

CHICO STATE GAME STUDIOS CLASS MANUAL



Fall 2008

Written by
Alisha Thayer



Spot a typo? Something you want to add? E-mail your suggestions
to Alisha Thayer at **alishathayer@gmail.com**

CSGS table of contents



- 1. Introduction
 - A. Welcome to Chico State Game Studios! 4
 - B. Course Philsophy 5
 - a. Working in Teams
 - b. Simulate the Video Game Industry
 - c. Create an Unparalleled Portfolio Piece
 - d. Excel at Your Given Task
- 2. Production Process
 - A. Production Pipeline 7
 - B. Job Descriptions 8
 - a. Producer
 - b. Director
 - c. Assistant Director
 - d. Technical Director
 - e. CSGS Team Member
 - f. Musican and Sound Effects Technician
 - C. CSGS Sub-Groups and Meeting Details 12
 - a. Art Asset Team
 - b. Animation Team
 - c. Level Design Team
 - d. Programming Team
 - e. Meeting Details
- 3. Troubleshooting
 - A. Common Pitfalls and Solutions 14
 - a. My Ego Could Beat Up Your Ego
 - b. The Curse of the Epic!
 - c. Clogging the Lines of Communication
 - d. Everyone Contributes to the Game
 - e. Meetings, Glorious Meetings
 - f. Can't We All Just Get Along?
 - g. Get To Know Your Teammates
- 4. Supplemental Forms for Directors, Assistant Directors, and Technical Directors 21

CSSGSS introduction

Welcome to Chico State Game Studios!

Chico State Game Studios was founded in 2005 by the Applied Computer Graphics Program to provide real-world experience to students who are interested in entering the video game industry upon graduation. Typically beginning with a pre-existing game engine (for example, the Unreal Tournament 2004 engine or Neverwinter Nights toolset), students implement a complete and unique video game over the course of one year. Students are encouraged but not required to enroll in the Chico State Game Studios game project for the full, one year duration of the project.

Students participating in Chico State Game Studios game projects can expect to work in large, specialized teams of video game designers, texturers, modelers, animators, sound designers, level designers, and programmers to create a video game from concept to final product. These projects involve every aspect of the modern video game production pipeline, simulating industry as closely as possible in a classroom environment.

So what can you expect from this class?

- A chance to experience the video game production pipeline from start to finish.
- An opportunity to strengthen your interpersonal skills by working in tightly-knit groups.
- An opportunity to work with talented, creative individuals who share the same passion for video games that you do.
- A safe, creative environment in which to develop your talents, and possibly discover some new ones.
- A complete, functional video game to add to your portfolio that you can say you helped create.

However, this class was not designed to be easy. This class is designed to be a demanding, intensive experience. Making video games takes a great deal



of planning, collaboration, and hard work. Expect this class to take the same amount of time as any production class. If you are taking a heavy load this semester, you might want to consider either taking this class another semester or dropping another class so that you do not find yourself overloaded mid-semester.

This class differs from other production classes in one very large way: in other production classes, when you forget to do an assignment or miss a deadline, only your grade is affected. You might sacrifice an A and end up with a B. In this class, you are working as part of a *team*. When you fail to complete your responsibilities, the rest of the team suffers. Overloading yourself and/or failing to complete the tasks assigned to you will not only stress you out, but affect the performance of the group as a whole *and* the final video game product. **Make sure when you take this class that you are aware of your course load and be sure that you can succeed in all of your courses.** Please do this for the sake of your fellow teammates and the project itself.

It is also your responsibility to make sure that you are both prepared and qualified for the class. Please review this manual carefully and make sure that you meet the requirements for the class and your chosen sub-team.

Above all things, remember that you are now on a team of people who love computer graphics and video games. Use this experience to make new friends, make a great portfolio piece, and **have fun!**

Course Philosophy

Working in Teams

This course is designed to give you real-world video game production experience in an academic environment. Creative industries such as the video game industry are different from other vocations in that they require large teams of creative, intelligent people all working as one unit. You've finished a computer or console game and watched as the credits ran—there can be as many as two hundred names on a credit roll for a video game. Nihilistic Software in Novato, California currently has around fifty people working *concurrently* on the same Xbox 360 action title. That's fifty intelligent, creative, and often strong-willed people all working as a unit towards a unified goal; no small task.

