



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

Confronting Games & Ethics Challenging Students to be Critical Designers

Karen Schrier -- @drgamermom
Director of Games & Emerging Media
Assistant Professor
Marist College

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





Special thanks to:

Learning, Education & Games (LEG) SIG
(join our roundtable tomorrow at 330 pm)

Gabriela Richard (UPenn)

Mark Chen (U of Wash/Pepperdine)

David Simkins (RIT)

Lee Sheldon (WPI)



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

Zzz



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17







The Physics of Basket Weaving

Accounting for Tax Forms

Biology of the Sloth

The History of Boring Lectures



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®

| FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017

| EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017

#GDC17

UBM



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

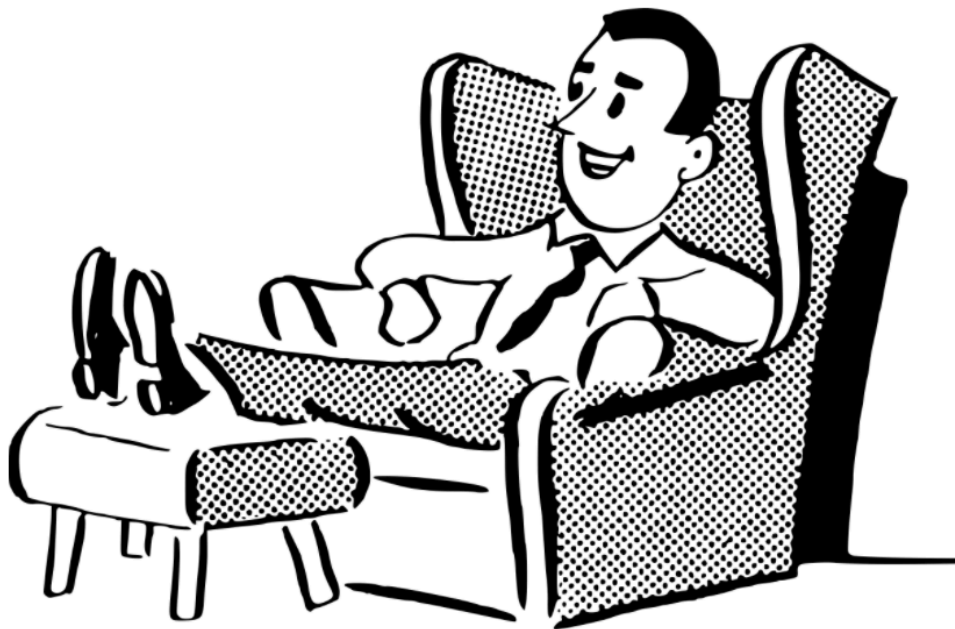
GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17

UBM





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



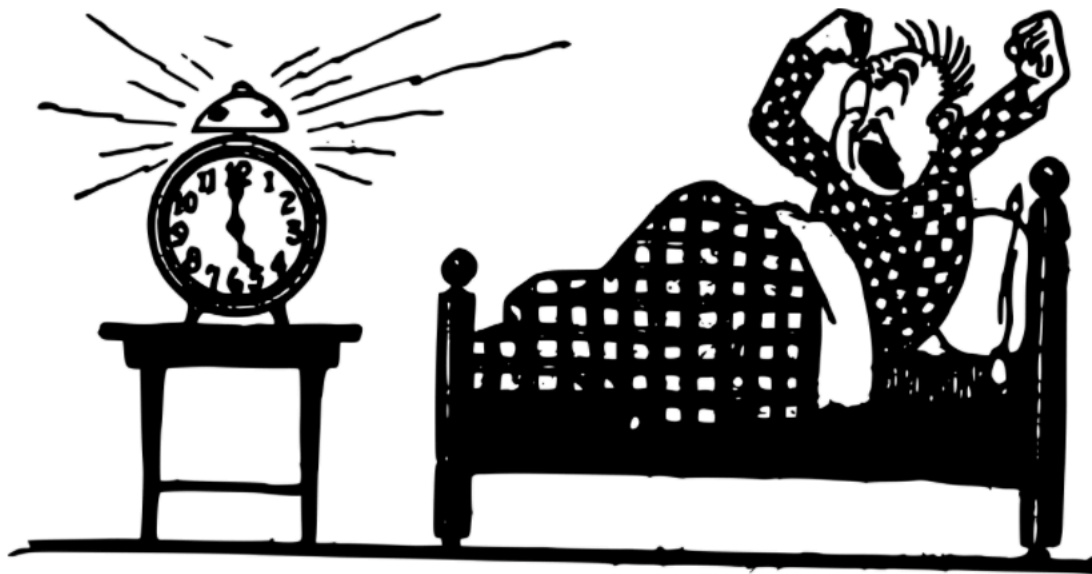
GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



