

# WHAT TO TEACH ABOUT VIRTUAL WORLDS?

**FAVE 1**

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## INTRODUCTION

- WHEN I WAS **FIRST** ASKED TO RUN A WORKSHOP ON “VIRTUAL WORLDS AND **EDUCATION**”, I SAID NO
  - WELL, ACTUALLY IT WAS MORE LIKE **NO!**
- I DIDN'T WANT TO SPEND **HALF A DAY** DISCUSSING HOW TO USE VIRTUAL WORLDS TO **TEACH** PEOPLE STUFF
- THAT'S NOT WHAT WAS **MEANT**, THOUGH!
  - THE INTENDED SUBJECT WAS WHAT WE SHOULD TEACH **ABOUT** VIRTUAL WORLDS

## VIRTUAL WORLDS

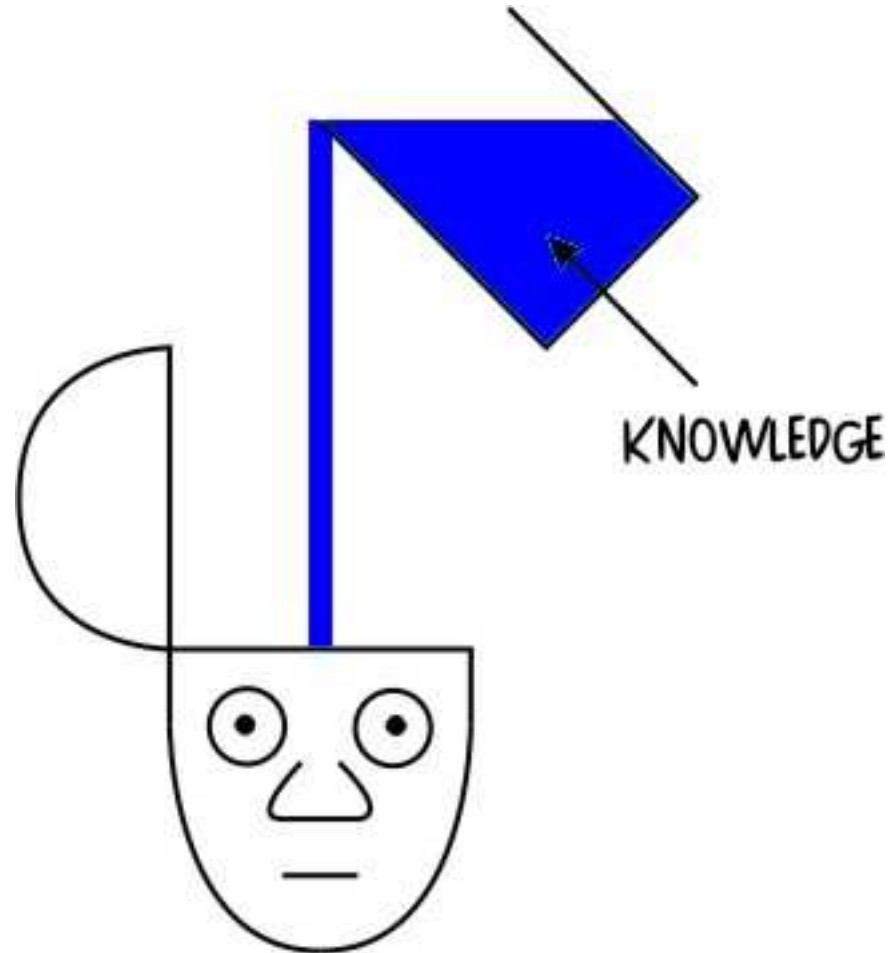
- VIRTUAL WORLDS COME IN **TWO** MAIN TYPES:
- **GAME** WORLDS
  - SUCH AS *WORLD OF WARCRAFT*
  - ALSO KNOWN AS MMORPGS OR **MMOS**
- **SOCIAL** WORLDS
  - SUCH AS *SECOND LIFE*
  - ALSO KNOWN AS, ER, VIRTUAL WORLDS...
- WE OUGHT TO COVER **BOTH**
  - BUT EXPECT MMOS TO ATTRACT THE MOST STUDENTS

