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THE PROGRAMME AND METHODOLOGY OF ART EDUCATION USED IN A PRACTICAL COURSE PREPARING STUDENTS FOR WORK IN CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Małgorzata ŁUSZCZAK, Katarzyna KROCZEK-WASIŃSKA and Paweł SYNOWIEC
University of Silesia, Poland

1 Abstract

The course – Game and Virtual Space Design was established in response to the growing demand for this type of artistic education. The dynamic development of the computer games market in Poland created new attractive jobs and an arena for artistic creation which is different from classical arts.

Games, apart from their commercial significance, have found their resonance in the world of art, they have become an element of the digital culture.

Keywords: Game Design, Digital Culture, Innovative teaching methods, Game Development, Game Content, Design Thinking

2 Introduction

Our mission is to prepare graduates characterized by a high intellectual and artistic level and an extensive knowledge of culture. Artists who possess competences which enable them to work in the video game industry, and possessing high artistic levels at the same time. From the beginning our goal has been to unite art and business in one course. Our ambition is to produce a graduate who will not only be a high class specialist, capable of carrying out certain tasks and working in a team, but also a highly creative individual, a visionary and a leader.

3 Teaching staff

The teaching staff is made up of university professors, who are the core of the teacher body on the course, as well as trainers who are employed in video game making companies, who are not closely associated with the university.

4 Problems and solutions

4.1 Moving the emphasis from technical issues to the development of creativity

The course was created without reference to any other course of similar profile. Initially, we put emphasis on the technological and commercial side of games, the artistic development came secondary. Having carefully analysed the educational outcomes, we found that artistic development should be at the heart of the educational process.

Three educational stages were introduced:

Observation, interpretation and creation, which constitute the core of artistic education complemented with a programming module.

Apart from the core artistic subjects we have introduced workshops with professionals from the game industry as an alternative to traditional education in order to keep balance between theory and practice in a practical course.

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4.2 Insufficient interest of students in intellectual development and art

In order to instil a genuine interest in broadly understood art in the students we introduced cyclical seminars and lectures with recognized personalities from the world of literature, art and philosophy.

4.3 Insufficient level of students' initial drawing ability

The recruitment criteria have been changed. The candidates now take a practical entrance exam in drawing from a model and imaginative drawing.

4.4 Teaching outcomes validation

In order to check the academic knowledge in practice we introduced an annual event – LAG (Festival of Art and Independent Games). LAG's mission is to develop competences, creativity and teamworking skills.

Students create playable versions of games over a period of 5 days. The games are assessed by university professors and specialists from the games industry.

4.5 Lack of understanding of the course's mission among university staff of other faculties

Inviting members of the broad academic community to active participation in the events which are important for the faculty, such as LAG (jury) or diploma paper final exams, proved to be the way to gaining recognition.

5 Conclusions

Striking a proper balance in the educational process between creative freedom and the requirements of the commercial market is a task which requires an ongoing process of careful examination on the part of the teaching staff. Our goal is to uphold our students' creative enthusiasm and encourage them to draw inspiration from the world of art and the reality around them. We want our students to be characterized by a high level of artistic culture and the courage to take creative decisions.