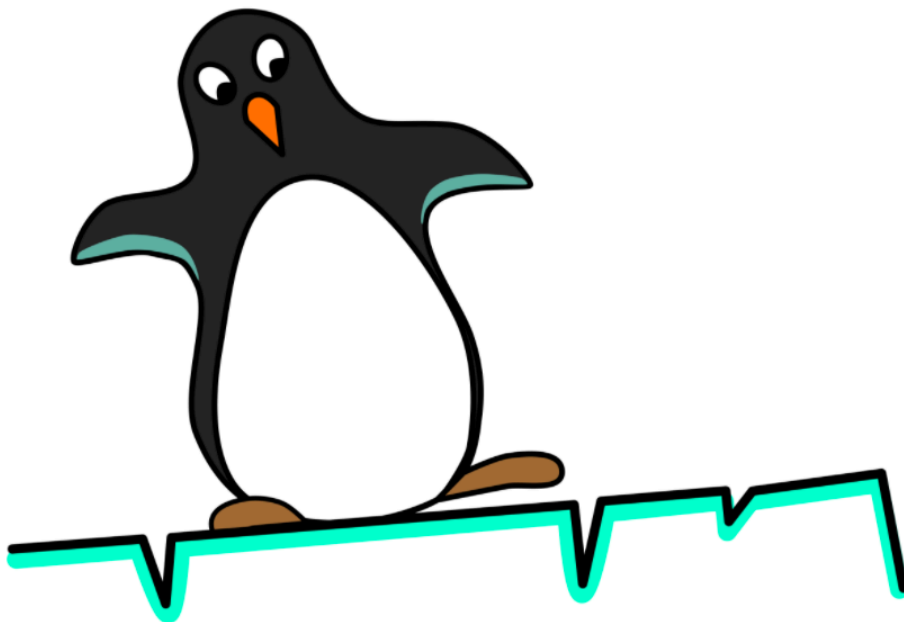
GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17

