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Less Talk more Rock

Less Talk more Rock speaks about the creation process and processing of information. The article simplifies the creative process into basic 3 parts. Basically, coming down to concept, planning, and creating with the talk on processing of information coming down to visual and auditory examples informing us without words. It starts off rather idealistic and somewhat unclear definitions making the logic questionable, but as a whole it makes much more sense when referring to naturally flowing game design and the repercussions of an overindulging players with information.

The idea for the creative process given is to plan it out of typical order. Starting from conceptual, creation, then planning and avoiding compromises giving examples of “middlemen” that prevent creativity. There’s an honest truth to that, but the solution feels idealistic and not considering the cons that stand over the benefits. The order of concept/ideas and skipping to creating to build momentum and kickstart that early adrenaline can be very beneficial under the right circumstances, but equally if not, more damaging. In terms of expanding conceptual design it works well. There a clear difference in thinking up something and creating it and creation can spark a lot of motivation and passion, but what if they don’t. Skipping to this step makes it very easy for a team to become disorganized with lead directors, whether creative or executive, to put too much faith on natural occurrences. Planning is more than just creating a set of rules, but also an integral form of communication. Without considerable time spent on communicating with your team to make sure all understand the intent and design philosophy behind this project then you run into great risk of the team not being able to follow along or understand making progress halt or even worse, having tons of work scrapped. If you are having this kind of communication be an exception, then you aren’t really skipping the planning stage at all. An example is of Bio ware’s creation of Anthem, which was revealed to have its developmental process negatively affected due to a lack of clear communication and vision leaving the team individually confused on what it is they are trying to create. They had hoped things would just naturally come together over the coming months like in their last project Dragon Age: Inquisition. What it feels like it’s really trying to say it to not worry about the marketing appeal. Don’t worry about incorporating designs that don’t mix with your vision just to sell more as it can have an overbearing restriction on the design team. That is a very important note, but the solution sounds incomplete and niche in it’s applicability.

Beyond that is the subject of using audio and visuals to give context and exposition. Contrasting the first half the solution is presented quite well and is an important lesson with conflictions being with the explanation for it. The quote “I’m suggesting that the written word -- and to some extent the spoken word -- is speaking to your intellect. Your intellect has a relationship to the whole mind, for sure, but it's a little bit apart, it's kind of its own thing. It's a great thing, but it's kind of its own thing. Meanwhile, images, sounds, music, patterns, motion -- these things are speaking directly to your whole mind, often without troubling the intellect” sounds mishandled. What it’s trying to say is that the mind can effectively be communicated with from association alone. A good example is of conceptual learning and language learning. When a child and even to an extent, and adult, learning a language involves associating words and concepts with previous experience such as using a ball to describe the concept of round or learn the word for circle. We use the participants past experience and knowledge to teach them thus acting like tools to help learn effectively and efficiently. The quote describes the written word

as speaking to intellect while images, patterns and sound often not doing so making the written word feel like its own entity with its own effects. It can be argued it's no different than the others. We take the written word differently not because it speaks to the intellect, but because it speaks to us out of order. Take learning a language as an adult for example. The reason it's so difficult is because we have more to process. Often times when an English speaker learns the Spanish word for bucket they process the translation first then associate the word with the object thinking "Okay Cubeta means bucket and a bucket is a circular container to carry things" going from word to object rather than object to word like the other senses tend to elicit like imagery for example. The suggestion here is that all these things (words, imagery, audio) speak to the intellect, but they are processed in a different order making learning substantially more difficult and often times more frustrating depending on what is being used. It's why language teachers advise associating words from another language with the object in question rather than the translated word in the back of their minds.

Now this is something that is extremely difficult to do and can't be expected to be done by everyone at an efficient pace. This is where the articles comment on visual and auditory learning comes into play. It brings up a very effective strategy of using the player's senses to teach them along with some basic problem solving skills like "this object looks and sounds like liquid and liquid falls down and changes shape so I can use it to fill this hole in the ground to pass through without falling by just swimming across". The player doesn't need a description on what this liquid is and what it can do because they should be able to see or test it themselves. If you want to give players information on a liquid with different properties, then visualize it instead of saying what it does through a textbox. If you want to make a lake made of acid, make the liquid green since the player notices it as an unnatural property of water (also green can be associated with sickness thus making them further cautious) then have an animal or object fall into the liquid and use visuals and audio to communicate that the animal/object is corroding inside the liquid thus quickly communicated "I probably shouldn't jump into that lake". It's a common use in game design, but isn't always prevalent. What the article adds to it is the benefit of words.

The article explains why relying on words to carry the player into the game can very easily be frustrating and overbearing it also informs of the benefits in its scarcity. They use a segment from "The Legend of Zelda" where the player is told "it's dangerous to go alone". Due to natural curiosity the brain tends to spark ideas when given a vague detail like this. Why is dangerous? What is out there? Is it always like this? All kinds of simple questions can stir up in the brain as a response to this and make players interested in figuring out why thus making them more invested.

Of course, environmental story telling is very effective in doing this as well, but it's the extra lack of detail in the words that make it more interesting for some. They fill images and sounds into their own mind and seek more clues that might help in painting a clearer picture. It's this concept of using sound, images and experience to teach and having words to be sparingly used to spark interest that makes an experience natural, satisfying and engaging rather than artificial, contrived, and boring.