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Six styles of classroom video projects

The process of creating and publishing videos can be a great way to get students excited about researching, storytelling, and sharing their work with an audience. For teachers who have never facilitated video creation projects in their classrooms, choosing the right style of video and the right tools can be a bit confusing at first. To help bring clarity to the styles and tools, I have a rather simple outline that I use in my video creation workshops (<http://bitly.com/ftworkshops>).

Project style #1 - One-take videos:

These are videos that are shot using the camera built into a mobile phone or tablet. You might also use the camera in a laptop for these types of videos. The purpose of a one-take video is to quickly record a short observation, to record a short message, or to capture an important moment like students making observations during a science lab. Generally, these videos should be less than sixty seconds.

One-take videos can be uploaded just as they are to YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram (depending on the length of the video), your classroom blog, Google Drive, Dropbox, or any number of online hosting services. If you use the YouTube or Instagram mobile app (available for Android and iOS) you might trim the beginning or end of the video to remove dead space in it or apply a color filter to it, but that will be the extent of the editing that is done before the video is shared.

Project Style #2 - Audio slideshows

These are videos that are built upon a series of still images combined with a soundtrack of either music or spoken words. Summarizing the highlights of an event, summarizing the key points in a story, and summarizing the results of research project are all common purposes for creating audio slideshows. You will also find this style of video used to give step-by-step directions for a process. This style of video is typically less than three minutes long.

Animoto (<http://animoto.com>) was the first tool to popularize creating this style of video. Animoto can be used in a web browser on your laptop or Chromebook. Android and iOS apps are also available from Animoto. To create an audio slideshow through Animoto you simply need to upload ten to fifteen pictures then choose the soundtrack that you want to hear as the images are displayed. Within Animoto there is an extensive gallery of free music that you can use if you don't have music of your own to upload. Animoto does allow you to add some limited text to your slideshow video. A variety of frame and transition themes are offered by Animoto. Some of those themes are free and others are only available to subscribers to Animoto's premium service.

YouTube offers an audio slideshow creation tool. The process of creating a video with YouTube's audio slideshow creation tool is very similar to the process of using Animoto to make a video. You supply the images and YouTube supplies the audio track. You can pick from thousands of audio tracks to match to your slides. After adding your slides and selecting an audio track you can add speech bubbles to your images by using YouTube's annotations tools. A video demonstration of the process of using YouTube's audio slideshow tool can be found here <http://bitly.com/yftslide>

The shortcoming of both Animoto and YouTube's audio slideshow creator is that you have very limited control over the timing of transitions in your video. So if you want to narrate the slideshow rather than just play music you will have to try another tool. On an iPad Shadow Puppet Edu and 30 Hands are good apps to use to create audio slideshows. WeVideo is a good browser-based as well as Android option. (Explain Everything is also a good Android and iPad option, but it is not free). For desktop creation of audio slideshows iMovie and Windows Movie Maker good choices.

Shadow Puppet Edu (<http://bit.ly/shdwft>) is a free iPad app that you can use to create audio slideshow videos. The app offers an integrated search tool for finding pictures from the Library of Congress, to search for images from NASA, and to find Creative Commons licensed images from Flickr. You can also import pictures and videos from the camera roll on your iPad. After selecting a set of images students you can arrange them into any sequence by simply dragging and dropping them into order. Then to create a story press the record button and talk while flipping through your images.

30hands (<http://bit.ly/30handsft>) is a free iPad app that makes it very easy to create a narrated slideshow and or whiteboard video. To create a basic narrated slideshow on 30hands all you need to do is import images from your iPad's camera roll then press the record button below each image to record your narration. If you don't have any pictures on your iPad you can take pictures using the 30hands app. 30hands also allows you to draw images instead of importing pictures. You can combine imported pictures with drawn images in your presentations. And you can draw on top of imported images. When your project is complete you can save it on your iPad or share it with the 30hands community.

Project Style #3 - Whiteboard/ Screencast Instructional Video

This style of video is what you will find on places like Khan Academy. This style is used for explaining and demonstrating how to solve problems, how to use a piece of software, providing a walk-through of a timeline or flowchart, or to simply narrate a set of slides. This style of video is often made by teachers for the purpose of instruction to students. There is value in flipping that model to have students create instructional videos through which they model their knowledge of a process or topic.

Clarisketch (<http://clarisketch.com>) is a free Android app that has great potential for classroom use. The app allows you to take a picture or pull one from your device's camera roll and then add your voice to it. While you are talking about your picture you can draw on it to highlight sections of it. Completed projects are shared as links to the video file hosted on Clarisketch. You can share the link to your Clarisketch video and have it play on nearly any device that has a web browser. Clarisketch is also available as Chrome app (<http://bitly.com/clarisketch>).

PixiClip (<http://pixiclip.com>) is a good option for creating simple instructional videos in your computer's web browser. PixiClip provides a whiteboard space on which you can draw, upload images to mark-up, and type. While adding elements to your PixiClip whiteboard you can talk and or record a video of yourself talking. In fact, you can't use the whiteboard without at least recording your voice at the same time. Recordings can be shared via social media, embedded into blog posts, or you could grab the link and include it on webpage.

ScreenChomp (<http://bit.ly/ftchomp>) was one of the first whiteboard iPad apps. Other apps have surpassed it in terms of optional features, but ScreenChomp still shines when it comes to ease of use. ScreenChomp provides a whiteboard on which you can demonstrate things by drawing and talking people through your instructions. You can draw and talk over a blank whiteboard or you can upload an image and draw on it while you're talking. Either way, ScreenChomp records your voice as you go. When you're done recording ScreenChomp provides you with a unique URL for your recording. Share that URL through email, social media, or post it on your blog for students to watch.

