Children's Book iMovie Project

This project gives students a chance to combine traditional art and music skills in a digital format. By combining GarageBand with iMovie, students have at their disposal an enriched format in which to interpret the meaning of children's literature. The project also provides opportunities for career exploration, for collaborating with younger children, and for performing service to others.

Author: Chris Cooper, Art and Digital Graphics teacher
Grade level: High School
Curriculum areas: Language Arts, Visual Arts, Digital Graphics

Project Overview

In this project, students work in small groups to produce an iMovie version of a sequel to a popular children's book, complete with dialogue and a soundtrack they create in GarageBand. The finished product, a CD of the class movies, is distributed to younger students in other classes.

Project Steps

1   Divide students into groups of four to five. Assign each group a children's book chosen as a favorite by a kindergarten or first grade class from a local elementary school.

2   Have the group use AppleWorks to write a sequel to the children's book, such as what happened to the three little pigs after the wolf was gone.

3   Ask group members to divide and complete tasks as described below. (Group members may work on one or all parts of the project, but one member should be the assigned manager for each task subgroup.)

 • One member should be in charge of managing the storyboard for the project. Each task subgroup manager should be responsible for recording his or her group's own data on the master storyboard. The storyboard can be drawn in a sketchbook or on a posterboard, or created in AppleWorks.

 • Have one task subgroup create illustrations to accompany the text for each page of the sequel. They can create the art using Adobe Photoshop or another graphics application or scan hand-drawn illustrations. Have them save all images in an iPhoto album.

- Have one task subgroup work in iMovie to add the images from their iPhoto library. Students need to time the reading of each page to set the correct timing for each frame, and they should record timing on the master storyboard. Students should also create a title sequence (including information about the kindergarten class that recommends the book) and a credits sequence.

- Have one task subgroup work in GarageBand to create an underlying audio track that complements the theme and sequence of action in the sequel. Have students save their GarageBand files in iTunes. Students should record dialogue and adjust timing done by iMovie subgroup members if needed. The completed soundtrack should be added to the iMovie file by the iMovie group.

3   Have all group members view and critique their completed movie, and suggest any needed changes to the appropriate subgroup.

4   After the movies are completed, have the whole class watch them.

5   Have students burn the movies on CDs for distribution to pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade classes. If time allows, students can submit CD cover designs produced in Photoshop or another graphics program for the completed project CD. Have the entire class vote for their top choice for the cover. The winning design should be printed (5" x 5") and used for the CD covers.

Outcomes

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Write a sequel to a children's book

- Develop critical thinking skills needed when editing sound

- Increase the critical thinking skills needed when working with a movie format

- Create a soundtrack that complements and enhances children's literature

- Apply the basic elements and principles of art to computer graphics

Technology Skills

After completing this project, students will be able to:

- Have learned or improved digital graphics skills, specifically those relating to using applications such as Adobe Photoshop

- Produce an iMovie project that combines still images and sound

- Use GarageBand to create a soundtrack and synchronize background music with dialogue

Assessment Suggestions

Assessment is most effective with a teacher-designed rubric. Each group can receive an overall major grade for their completed iMovie book as well as either a major grade or a series of daily grades (or both) for their participation in and contribution to the group process.

Preparation and Duration

- If students have not already learned storyboarding, you should give one lesson introducing the concept at the beginning of the project.
- Ask primary classroom teachers for their class's favorite picture book recommendation as early as one month ahead of time to give time for responses and gathering copies of the selected children's books.
- This project should take two to three weeks to complete, depending on the amount of time needed to introduce concepts and software.

Tools and Resources

Books

Children's picture books, which can be collected from elementary or public libraries

Internet

- http://www.apple.com/support/garageband/
  GarageBand resources from Apple
- http://www.apple.com/education/music
  Apple digital music website

Tools

Macintosh computers, scanner (optional), MIDI keyboard (optional), GarageBand, GarageBand Jam Pack (optional), iMovie, Adobe Photoshop or another graphics application, iTunes, iPhoto, AppleWorks, materials for storyboarding (sketchbook or posterboard and pencils or markers) (optional), blank CDs for sharing work

Prerequisite Skills

Before beginning this project, students should be proficient in the use of the graphics application. Previous experience with iMovie and GarageBand is also helpful.

Facilitation Tips

- Assign group membership with student skills in mind. Each group should ideally have a skilled writer, a good organizer, a member proficient with iMovie, and one proficient with GarageBand.
- Use a sign-up rotation system when only a small number of computers are available. (This project is designed to be done in a graphics lab.)

Technology Tips

- Audio tracks should be done in sections. Once a GarageBand file gets too large, it can be difficult to save, especially with smaller hard drives.
- Save often…make a backup copy…save often…make a backup copy.