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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/yftfslide>

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.

Adobe Spark (<http://spark.adobe.com>) is a suite of free tools for creating images, videos, and simple web pages. Key features of Adobe Spark's web app include an integrated Creative Commons image search tool, the option to download images as JPEGs, and the option to download your videos as MP4 files. My Adobe Spark tutorial video can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD81ew_UvGU

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.

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.

Nimbus Screenshot (<https://goo.gl/yjWJYj>) is my favorite tool for creating screencast videos on Chromebooks. It is easy to install, includes customizable countdown timer, and offers multiple ways to save and share your videos. Screencasts recorded with Nimbus Screenshot can be saved to your local drive or to an online Nimbus account. I chose to save to my local drive then upload to my YouTube channel (<https://goo.gl/t6BL6S>). You could also save to your local drive then share to Google Drive or another online storage service.

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.

Know Recorder (<https://www.knowlounges.com/recorder/main>) is a free iPad app and free Android app for creating whiteboard-style instructional videos. With Know Recorder installed on your iPad or Android device you can draw and talk while the app records everything that you do and say. Your video can have multiple pages which is a nice feature when you want to give a multiple step demonstration without having to erase anything. Know Recorder will let you import PDFs and pictures to display and annotate on screen in your instructional video. Completed videos can be saved to your device's camera roll, exported to YouTube, or shared to Know Lounge. Know Lounge is the community site for sharing lessons created with Know Recorder.

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 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.

Toontastic 3D (<https://toontastic.withgoogle.com/>) is an Android app and iPad app for creating animated videos. (If you have a Chromebook that supports the use of Android apps, your students can create animated videos with Toontastic 3D too). Students can pick from a variety of story setting templates or they can create their own within Toontastic 3D. Once they have established a background setting students then select cartoon characters to use in their stories. Students can choose from a wide array of customizable cartoon characters or they can create their own from scratch. Once characters are placed into the story scenes students can begin recording themselves talking while moving the characters around in each scene. Students can swap characters between scenes, change the appearance of characters between scenes, and move characters from one scene to the next.

My Simpleshow (<http://mysimpleshow.com>) is a free tool for creating Common Craft (<http://commoncraft.com>) style explanatory videos. The best aspect of My Simpleshow is the emphasis that the developers have placed on storyline planning and development. As is demonstrated in my tutorial below, students have to write a script on My Simpleshow before they can begin to use the video editing tools. Learn how to use it by watching this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTfZ1SN-LiY>

Tellagami (<http://tellagami.com>) is an iPad app 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.

Animatron (<https://www.animatron.com/>) is a nice tool for creating animated videos and images. The concept behind [Animatron](#) is similar to that of MySimpleShow and Powtoon. You drag and drop characters on a background scene and then choose how long each character will be displayed on the screen. You can also set the length of time for each character in a scene to be in motion. By using Animatron's timeline editor I was able to make objects appear and disappear from a scene. The best feature of Animatron is that I can record audio directly over the animation. The built-in recording tools lets you see the scene while you're recording so that you can precisely synchronize each scene with its audio track.

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 timelapse 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.

WeVideo (<http://wevideo.com>) offers the most features of any of the tools in this document. It is an online video creation tool that I have written about many times over the last few years. WeVideo offers templates that new users can follow to create their first videos. Advanced WeVideo users can skip the templates, use the full editor, and apply themes to their videos by choosing them from the themes menu in the editor. In the video editor you can upload your own media clips or use stock media clips to produce your video. WeVideo's Google Drive app allows you to save all of your video projects in your Google Drive account. WeVideo also offers an Android app and an iPhone app that students can use to capture images and video footage to add to their projects.