A Time To Plan: Creativity Workshop Credits for 3D Production

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The 3D Animation and Game Design program at the University of the Incarnate Word requires students to produce complete 3D narrative animations or video games. Although students know this is coming, the specifics of how to plan the production, and make the specific design and story decisions that provide a successful piece seems to come as a surprise when students are actually in the class. This means that weeks are spent in the story revisions, character designs, and/or game flow that students could be using to produce the necessary assets. Therefore, we have implemented a one credit planning course: Senior Thesis Workshop in which students produce no digital assets, but propose multiple projects with various teams and work them up to a pitch state. Then, still within this course, the students do initial design and planning work in preparation of the upcoming production cycle. Then, during the next two semesters, students implement their plan through an aggressive production cycle where the assets are built, the textures are created, the characters rigged and animated, and finally the narrative rendered, or the game programmed. Because the planning was taken care of earlier, focus is maintained and products are better. In this presentation we will show the course structure of the workshop, and the results created there. We will share lessons learned in the process and how it has strengthened the output of the production courses.

Biography

Matthew Tovar is an Assisant Professor in the 3D Animation & Game Design department at the Univeristy of the Incarnate Word. Matthew worked and continues to work profesionally in the film and game industry with top studios such as Sony Computer Entertainment of America, Sony Pictures Imageworks, Infinity Ward, and Naughty Dog. Most notable recent projects include The Last of Us, Call of Duty: Infinte Warfare and Uncharted: The Lost Legacy.

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