



Consulting Services

Workshops

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About Marie

Marie Mejerwall is a long-time veteran of game design. She has led creative teams at more than six game studios around the world and has worked on several famous award-winning franchises, such as Dead Rising, Deus Ex, RollerCoaster Tycoon and the Batman Arkham series. She started out in programming, transitioned to game design, rose to become a Lead and eventually Game Director over her own game.

Having worked at many renowned studios, such as Capcom, Ubisoft, Eidos and Warner Bros, Marie has developed a deep understanding of game design, and has added many pages to her own Designer's Handbook, that she now shares with schools and by speaking at conferences.

Read on to learn which topics Marie teaches, and see some examples of her sessions.



Types of sessions



Talks & Exercises

These are lectures and exercises with learnings from Marie's past experience, using **released games or fictional games** as examples.

Most of them has been held before either at conferences or internally at studios.

[Catalogue](#)



Tailored sessions

These are focused on **your project**, and Marie works with your team to help you reach your goals according to your situation and needs.

Examples: hosting creative brainstorming, pitch jams, game pillar workshop, scoping exercises.

[Catalogue](#)

Talks & Exercises

Do you want to boost the skill of your dev team even further?

Do you want to increase your studio's understanding and knowledge about game design?

Do you want an inspirational and interesting keynote to your internal event?

Overview

Marie's lectures and exercises are all **educational** and aim to **inspire creativity**. They are all based on her long experience within the games industry, have all been held before and met with great response and result.

Marie offers both pre-made packages of suggested sessions, as well as single sessions according to your needs. **Get in touch** to tell her more about your situation and goals and she can suggest relevant sessions.



Workshop Packages - Masterclasses

Core combat design

Full-day workshop on the basic building blocks of core gameplay and how to you build core combat

Core gameplay challenges

Verbs & Actions

Depth & Mastery

Combat roles & playstyles

Beats & Intensity

Player Coordination OR
Bossfight design

Multiplayer design

Unique full-day workshop on multiplayer design, going from the game mechanics all the way to how to serve a community

Core gameplay challenges

Depth & Mastery

Player Coordination

Social Glue

Growing a community

Matchmaking Best Practices

AI Masterclass

Full-day workshop on AI, going into advanced AI systems and ending with participants designing their own bossfight

Core gameplay challenges

Realistic AI behaviours

Immersive AI Expression

Bossfight Design

Storyboarding

Make Your Own Bossfight

Workshop Packages - Fundamentals

Design Theory evolved

Full-day workshop on game design theory, taken one step further with Marie's experiences from AAA studios

- Design Pillars Evolved
- Design Structure & Hierarchy
- Experience goals
- Core gameplay challenges
- Verbs & Actions
- Personas

Creative Process

Full-day workshop that shares best practices to strengthen the creative process and way your team works with game design

- Creative Habits
- Your team is your Superpower + Playtest practices
- Collaborative design
- Referencing Efficiently
- Level Up your design docs
- Prototyping Efficiently

Custom workshop

Get in touch with Marie to tailor your own workshop package! Find the [session catalogue here](#).

Workshop Packages – Design Jam

Design Jam – Day 1

Design Jam – Day 2

2-day workshop to spawn new game ideas on paper (no implementation)

Finding the fun

Affinity chart

Design Pillars Evolved

Design your pillars

Design Structure & Hierarchy

Structure your vision

Scoping & Prioritization

Create your roadmap

Experience goals

Referencing Efficiently

Creative brief

Write your creative brief

The Steam Page

The Art of Pitching – pitch your games

Singular Sessions

Topics

Design Theory

Design Methodology

Presentation techniques

Creative Processes

AI

Esports

Career

Diversity & Inclusion

Design Theory

The building blocks of game design

Core gameplay challenges

The core gameplay of everything you have played can be deconstructed into a few reoccurring mechanics and patterns. What are they, what do they challenge the player on and how can they be layered combine to create deep and varied second-to-second gameplay?

Takeaway: More varied core gameplay

Depth & Mastery

This session dives into different the different categories of gameplay depth - knowledge, mechanics and strategical, and speaks about how you can build features that touches upon them all to create cohesive gameplay that challenges all of a player's senses and abilities.

Takeaway: More gameplay depth

Combat Roles & Playstyles

Which common playstyles does different players have, and how to they harmonize with different combat archetypes, and different combat roles a player can assume? This session dives into how you can make your gameplay flexible to allow for several playstyles.

