

Statement of Teaching Philosophy – Game Design

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The field of game design is far more complex than the average person realizes. Quite often, students begin their university education without a solid understanding of what game design actually entails. My goal is to give students a strong understanding and appreciation of the many different aspects of games and how they work together to create a cohesive experience. I believe it is also important to emphasize the need for not only creativity, but hard work and careful planning. The key aspects of game design that I seek to pass on to students are as follows.

1. **Creativity:** Games are first and foremost a creative art form and it is important to think outside the box and not just copy previous titles.
2. **Hard Work & Planning:** Designing games is very different from playing games. It involves massive amounts of planning and long hours of work.
3. **The Player's Desires:** Designers must always consider the feelings and motivations of their audience in order to craft a game that people will want to play.
4. **Teamwork:** In most cases, game design is not a solitary practice. Designers must know how to work closely with team members of many different disciplines.

Game design is not something that can be adequately taught by simple lectures and exams. I use many popular games as examples and case studies during lectures in order to show students how the concepts being taught are used in the industry and the ways in which they positively and negatively affect games. But such examples are only the beginning. The sooner students begin working together to create games, the sooner they will come to realize the importance of the information and skills being taught and how everything comes together. Therefore, I believe that it is important to focus heavily on both single and team projects such as evaluating games, writing pitch and design documents, drawing level maps, and creating fully functional games and mods. As many of these projects can take weeks or even months to complete, I strive to review them multiple times throughout the semester and provide students with meaningful feedback so they can continually improve and refine their work. To ensure that the students are receptive to constructive criticism, I do my best to be friendly and available to them and always provide detailed logical explanations of any problems I find with their work.

Games have rapidly become one of the most popular forms of entertainment world wide. A good game can affect the players' lives and emotions much as movies and books do. Today's students could easily grow into skilled designers who may one day be compared to famous producers and writers such as Steven Spielberg or J.K. Rowling. Therefore it is important for a good teacher to impart not only a love of games but a deep understanding of the elements and processes that make them great. Only then will students be able to realize their full potential and create the great games of the next generation.