If you've completed the prerequisites for this class, you have no doubt found yourself working in much smaller groups for projects such as animations, 3D modeling, and storyboarding, among other things. You've also probably experienced friction in these groups, maybe experienced a few failures, and likely a few successes. Groups are volatile because you can never predict how personality types are going to interact with each other.



This class is your chance to learn how to mitigate any problems with personality or otherwise that might arise in a group so that you don't have to figure it out when you get into industry, where it is *vital* that you are able to work with large groups of people.

Simulate the Video Game Industry

In addition to strengthening your teambuilding skills, this course has been designed to simulate the video game industry pipeline. By nature, the video game industry works in a series of ebbs and flows. Work may be lighter a few weeks before a major project milestone, but the week of that milestone may see a two or threefold increase in work. This class will behave in a similar manner. Take advantage of your time in this class to discover whether this type of schedule is compatible with you.

Provide an Unparalleled Portfolio Piece

This class is an excellent opportunity to create a piece of work that would be impossible to create on your own. It is common that a Chico State Game Studio's project have twenty to thirty students working on it at one time. Such a large team is capable of completing tasks that may take one person years to complete. Take advantage of this—do your part in the project so that others can do theirs, and at the end you will have a completed, functional game to put in your portfolio.

Having a completed game in your portfolio shows a great deal to a potential employer. It shows your creative abilities, whether you are a programmer, artist, modeler, sound designer, et cetera. More importantly though, it shows a potential employer that you understand the production process and that you can stick with a project long enough to see it completed.

Excel at Your Given Task

Not everyone in this class will be at the same skill level. It is the responsibility of you and your director to find tasks that are within your scope so that you can produce work that you are proud of, and that will enhance your abilities as a game maker. It's okay to have high expectations of yourself on any project, but it is imperative that you understand your own boundaries so that you can produce high quality, solid work for the project. It *always* feels better to succeed than fail. Remember, this class is a venue in which you can really shine, but be responsible—don't set yourself up for failure. Use this time to really excel.