UBM



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

Ethics

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





Morality

Decisions

Right

Ethics

Wrong

Choices

Values



Virtue Ethics

Utilitarianism

Hedonism

Ethics

Feminist

Kantian



Addiction

Pay-to-play

Aggression

Ethics

Marketing
to kids

Violence

Obesity



Connection

Inclusion

Citizenship

Biases

Ethics

Compassion

Boundaries

Power

Identity



Humanity

Humanity

Humanity

Humanity

Ethics

Humanity

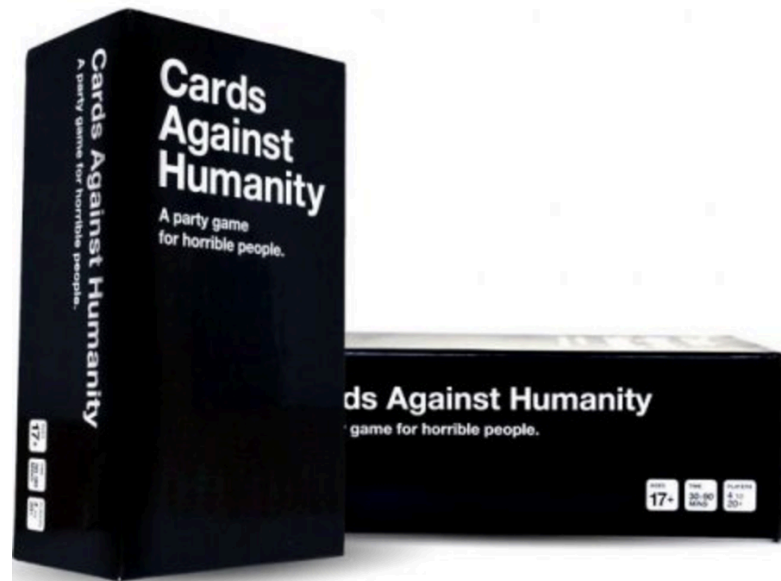
Humanity

Humanity

Humanity



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



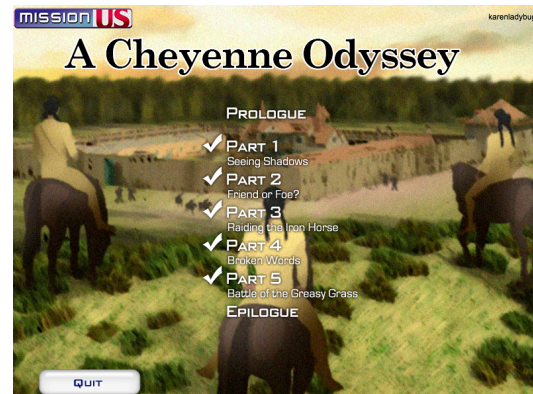
GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17

UBM



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17

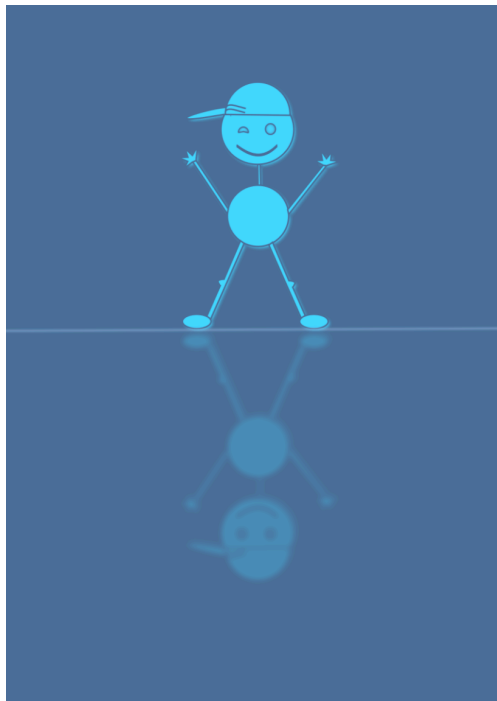




Games → G A M E S



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



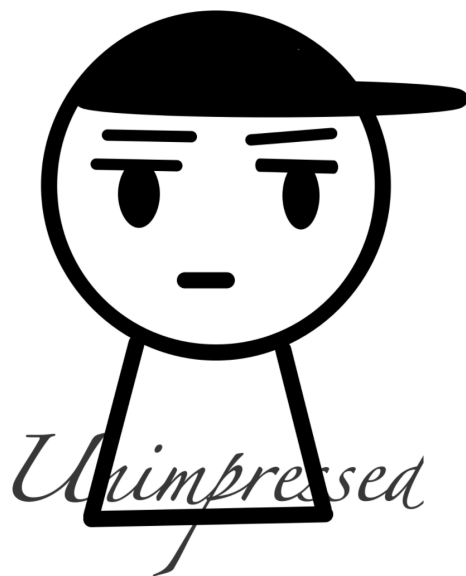
GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

Key questions?

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





What does it mean to play, design, and sell games ethically?



How should we design games about race and inclusion, belongingness and empathy?



How can we better express sexuality, identity, and/or gender through games?



To what extent should we tolerate or encourage the transgressive nature of play, and when should we emphasize responsibility? How do we safely traverse boundaries?



How can we use games to confront our presumptions or biases?



How do we evaluate the morality of behavior within the context of games, as well as in relation to out-of-game contexts?



What is the relationship among play, games, citizenship, and humanity?



What are the “right” choices to make for Lee in *The Walking Dead*?



And who the !???! do I save in
1979 Revolution?



(The fine print)

Some Learning Objectives for Game Students

- Knowledge of and application of **key ethical frameworks** to gaming topics
- Enhanced use of **ethics, social, and cultural research** to inform one's design practice
- Honed ability to **interpret games** and gaming culture, and how audiences interact with games
- Greater understanding of the **cultural significance** of games
- **Critical reflection** on one's own game playing and design practices



Key Skills

Writing, reading, ethical thinking, public presentation, analysis, interpretation, research, design, reflection, critical thinking, listening, argumentation, inclusion, cultural competency, teamwork, collaboration, communication



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT



GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17



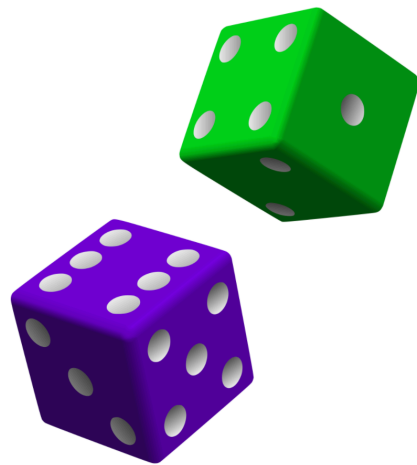


Example Exercises



#1 Make lots of games!

