

Integration into your class today and everyday.

by Beverly Clayton

“My class is not a STEM class. I’m an English teacher.”

Well, you are both. You’re a STEM teacher as you are using, expecting and encouraging *STEM skills* with every assignment, lecture and test.

Science is the “systematic accumulation of knowledge” and is absolutely necessary for any term paper, history lesson or learning evaluation. So, here is the “S” in STEM. The use of Google, on-line libraries, computer and software use, all of which are a daily part of your class and homework assignments is obviously the “T” for technology. They are only “users” of the technology rather than innovators, but still attached to the “T”.

“E” for engineering is the use of the engineering method (a decision making process) that make a term paper or other writing assignment impossible to accomplish without. Simple decisions about how to organize and prioritize content is a perfect example of that method. We use it 10 times a day if not more, and English class is not exception.

Math, the “M” of STEM is also used to a lesser degree perhaps, but used non the less. From a simple “word count” calculation, which happens to tie in closely to the engineering method of decisions, to statistics, dates, time spans and more, some level of basic math is included.

Here we have shown how STEM skills are a regular part of the typical English class. It’s important for the English teacher and student to be aware of this.



This “connection” and awareness is a primary objective of STEM Magazine.

“But why is this important?”

Students NEED to see the practical connection between what is being taught and why they need to learn that information. Name one career that does not require some form of written communication daily, either from filling out forms or sending E-mails to clients or preparing written presentations to acquire new customers or clients.

The skill set needed is not just creative writing, but the *complete set* of STEM skills and more importantly, the knowledge that they are using them.

Aside from your curriculum, this too is your responsibility to adequately prepare your student to enter the work force.

Here is your “Verbal Integration” opportunity and it only takes about *30 seconds*.

- Bring to the attention of your students that they are using a type of **science** to do their assignment (*the systematic accumulation of knowledge*).

Now they begin to make a conscience connection between the assignment and the “S” in STEM. The journey begins. If you have another 30 seconds, ask someone to name any job that requires writing something regularly.

This simple and “non-curriculum” type of integration and awareness has value far beyond our understanding, both for the educator, student and parent.

You may have other ideas about how to make these connections in your class, and it remains our responsibility as educators to prepare our students goes well beyond our specific subject field. This type of easy integration is not be a burden, but rather an easy opportunity. This can be fun and will certainly improve the performance of students as they make these important connections early in their scholastic development.





Making Careers Real **Through Virtual Reality**

Junior High students in the heartland learn medical careers are within reach

By Colleen Reynolds

Media Relations Coordinator / OSF HealthCare

Payton Glinkski watches TV medical shows with her mom, but she never thought about a career in medicine because she doesn't like, as she puts it, "blood and guts." But, with a virtual reality (VR) controller and headset she learned not every job in health care has a potentially gory element.

"I just knew there were nurses, doctors, dentists and social workers but it kind of went into more depth into every part of what a doctor does or (what) everyone in a hospital does ... all the workers."

A two-year collaboration between OSF HealthCare, LaSalle County government, and the Regional Office of Education District 35 in North Central Illinois included design, equipment installation and training, led by OSF STEAM, under the umbrella of OSF Innovation.

Healthcare Careers 360, a web-based application, and the Enduvo VR Career Explorer remove barriers and allow middle school students to explore a wide variety of health care careers.

OSF I-80 Innovation Hub Director Zack Vankeulen of OSF HealthCare explains the web-based app and VR offers immersive learning in health care settings that would otherwise be off-limits to students due to federal privacy and safety regulations.

“An observer isn’t allowed in the emergency room or in the operating room (OR) so they can’t learn about those careers as well as some of the other areas (outside of health care) that they have access to. So, by creating this virtual reality environment the students are immersed right in the middle of an OR during a surgical case and they’re able to do as close to hands-on experiences they can without actually being in the room.”

Gamified learning

While some students used the VR headsets and worked in such careers as surgery technician, dental assistant, or an emergency medical technician, other students worked on computers playing games to identify and learn about items in medical settings. For example, Brooklyn Verda showed how she found a pressure washer in a bio-medical engineering lab. Kids also had to find a bonus ‘lucky pickle’ and then watched videos about the environment and career they were exploring.

