

Stop Motion

Stop motion animation is a fantastic medium for activating creativity and storytelling in young minds as it allows for any conceivable story to be convincingly brought to life. The process involves drawing and artistry in a way that film does not, but still has the peripheral benefits of stage based progression through scripting, storyboarding, and final production. Groups are best suited to undertake production considering the varied roles demanded of creating a stop motion animated piece, but individual efforts can also be highly rewarding. As with live action film, the final piece is an excellent bridge to the home and activates the parents as viewers, ideally sparking further productions outside the school environment.

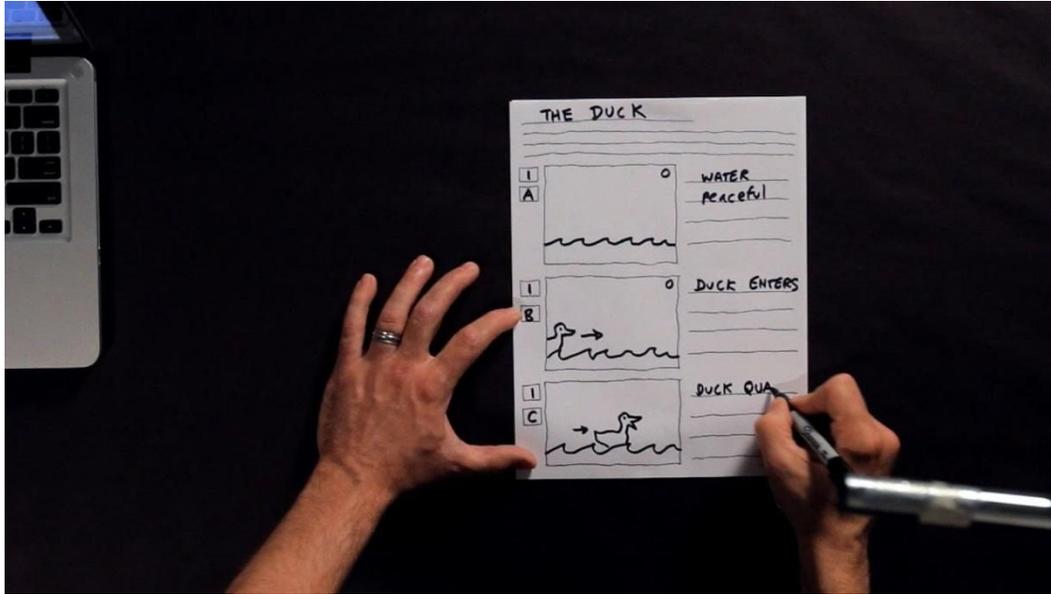
Areas for exploration include sender and receiver roles of mediated messages and content, depiction of sensitive issues in a symbolic manner, and understanding emotional stimuli and response mechanisms. Each of these areas are valid and worthy of exploration in a creativity and student based pedagogic model as they consider the activity as a jumping off point to larger issues and societal concerns.

The materials needed for a class to perform stop motion include modeling dough, several cardboard project sheets and a smartphone or tablet with an animation program such as Stop Motion Studio (available on Google Play and the App Store). Existing plastic models such as atoms, planets or parts of the human body can also be used instead of (or in conjunction with) models made out of dough.

Step 1. Plan/Research/Teach

First, you need to come up with a topic for your stop motion movie. This could be something that either the teacher prepares or the class does with the help of the teacher.

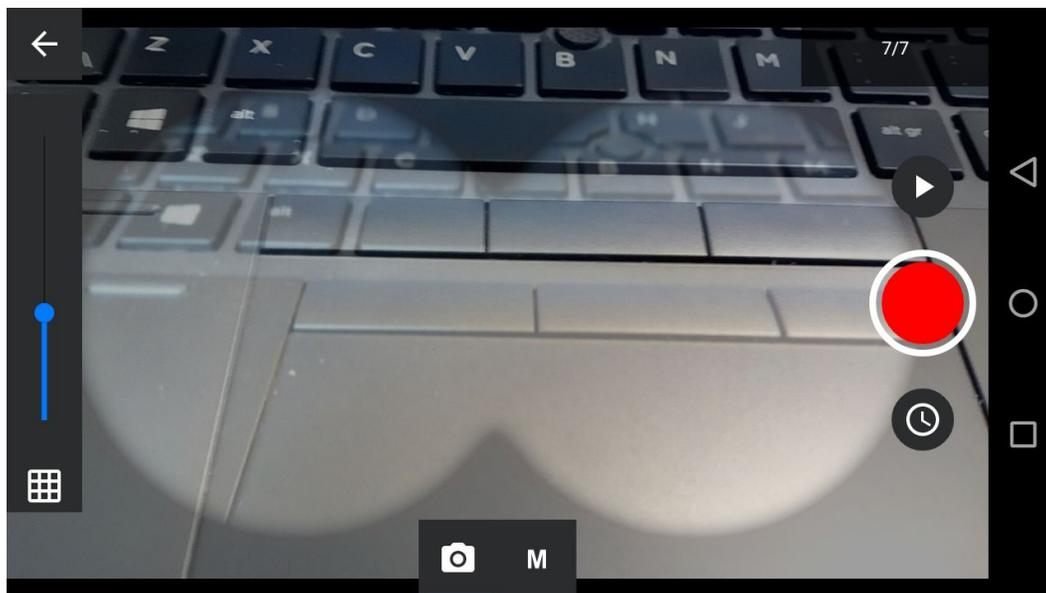
Then, the class should be divided into four to six groups according to the number of episodes or sections that make up the whole concept or topic. Once the episodes are established, allocate specific roles within each group. Roles to be allocated could include story boarder, model maker, scriptwriter, sign maker (for title, end or descriptions for a particular photo), photographer and background designer. Each group needs to draw a storyboard for their scene, consisting 20-40 movements.



