

Case Study 7 Exploring The Tempest using Animation

Secondary School Norfolk

Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

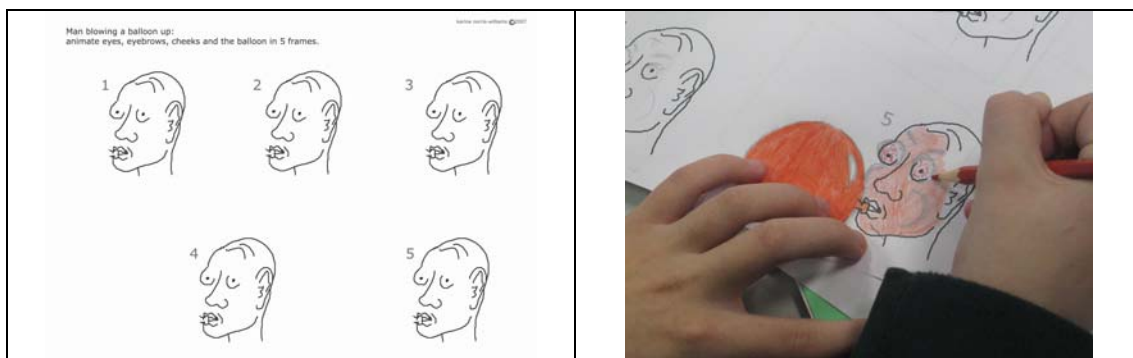
Cineliteracy Day

The aims of the day were to

- learn about drawn animation through simple exercises
- learn the basics of film language
- storyboard a short sequence from The Tempest by William Shakespeare
- film a few selected shots, based on the storyboards

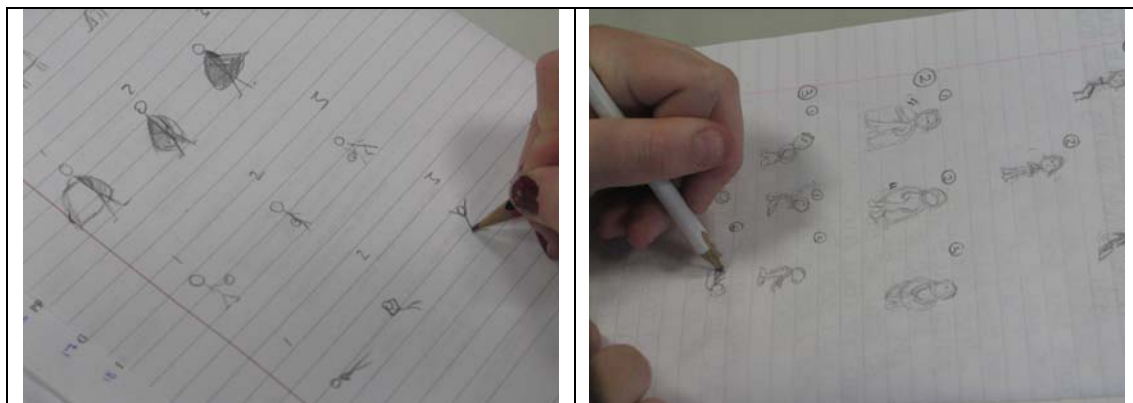
The practitioner started the day by demonstrating the tools and methods of traditional drawn animation. She showed the class a peg bar and light box, and how to register drawings. Through examples, she demonstrated tracing in between drawings and checking movement through a number of drawings. She then showed how to capture drawings to a computer using a rostrum.

Exercise: Blowing a balloon



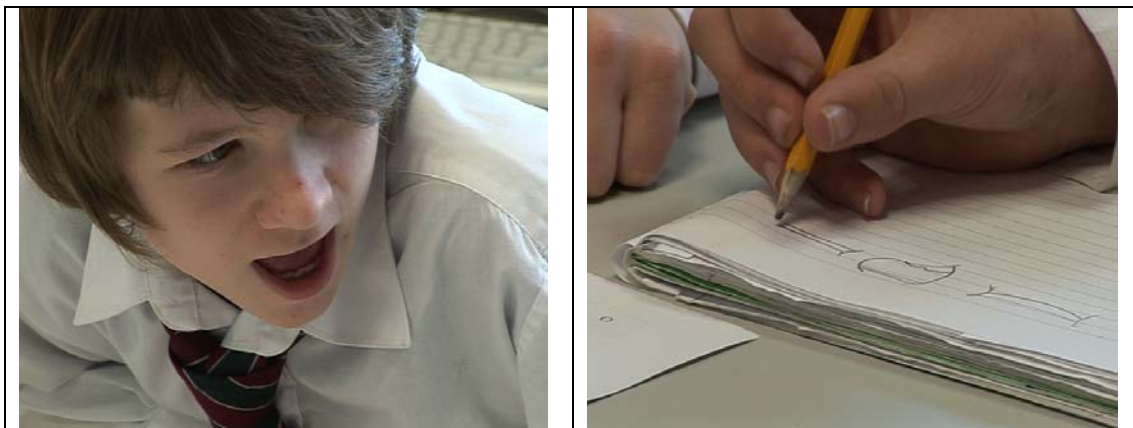
Each pupil was given a photocopied template with five heads and asked to draw a balloon being blown up. It was suggested they draw frame 1 first, then frame 5 to show the two extremes, then frame 3, then 2 and 4. The exercise proved a simple way to develop a sense of smooth development from frame to frame. Most of the class found this quite easy to master. Each student then cut out and stuck each frame to the corner of a page in their notebooks, to convert the images into a flipbook. This way they could assess how well each sequence worked.

