

LLED 368
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Media Project 2 – Stop Motion Video

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1. For this project, we wanted to challenge ourselves to engage with a different type of visual media representation. Most of us were interested in the idea of a stop motion video, but none of us had ever created one, so it was the perfect choice as it afforded us an opportunity to try and learn something new. We enjoyed working with Beowulf for our first media project, but we decided to tackle something new and (maybe more?) exciting for our second media project. Four out of the five of us had an English Language background, so naturally, we wanted to look at language from a more technical perspective. We were drawn to the function of phrasal verbs, and we immediately thought of the affix *up*. Immediately, we started brainstorming a list of phrasal verbs that incorporated the word *up* and we decided to create a stop motion video that would demonstrate the many uses of *up*, both literal and figurative.

2. Before we begin filming we had to make quite a few decisions. First we had to decide on what the content of our stop-motion picture would be. We decided quite quickly on displaying the many uses of the affix “up.” Then we spent some time drawing out vaguely what we wanted the pictures to look like. We drew some inspiration by looking at stop-motion videos on YouTube. This helped us become immersed in the type of media we would be using and to get an idea of what kinds of things are possible with stop-motion pictures.

Once we figured out what would be in the movie, we had to make some more complicated choices: how were we going to take the pictures? Where would we take pictures? What props would we use in our video? The answers to these questions were worked out in several ways. At first, we thought we would use a tripod for taking pictures, but we had the opportunity to talk with Ernesto and he suggested that if we are designing a project for high school students we should avoid any equipment that high school students might not have easy access to. We agreed with this idea and so we looked around for things that were the right height for filming, which ended up being our friend Sophie’s water bottle. Finally, we decided that when we met up for filming, we would all bring whatever materials we thought would be interesting in the video. Cristina followed through and after looking at all the materials she brought, we created a new storyboard. The rest of the details of the project we worked out as we went. This project involved a lot of collaborations and a lot of tiny movements.

3. Before filming the project, we had some idea of what roles we should take during the process of making the film. During the process, our roles became clearer as all of us took responsibility and focused on the areas we were working

on. We roughly organised the roles as follows: Christina as the director of project, Cristina as the producer, Dayonne as the photographer, Sarah as the assistant, and Melanie as the backstage progress photographer – though we also made sure that everyone was involved in some way in all the creative and technical aspects of the video creation.

We definitely used the project working time given in class for our planning and we spread out the actual filming over two days when we knew we all had plenty of time after class to work. We took one afternoon to edit the project, and then a second afternoon to re-edit when we encountered some technical difficulties. We learned a lot about teamwork and creative problem-solving that day!

4. Our experience with this project led us to decide that assessment for a similar assignment in a high school class would need to focus on the process and collaboration aspects, along with the final product. For a major project such as this, the first thing we would want to incorporate into the assessment would be time management and planning. Creating a video is a time-consuming project and having a clear plan definitely makes things easier. This is one of the lessons that we would hope our students would learn and the assessment would cover this - in whatever format was available to us (depending on school and/or district guidelines). If possible we would have groups complete a planning sheet for their project, which would be part of the assessment.

The next important part of the assessment would be group work and collaboration. A project of this type would probably not work very well with a class that wasn't already familiar with the basics of working in groups. That being said, we would want to keep some accountability for individual contributions to the overall project. A self-assessment and an opportunity for peer review similar to those used with our first media project would cover these areas.

In addition, we would want to evaluate the final video with emphasis on techniques used and the relevance of the content to the subject (whether it is assigned or chosen by the students). Depending on the context of the assignment, there may be an analysis portion of the rubric which would be used to assess the critical thinking skills that the students made use of when creating the video content.

Finally, we also discussed whether or not this is the kind of assignment in which a minimum length requirement would be appropriate. Though we don't want to inhibit the students from both exploring the video techniques and creating meaningful content, it may be necessary to insist that students create videos of a certain length. We felt like two to three minutes was a good minimum for us!

5. The greatest challenge of using this approach in the classroom would most likely be the amount of time that needs to go into the project. Just getting a

general grasp of what stop motion animation is and how to approach it takes time in itself. While some students may have done stop motion animation before, those who have not would need to spend time learning to use the equipment (camera, tripod, iMovie), as well as the techniques needed to create stop motion. In order to have a piece that has some continuity students would need to be somewhere with the same lighting each day. Because of all these factors it would be important that students are given plenty of time to work on their project, perhaps throughout an entire unit. We also discussed that stop motion should perhaps be given as an option for a media project but not mandatory, as it may not be enjoyable for all students. The students who choose to do stop motion animation should have access to resources such as the internet in order to assist them in finding useful techniques. Finally, students should be made aware that advanced stop motion animation is most successful when done in partners or in small groups. There should be at least two people as it is easiest to have one person taking the pictures while another person changes the scenes. Students must also take the time to carefully storyboard their plans in order to be prepared to create and edit the stop motion.

While a project such as stop motion animation might seem challenging and time consuming it is most definitely a worthwhile learning experience. Students learn the importance of planning and storyboarding their ideas before jumping ahead. During the creation of stop animation students are able to work collaboratively to make their storyboard come alive with patience and constant organization. Lastly students will learn from working together in order to edit their stop motion animation to create the final project. Overall, while challenging, this is a useful media project that could easily be adapted to fit into any classroom and subject area.

Sample Rubric – Video Project

Categories/Criteria	1	2	3	4
<i>Planning/Time Management</i>	-demonstrates limited preparation and planning -planning sheet not completed, work seems rushed	-demonstrates moderate preparation and planning -planning sheet was partially completed and followed minimally	-demonstrates considerable preparation and planning -planning sheet was completed and somewhat followed	-demonstrates extensive preparation and planning -planning sheet completed (with realistic goals) and followed, showing a good use of time
<i>Video Techniques</i>	-uses few audio-visual elements to enhance video	-uses some simple audio-visual elements to enhance video	-uses a variety audio-visual elements to enhance video	-uses creative/innovative audio-visual elements to enhance video

<i>Video Content</i>	-demonstrates limited understanding of topic	-demonstrates some understanding of topic	-demonstrates considerable understanding of topic	-demonstrates thorough understanding of topic
<i>Analysis, Interpretation</i>	-analyzes and interprets information with limited effectiveness	-analyzes and interprets information with some effectiveness	-analyzes and interprets information with considerable effectiveness	-analyzes and interprets information with a high degree of effectiveness

Sample Planning Sheet

Activity/Part of Project	Materials Needed	Estimated Completion Date	Other Notes	Check when completed