A New Strategy for Open-Ended Long Term Creative Projects with A La Cart Rubrics

Hunter Dyar

Assistant Professor

Chatham University

Pittsburgh, PA

Hunter Dyar

- h.dyar@chatham.edu
- me@hdyar.com
- bsky: @hdyar.com

Immersive Media at Chatham University

A la Cart Rubrics & Student Driven Production Courses

- I had a chance to create my "dream" project course… and I did!

- We designed and created new course(s) from scratch
  - 200, 300, and 400 level
  - Put all three in the same room at the same time

- The courses are paired with corequisite theory-oriented courses
  - Split 2x credit courses into 1x theory and 1x production
  - The new courses get to be completely focused on production skills

- Primary Goals:
  - Better Projects
  - Students chasing their own goals

(Traditional) Project Pedagogy Pain Points

- Grading
- Effective and Consistent Feedback
- Student Participation and Engagement
- Effort/Outcome Ratio
- Students work on the
  - valuable thing vs.
  - the right thing vs.
  - the next thing

- Student Distribution and Prioritization of Work
- Late work and resubmission
- Varying Skill Levels
- Hard to give students freedom to go wild with it

More Pain Points

- Technical Hurdles Suck
- Projects may not fail gracefully
- Don't handle absences or makeup work well ("The Snowball")
- Students might just whiff it
- Learning the hard way isn't fun
- Assessment

Analysis of self-work.

It was difficult to find resources pertaining to AR development. I tried to use standard Web search with varying prompts that would, unfortunately, lead me to AI generated garbage, or something outdated website with very limited documentation. I found that Tribeca, South by Southwest, Voices of VR, and social media websites are where it is easiest to find AR based projects. Most projects are so new, social media is the only place to find them.

I don't think I did a great job getting broad understanding of the AR field. I especially had a hard time trying to find information about storytelling in AR. If anything, I've confirmed my understanding of AR's limited use cases today. Next time for this specific research, I want to go to a museum! I want to experience more AR based projects. I don't want to watch them at home, I think it was a mistake not to try to plan something out in Pittsburgh. I want to take this forward.

Besides the form that must be filled out, another "gate keeping" decisi company made, was to make their non-consumer hardware VERY expensive. I expensive for any one person to buy and can instead be afforded by large comp institutions.

In summary, there is no "easy way" to develop with the Tobii Eye Tracke can't be used for anything outside of games and entertainment. Tobii decided development and research away from consumer hands and make it exclusive institutions. To ensure this, one must have a paid email domain and a lot of mo hardware. This is not spelled out anywhere on their multiple websites and is im Customer support will not aid in developing with their consumer hardware, as sales. If someone wants to develop with their consumer hardware, they'd have get the information from the sensors directly or find some other work around. I wants to use eye tracking or eye gaze as input, and doesn't want to go through department, it's recommended to find a camera software that will do the eye t
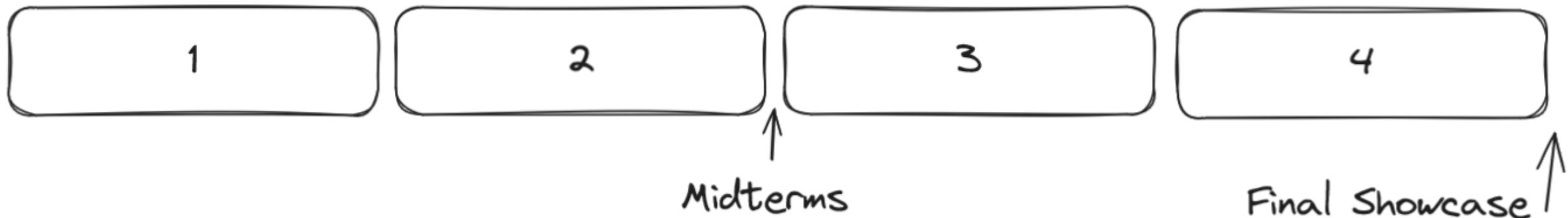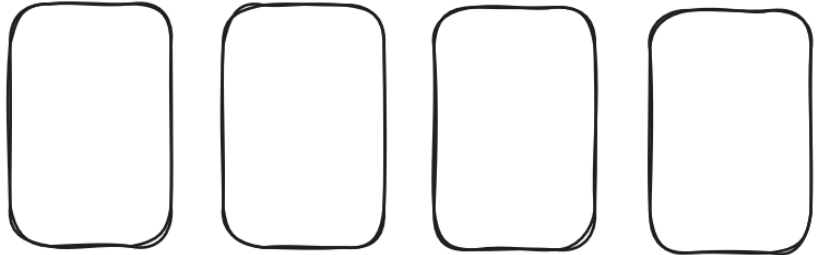
So, what?