Takeaway: More enjoyable gameplay

Verbs & Actions

What are the decisions that the player takes second-to-second, minute-to-minute and hour-to-hour in your game? What are the tools that the players at their disposal to take said actions? How overloaded, or understimulated, is the player, in terms of both mechanics and tactics?

Takeaway: Balanced player stimulus

Beats and intensity

Beats and intensity can be described as a game's EKG. What does that mean in practical terms? How can they be used to your advantage when designing? In this session, we go over them and talk about ways to create and distribute them over the course of a game and session.

Takeaway: A more enjoyable game for players

Personas

Personas is a concept the industry has used for years, but what are they? How do they 'work'? When are they useful, and how should they not be used? This session tells how to use them in the best way to make informed choices in your design, and ensure it caters to many players.

Takeaway: A more rounded game experience

Design Methodology

Building your game vision

Design Pillars Evolved

What characterizes a good design pillar? Should they overlap, or stand out, or complement one another? How can they be used to inform the rest of your design? What elements bind them together to explain the full direction of the game?

Takeaway: Clear design direction

Experience Goals

Often when we design, we become prescriptive. The resulting gameplay isn't always as fun as was intended – but that's what experience goals can change. This session tells how to use them to align and motivate your team, and put the focus back where it should be: on the player.

Takeaway: Aligned team, more fun features

Creative Briefs

In this session, we walk through what Creative Briefs are, and how they can be used at early stages of design to align and connect your game across all design aspects – from narrative to progression to gameplay.

Takeaway: More aligned design across team

Design structure & hierarchy

In this talk, Marie walks through the concept of design hierarchy, and how it can be used to structure your vision to ensure your that the core aspects of your game gets to thrive and harmonize with one another, and make the game feel coherent.

Takeaway: More concise & coherent design

Scoping & Prioritization

Workshop to help sort and prioritize ideas and features. By establishing what's core in our vision, and what's not, we make sure to leave room for important features to grow and thrive, whilst darlings get put on hold for the time being.

Takeaway: Alignment, clear priorities, more solid design structure

Presentation techniques

How to convey your ideas

Leveling up your design docs

In this talk, Marie walks through some best practices for design documentation. We will then walk through the transformation of improving a messy design document and step by step turning it into something that is clear, concise and inspirational to read.

Takeaway: Improved design documentation

Leveling up your design docs

In this workshop, Marie presents examples and advice on how to write design docs so they are clear, concise and inspirational. The participants then get to try their learnings on messy fictional documents, and get peer feedback on their changes.

Takeaway: Training to write better design docs

Referencing Efficiently

In this talk we will explore the art of using references to other games when working with teams. What characterizes a good reference and how can it be used to boost the immersive understanding of how your features should work? What are the pitfalls to look out for?

Takeaway: Clear and relatable design

Finding the Fun

Sometimes our design docs become dry and descriptive, focused on the what but forgets to include the why. Yet, the most effective way for a team to understand an idea is to align with the feeling a player should have - the fun. We practice ways to focus on and convey it.

Takeaway: More inspirational design docs

Storyboarding

This workshop teaches how to make storyboards as a design tool that is both inspirational, illustrative and informative. The team will then reverse-design famous boss fights into storyboards.

Takeaway: Improved ability to convey design

The Art of Pitching

We discuss the format of a pitch, how to find the most relevant and engaging message in it and how to deliver it in an inspiring fashion.

Participants then get to practice together before presenting to get peer feedback.

Takeaway: Ability to inspire and to judge ideas

Creative Process

Best practices for processes related to game design

Playtest feedback loop

How often should you play your own build? How can you get relevant, actionable quality feedback whilst also making the team feel like their time was spent valuably and that they have been listened too? This talk dives into best practices.

Takeaway: Better quality playtest feedback

Using your team as your SuperPower

Inspirational talk about how to tap into and use your whole feature team to your advantage when designing - and motivate them to achieve greatness in the process.

Takeaway: More team happiness and cohesion, better quality design decisions

Collaborative Design

Collaborative exercises used to both ideate and then align together which ideas to move forward with. After an initial demonstration, the participants are divided into teams and take turn to lead sessions using fictional topics.

Takeaway: Tools to get great ideas and an aligned and a motivated team behind them.

