

# Zach Burris

## Technical Systems Designer

zachary.burris@digipen.edu | [ZachBurrisDesign.com](http://ZachBurrisDesign.com) | (302) 260-0203 | Redmond, WA

Education: DigiPen Institute of Technology | B.A., Game Design | Graduating April 2026

### Student Projects

#### Game Director, Co-Producer, Technical Combat Designer

September 2024 - Present

##### Malice in Wonderland

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

- Led a team of 24 developers, providing game design centric direction to 7 strike teams over 2 years.
- Managed a crossdisciplinary strike team to create 6 Action-RPG style abilities that fulfill a specific power fantasy.
- Developed, implemented, and balanced a roguelike in-run progression system to support an engaging buildcrafting sandbox.
- Designed and implemented a meta progression system to turn a gameplay loop into dozens of hours of content.
- Implemented a wide range of gameplay systems using Unreal Engine's Blueprints. (Combat, Camera, Feedback, etc.)

#### Investment Designer (Solo Project)

August 2025 - December 2025

##### Gacha Action-RPG

Designed and modeled retention and monetization systems for a hypothetical Gacha Action-RPG.

- Designed progression and economy systems to make 1000+ hours of engaging content out of a simple core gameplay loop.
- Made social systems to enhance retention through supporting player bonds.
- Created a business plan and monetization strategies that harmonize with the player experience.

#### Design & Technical 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.

- Conducted formal playtesting and research to solve specific problems and guide development.
- Hand-tuned animations, particles, and feedback for all of the game's interactions.
- Implemented a majority of gameplay content using JSON files. (Interactions, NPCs, Weather, Particle Systems)

### Professional Experience

#### Game Design Instructor | Open World by DigiPen (Summer Camp)

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 8 different Computer Science and Game Development courses.
- Graded and gave constructive feedback on student work, and kept confidentiality of student performance.

### 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 | Analysis | Time Management | Communication