

Lecture1 What is Narrative Design

1. Writer versus Narrative Designer

- A narrative designer is a writer embedded in a game development team
- A narrative designer is integral to the team and project, from the first concept to publication
- You can use both "Writer" or "Narrative Designer" interchangeably. It's all just terminology
- Narrative designers are creating interactive experiences in which players are active participants

2. Narrative Design

Narrative Designer's tasks are divided into three buckets:

Write

All the writing that goes into a game falls squarely on the narrative designer's shoulders.

- dialogue and text
- story elements

Pre-production

Pre-production writing tasks is necessary to create a solid design foundation for the implementation stage

- concept document
- game design document
- level/zone design documents
- scripts for presentations to upper-level management

Sometimes just an outline of the anticipated content of a cinematic is written up during pre-production.

Production

- character dialogue
- text for notes and books
- other writing related tasks

Design

Pre-production

- writing the game design document
- creating the initial versions of level or zone design doc
- breaking down the story into specific events, settings and situations the player will encounter in the game

Production

- getting characters into the game and scripting their interactions with each other and the player
- writing notes and brief texts for the player to find and read in-game
- implementing dialogue to help convey the game's story to the player

Interact & Collaborate

They similarly interact with all other members of the team, in every discipline, sometimes multiple times a day

3. Narrative Design Tasks

Tasks	Collaboration
Create design documents	Work with animators
Be the CD's point person	Work with engineers
Brainstorm	Work with localization
Maintain CD's vision	Work with sound designers
See the whole game	Temporarily record dialogue
Write the game's story	Help choose voice actors
Create characters	Direct voice sessions
Write dialogue	Pick the best version of each line
Write cinematic scripts	Ensure correct voice-over (VO) lines are in-game

Tasks	Collaboration
Work with designers	Script
Work with artists	Playtest

- a multitude of design tasks fall to the narrative designer
- much of a narrative designer’s job involves interacting with other members of the team