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Writing and Research

### **Analytic Brief**

My concept is to create a 3D animation sort that inspires south Asian youth to talk to their parents about non-acceptance of non-traditional professions. I also hope to encourage parents to be open minded about their children's career choices. As it is crucial that the message in my story is clearly understood, I have designed the initial stages of my process to focus on story creation, character design, and making a fully working character in Maya.

#### **Concept Analysis:**

Over the summer, I spoke to several Asian Youth about the issue of non-acceptance of non-traditional professions in South Asian society. I found that even with the increase in education and westernization of India, this issue still exists. Therefore I needed to target the part of the population that is not open to non-traditional careers.

Initially my target audience was south Asian children between the ages of 8-14 years of age. As this age range was too broad, and tweens are the age group where they first start making their career decisions, I narrowed down my audience to 8-12 year old Asian youth. My research also showed that the parents were the ones that also needed convincing. Therefore my audience will now also include parents of tweens in order to start encouraging them to be open minded to their children's career choices.

For my next steps, I will speak with SAYA (The South Asian Youth Association) about how they can best incorporate my thesis into their program. I will also be user testing my animatics and animation on youth between the age ranges of 8-12 yrs and their parents.

#### **Character Process and Analysis:**

I started my process by creating short bios of my characters and writing my story in order to help me visualize how my characters would look and behave in the story. I proceeded

by drawing different versions of my characters and building maquettes for the main character. I tested the character designs on six children from my target audience by showing them the drawings and the maquettes that I had created of my characters.

The feedback was useful and I was able to move forward and make changes to the characters. However, when the characters were placed in the storyboards, it was hard to tell the father apart from the son because they looked too similar to each other. Therefore I had to redesign the father's character so that he looked like he could be related to the boy while being clear that he is the father.

Overall, I found that the character design tests were not as accurate I hadn't tested the character designs on enough children from my target age group. Another area that my character designs failed to address was if my audience prefers characters that look more Indian as opposed to a non-Indian character. I will also need to test out the new character designs with a large group of South Asian youth (8-12 yrs) to get feedback on the changes I have made.

For my next steps, I will make a maquette for the father's redesign and show both the maquettes and drawings of the father and son before I show the children my animatic. This will allow them to visualize the characters in the story so I can get the best feedback as to whether they like the characters. I will also show them different versions of the characters as far as race and ethnicity to find out if my audience prefers an Indian character or a non-Indian character.

The overall goal of these next sets of experiments is to help me finalize my characters so that they are loveable and relatable by both south Asian youth and their parents. Creating characters that my audience can identify with will help make my story successful and therefore help the message resonate with them.

**Story Process and Analysis:**

My process for developing the story first involved creating storyboards and showing them to children while pitching it to them. Pitching the story was successful as I was able to find out what parts worked and what didn't. However, I felt that the children did not get the full impact because of lack of movement and sound that storyboards present. Therefore I proceeded by creating an animatic with the revised storyline.

The first animatic that I created was too rough in terms of both sound and story. The users (in this case my classmates for initial testing of story) were not able to get the beats of the story, as it was too rough. The second animatic was more developed in terms of the drawings and sound. From this test I found that parts of my story were really unclear and the sound was confusing as was hard to tell when the drums were being beaten I was using a temporary soundtrack.

The analysis from creating these two animatics was that the beats of my story were unclear and therefore the message was unclear. Therefore I changed my process for the revised story. I broke down the story into beats so that I was clear about every little action that the character made. I then showed these beats to a few people and got feedback on whether or not the story was clear. After this I went in changed the beats that were unclear and ended up with a story that was very clear and definitely conveyed the right message. Using the revised beats, I then came up with a storyboard, which I presented in class. This story was more successful as the message and the storyboard was clear. I tested the new story on south Asian students from Parsons who were not aware of my thesis and found that they got the message and the story. Though the new story was successful, it has become twice as long and will therefore need to be revised to be no longer than a minute and fifty seconds in length. Also, the father's expectations are not clear in the storyline.

From these iterations of story process I found that it helped me to break down the story into beats before the storyboard and animatic stage. For future animatics, I will need to make them more detailed not only to get an exact sense of timing but also so my audience can see the closest iteration to a full blown animation. This will mean showing actions

from every 15 frames and being clear about the sound (i.e. when the drums are being beaten etc...).

My next step will be to shorten the story. I will do this by first improving a dialogue between father and son where both have expectations. I will then replace the dialogue with actions. This will not only reduce the length of my story but also help make the expectations and the message clear. After finalizing the story through this method I will place the characters in a setting.

The goal of this next experiment is to help me narrow finalize my story to the fullest extent to enable to move onto the next step of implementation in Maya.

### **Maya Implementation Process:**

Creating the character in Maya and testing the rig to a scratch sound track has helped me figure out the problems with the character model that I need to solve. I found that I would need to remodel the legs so that they are thinner and the hands so that it looks less abnormal. I also found that I rigging the character's face using the Setup Machine (a Maya plug-in for setting up animation controls) was not working as successfully as I had hoped. The file size became too large and as a result slowed my computer down tremendously. Therefore I will either need to look into blend shape animation or find a way to optimize the facial rig so the file size is smaller. I have also been able to figure out how to synchronize the animation to sound using After Effects. This part of my process has been successful because it has helped me figure out the issues with my model that I need to fix.

For the next steps, I will need to remodel my character according to my findings from the previous test. I will also need to model the new character design for the father once tested on my users so that I can move onto the animation process. Using the animation lab (rigging class), I will learn about blend shape animation to animate my characters faces.

The goal of these experiments will be to build fully working characters that move well in order to enable me to move onto the next stage of my implementation process i.e. animation. Learning how to animate the characters faces using blend shapes will not only optimize my production time but will also enable me to get a large range of expressions from the characters faces.

Overall, I have found that parts of my process for each segment of my thesis work while others do not. I will continue with the next sets of experiments for each segment to enable me to move onto the next stage of implementation. The overall goal for the next set of experiments is to have a finalized story that is no longer than a minute and fifty seconds long, accompanied by a detailed animatic, along with fully working characters in Maya whose designs are tested and finalized.