transition slide

IMM Production Context

- Once a Week, 2.5 hours

- Split into 4 Sections, 2-5 weeks each
    - Each section is 1 assignment per week
    - Students can work on groups or independent

    - Course learning objectives
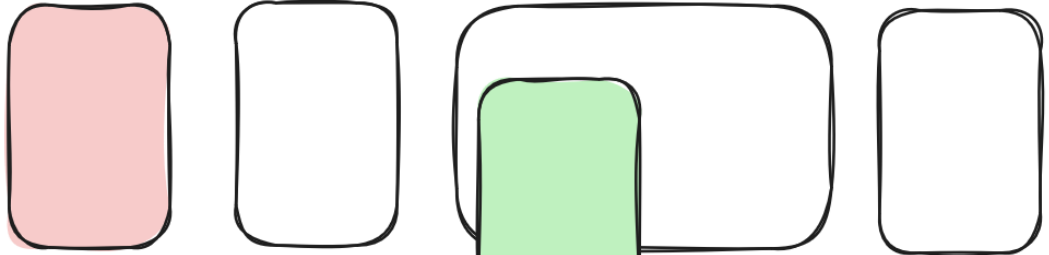   - Student provided learning objectives

Section

Self-Directed Learning

Desing Doc

Proof of Concept

Iterative Pass

Section

Desing Doc

Research Report

Prototype

Playtesting

Resubmit design doc

The Rubrics

- Design Document + Proposal
- 1/2/3 Week prototype
- Technical Proof of Concept
- Playtesting + Report
- Research Paper Report
- Iterative Pass
- Paper Playtest / Lo-Fi Speculative Prototype
- Six Sketches
- Creative Asset Development for Others

- Independent Learning + report
  - "Go figure that thing out"
- Design Research
- "Other"
- Midterm and Final Showcase

All Rubrics are:

1. Define the problem

2. Describe your chosen approach

3. Define Success

4. Document It/Report

5. *attribution, credits, bibliography, etc*

Open-Ended Projects

- Students pitch, I veto
- In-class brainstorming sessions enforce & remind learning objectives
  - *Also, these are the most fun*
- Groups or Not, depending on level/objectives
- Inter-cohort collaboration allowed.
  - *Sophomores and Seniors can work together!*
- Groups can join and split up week by week

In Class

1. Brainstorming Sessions
    1. Day One: *Identity as a Creator*
2. Feedback For Assignments (60%)
3. Mini-Lectures
    1. Students suggest topics
4. Work Time

The Class is Project Feedback

- All students learn from all projects

- Teach analysis and giving feedback

- The thing that is due is usually "prove you met your objectives"
  - A report about what was learned
  - Project has to be good enough to get surprising feedback
  - Once you've been on the wrong side of this, you *know*
  - ("brag about it")

Grades

Satisfactory

Not Satisfactory

SNSSNSSNSSNSSNSSNSSNS

- Every Assignment Gets:
  - Satisfactory or Not Satisfactory
    - *Or incomplete: NS but marked it differently so I know what's going on.*
- If it's not satisfactory, it's worth nothing. 0 points.
- But you can resubmit as much as you want!
- "NS but like give it half an hour to clean up *xyz*" is pretty common
- "I've never given out worse grades, and I've never gotten better student feedback" - Prof. North Cook

Students Choose

- "What's the blocker?"
- "What is in between you and success"
- "What does success look like?"
- "No limits, no restraints, what are you making?"
- "What kinds of problems do you want to solve?"