CSSS production process



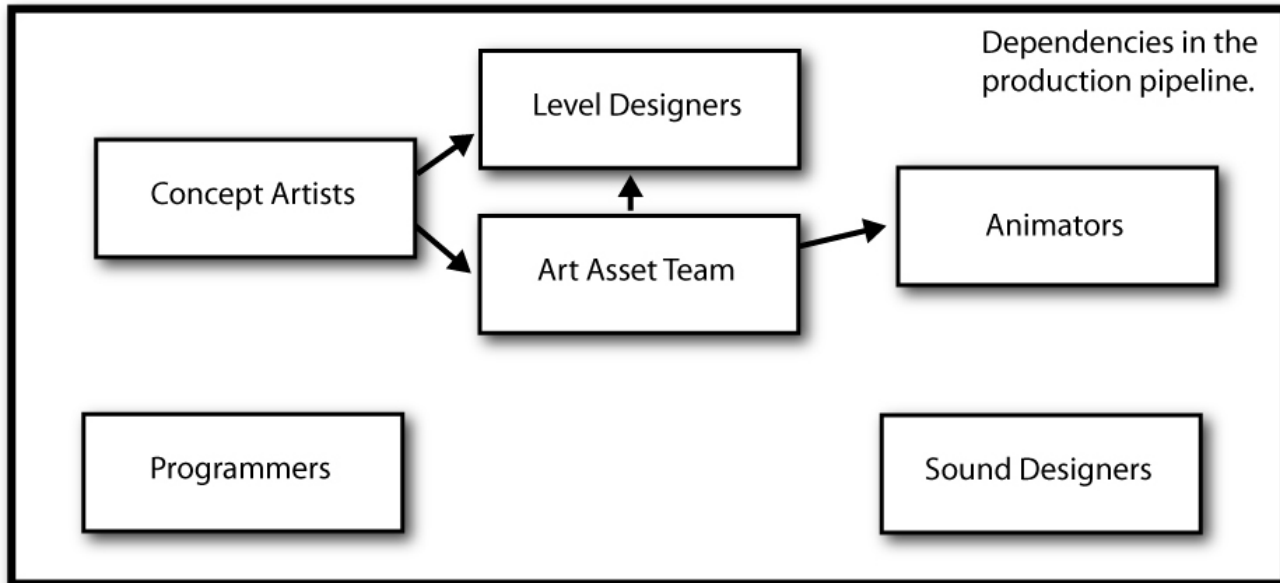
The Production Pipeline

The production pipeline in any video game project is as delicate as it is robust. Production pipelines show the team how the large number of people are all working in conjunction to produce a video game. The production pipeline utilized by the Chico State Game Studios project is no different. The production pipeline for this class works as follows:

- Concept art is generated by concept artists and is given to level designers and modelers.
- Models are generated based on concept art. While modelers are allowed creative license with the visualization of the final model, it is encouraged and preferred that they stick as closely to the original concept art as possible. When the model is complete, the modeler attaches a UV map and begins to plan the texturing process. This is a major change from previous semesters as the modeling and texturing teams have been merged to better simulate industry. Starting this semester, all or most of the members on the modeling team will be expected to texture their models as well.
- Generated models are then passed to the animation technical director, who distributes any models needing animation cycles to animators.
- Generated models are also passed to the level design technical director, where they are integrated into packages for the weekly build.
- Textures are integrated into packages by the level design technical director.
- The programming technical director gives his/her updated code to the assistant director, where they both combine it with the levels, UKX, UTX, and USX packages. Once they are satisfied with the build they pass it on to the director.

If at any stage something does not get approved, then it is sent back to the previous position in the pipeline.

Dependencies and bottlenecks are bound to appear in any production pipeline. Learn to recognize where these dependencies and bottlenecks are so that you can develop a plan to mitigate them.



Job Descriptions

Producer

Your faculty sponsor for this class is your *producer*. In this context, the producer is the member of the team that has the following responsibilities:

- The producer issues the final grades for the course. All grade disputes need to be directed to the producer.
- The producer has the final say in any issues or disputes that arise in the class.
- The producer serves as the advisor for the entire team. You are welcome at any time to ask the producer any questions or voice any concerns you have about the project.

Director

The director of the project is an upperclassman who has served on the project for more than one semester. The director is expected to be a responsible, personable, and knowledgeable individual who works well leading large groups

and has strong communication skills. The director is also expected to be a strong problem-solver, have a love for video games and the process of making them, and to have unparalleled respect for his/her fellow teammates. Serving as director of a Chico State Game Studios project is an extremely large task and is not recommended for students taking heavy academic course loads. The director has the following responsibilities:

- The director is the primary decision maker on the project. Most questions should be directed to the director unless they require the direct attention of the producer.
- The director manages day-to-day operation. He/She makes sure that teams are working well together and that any technical or personnel issues are addressed as they arise.
- The director holds a direct responsibility to the producer, and reports on a weekly basis to the producer about the status of the project.
- The director interprets the story and provides vision and direction to the other team members.
- The director works directly with the assistant director as buildmaster.
- The director sets standards for the project in regards to technical aspects such as polygon count and texture resolution, as well as provides specifications for levels, objects, triggers, and other game functions to the team.

Assistant Director

The responsibilities of the assistant director are very similar to those of the director, and in many occasions, the assistant director may act as director if the director is unavailable. Because of this reason, it is imperative that the assistant director and director are able to communicate on a daily basis about the status of the project. E-mail, instant messenger, and online forum communications are required between the assistant director and the director. Both entities must make an effort to ensure that communications are consistent and thorough.

However, the assistant director's primary task is to act as project manager. The assistant director has the following major responsibilities:

- The assistant director creates and manages the timeline for the course. It is the responsibility of the assistant director to not only ensure that the class adheres to the timeline, but to modify the timeline if deadlines or milestones are missed.