Knowmia Teach (<http://apple.co/1RQGG37>) is an iPad app for creating instructional whiteboard videos. The app allows you to create your video on a slide-by-slide basis. You can draw and talk on slides in the app. You can pause the app between slides. Images can be inserted into the backdrop of each slide which is great when you want to explain a diagram to students. An option for recording your face on each slide is also included in Knowmia Teach.

To record your screen on a MacBook you can simply open QuickTime Player then choose “New Screen Recording” from the File drop-down menu.

There are lots of tools for creating screencast videos on a Windows computer.

Screencast-O-Matic (<http://screencast-o-matic.com>) is the tool that I use on a regular basis for creating screencasts on both my Windows 7 laptop and on my MacBook. You can launch it from your web browser and use it for free. Screencast-O-Matic also offers a desktop installation option for \$15/year. Jing (<https://www.techsmith.com/jing.html>) from TechSmith is another screencasting tool that I’ve used on both Windows and Mac over the years. The drawback to Jing is that the video saves as a .swf file which isn’t terribly easy to use in other services or upload to YouTube. You can learn more about SWF files on the TechSmith website (<http://bitly.com/1KbfUQF>).

Project Style #4 - Animated Videos

Creating animated videos is a great way for students to bring a story to life. They can create animations for stories they’ve created or for stories they’ve read.

Tellagami (<http://tellagami.com>) is an app for iPad and Android that is a lot of fun to use to create narrated animations. Tellagami allows you to create customized animated scenes in a matter of minutes. To create a narrated, animated scene simply open Tellagami and tap “create.” After opening the create menu you will see a default character and background scene. The characters can be altered by selecting from a big menu of customization options. The background scenes can be changed by selecting from a menu or by inserting a picture from your iPad or Android tablet’s camera roll. To add your voice to your animations simply tap “record” and start talking. Completed animations are stored on the camera roll of your iPad or tablet. Tellagami does not require students to create accounts or have an email address.

Wideo (<http://wideo.co>) is a neat video creation service that allows anyone to create animated videos and Common Craft-style videos (<http://commoncraft.com>) online through a simple drag-and-drop process. Wideo templates provide a basic framework for a video’s theme. A couple of the templates that might be of interest to teachers are the slideshow template and the curriculum template.

Scratch (<http://scratch.mit.edu>) allows students to program animations, games, and videos through a visual interface. Students create their programs by dragging together blocks that represent movements and functions on their screens. The blocks snap together to help students see how the "if, then" logic of programming works.

Project Style #5 - Stopmotion & Timelapse Videos

Creating stopmotion videos is a good way for students to see how a story develops frame-by-frame. Think about the process of making a claymation film. That process requires students to plan each part of a story by positioning the clay figures for each scene. I have had students use this process with paper cutouts instead of clay. The videos on CommonCraft.com provided my inspiration for having students create stopmotion videos featuring paper cutouts in place of clay.

Timelapse videos offer a fantastic way for students to record and then see how a lengthy process occurs. Capturing the process of osmosis provides a good opportunity to use timelapse videography. Take that standard osmosis demonstration of placing a raisin in a beaker of water and capture it with a timelapse video tool. When you're finished capturing the process you will have a short video that will show students the stages of the raisin swelling.

JellyCam (<http://bitly.com/ftjellycam>) is a free program for creating stopmotion movies. Using JellyCam you can create stop motion movies using images from your computer or images that you capture via your webcam. Once you've selected images you can quickly arrange them into a sequence. After the sequence is set you can specify how many images you want per frame. A soundtrack can be uploaded to your video. JellyCam uses the Adobe Air platform. If you don't have Adobe Air it takes just a couple of minutes to install it.

OSnap (<http://bit.ly/ftosnap>) is an iPad app (available in a free version and in a paid version) that you can use to create stop motion and time lapse videos. The app is quite easy to use. To create a video with the OSnap app you simply need to start a project and take a series of still pictures using your iPad's camera. Then adjust the number of frame per second to edit your video. If you want to, you can add a soundtrack to your video by selecting audio files that are stored on your iPad. You can go back and edit your videos by removing images and from the project at any time. Completed projects can be stored on your iPad, uploaded to YouTube, or shared via email.

Parapara Animation (<http://bitly.com/ftpara>) is a free animation creation tool developed and hosted by Mozilla. The tool is easy to use and it does not require registration in order to use it. To get started simply visit the Parapara Animation website, select a digital crayon, then start drawing. Click the large "+" icon in the top of the screen to add a new frame to your animation. You can playback your frames at any time in the creation process. When you're done making

your animation it will be assigned a unique URL that can be shared via email. A QR code for your animation will also be generated for you.

Project Style #6 - The Documentary/ Feature Film

These are the longest video projects in a classroom. Students will create videos of five minutes or more to tell a fiction or nonfiction story. While any of the previously mentioned project styles could be stretched to five minutes, generally they're better kept to shorter lengths. The typical project over five minutes is going to be a documentary style, news report, or telling of a long fiction story with live action. For Mac users, iMovie is the go-to tool for these projects. Windows users will lean toward Windows Movie Maker. On a Chromebook, WeVideo is your best option for editing documentary/ feature film projects.