- Use lots of low stakes exercises
- Non-digital and digital games
- Encourage innovation
- Encourage mistakes





#1 Make lots of games!

Exercise: Choices & Consequences



#1 Make lots of games!

Exercise: Marginalized Voices



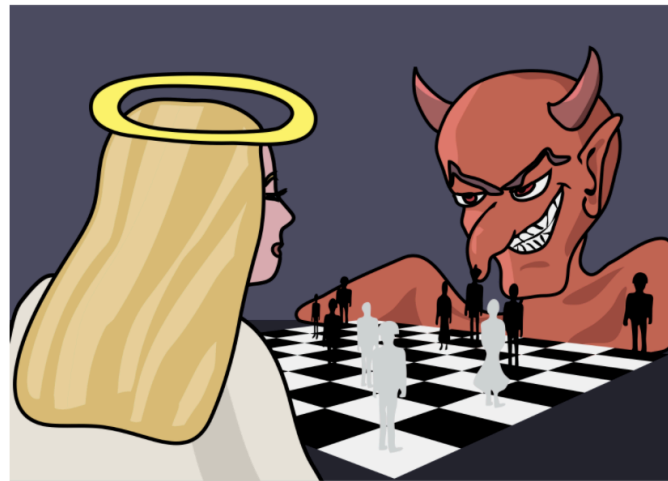
#1 Make lots of games!

Exercise: Make a Game Out of it



#2 Push Boundaries

- Encourage rule-breaking and identity shifting
- Find just the right amount of discomfort





#2 Push Boundaries

Exercise: Let Go of the Controls



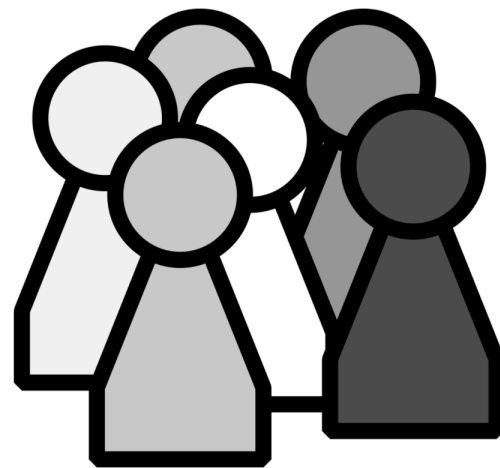
#2 Push Boundaries

Exercise: Experience Systemic Bias through Play



#3 Reflect, Deliberation & Share

- Engage in critical design
- Deliberate and debate issues
- Share findings with the public





#3 Reflect, Deliberation & Share

Exercise: Public Presentation



#3 Reflect, Deliberation & Share

Exercise: In-class Debate



#3 Reflect, Deliberation & Share

Exercise: Personal journal or blog



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

Top Tips!

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE®

| FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017

| EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017

#GDC17





#1 Create an Inclusive Classroom



#2 Integrate an Ethics Foundation



#3 Connect to Your Institution



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

#4 Play, Critique, Design

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





#5 Safe Spaces



#6 Allow Transgression



#7 Teach **Skills**, not just “skills”



#8 Use Indie or Low-Cost Games



#9 Ground the Conversation



#10 Use Multiple Lenses



#11 Opt Outs are Okay



GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

#12 Use Critical Design Models

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





GDC EDUCATION
SUMMIT

#13 Learn from Games

GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27-MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1-3, 2017 #GDC17