## PAST WORK

- THERE IS VERY **LITTLE** WRITTEN ON THE SUBJECT OF WHAT TO TEACH ABOUT MMOS
- ITS **MAINLY** PIONEERED BY **INDIVIDUALS**
  - I TEACH A 30-CREDIT **MODULE** ON THE SUBJECT
  - I KNOW OF **ONE** UK UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE SCHEME IN IT
    - MY MODULE PROBABLY HAS MORE MMO CONTENT...
- THERE ARE BASICALLY **TWO** APPROACHES:
  - TRAINING – DELIVERING WHAT INDUSTRY **WANTS**
  - EDUCATION – DELIVERING WHAT INDUSTRY **NEEDS**

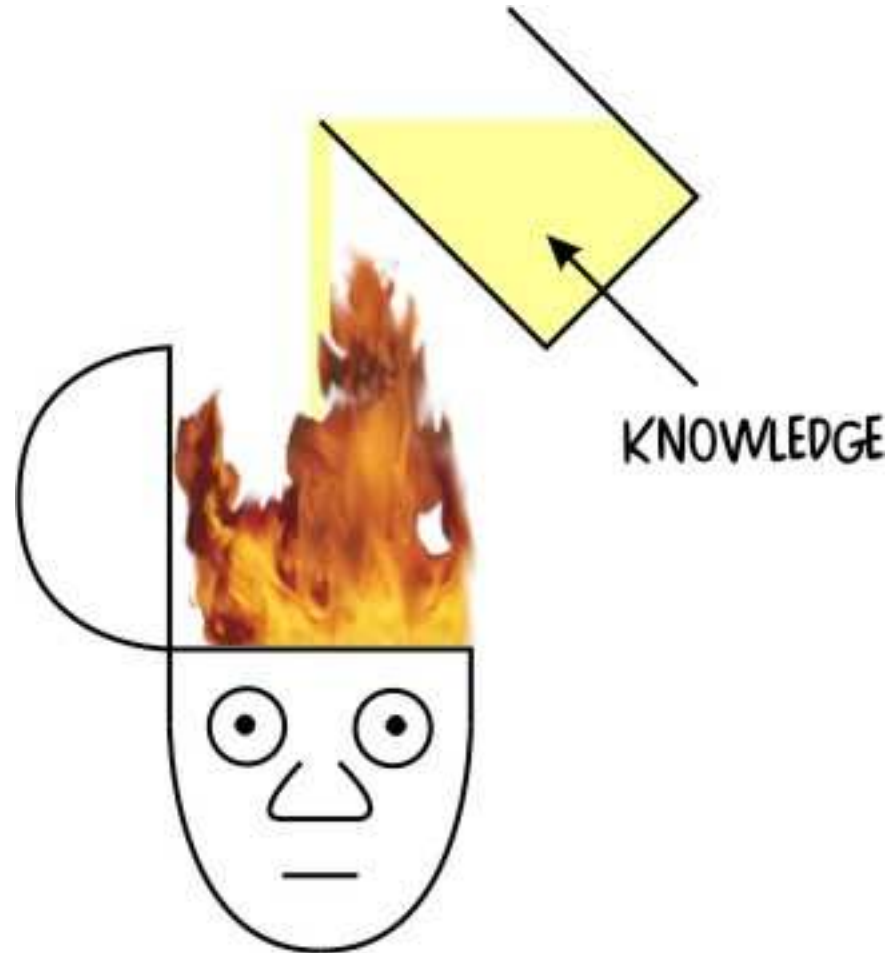
## TRAINING

- VESSEL TO BE FILLED



## EDUCATION

- FIRE TO BE KINDLED



## WHAT INDUSTRY WANTS

- I WENT TO **THREE** SENIOR PEOPLE WHO WORK IN THE MMO INDUSTRY **RIGHT NOW**
  - TWO AMERICAN, ONE EUROPEAN
- I TOLD THEM I WAS GIVING THIS **WORKSHOP**
  - I SAID YOU'D **BELIEVE** ANYTHING I TOLD YOU, SO WHATEVER THEY ASKED FOR, THEY'D EVENTUALLY GET
- I ASKED THEM WHAT THEY THOUGHT SHOULD BE ON A **CURRICULUM**
  - WHETHER BACHELOR'S OR MASTER'S LEVEL
- WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY **REPLIED?**