At this stage, groups need to decide whether the stop motion is going to be photographs and signs only or a narrated storyline and/or music. The groups also need to decide whether the stop motion is going to be constructed on a blank cardboard sheet or on a rendered sheet that will be part of a background.

Step 2. Photography

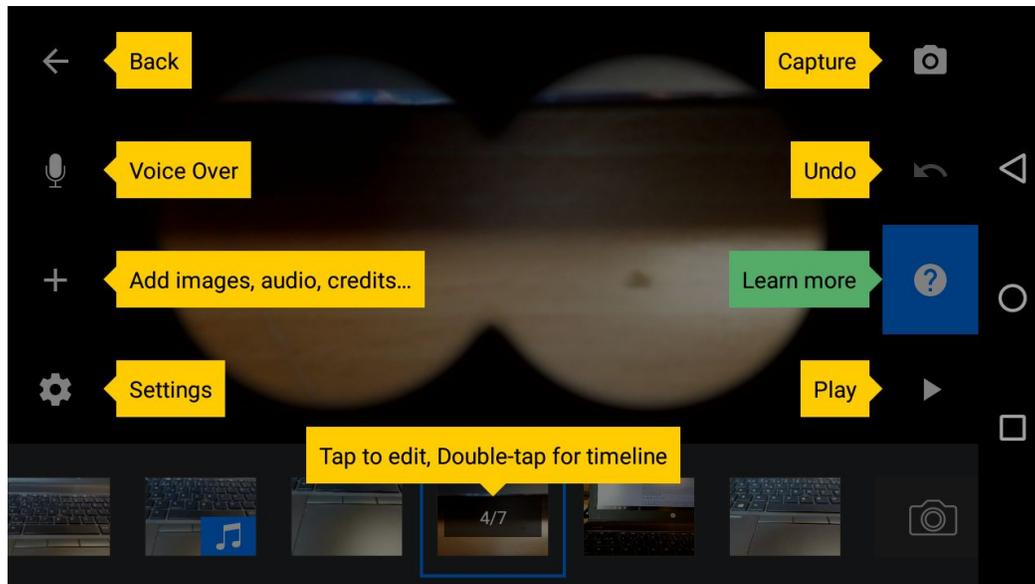
It is best if the models are made on a sheet of project cardboard on the floor. The students make the models and plan to move them in 20-40 small steps. Make sure that you tell the students not to press their models down hard onto the project sheet as they need to be moved easily. Pictures should be taken vertically looking down at the cardboard through the Stop Motion Studio app. A tripod can help with keeping the smartphone or tablet stable.



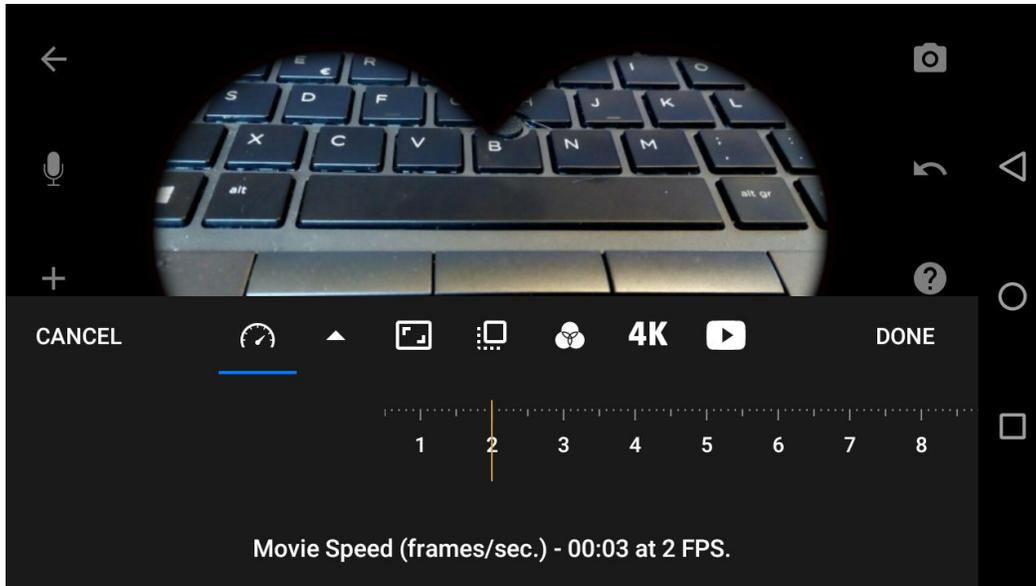
The students make each of the small movements in the model manually and a photograph is taken at each step. The photographer needs to take 20-40 photographs of each episode. It is simpler if the photographs are taken in order of the presentation of the episodes for the whole story.

A handy tool is the slider on the left side of the screen. It adjusts the opacity of the previous shot, which helps students compare it with their current shot and decide how much the character should be moved.

Step 3. Edit



The Stop Motion Studio app allows you to edit and enhance your movie right after taking the pictures. You can select the framerate (1-2 frames per second for a quicker animation, 6-7 for a slower one), you can add filters and also record sound.



Step 4. Export

To export your edit you will have to tap the left arrow in the top left corner and then tap on the share icon. You can choose between exporting it as a movie, as a gif or saving all the images taken with the app separately.