Exercise: Key framing a gesture from life



Pupils were invited to the front of the class to demonstrate simple body movements such as sitting down or bowling a ball. Each student was given 5 sheets of paper and a peg bar and asked to draw stick men to analyse one of the movements. Again each person first drew the extremes, then the third position, then the inbetweens. Many used notebooks to practice drawing first. Some of the more successful examples were then captured and played back on the whiteboard.

Exercise: Key framing speech

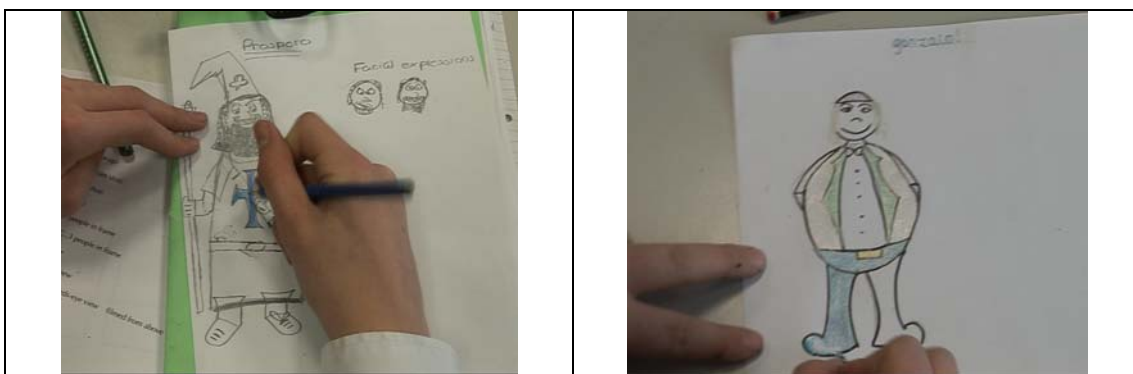


Working in pairs, the students then faced each other, and spoke each other's names. Each partner then closely observed the facial movement, drew the key frames, then inbetweens of the mouth forming the word. To assist, each student was given a handout with drawings of all the main phonemes, and mouth shapes.

Exercise: Character development

The students were then asked to summarise the narrative of the study section of *The Tempest* they had been assigned. The class identified the key characters involved, then allocated one to each of 6 groups of four. Each group then produced character sheets for their selected character, creating coloured face-on drawings of the full body and two close ups of facial expressions.

The class then voted on all the character sheets, so that the best versions could then be transferred to the storyboards they were about to draw.



Exercise: Storyboarding a short section of the text

The class was then asked to divide the study text into six sections, so each section could be visualised as a scene of animation. The sections were then allocated to the six groups. Each group was given a storyboard template comprising six frames. Their task was to visualise their allocated sequence, using at least one close-up, medium and wide shot. Each sequence was designed to run for 10 – 20 secs.

Once this was complete, each team selected one shot from their sequence to animate, and drew it out in 12 frames.



These tasks proved by far the most challenging of the day, and the students were tiring by this stage of the afternoon. They were faced by the multiple challenges of comprehending Shakespeare's English, assimilating film language, bringing the two together in a visually creative way and analysing movements.

Each group needed intensive one to one support, and some wanted to give up entirely! However, with careful prompting some very worthwhile results were produced. One girl drew Ariel's lightning storm reflected in Prospero's eye and drew it as a short animated sequence.

The teacher explained that the class would be given much more time in the coming weeks to work on their storyboards. We felt that it was enough to convey the working methods, and produce a few sketchy ideas by the end of the afternoon.

A high level of focus and engagement was maintained throughout the day. We would have preferred to work at a more leisurely pace. However, this was the only day we could spend supporting the project. It was felt important that the students should end the session with enough confidence and knowledge to realise a finished animation without us, over the coming weeks.

The day also proved that animation can be very usefully integrated into the English curriculum at KS 3 and 4. By asking the students to carefully visualise a sequence from the play, they are led towards a fuller comprehension of the nuances of the text, the motives of each character, and the changing moods of the drama.

	
Ariel's storm reflected in Prospero's eye.	Using a light table to analyse movement frame by frame