

Case Study 2: Animating 'Found Objects'

A Norwich Middle School, Norfolk

Key Stage 2

The Cineliteracy Day

This was the second cineliteracy day led by Hannah Giffard of Red Fox Productions. During the first section of the morning Hannah showed the pupils the stages of writing a Pablo story in book form. She also showed the changes made to rough sketches, so that pupils could see the editorial processes involved. She presented some of the original artwork and sketches from her portfolio which were used to make the Red Fox books. She then explained the different processes involved in producing an animated story for television.

After break, pupils were introduced to other styles of animation, such as 3D and pixillation. They watched a variety of different films to learn about the techniques, and different ways to tell a story. Hannah discussed storyboard techniques and story structure. Pupils were encouraged to use long shots, middle shots and close ups in their own storyboarding, and shown ways to create humour or surprise. They also discussed the use of props in their animation such as a milk bottle or a carrot and how movement can be achieved.

The pupils were given time to try flick books and zoetropes and were given a short demonstration on how to animate objects, using Cinecap capturing software, a laptop, camera and whiteboard.



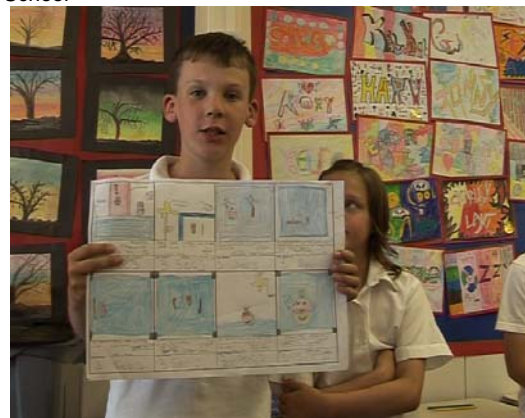
Cineliteracy day at Woodland View with Red Fox Productions



Storyboarding 'Healthy Times' at Woodland View Middle School



Pupils engaging by asking questions



Pupils presenting and evaluating their work

The Animation Assignment

The class worked in teams to devise short stories to encourage a healthy eating lifestyle. The class were given two days to shoot their sequences, edit and add sound. Day 1 was a very active and busy production day where six groups of four worked in teams. Six animation rostrums were set up across two classrooms.



Pupils used real objects and changed them into characters.



Thinking creatively, pupils attached faces to their coconut characters

Findings

Animation was introduced to the school in the previous year, and some of the same students made model animations on the theme of Nelson's life. Overall both projects had a strong impact on the school, and it now offers an animation club to all pupils.

The experience of making an earlier animation had clearly enhanced pupils' presentation and communication skills. They talked about their ideas to camera with ease, and adopted film language when explaining their storyboards. Shot types became part of their vocabulary. Additionally pupils understood when to apply particular techniques to achieve something special, e.g. use a close up of the apple, moving through 180 degrees to celebrate his win over the chocolate bar.



Pupils explain their storyboard to the camera



Pupils learn and use film grammar

Quotes from the class teacher's evaluation:

How can you include animation in your curriculum?

Animation is probably best incorporated as a support to current practice. This could take place in lesson time or as an additional 'club'. We have found that blocking animation helps with acquiring skills and maintaining impetus on the project. Ideally the whole class would be involved (as in the recent projects with Britta). However cost/time implications limit this. Ways round this include rolling lunch time clubs or teaching assistant sessions for those involved – input would still be given as a whole class, but for the filming/editing smaller groups would be essential.

I currently use cameras (still and video) and Digital Blue in lessons for input and plenary purposes. Animation could be used to enhance art projects such as 'Talking Tapestries' studied in Year 5 – children create a Bayeux Tapestry style storyboard of a St Lucian myth. I can see opportunities across all curriculum areas.

Animation could either replace or enhance current practice as appropriate.

What areas of animation do you think are useful for literacy?

Animation can be used for a variety of uses. From storyboarding to bringing to life children's stories from Creative Writing sessions, from plenary style clips for grammar to assessment.

What areas of animation do you think are useful for learning?

Obviously the acquirement of new IT skills is great, but for me the interaction in groups was really powerful. Children were given the opportunity to see the animation process through to the end and whilst gaining new skills were 'forced' to work co-operatively with members of the class they might not have worked with. The way the inclusion of animation motivated children to learn was the most important for me. Children who had previously sat back, came to the fore and relished the new challenge.