Verda liked the gamified learning and didn’t find it too challenging. “I didn’t really have any difficulties. It was pretty fun and easy to do. But other than that,



it was really cool.” Vankeulen says OSF targeted careers that are hard to fill in rural communities such as Earlville, Mendota and Ottawa.

“So, we focused on those, mainly, as well as the large volume careers such as nursing and dental hygiene, which you wouldn’t think traditionally is an OSF career, but we recognize the need and included that as well.”

The collaboration for STEAM programming picked up steam when state lawmakers enacted Illinois PaCE, which requires school districts prepare students in grades 6-12 for a career or technical education pathway by introducing them to opportunities for a wide variety of high-skill, high-wage or in-demand career fields. It also requires high schools to implement College and Career Pathway Endorsements or opt out of implementation by July of this year.

ROE 35 Superintendent Chris Dvorak says he would love to continue the collaboration and possibly expand the career opportunities included in the programs. Additionally Dvorak says, “The ROE will hold future professional development opportunities that will allow teachers to share thoughts, ideas, and successes as we continue to support STEAM implementation.”

Earlville Junior High Principal Jenette Fruit has a philosophy that small schools can do big things and collaboration is key. Even if the technology brings a new challenge, Fruit says, students readily embrace it.

“And they will figure it out and they like being able to explain what they did to solve the problem. And I think that comes with this too. I didn’t know about the boundaries. I didn’t know about the different things with the VR and they’re like, ‘No Mrs. Fruit. This is what you have to do, and this is why.’ And kids just like to know how to solve stuff. We just have to put it in their hands.”

The ‘boundaries’ she references are the areas within the sterile environment in an operating room. Those are the kinds of concepts students are learning as they experience surgical procedures, patient interactions and medical decision-making in a simulated environment that mirrors a real hospital and clinical setting. Science teacher Kristen Sweeney says for a small, rural school district it’s rare that students would have exposure to using VR headsets.



“To be able to work with equipment like this, that they just aren’t going to be able to because they just can’t afford these types of systems, so it’s so valuable to be able to have that in the school system for them.”

Next steps

OSF STEAM builds programs to help students see how their skills and interests align with potential careers, encouraging them to pursue further education and training. In fact, Sweeney says the next steps for students include using another OSF STEAM-designed web-based app called [healthcareers.guide](#). It will allow them to explore more deeply one health career including such things as duties during a typical day and of course, salary.

“They always want to know how much they’re going to make so we’ll be looking at what the average pay is for those positions, and we’ll actually have them create a resume and a cover letter as if they were sending it off to OSF.” And that’s what it’s all about. Getting the next generation ready to fill the significant shortage of health care positions, not only physicians, nurses and vital staff, but the many important support roles.

Without a strong pipeline, patient care and access to quality medical services

could be in jeopardy, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Key Takeaways:

- OSF STEAM has designed game-based web applications and virtual reality programs for middle school students to explore health careers
- The programs are helping schools in LaSalle, Marshall and Putnam counties in Illinois meet new state requirements for career preparation
- Students at Earlville Junior High say experiencing the OSF STEAM-designed lessons helped them think about health careers they didn’t know existed

Schools interested in partnering with OSF for STEAM programming, can contact events@jumpsimulation.org



Professional Etiquette Is *Still* Important

by JJ DiGeronimo



JJ DiGeronimo

President of Tech Savvy Women, author of “Accelerate Your Impact” and “The Working Woman’s GPS” to retain, develop and advance diverse talent in STEM- based organizations.

In this tech-driven world, we often find ourselves using shorthand speak in an effort to speed up projects, objectives and business experiences. However, there are some old school traditions that simply can’t be forgotten; professional etiquette should be at the top of the list and both school, home and work.

Professional Etiquette – A Sign of Respect

Whether you are meeting for the first time or not, utilizing a little etiquette is a great way of showing respect:

- Arrive on time
- Offer your hand for a firm handshake
- Make eye contact
- Use your full name
- Introduce those that might be with you
- Be polite

Etiquette can be demonstrated in person, over the phone or within your email messages.