- The assistant director is the primary hub for paperwork. It is the responsibility of the assistant director to make sure that all paperwork is organized and accounted for and all scheduling is done and published in a place where the team can access it. Assistant directors are also responsible for organizing and checking off turn-in sheets and homework.
- The assistant director communicates frequently with the technical directors about scheduling and goal setting.
- The assistant director works directly with the director as buildmaster.
- The assistant director provides assistance when needed in the above mentioned *director* responsibilities.

Technical Director

The Chico State Game Studio's team is broken up into sub-teams according to tasks. These sub teams are directed by a technical director, who interfaces with the director, producer, and other technical directors. He/She also ensures that the work being produced for the game is suitable. Technical directors are required for each of the following sub-teams: modeling, texturing, level design, programming, and animation. The technical director's primary role is to provide help, direction, and structure to his or her group.

The technical director is also expected to ensure that all the teammates are producing work that is in line with each other and the overall project vision. A technical director should probably be spending approximately 20 - 30% of his or her time on administration tasks and the rest producing work.

The technical director is also responsible for encouraging and facilitating communication between sub-teams. It is important that the sub-groups do not feel like they are not allowed or forbidden to interact with one another. Remember, each sub-group is part of the whole CSGS team, and must be communicating with one another to ensure smooth workflow.

The responsibilities of the technical director are as follows:

- The technical director reports to the director and/or assistant director on a weekly basis, or multiple times per week if necessary.
- The technical director directs a team in implementing the director's specifications and vision.
- The technical director provides **quality assurance** with all content created

by their respective teams, and therefore ensures that models, levels, textures, scripts, et cetera meet the provided specifications.

CSGS Team Member

As a CSGS team member, you will be working with a technical director to complete weekly tasks for the Chico State Game Studios project. It is the responsibility of the CSGS team member to keep the lines of communication open between them and their technical director. If any issues arise, the CSGS team member is encouraged to speak not only to their technical director, but to the assistant director, director, and producer as needed.

The primary responsibilities of the CSGS team member are as follows:

- The CSGS team member works in a specialized group to create professional-quality content for the module.
- The CSGS team member is encouraged to learn new techniques and apply them in a professional environment.
- The CSGS team member is expected to build solid teamwork skills, including how to communicate in a professional environment.
- The CSGS team member is expected to provide quality content in a timely manner.

Musician and Sound Effects Technician

Musicians generally tend to work separately from the main fold of game development; such has been the case throughout most of the iterations of CSGS projects.

Creating music is a very individualistic activity, and, for most cases, the musician can be given an animation or a demo, or even just a description of the mood required, and he or she is then able to produce the music.

Therefore, the musician and sound effects team members usually do not have a technical director assigned to them, instead reporting to the director, assistant director, or both. It is the responsibility of the director to provide the musicians on the project with vision and direction, and the responsibility of the musicians to provide quality content in a timely manner.

CSGS Sub-Groups and Meeting Details

Art Asset Team (Modeling/Texturing)

These days in the video game industry, modelers are expected to be able to texture their own models. Because of this trend, we have merged the modeling and texturing teams. Thus, the Art Asset Team is born.

The art asset team is responsible for the creation of every model exhibited in the game, from complex models like characters to more simple ones like rocks, trees, et cetera. They are the primary force behind the visualization of the art style for the project. The art asset team has the most dependencies of all of the sub-teams. It is imperative that the art asset team is organized, efficient, and in good communications with the other teams, especially the ones that are depending on content from them.

Members of the art asset team will be expected to have strong modeling skills, in addition to experience with Photoshop, ZBrush, BodyPaint, or other relevant programs. The role of the artist is extremely important in a video game project as the artist is one of the primary influences on the player's interpretation of the look and feel of the game. An artist's primary inspiration comes from the images generated by the concept artists in pre-production.

There are many different jobs in a range of difficulty on the art asset team, making it a great starting point for fledgling and experienced modelers alike. Make sure you communicate with your technical director about your skill and comfort levels.

