

# Zach Burris

## Game Designer

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### Skills & Tools

**Design:** System Design | Pacing | Rapid Prototyping | UX Design | Game Feel | Engagement Theory | Playtesting | Combat

Progression & Economy | Monetization & Retention | Core Gameplay Systems | System Modeling | Balancing | Iteration

**Software:** C# + Unity | Unreal Engine | Excel | Desmos | Figma | Custom Engine | SVN | P4V | ClickUp | Maya

**Soft Skills:** Quick Learning | Collaboration | Problem Solving | Conflict Resolution | Feedback | Time Management | Teaching

### Projects

#### Game Director & Co-Producer

September 2024 - Present

*Tea Time's Over*

Developed an action roguelike in Unreal Engine based on Lewis Carol's Alice in Wonderland books.

- Led a team of 24 developers, providing game design centric direction to 7 strike teams.
- Managed a crossdisciplinary strike team to create 6 Action-RPG style abilities that fulfill a specific power fantasy.
- Developed a roguelike in-run progression system to support an engaging buildcrafting sandbox.
- Reported progress to stakeholders and managed feedback and direction.
- Prototyped & implemented a wide range of gameplay systems using Unreal Engine's Blueprints. (Combat, Camera, Feedback)

#### Design & Tech Lead

January 2023 - August 2023

*Instruction*

Published on Steam

Developed and shipped a narrative-centric clicker game in Unity with a team of 2. Accrued 600+ reviews on Steam, 94% positive.

- Balanced an incremental progression system directly responsible for the narrative's pacing.
- Designed unique core gameplay systems for an incremental game without any idle mechanics.
- Implemented all gameplay elements using Unity + C# scripting. (Dialogue System, Incremental Mechanics, Puzzles)

#### Design Lead

August 2023 - August 2024

*Cobble: The Stone Forager*

Published on Steam

Developed and shipped a cozy game in a custom engine with a team of 8. Accrued 100+ reviews on Steam, 98% positive.

- Led a team of 3 designers on a project with heavy tech and art constraints.
- Collaborated with 5 programmers to tailor a custom C++ engine to our game's design.
- Conducted formal playtesting and research to solve specific problems and guide development.
- Implemented a majority of gameplay content using JSON files. (Interactions, NPCs, Weather, Particle Systems)

### Professional Experience

#### Game Design Instructor | Open World by DigiPen

June 2025 - August 2025

- Taught 7 unique 1-2 week courses on game design and programming to K-12 students.
- Trained on 5 new engines and tools within one week. (UEFN, RPGMaker, MCreator, Blockbench, MakeCode)

#### Teaching Assistant | DigiPen Institute of Technology

August 2023 - Present

- Helped students through 7 different Computer Science and Game Development courses.
- Guided students through implementation and debugging using C# scripting in Unity and Blueprints in Unreal.
- Advised students on struggles, interpersonal conflicts, and project direction.
- Graded and gave constructive feedback on student work, and kept confidentiality of student performance.

### Education:

DigiPen Institute of Technology

| B.A., Game Design

| Graduating April 2026