Suggestions for planning your workshop.

Students will be excited, smart and interested. But they are young and concepts we use everyday are new to them, such as AI, modeling, 3D art vs environmental art, a heroic tale vs a coming of age tale, or major keys vs minor keys. These concepts might be “something they learned in school” but have not yet manipulated for their own creative purposes, yet. Or, they may have already published a game!

Take an idea and have fun explaining it, describing why you want to use this idea in a game, and demonstrating technically how you implement this idea in the game. Demonstrate ways you could tweak what you have created in order to have a different effect on the player.

Demonstrate where you look for answers when you get stuck: Unity manual, forums for you fav software. Describe how you troubleshoot. Every thing it iterative; nothing looks good the first time!

A method that works well is to provide students with something they can manipulate themselves, like a simple video editor or a tiny, complete 2D project in Unity. Mention your concept: like creating the feeling of being chased in a game, then you describe how you want the game to operate—with bank robbers chasing you around your bank—and then show them step by step how the project woks in Unity, show them how changing some variables affects the speed, number and behaviors of the bank robbers. Then discuss how the differences might affect the feelings of the player.

Try to give a complete slice of your creative process: The concepts, the purpose, the technique used and the iterations. Show them how you decide what to make, what you do to make it, test it, troubleshoot it and how you iterate. To do this you must pick a very small something to make. Like, the shader on a car, just changing that shader can change the way a player feels about the car, or their own relationship to the car, etc…

A suggested schedule:

9:30 Arriving, finding seats, taking your handouts

9:40 Introduction to you, your technique and your concept (+Questions)

9:50 Introduction to the software on the computers (+Technical difficulties)

10:00 Walk through the project, show all the parts. Explain why each part is included.

10:10 Discuss role of this item in the game. How does it affect the player’s experience?

10:20 Let players tweak the thing and create their own and let them explain why and what they expect their version would do to the player’s experience.

10:30 Discussion, advice about where to post/store their portfolios, college classes to take, how to get started in a company, how to get an internship… Add any links, advice, etc. to your handout.