## INDUSTRY RESPONSE

- THEY WERE UNABLE TO COME UP WITH **ANYTHING** EVEN **REMOTELY** CONCRETE
  - EVEN **VAGUE OPINION** HAD TO BE WRUNG FROM THEM
- THE MMO INDUSTRY **DOESN'T KNOW** WHAT IT WANTS
  - IT JUST KNOWS WHEN IT DOESN'T **GET** IT
- THIS MEANS TRAINING ALONE IS **NOT** YET AN OPTION
- WE HAVE TO GO WITH **EDUCATION** TOO



## OTHER FIELDS

- HOW DO **RELATED** FIELDS DO IT?
- THE **FILM** INDUSTRY HAS MANY SIMILARITIES WITH THE MMO INDUSTRY
  - EVEN A FICTION/DOCUMENTARY **SCHISM** LIKE GAME/SOCIAL
- THE #1 RATED FILM SCHOOL IN THE USA IS AT **UCLA**
- SO, I TOOK A LOOK AT  
[HTTP://WWW.TFT.UCLA.EDU/PROGRAMS/UNDERGRADUATE-FILM/ABOUT/](http://www.tft.ucla.edu/programs/undergraduate-film/about/)

## WHAT THEY SAY #1

- UCLA's Department of Film, Television, and Digital Media offers programs of study in the history and theory as well as the creative and technical aspects of the moving image. The department provides a scholarly, creative, and professional approach to the study of these media and seeks to help each student discover his or her powers as an independent artist and communicator.

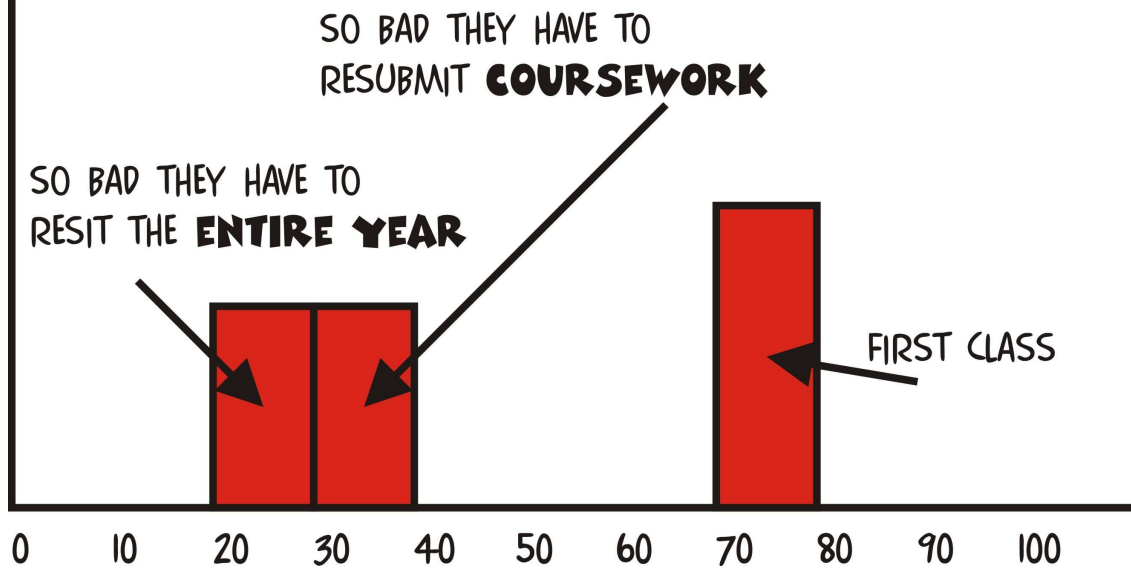
## WHAT THEY SAY #2

- UCLA's Department of Film, Television and Digital empowers the creative innovators of tomorrow by training them in all aspects of the arts and crafts of the moving image, from the aesthetic to the technological. At the same time, the Department explores the best work of past masters of film and television in Cinema and Media Studies courses, and encourages students to aspire to similar accomplishments. We affirm the importance of storytelling as the form in which human beings give weight and meaning to the most important passage of their lives.

