



Setting up shots for claymation videos cultivates patience and digital know-how.



Children using a tablet to edit stop-motion photos

MODEL MAKERS

TAKING CLAY PLAY FURTHER WITH STOP-MOTION ANIMATION GIVES CHILDREN A BOOST IN DEVELOPING 21ST-CENTURY SKILLS.

Preschool teacher Ms Reyna Cabalhug is always exploring new ways to engage children meaningfully. She first came across stop-motion photography in a training workshop, which led her to research more about 'claymation' — a stop-motion animation technique that uses movable clay figures.

"I was intrigued by how claymation can help children cultivate their sense of agency as well as build essential thinking and communication skills," recalls Ms Cabalhug, a teacher at PCF Sparkletots @ Ayer Rajah-Gek Poh Blk 41. She spearheaded a year-long project to integrate claymation into the preschool's curriculum for the Nursery 2 and Kindergarten classes. This project saw the preschool win an ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award (Distinction) in 2023.

BUILDING KEY SKILLS

The children worked in pairs or groups to develop their own storylines and characters. They then moulded clay characters based on their drawings and took pictures one frame at a time to create the claymation videos.

"I was amazed at the children's focus and how engaged they were throughout the process. They worked

together and built on each other's ideas," says Ms Cabalhug.

The process provided children with different learning opportunities. She elaborates, "Writing the storylines engaged their creative thinking and language skills. Moulding the clay improved their fine motor skills. Working in small groups enhanced



Aqil moulding a clay turtle for his group's story

“ I like claymation because I can form my characters the way I want. I can decide the shape, size and colour of clay to use.

AQIL ARYAN BIN RIDWAN, 6

their communication, collaborative and social-emotional skills. The children also showed confidence in presenting their projects during Show & Tell sessions."

INTEGRATING TECH

Another useful 21st-century skill that the project imparted was digital literacy. Children explored the use of digital cameras to snap stop-motion photos. They did simple photo and video editing and voice recording using apps such as iMovie, InShot and Microsoft PowerPoint. They even learned how to add transitions, music and filters to their videos.

The project also trained children's patience as it took time to set up the clay figures for each shot. It was especially challenging if they missed a frame and had to redo the set-up.

Although it progressed slowly at times, children enjoyed the process immensely. For example, Jena Tang, 6, made a clay octopus for her team's story about marine creatures playing tag in the sea. "I liked using the iPad to edit photos because I could choose different filters to make the photos look bright," she says.

Observing the impact of the project on children's learning, the teachers decided to dedicate a permanent space at the preschool for a claymation learning centre. Equipped with digital gadgets, plasticine of different colours, and writing and drawing materials, it allows children to continue to work on their stop-motion projects. ●

Visit go.gov.sg/2023-ecda-awards-innovation-project-showcase or scan here to check out the full list of winners for the 2023 ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award.

