

Kids Holding Cameras

Presented By:

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Getting Started

1. You will need a digital camera or a video camera. Both of these types of cameras have become more affordable, but if you still are unable to purchase one you may ask a parent or colleague if you can borrow one. You will also find that a tripod is a great tool to have access to.
2. You will need some type of video editing software. For Macintosh, we feel iMovie is the best program to use. Plus it is already installed on your Macintosh computer. For those of you who use Windows XP, you can use the MovieMaker program that is usually already installed on your computer.

Lights, Camera, Action

1. **Choose a topic** that you are studying, or one that will grab the students' attention. Introduce the project to the class. The more excited you are, the more excited they will be!
2. **Group it.** Depending on your topic, you will want to divide your class into manageable groups or pairs. Make sure to write down who is in what group for future reference.
3. **Brainstorm** ideas for the project as a class. Write down ideas on chart paper that can easily displayed during the entire project.
4. **Make a plan or outline** of what the sequence of events will be. If the students will present in groups, they will want to know when it will be their turn. It will also put pressure on the groups to complete any scripts or props that will be needed for filming. It is important that the groups rehearse before the actual filming. *If you are doing individual filming on something spontaneous this step is not needed.* You will just want to make sure they know what they want to say before you record.

5. **Quiet on the set!** Now it is time to begin producing your masterpiece. Make sure you have gone over all rules for handling the equipment. This is a good day to ask for a few parent volunteers to come in and help out. Be sure you have a new tape if you plan on turning this project into a movie. You can tape over other material, but it will not be as clear as you may like. Make sure to leave a 5 second blank space at the beginning and the end of each take. This way you are sure not to cut off any of your video.
6. **Now it is time to import and edit your movie.** This can be done with you in small groups, or using the LCD as a whole class. Editing whole group may take some time, but the learning is unbelievable. I usually edit about half of the movie on my own if we are not working with an older grade level. It is always very exciting to buddy up with another teacher while making video production.
7. **Let's preview our creation.** The kids just love to see themselves on film. It is a good idea to watch the movie once just for fun, and then a second time to make corrections. Do not forget to add a credits page at the end.
8. **Come and join us for the film festival.** It is a lot of fun to invite friends and family in to watch the movie you students have created. Some students will be able to email invitations, but others will have to write them and take them home. You will be amazed to see how proud the students are of their work. For the parents and family members that can't attend, it is a good idea to have a VHS or DVD of your presentation available for check out.

Digital Still Cameras

1. Safety first. Teach and enforce camera safety. Always use the wrist strap. Model every step before putting the cameras into those tiny hands.
2. Batteries: These cameras use lots and lots of battery power. Using rechargeable batteries and a re-charger is less expensive overall. Start any shoot with fresh batteries and have more ready to use.
3. Practice! Practice! Practice! Let the children take lots of pictures before beginning an actual project.
4. When shooting, teach the children not to move for 5 seconds after pushing the button.

5. When exporting pictures, remember to "save as" into a folder, and keep these for later use. Labeling this folder "Raw Pictures" or something like that helps you know they're uncropped, etc. Then, before removing your picture card from the computer, trash the photos from your card. (Note: if you remove your picture card, and then trash pictures you don't want, the picture card still holds them and it takes up memory space.)

General Management Tips

1. If possible, have an aide or volunteer help with the class during the production and post-production stages. Consider pairing up with another grade level class and produce movies together.
2. Small groups of 3 to 5 students work well. Having 5 or 6 projects or movies to produce is much easier to manage than having 10 or 11!
3. Preparation is everything. Plan ahead; use storyboards, scripts or other planning tools. But then, be willing to "let it happen". The initial vision may have to change.
4. Use the LCD projector to model and teach the whole class. Use it again to show off progress as the students work through their projects.
5. Resist the urge to control everything. Let the children take ownership.
6. Each project team should divide responsibilities and take turns.
7. Patience, patience, patience.

Making Digital Videos

1. Safety first. Teach and enforce camera safety. Always use the wrist or neck strap. Model every step before putting the cameras into those tiny hands.
2. Keep the cameras rolling! You can always edit later.
3. Improvise. Some of the best ideas come at the spur of the moment.
4. After importing your footage into your editing program, be sure to export your original footage back to the camera to keep for archival purposes. Keep all the original clips just in case.

5. Editing - start as a whole class using an LCD projector. Model and teach the steps with detailed directions. Then step back and believe in your children! Younger children can double up on the keyboards to work.

A few good resources

iMovie Tutorial <http://www.atomiclearning.com/freeimovie.shtml>

Here you will find a QuickTime tutorial that covers all aspects of iMovie. It also includes tips on working with sound and techniques for transitions and titles.

Short Course in Digital Video <http://www.shortcourses.com/video/>

Here you will learn information about digital video equipment and how it works.

Video Guide <http://pblmm.k12.ca.us/TechHelp/VideoHelp/VideoGuide.html>

Information and resources for teachers and students on setting up shots, correctly using a tripod, movie production advice and much more.

Rubistar <http://rubistar.4teachers.org>

A free site where you can create customized rubrics for assessment of student and group projects.

If you have any question or comments please feel free to email us at:

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