Animation Team

Animators are vital to an effective, convincing video game. Have you ever played a video game with poor walk and run cycles? It's undeniably distracting. Conversely, a game with excellent animation tends to act smoother and is a generally more enjoyable experience.

Good animation is not easy. Make sure if you are interested in joining the animation team that you have either had experience animating in 3D or you have taken *APCG 340 Computer Animation* and/or *APCG 545 Advanced Animation Production*. An understanding of walk/run cycles, timing, weight, and anticipation are also excellent qualities in an animator.

Level Design Team

Good level design is one of the telltale signs of a successful game. If you like to create large worlds for people to explore, then level design is for you.

Level designers are versatile, capable of anticipating the many ways a player



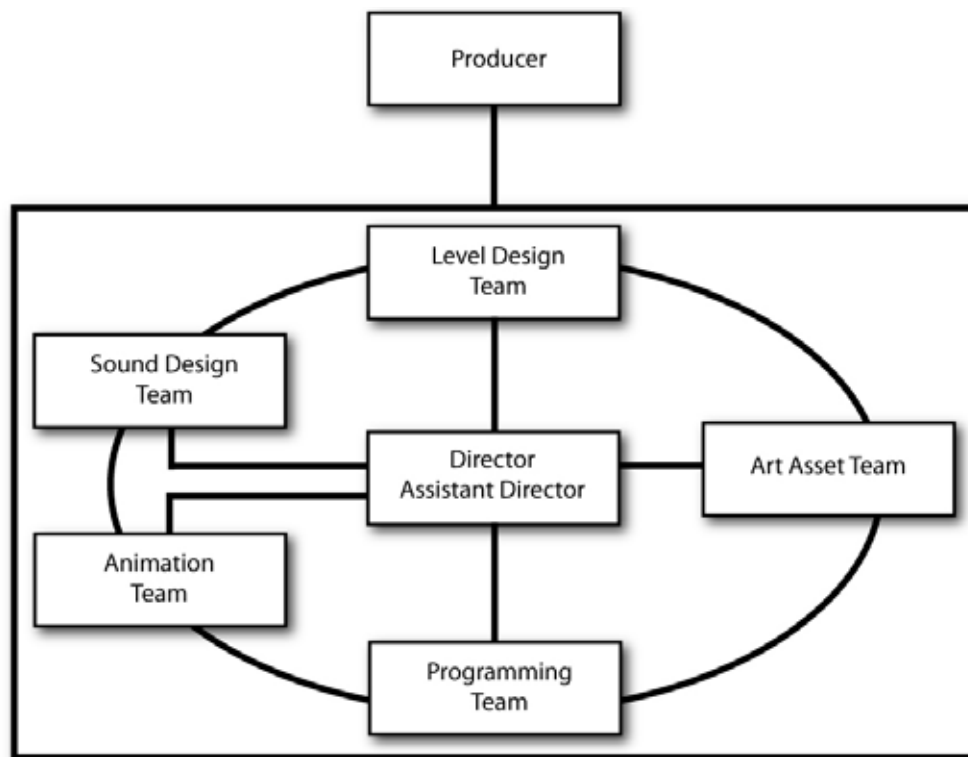
could navigate through a level. Not only that, but a good level designer knows when to give the user power-ups, health, and other goodies while keeping the difficulty at an acceptable level.

Level designers should be organized, able to visualize and plan ahead, able to think spatially on a large scale, and able to communicate their ideas to their fellow teammates.

Programming Team

Games obviously won't work without programmers telling the game what to do and when to do it. Are you a Computer Graphics Programming or APCG Technical major looking for a challenge? Do you love coding? Then the programming team is waiting for you!

While all sub-teams are equally important in the production of a good video game, it is the programming team that implements the rules, weapons, and other features that make the game unique and playable. Programmers have historically had a lot of work on their hands for Chico State Game Studio's projects, so make sure your schedule facilitates the extra time that this class is likely to take.



A workflow diagram. All teams are encouraged to communicate with each other, with the director, assistant director, and with the producer.

