



Case study: Top tips on incorporating animation into lessons

After working in the animation industry for a number of years, Joe Collins decided to retrain as a teacher and in 2011, he became an IT Teacher in Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre, Kent. Several years on and Joe is now Acting Principle Teacher of ICT and Computing, with animation playing an important role in the lives of students at the school.

bee-it met Joe to discover how the students at Homewood School are using animation toolkit, Zu3D. Joe begins:

“In my previous life as an animator, I was in charge of in-house editing and ran school workshops to teach students how to create their very own animations – whether about areas they were learning, specific topics such as The Olympics, or just as a team building exercise.

“When I became employed by Homewood School, I brought Zu3D – the animation toolkit I had been using for years – along with me.”

Zu3D is a comprehensive animation kit designed specifically for use in schools. The system is designed to be easy to use, requiring little to no previous animation experience in order to create a film, although for the more advanced animators, features such as green-screening, rig removal and on frame painting allows for further development.

As an animator with a wealth of previous experience, Joe had tried out numerous other animation tools in the past. Explaining why he chose Zu3D over any other product, Joe says:

“The system is just so simple to use, yet so incredibly powerful. In my previous job, we had used Zu3D for younger students, but also ran workshops at Christchurch University for 6th formers looking to go into university, employment or apprenticeships. Having seen how well the software worked across all ages, I felt we could do the same at Homewood School.”

Homewood School and Sixth Form Centre caters to over 2,600 students ranging from Year 7 through to Sixth Form. The school places importance on providing a project based learning environment, with plenty of cross curricula activities and lessons. Initially starting with seven desktop licenses, the school purchased Zu3D to see how well the system would work as a cross curricula tool to help students present their knowledge on a range of subjects, instead of them using PowerPoint.

Joe continues:

“Initially we started in Year 11 and Sixth Form ICT classes, asking students to animate their knowledge of a topic from any of their other lessons into a short video. The end results were so impressive that we quickly rolled out Zu3D activities to all year groups and the school subsequently purchased a site license.”

Following the success of incorporating animation skills into lessons, an after-school club was established to provide students with out-of-hours access to Zu3D to continue their school work.

Summarising his experiences of Zu3D, Joe adds:

“Zu3D is brilliant for schools that are looking to add animation to their lessons. We have used it right across the curriculum, across all age groups. It is incredibly user-friendly, catering to the needs of a wide audience. It is quick to learn, built for kids but incredibly powerful. For me, Zu3D is not just an animation tool, but a multimedia production system.”

For schools that are considering introducing animation lessons, Joe suggests the following structure:

- 1) Start a whole-day project around a given topic.
- 2) Get students to form groups of approximately four people.
- 3) Give students Zu3D to play with. If you are familiar with the basics, demonstrate elements of the software.
- 4) Let students learn by themselves – you’ll be amazed how quickly they pick it up.
- 5) Aim for each group to produce a 30 second clip.
- 6) At the end of the day, watch all of the clips and upload them to the school intranet to share with parents.

Zu3D comes with a variety of kits and license types, including an iPad app and numerous accessories. For more information about Zu3D, click [here](#).