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Part 1: Introduction to Animation (7 50-minute sessions)

Students are introduced to the basic principles and techniques of animation. They begin the unit with a simple project—animating a penny using stop-motion animation—and then analyze clips from animated films to learn about several of the principles of animation and to see how the elements of art and principles of design are used. Students practice a classic animation task, animating a bouncing ball, using both pencil-and-paper and computer-generated techniques.

Activity 1A: The Principles of Animation (3 sessions)

1A.1: <i>Why Animation?</i>	Students watch and discuss a clip from an animated movie and are introduced to the unit.
1A.2: <i>Animating a Penny</i>	Working in teams, students use digital cameras and stop-motion animation software to animate a penny, giving it the appearance of bouncing across a page.
1A.3: <i>Seeing the Principles of Animation at Work</i>	Students are introduced to several of the 12 basic principles of animation and identify how each is used in an animated movie clip.
1A.4: <i>Looking at the Elements of Art and Principles of Design</i>	Students identify the ways that animators use the elements of art and principles of design in a movie clip. Students are introduced to the weekly critique assignment.

Activity 1B: Follow the Bouncing Ball (4 sessions)

1B.1: <i>Introduction to Straight-Ahead Animation</i>	Students are introduced to hand-drawn animation by using straight-ahead techniques to animate a bouncing ball. Students then create pencil tests of their work.
1B.2: <i>Introduction to Pose-to-Pose Animation</i>	Students use pose-to-pose animation techniques to complete another bouncing ball animation and then create new pencil tests.
1B.3: <i>Introduction to 2-D Computer Animation</i>	Students learn the basics of a 2-D animation software program and create a third animation of a bouncing ball, using the animation principles they have learned so far.
1B.4: <i>Introducing the Career Profile Project</i>	Students learn about careers related to the work they are doing in the unit and are introduced to the Career Profile project. Students conduct research on AME professionals whom they may want to profile.

Part 2: Finding the Right Story (15 50-minute sessions)

Students begin work on their unit project. They select a story, choose a scene from the story and a moment from that scene, and design one of the main characters. Students then create several drawings of their character. To more fully understand the techniques and principles of animation, students learn about and practice drawing walk cycles.

Activity 2A: Developing the Story (3 sessions)

2A.1: <i>Choosing a Story</i>	Students are introduced to the unit project and watch a clip from an animated movie based on a fairy tale, myth, folktale, or short story. Students conduct research and choose the story for their unit project.
2A.2: <i>Choosing a Scene and a Moment</i>	Students select a scene from their story and choose one moment from that scene to animate for their unit project.

Activity 2B: Developing the Character (8 sessions)

2B.1: <i>Initial Character Design</i>	Students learn about two more principles of animation. They sketch out a character design, conducting research on the character's visual attributes. Students share their designs and revise them based on feedback.
2B.2: <i>Creating Turnaround Sheets and Character Studies</i>	Students develop turnaround sheets and character studies showing expression.
2B.3: <i>Finalizing the Character Design</i>	Students created polished model sheets showing their character in a typical pose. They also create simplified versions of their character to use in their animations.

Activity 2C: All About Walk Cycles (4 sessions)

Students learn about creating walk cycles, a challenging and important task for animators. They watch a clip from an animated movie in order to analyze how characters move as they walk. Students create a walk cycle animation for a simple figure and for their own character.

Part 3: Creating the Animation (20 50-minute sessions)

Students animate a moment from a scene in their story. To prepare, they create a storyboard of the moment. They draw the frames for their animation, capture their drawings with a camera or scanner, and ink in and animate the drawings using 2-D software.

Students incorporate the principles of animation as they work, trying to effectively use the elements of art and principles of design. Throughout the process of creating their animations, students revise their work based on feedback.

Activity 3A: Creating Storyboards (3 sessions)

3A.1: <i>More Principles of Animation</i>	To learn about the remaining principles of animation, the class analyzes a clip from an animated movie.
3A.2: <i>Storyboarding the Moment</i>	Students create a detailed storyboard of the moment in their story that they plan to animate.

Activity 3B: Drawing the Moment (10 sessions)

Students draw the key frames of their animation, create a pencil test to help them determine the timing of the animation, and get feedback on their pencil tests. Students then draw their animations and create a second pencil test.

Activity 3C: Creating Digital Animations (7 sessions)

Students work with their drawings in 2-D animation software. They ink in their pencil drawings and make adjustments to the animation based on feedback they receive. Students may also color in their drawings.

Part 4: Pitching the Work (3 50-minute sessions)

Students prepare and deliver pitches for their animated movie idea to an audience of classmates and, ideally, AME professionals. Students reflect on their work in the unit.

Activity 4A: Preparing for the Pitch (1 session)

Students develop their presentations for the pitch session.

Activity 4B: Pitch Session (2 sessions)

Students pitch their animated movie ideas to the class and reflect on what they learned during the unit.