Meeting Details

It's already been touched upon in this manual: this class is going to be demanding, and is going to require you to meet with your teammates multiple times a week. The following is a *minimal* recommendation for meetings per week with the team:

- The director and assistant director are to meet with the Producer at minimum once per week.
- The director and assistant director are to meet with the technical directors at minimum once per week. Additional meetings are encouraged and acceptable.
- Technical directors are to meet with their team members at minimum once per week for a team weekly, where progress and troubleshooting will be discussed.
- All team members (director, assistant director, technical director, and teams) will meet once per week in a group discussion lead by the director. Groups are to present their progress in that week. Authors of the content are to present their contributions to the project.

In summary:

- Directors and assistant directors will face three meetings per week at minimum.
- Technical Directors will face three meetings per week at minimum.
- Teams will face two meetings per week at minimum.



Common Pitfalls and Solutions

My Ego Could Beat Up Your Ego

These days, the game industry is considered the coolest of the cool. You can now introduce yourself at social functions by saying that you develop computer games. Ten years ago, you would have ended up sitting in the corner with the other dorks, discussing the merits of gameplay and assembly-language

programming. Now even Dilbert, king of the dorks, is cool.

So, it's only natural to suppose that the industry attracts more than its fair share of gargantuan egos. Does this sound familiar to you? How many of your fellow classmates have egos the size of a minor planet? How many of them are convinced that they are the best game designers since the dawn of man? How many of them are childishy adverse to criticism and protect their work and their ideas with zeal beyond the rational, even when they are wrong and have been presented with a clearly superior solution (such as yours, of course)?

Game developers also tend to be very individualistic and very bright. But these things can be a problem as much as an asset. Such qualities can, if not managed, spark a team dynamic (or more exactly an "antidynamic") that is disastrous to your project.

All that being said, the most common pitfall for a project of this nature is **EGO**. Everyone has one, and some are bigger than others, and they are often the first thing to hinder the creative process in a video game project. Egos are vital to self-confidence, and self-confidence is vital to creating strong, inspired, and creative works in a team. However, an overactive or out-of-control ego can administer a death blow to an otherwise healthy and functional project.

Seriously, what sucks more than having to deal with someone who spends more time bragging about their work than actually producing it?

Our best advice? Don't be that someone. It's healthy to think highly of yourself, but don't do it at the expense of your teammates. You're not the boss of them, they're not the boss of you, and neither of you are more worthy of being on the team than the other. A big ego can hurt a project, a friendship, and a class faster than you can say *superiority complex*.

Keep those egos in check, boys and girls. It can only help your working environment, not to mention your relationship with your classmates.

The Curse of the Epic!

Alright, so you're the best game designer/ animator/ modeler/ programmer/ level designer since sliced bread. You also have incredibly high goals for yourself. You *know* you can do them. You *know* you can make the best darn game ever created. World of Warcraft? *Childs play*. Blizzard will be *begging* you to work for their company after you're done with this masterpiece. This game/program/animation/et cetera is going to be **EPIC**.

Okay, come back to Earth.



One of the most prominent obstacles that plagues the fledgling computer graphics artist/programmer is something called the Curse of the Epic. Everything is totally new, everything is totally exciting, and *man*, with all the cool new tools you now know, you could make *anything!* Finally, after all of this work learning about process and struggling with all the tools, you're finally at a point where you can actually make something! Any computer graphics enthusiast can tell you that they've felt that rush before, and any computer graphics enthusiast can tell you that it was the most exhilarating and dangerous feeling ever.

It's awesome to push your boundaries. It's necessary to keep pushing yourself to new heights. You're still learning. Heck, we all are. But don't let *World's Most Revolutionary Game Syndrome* doom your project. We all have to do it once or twice in our lives, that's for sure, but don't do it at a time when you've got twenty other people depending on you.

Long story short, you deserve to use this time to push yourself to new levels of success, but be responsible about it. Push yourself to the point of growing, not of breaking.

Clogging the Lines of Communication

It's common knowledge that communication is important. In the game industry, communication is paramount. Communication can lead to the success or utter demise of a project, as many professionals can attest.

