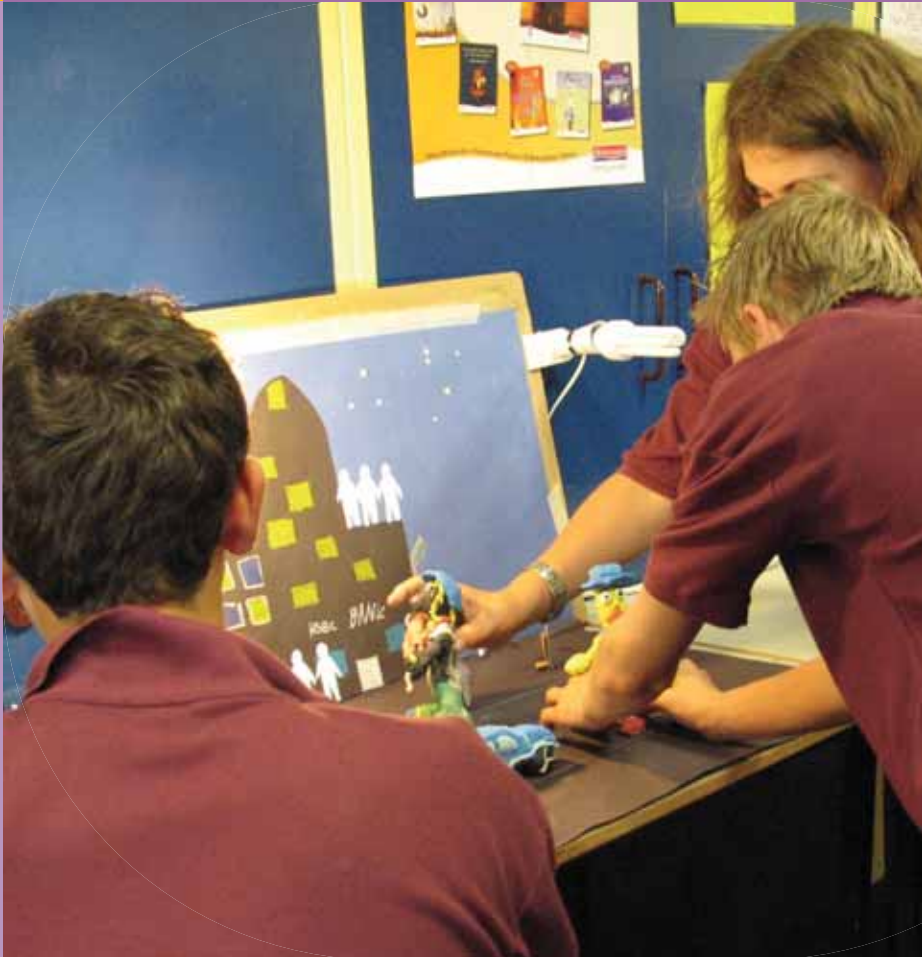


Britta Pollmuller believes strongly in the power of animation projects to support the development of literacy, numeracy and social skills in secondary school pupils. Here she details an ESCalate-funded project that enabled her to research into the role that animation can play in the curriculum. ►



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Animation work is a proven way to build self confidence in the learner's creative abilities.
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Schooltoons - animation and creativity in education

Schooltoons, an animation resource pack for schools, is the end result of a three year research project, exploring ways to make animation a vital part of the secondary school curriculum.

The ESCalate research grant allowed us to undertake a series of action research-based case studies, which observed GCSE and BTEC Media students engaged in a range of animation projects. These case studies identified the extremely

valuable part animation can play in enhancing literacy, numeracy and social skills, and visual creativity amongst pupils of all ages. They also highlighted the types of practical and theoretical support teachers urgently need to teach animation effectively, and offer practical, classroom-friendly solutions.

The pack includes lesson plans, worksheets, technical advice, and schemes of work. Theory is intercut with practical activities throughout the pack, covering a wide range of styles, from model animation to drawn. A series of schemes of work take the reader from initial idea to finished project, with useful advice along the way.

Animation work is a proven way to build self confidence in the learner's creative abilities. The hands on, personal engagement which the process demands, allows each individual to take immediate ownership of his/her work. Pupils truly care about the outcomes, and strive to reach ever more demanding goals. The multifaced nature of the process provides learners with many different points of engagement and an open ended path into discovery. This quote from a school teacher about an often excluded student says it all:

Even Liam stood in front of me jumping up and down with the

excitement of doing animation next year!! He has never been excited about anything he does in school.

And this, from a Head of Art and Design at a secondary school in Norfolk:

In line with national averages, of the 17 students involved four have some kind of learning difficulty. The animation project enabled these students to achieve in a way that I had not witnessed before. They became confident and articulate, in part due to working within a safe environment for a concentrated amount of time, but also due to the high expectations placed upon them and their loyalty to 'the group'.

I can see that it is a very expressive medium and that the language of movement itself is powerful and individual, akin to dance perhaps, but sharing the language of framing and composition with photography and painting. The project created opportunities for pupils to explore the value of animation as part of the creative industry.

We have now found a publisher and hopefully *The Teachers' Animation Toolkit* will be available to schools and teachers across the UK and internationally.



Britta Pollmuller
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Britta Pollmuller is a contemporary new media artist, teacher-as-artist and researcher working within Norwich University College of the Arts. She lectures in Games Art and Design, Animation, Photography, Machinima and Film. As company co-director (Media Projects East: www.mediaprojectseast.co.uk) Britta works with community groups and schools around the themes of media arts, creativity and social issues. For example 'Home Truths' whereby young people from Norfolk have worked together to write a book for schools about the issues which can lead to becoming homeless.

Schooltoons is a Norwich University College of the Arts project, in partnership with Media Projects East Ltd and supported by ESCalate, NESTA and Creative Partnerships.

Example of animations:
http://schooltoons.ning.com/video/animatedmusicvideo_swmv-1