The Instructor Chooses

- Enforce a Learning Objective
- Back up and Try Again
- "That was good, but it would be great with another week… go"
- "I think you should consider pivoting"
- No, really, it's time you learned about color spaces33.
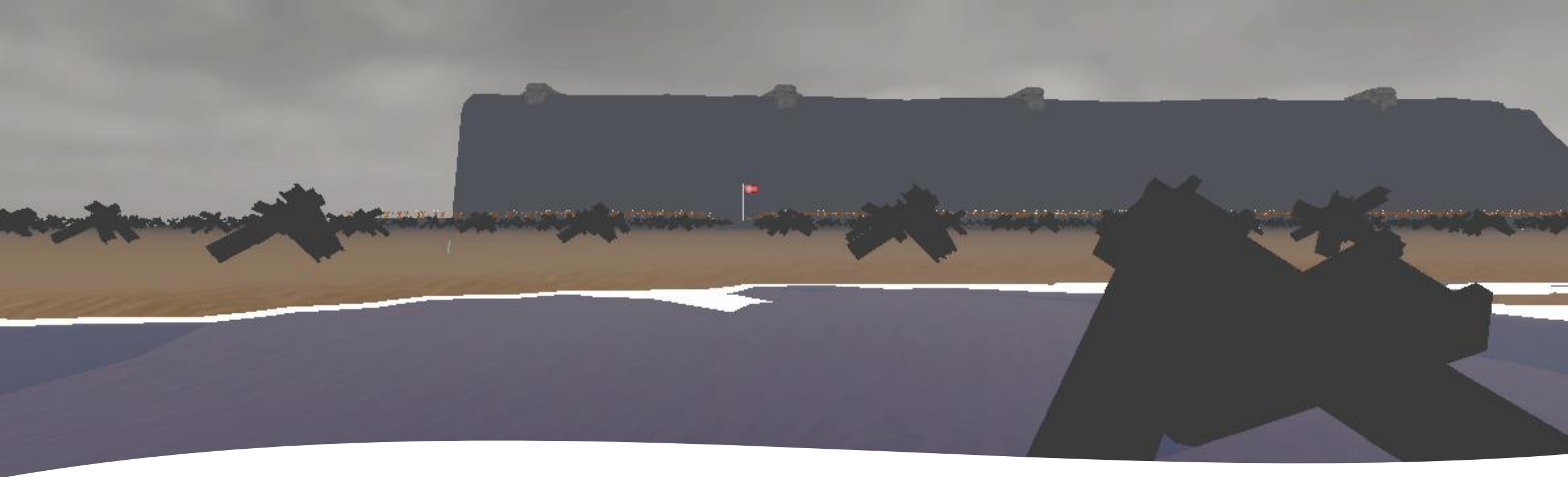
Resubmissions: Rate Limited

- Unlimited resubmission of any assignment!
  - Keep fixing it until it's right
  - No Late penalty
  - Only one resubmission per week, 2 during Finals & Midterms
- Fair for both instructors time and students planning

Groupwork... works?

- A group submission, they all get the same grade
  - I scope up the rubric accordingly
- Or students can do different rubrics
  - Each student gets own S/NS Grade
- Students can join or split
  - Students doing art for other longer projects is a huge win for the class

tl:dr

- Students work towards agreed upon goals over a few weeks
- Each week they break their project into some small piece, and do a large assignment that holistically approaches that piece
- S or NS, no late penalty
- Heavily use collaboration and groupwork
- Secretly it's a structure about conceptual decomposition and project management

Goal:

Understanding the appropriate level of sensitivity for an experience covering a controversial topic. Additionally, creating a living document for future reference in both this project and my Capstone.

Research Question:

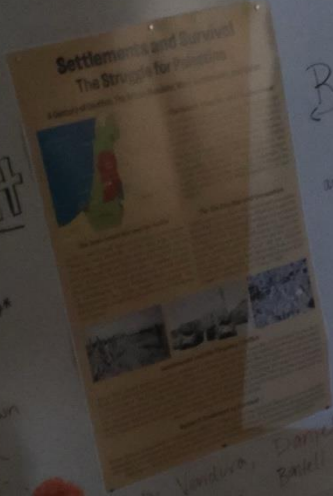"What factors define a game about a sensitive topic as *commentary* instead of *exploitation*?"