

Clay Animation Program

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This course will serve as a standalone introduction to the art of clay animation. During this set of lessons we wish to incorporate a number of different concepts and skills in order to allow each student to find the aspects they most enjoy. As each student discovers what they enjoy and/or are skilled at, they can continue with that aspect as their focus for the duration. There will be a focus on group projects and teamwork to accomplish the end result of an animated clay video. In addition to the core aspects of modeling and shaping clay the lessons are intended to develop concept selection, concept development, and storytelling skills. We will also focus on how to express the intended message in a communicable way.

Materials (Consistent throughout):

- Clay
- Shaping tools
- Paper
- Pencils
- Pens
- Stop-motion capture equipment

Thematic Elements: Nature and Fantasy

Ideas to Incorporate:

- Storyboarding
- Problem solving
- Precipitating abstract ideas
- Combination of skills and disciplines toward a single goal
- Teamwork for efficient use of time

Lessons:

1. Introduction - Telling Stories

Goal(s):

- Learn to sketch out a sequence to be animated afterward
- Animate a small scene where one character helps another
- Recognize personal ability to make art
- Anticipate problems and solutions
- Complete pre-test

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- The anatomy of a story
- Anthropomorphization
- Expressing ideas with motions
- Sculpting clay

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

2. Dreams – Our Imaginations

Goal(s):

- Animating a dream

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- The power of our imagination
- How memories and dreams connect
- Commonalities between all people's dreams

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

3. Buildings, Cities, and Nature

Goal(s):

- Animation of things that occur over a long period of time
- Create imaginative scenarios in fabricated landscapes
- Practice making life-like forms from memory

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- How do we interact with our environment
- What do we notice about the buildings around us stylistically, structurally, etc.
- What goes into making a building, e.g. planning, measurements.

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

4. Fantasy – Create Your Own Mythical Creature

Goal(s):

- Understanding how humans perceive things we don't understand
- Understanding how stories are created
- How to capture creativity

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- Mythology and where it comes from

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

5. Compassion

Goal(s):

- Animation of story
- Understanding abstract concepts
- Understanding personal relation to, and experience of, abstract concepts
- Relating compassion and artistic expression
- Animation of a scene involving multiple motions and character

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- Compassion vs. Sympathy vs. Empathy
- Story of personal experience

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

6. Outer Space - What exists outside of planet earth?

Goal(s):

- Introduce curiosities about space
- Prompt students to sketch realistic or fantastical ideas of planets or extraterrestrial life.
- Discuss what one would ask an alien if one had the opportunity.

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- What do we know about space already?
- What do we imagine extraterrestrial life to look like?

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

7. Monsters - Monsters and Fears

Goal(s):

- Animate a Monster Story
- Understanding the sources of fears
- Understanding courage

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- What we are afraid of and why
- How creating story about a fear can defuse it

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

8. Water - Finding meaning in everyday things

Goal(s):

- Animating a scene or story involving water
- Artistic expression of motion
- Conveying meaning and a message through motion and color

Prep: Place paper and pencil on each desk. Lay out Plasticine and tools on the side. Set up stop-motion capture equipment.

Discussion:

- What does water mean to you?
- The water cycle and the importance of water

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Take photographs while the lead teacher explains the lesson. After the discussion and explanation walk around the room assisting individual students as needed. Continue to take photographs periodically and document student thought processes and quotes. Have students who finish early help collect and return materials.

9. Summary and Surveys

Goal(s):

- Completing surveys
- Complete post-test
- Continued development
- Recognizing room for improvement

Prep: Place a survey and a pen on each desk.

Discussion:

- Summarize concepts learned and discuss survey questions
- Importance of debriefing

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Go around and help out the students who require it. After a student completes a survey collect it immediately.

10. Movie Day

Goal(s):

- Displaying the videos we made to the students and parents
- Popcorn!

Prep: Set up projector ahead of time, ensure everything is functioning correctly and ready to go. Prepare popcorn.

Discussion: Recognizing what we've accomplished!

Instruction: Assistant teachers: Help to pass out popcorn and take some for yourself.