Phone Etiquette

There are several ways that you can show respect to the other person on the phone. It may sound silly, but putting a smile on your face when you speak on the phone really does make a difference in the tone of your voice.

Always be aware of the other person's time and schedule. Make sure you ask if this is a good time to talk and if not, offer up options for a follow-up call.

Speak clearly. If you are a fast talker, be aware that it may be difficult to follow your conversation so take time to slow your cadence. Using mobile phones can offer up additional challenges, be aware of your cell reception, background sounds, and other distractions.

Email Etiquette

Email offers its own unique challenges when it comes to Professional Etiquette. We've all been part of the never-ending email chain that includes way more people than are really necessary and the dreaded "reply all."

There are actually times when reply all is necessary but first, make sure that



the right people are included in the message. Use a clear subject line and keep the body of your email to one topic. Many people file and sort their messages by project, department or person and if you include multiple topics in one email, this becomes a challenge.

Also, if the opportunity to speak in person is an option, consider walking down the hall or picking up the phone so that you can engage in a conversation. How many times have you received an email from the person in the next office when they could have easily just knocked on your door?

Professional Etiquette When Seeking a Mentor/Sponsor

There is a special level of importance to your professional etiquette when seeking a mentor or a sponsor to help you advance in your career.

Like most strategic activities, aligning with sponsors takes a plan, awareness, and courtesy. These exchanges and high-value alignments can help catapult your career or business to new levels of impact. With this, professional etiquette still applies. I recommend the same professional politeness you would have for executives with a focus on consideration for their time, awareness of competing activities, and acknowledgment that it takes personal preparation.

Even though there are many professionals with social capital, not everyone wants or can be your sponsor, so be ready for some rejections too. Accept rejections with grace.

It is nice to know that in this fast-paced, ever-changing world, basics like chivalry, ethics, respect, politeness and etiquette are still important in our lives.



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Start with the Microsoft Azure AI Fundamentals courses where you'll learn the foundation of modern artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML). This will enable you to recognize common applications of AI and identify the available AI services in Microsoft Azure.

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Ask About Bridge Builders Scholarship: TAG Bridge Builders and SkillStorm are committed to promoting equity and diversity in the workforce. Apply for a scholarship tailored to serve minorities in Georgia who are looking to advance their tech careers.

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AI Skills: The New Currency in Today's Job Market

The AI revolution is here. Ever since ChatGPT arrived on the scene in late 2022, artificial intelligence has been reshaping the way we live and work. What does that mean for tech professionals looking to compete in a changing labor market?

TV pundits and talking heads love to get riled up about whether robots are coming for our jobs — but the truth is that AI will probably create more jobs than it eliminates. And one thing's for sure: understanding how AI works, and mastering AI skills, will be the key to success in tomorrow's ever-changing world of work.

New research shows that a growing number of companies are asking for AI skills in job descriptions — including non-tech roles. And a survey of HR professionals released last month shows that job candidates with AI skills ask for more money during the interview process — and tend to get it once they're hired. Simply put, AI is going to be underpinning nearly every job out there. That's why staying ahead of the latest in AI development is so important.

Building AI skills doesn't just mean learning how to engineer prompts for ChatGPT. It's everything from programming to data modeling and analysis to mastering concepts like machine learning and natural language processing. And if there's anything certain in our fast-paced economy, it's that building AI fundamentals today will translate to career opportunities tomorrow and beyond.

That's where SkillStorm comes in. In partnership with TAG, we offer Microsoft Azure AI courses that are instructor-led, career-aligned tech certification courses and will help you build the AI skills that employers need. From the basics of AI and machine learning to a comprehensive understanding of how to design, deploy, and maintain AI solutions, you'll learn everything you need to accelerate a career in the economy's hottest fields.

It won't be long before all kinds of jobs, all across the economy, require AI skills. And starting now is the best way to accelerate your ascent up the career ladder. Build those skills today and you'll lay the foundation for opportunity for years to come — and set yourself up for success in an AI-driven future of work. [Register today](#) to get started with a career in tech.



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