

The Orange County Animation Project: Mentoring from the Real World

There are many variations for setting up and purchasing technology for having students create animation. Budget plays a big part in determining the setup of your classroom animation studio. For those willing to creatively put together their own systems using digital still or video cameras and basic software, getting a basic setup can be done fairly cheaply. Ready made systems like the Lunch Box make it much easier to capture each drawn frame and output to an animation, but cost more money. For 3-D animation computers are needed, as is software that will allow students to create and render animation.

2D Animation

Animation Pencil Test System

(for capturing sequenced, still frames and converting them to animation)

Recommended Product

Animation Lunch Box Sync
Color Kit, with Copy Stand and
Pinnacle Studio Movie Box DV
Approx. \$5,800.00

Vendor: Animation Tool Works
Phone (877) 625-6438
e-mail: Info@animationtoolworks.com
<http://www.animationtoolworks.com>

The Lunchbox Sync is a frame-grabber capable of recording individual frames or full motion video, and playing them back, full screen, at a user selectable 24 or 30 frames per second. It can also display frames sequentially. The Lunchbox Sync also records sound and plays it back with the video. It also can do audio "scrubbing" as you step through frames sequentially. The hallmarks of the Lunchbox Sync are its ease-of-use and instantaneous viewing capability.

Macromedia Flash is also used by some high schools.

Budget Solution

For a cheaper solution that will take a little more setup work and training for the students, there are basic software that will take a series of frames and create an animation. With these you can use existing technology like digital still and video cameras, as well as scanners to capture each frame of the animation. Purchasing a copy stand with lights will greatly enhance the quality of the animations.

Monkey Jams (PC): <http://www.giantscreamingrobotmonkeys.com/monkeyjam/index.html>

Frame Thief (Mac): <http://www.framethief.com/>

Animator DV (PC): <http://animatordv.wmmedia.com/>

Pencil Test (Mac): <http://www.slashjpl.com/html/software/penciltest/html/index.html>

2-D Supplies

Plastic Peg Bars - \$3.00 Each

Used to hold your animation paper in the same place while drawing, flipping and filming.

Animation Cell and Paper Punch - \$500.00

Used to punch your animation paper so that it can be used with the plastic peg bars

Plexi Light Box-Single Bar - \$85.00

Used to place animation paper on so that the artist can see through to the next piece of paper. Used for drawing, flipping and animation. These light boxes are portable.

Clay animation and paper cut-out animation supplies can be purchased at many art or craft supply stores. Tech4Learning sells a Clay Animation kit (<http://www.tech4learning.com/claykit/index.html>)

3D Computer Animation

There are various 2D and 3D computer animation software packages available. Most colleges use Maya software. Most high schools use 3d Studio Max, Softimage, Cinema 4-D by Maxon (www.maxon.net), or Animation Master (www.hash.com) for the computer animation software and iMovie or Premier to edit the films.

Blender 3d is a free open source digital for creating animation that is similar to 3D Studio Max. You can download from <http://www.blender3d.com>.

Digitizing and Compressing

Software

Sorenson Video 3 or Cleaner 6 are both high-quality video compression software. Compressing video onto your computer allows you to convert it to Quicktime (free download). Quicktime Pro is also useful for compressing in different formats.

Curriculum

The Orange County Animation Project has partnered with ACME Animation for the animation curriculum. ACME provides students with a series of challenges that teach students the principles of animation. ACME has also developed a system in which students can share their animations in an online environment that allows for feedback from peers and professionals. They also make connections directly to professional animators through two-way videoconferencing. More information and examples of the challenges can be found at <http://www.acmeanimation.org>. Contact dbrooks@theacmenetwork.org about adding ACME to your curriculum

Recommended Books:

Exploring Drawing for Animation by Stephen Missal

The Animator's Workbook by Tony White

The Animator's Survival Kit by Richard Williams

All available through Amazon.com

Resources

Orange County Animation Project
animation.ocde.us

The ACME Network
www.acmenetwork.org

Animation World Network
www.awn.com