Communicating with your peers in a constructive, kind way, not to mention *punctually*, is really hard. Most of you are taking between twelve and eighteen units. That's a lot of course work. So, when you get home after a twelve hour day and you've got a test tomorrow and a paper due the following day and you're sure that your head is going to explode, do you really need to toss that update e-mail to your director or teammates?

Oh, you bet you do.

What takes you a couple of minutes to do can save you hours of headache. Previous Chico State Game Studios game projects have seen their fair share of trouble because the lines of communication became clogged as the semester progressed. It may seem trivial, but if everyone knows what everyone else is doing, very little can be left to the imagination. And when that imagination is running on two hours of sleep, a couple of cans of Red Bull, five cups of coffee, and a general sense of overload, it might not come up with the most flattering reason why you didn't e-mail when you said you would.

Save yourself—and your teammates—the guesswork. Let everyone know what you're doing when you're supposed to. Directors, keep those lines of

communication open and make sure your teammates know that they're part of a *team*. If you have a concern, suggestion, praise, whatever, make sure you voice it. Everyone will feel better that you did.

Everyone Contributes to the Game

This does not mean that everyone will literally participate in the design process, but it does mean that in this project, each and every member of the team is able to contribute their special talents to the articulation and execution of the design at whatever level they may have been involved.

In some cases, this may just mean that every suggestion is always received with respect and consideration. In other cases, it may mean that the director actively solicits input from the team when making decisions about the design. Different situations will call for different solutions. But the end result should be that everyone who works on the game should have a sense of authorship on the final product, and be able to say with pride about some aspect of the experience, "I worked on that."

We all have ideas about what the perfect game is. Make sure that you realize that your input is valuable, but that some things just can't change, and that it is the director's decision to decide what can and cannot change. If the director decides that your idea is not feasible, *never* take it personally. It is *never* meant personally. It is the job of the director to understand what is in the best interest for the game as a whole. If your idea doesn't fit with the director's vision, don't despair. This is the way of the game industry. Take good notes of your idea and try to use it the next time around.

Lastly, make sure that you are actively contributing to the project no matter what position you hold on the team. Without your efforts running at 100%, the project *will* suffer. If for some reason you cannot do the work that has been assigned to you, make sure that it gets properly passed to someone else.

Meetings, Glorious Meetings

Conducting a good meeting can be very challenging. Meetings are the best way of getting your team members to communicate. Face it, most of us do better communicating in-person. But conducting meetings is not as simple as gathering your teammates together in a classroom and beginning a conversation. You need to structure the meeting so that it produces the desired results.

If you are calling a meeting, someone (usually a director or technical director) will need to set the agenda. The best meetings are ones for which there is a definite goal, everyone knows the goal ahead of time so that they can come prepared, and by the resolution of the meeting the goal has been

accomplished. If you don't have a clear agenda in mind, you are likely to waste everyone's time and accomplish very little in your meeting.

If you are asked to participate in a meeting, you will need to come prepared. Find out the agenda and goal and make sure you have all the material you will need in order to contribute. If you don't come prepared to a meeting, you will also be wasting other team members' time and have very little to contribute.

At the meeting, the person who called it will most likely function as the discussion leader. This person may designate other individuals to run certain parts of the meeting, but it's still up to the discussion leader to keep the meeting on track and moving toward the goal.

Many of the rules of meetings involve personal and social skills. No one should be left out of the conversation intentionally, and those who speak should be able to do so without being criticized. No personal attacks are permitted. If anyone makes a personal remark, they should be warned, and if it continues, they should be asked to leave the meeting. Make it clear that differences of opinion are helpful in sorting out the problem, and allow people to approach the same topic from multiple angles.

As the meeting draws to a close, you should make sure to review the decisions that have been made and any action items that have been assigned to the team. If the discussion requires a follow-up meeting, determine when it will be and make sure that everyone will have time to prepare for that follow-up. And last, if you have called the meeting, you should always send out notes and reminders of the decisions and assignments to the participants and to any key team members who were unable to attend.

Can't We All Just Get Along?