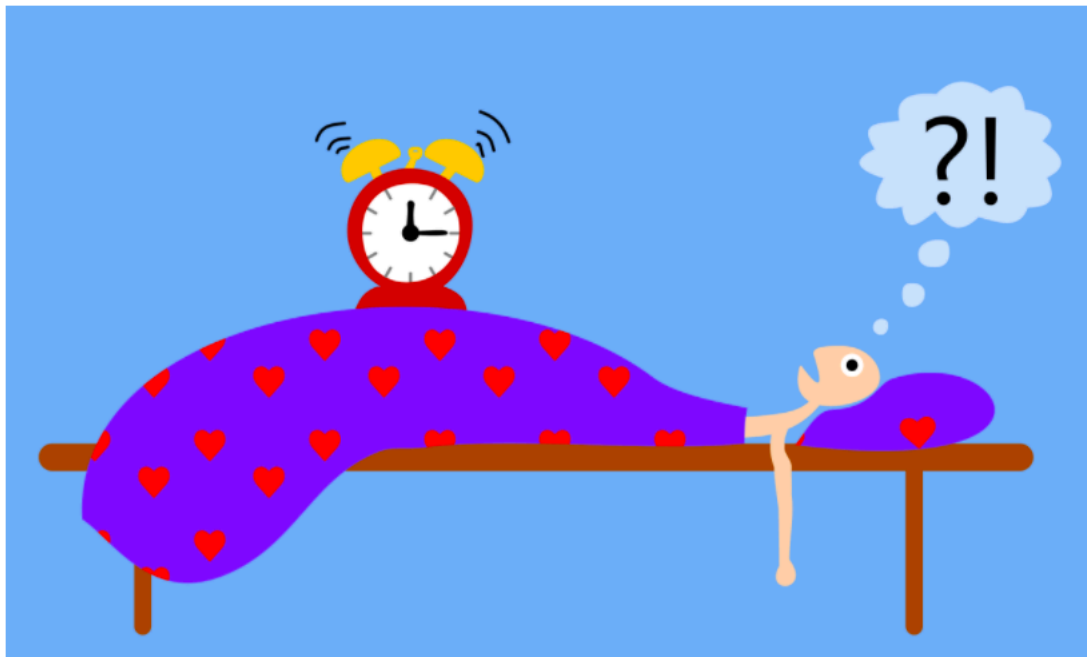
#14 Be Intersectional



#15 Let's Start with Ourselves

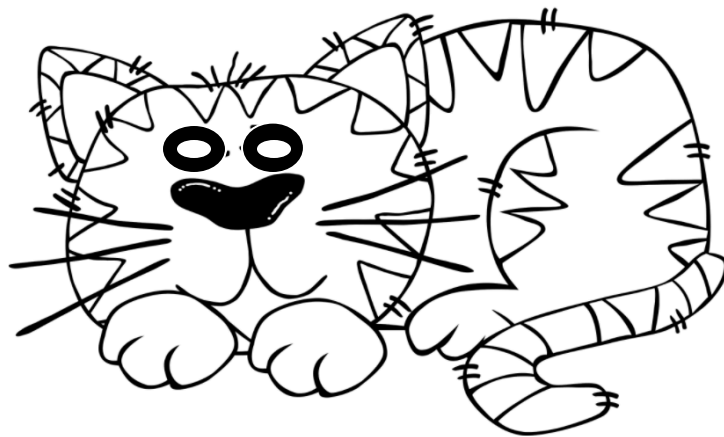


We need to get comfortable with
being a little uncomfortable.





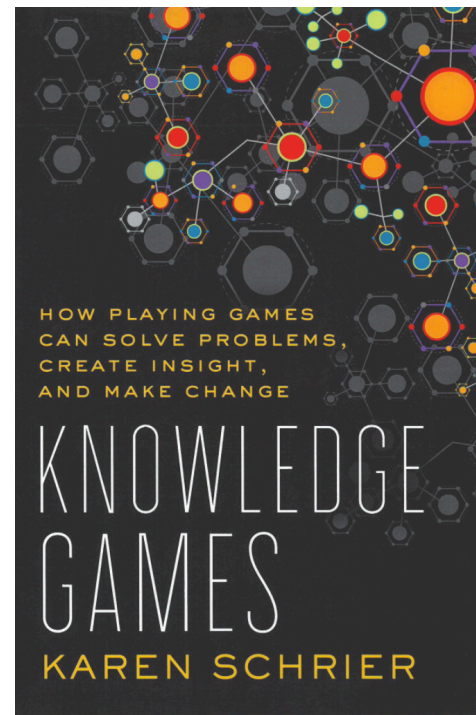
!!!!!





Want more rubrics,
exercises, games, or tools
to use? Free books?

Email me at
kschrier@gmail.com
[@drgamermom](https://twitter.com/drgamermom)





#1 Make lots of games!

Exercise: From Competition to Collaboration



Games as a way to teach critical thinking

Writing/talking about games

Game design and development process

Playing games