## RICH

- AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS IS A **RICH** COURSE
- UCLA GETS TO **PUT ON** THIS KIND OF COURSE BECAUSE IT ATTRACTS **INTELLIGENT** AND **ENTHUSIASTIC** STUDENTS
  - IT **ATTRACTS** THEM BECAUSE IT'S #1
  - IT'S #1 **BECAUSE** IT ATTRACTS THEM...
- AROUND **40%** OF MY GAMES STUDENTS LAST YEAR WERE INTELLIGENT AND ENTHUSIASTIC
  - THE REST WERE LACKING IN **ONE** OR **BOTH** OF THESE AREAS

## GRAPH



- THIS IS HOW THE RESULTS OF MY FINAL-YEAR STUDENTS THIS YEAR BROKE DOWN
- NO THIS IS **NOT** A JOKE..!

## AVERAGE

- THE **AVERAGE** SEEMS TO BE THAT MAYBE **10%** OF COMPUTER GAMES STUDENTS HAVE A **FUTURE** WORKING IN/ON/WITH GAMES
- BUT GOOD NEWS!
- NO-ONE **REALLY** TEACHES THIS STUFF, SO **YOU** GET TO SET UP THE FIRST COURSES
  - **YOU** GET TO ATTRACT THE INTELLIGENT AND ENTHUSIASTIC STUDENTS
  - **YOU** GET TO BUILD THAT NICE FEEDBACK LOOP!

## A PARADIGM

- THE WAY FILM COURSES TEND TO WORK,  
**EVERYONE** GETS TAUGHT THE **BASICS**
  - DIRECTING, SCREENWRITING, ACTING,  
**CINEMATOGRAPHY**
  - PRODUCING, CASTING, EDITING, COSTUME, MAKE-UP
  - PITCHING, CRITICISM, FILM THEORY, **HISTORY**, ...
- THE SPECIALISTS ARE TAUGHT THEIR SPECIALITIES  
**ON TOP** OF THIS
  - OFTEN AS A **MASTERS**

## THE REASON

- FILM COURSES ARE LIKE THIS BECAUSE EVERYONE NEEDS TO **UNDERSTAND** WHAT EVERYONE ELSE INVOLVED IN MOVIE PRODUCTION **DOES**
  - SO THEY KNOW WHY THE CONSTRAINTS ON THEIR **OWN** WORK ARE THERE
  - SO THEY KNOW HOW **THEIR** WORK AFFECTS THE WORK OF **OTHERS**
  - SO THEY HAVE A COMMON **VOCABULARY**, CULTURE AND **UNDERSTANDING**
  - SO THEY CAN WORK AS PART OF A **TEAM**
- AT LEAST UNTIL THEY'RE **FAMOUS**, ANYWAY...



## VIRTUAL WORLDS

- THIS IS A MODEL APPROPRIATE FOR VIRTUAL WORLDS, TOO
  - TEACH THE **BASICS** TO EVERYONE, BUT THE **SPECIALITIES** TO THE SPECIALISTS
- I ASSUME THAT YOU, AS AN INDIVIDUAL, **KNOW** WHAT YOUR **OWN** SPECIALITY IS
  - DESIGN, PROGRAMMING, ART, MUSIC, CRITICISM, ...
- THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DOES **EVERYONE** WHO IS WORKING IN/ON/WITH VIRTUAL WORLDS NEED TO KNOW?

## END OF TALK

- OK, SO THIS IS WHERE THE TALK **ENDS**
  - PLEASE WAKE UP ANY **SLEEPING** PEOPLE IN YOUR VICINITY
- **NOW** WE'RE GOING TO **DO** THINGS...