A great team doesn't materialize in the first week of a project. It takes time and the right environment to grow. The following reminders can help you to establish a great working environment from the beginning and make sure that your team has the potential to come together as the project moves forward.

Everyone Belongs

Make sure that everyone feels as if they're part of the team. Many times cliques form and no one realizes it. This is especially apparent to new team members, who often feel left out. Do your best to avoid excluding anyone.

Fairness

Showing favoritism demoralizes and excludes those who are on the outside. When working in a team, try to treat all team members according to the same set of rules.

Cooperation

Emphasize hard work and cooperation. Try to build a culture where everyone is committed to working together to produce the best game possible.

Goals

Achieving a goal gives us a sense of completion that can re-invigorate us for the next leg of the race. But often the big goals—the major milestones of a production are months apart and filled with stressful moments. Don't hang the morale of the team on these major milestones, instead, set mini, internal deliverables along the way. Publicize the completion of these mini-deliverables within the team to boost confidence and re-energize the team.

Results

Define success. Point out what success and failure mean in terms of the class and the video game. Provide a mechanism for monitoring results, and make sure each team member knows exactly how they fit into the overall success of the class.

Tracking

Make sure that everyone is on the same schedule and adheres to a single plan. Many times one group's deliverables are contingent upon another's. Bring the groups together at the start, even if they are in totally different sub-groups, and open up the channels of communication whereby everyone in the class can track the progress of everyone else. This way each group can adjust their schedules accordingly.

Responsibility

Make sure each group knows what its tasks are and accepts responsibility for deliverables and deadlines.

Roles

Make sure every individual knows his or her role. All team members should have a clear idea about what is expected of them. Also, everyone in the class should know who to turn to for various functions. Clarify any confusion in roles or overlapping duties. Allow people to take ownership and fulfill their obligations to the other team members.

Evaluation

Set up a mechanism by which individuals and groups are evaluated. Both directors and peers should be involved in the evaluation process, and it should be based on clear criteria so that everyone feels it is as fair and accurate as possible. The evaluation should then be delivered in an open and constructive environment so that it helps the team member to improve and become better integrated with the team.

Delegate

Some decisions should be made from the top down, but not all. Good managers delegate decisions and monitor results. Let your teammates know that you trust them give them the freedom to make mistakes. Teams run from the top down can be bottlenecked and inefficient.

Diversity

Accept that different people have different cultural backgrounds, personalities, outlooks, skills, strengths, and weaknesses. Encourage everyone to be themselves. Don't look for one type of person, but look for the best in each person. Try to find jobs that suit each individual and allow them to contribute the most they can to the team effort.

Communication

Make sure there's lateral as well as vertical communication. Problems should be addressed between groups. Structure your teams to that they are constantly talking to each other. Schedule weekly or even daily meetings between and within groups. Every group should know what every other group is doing and who to talk to if there is a problem. Make these details public and distribute them to every member of your team.

Support

Ensure that each group has the support it needs to get the job done, whether it is technical support, computer equipment, training, et cetera. Monitor this and have a way for groups to obtain the support they're lacking.

Honesty

Encourage an environment where people accept blame for their mistakes. Make it an issue of pride to stand up and admit that you made an error. Discourage blame shifting and political games. Foster a culture of honesty by holding up examples of people who take responsibility for their actions.

Get To Know Your Teammates

Understanding your role in a team and having the interpersonal skills to work within a team structure are as important as any part of a game design project. Game development is a collaborative art, and game teams are getting larger and more complex every day. Take the time to practice your team-building skills before you are thrown into a maelstrom of production.

Take the time to understand the roles of the other team members and to learn to communicate with them. Make sure they know who you are and what your role is in the production. Participate at the highest level possible in team discussions—always come prepared, and focus your input towards achieving the goals of the

meeting. Whether you're just starting, or you're leading the team, be the best team member you possibly can, and your contribution will act as an inspiration to others.

Supplemental forms for Directors, Assistant Directors and Technical Directors

On the following pages you will find templates for forms commonly used in the Chico State Game Studios project.

1. Attendance and Weekly Goals Spreadsheet

More templates to come!