Prototyping Efficiently

When should you prototype, how should you prototype? Should you prototype in several layers? What answers can it give? In this session we discuss the concepts fail-fast and fail-right and discuss which way of prototyping works best when.

Takeaway: Quick and solid design decisions

Creative Habits

Have your creatives ever felt stuck, uninspired and drained of ideas? In this workshop, we explore the concept of Creative Habits and try a couple of short exercises that the team can do together every morning to keep their creative brain active and ensure ideas always flow.

Takeaway: More ideas, higher creative output

AI

*Advanced knowledge about game AI (NPCs)***AI Basics**

Basic crash course what Game AI is, which parts of a game that is controlled by AI logic. Marie discuss what an AI/NPC is in both philosophical and technical terms, how its brain works and connects to its body and how it can take decisions, move and act.

Takeaway: Crash course in developing Game AI

Bossfight Design

Having been the feature owner and responsible designer for all boss fights on an AAA game, Marie dives into and share some of her design secrets on how she approaches their design and work with devteams to create fun, intriguing and challenging boss fights that are satisfying to beat.

Takeaway: Better boss design

Realistic AI Behaviours

Session teaching some of my secrets in AI – a system developed that makes AI respond to player actions in immersive and realistic ways depending on both the nature and strength of the actions, the personality of said AI and its relationships with other surrounding AI.

Takeaway: More realistic AI actions

Immersive AI expression

Player immersion rests upon the whole package of what they experience whilst ingame, – the narrative, sound, VFX, animation and so on. This session walks through my *Mood System* – a model that seamlessly improves the appearance and expression of an AI, in parallel to it taking actions.

Takeaway: More realistic AI expressions

Esports

How to make an esports or multiplayer game and build a community that lasts

Depth & Mastery

Session where Marie walks through the foundational design principles of an esports game - what challenges players look for, what depth it should offer and what's needed to ensure the game has competitive integrity.

Takeaway: How to layer challenges to make your game easy to learn, but hard to master

Player Coordination

Session focused on how your game can serve players to help them understand what's happening in the game, promote them to follow the same decision logic and be able to coordinate their strategy.

Takeaway: Better teamplay

Social Glue

Session where we look at different ways to build and strengthen the social glue between players that both makes them want to excel, play together as well as keep coming back to the game.

Takeaway: Better retention

Growing a community

What does a pro player need to be able to rise to the top in your game? What tools does coaches require, and how do you ensure orgs can get enough exposure? This session goes into the features you need to ensure your game can grow a thriving esports community.

Takeaway: Making your game community-ready

Matchmaking Best Practices

Course in matchmaking algorithm configuration that goes through standard configurations, region adaption, latency adaption, common mistakes and many other bits of advice for competitive games.

Takeaway: More solid matchmaking algorithms and infrastructure

Career

Advice for students looking forward to a career in video games

The Career Masterplan

This session is aimed at students and devs in entry roles and speaks about how to plan your career in game development. What exists out there, which steps do you take to get to your dream studio? How do you relocate, and get visas? How can you get to your dream role?

Takeaway: How to turn your dreams into goals

Diversity & Inclusion

Various sessions on D&I both inside games and inside studios

Representation in Video Games

Session where Marie walks through the foundational design principles of an esports game - what challenges players look for, what depth it should offer and what's needed to ensure the game has competitive integrity.

Takeaway: Better design decisions, fewer iterations and more esports potential

Tailored Sessions

Do you need someone to lead creative ideation sessions with your team?

Do you want expert coaching to take the next step with your vision?

Do you feel that your creative processes could use some improvement?

Overview

Having worked many studios, Marie has developed a **set of 'best-of' practices** that were highly successful and improved the quality, efficiency, motivation and alignment of the team. She now share these as tailored sessions.

It's not a one-fits-all, however – which is we always discuss what is currently in use and evaluate what would work best for your studio.

Get in touch to discuss your situation and needs and she can suggest relevant sessions.



Ideation sessions

Creative exercises aimed to spur ideas and iterate on them

Pitch Jam

Workshop to spawn relevant ideas around a design area or a whole game. After initial briefing on creative goals, format and questions to answer, the team will split into groups to come up with relevant ideas to present to each other later for feedback and critique.

Affinity chart

Creative exercise where we first brainstorm about a specific key feature, and then together group and align our ideas to lay a puzzle on how everything works together.

We then analyze our ideas and rank them from which fulfills our requirements and vision best.

The Steam Page

Exercise where we elaborate on some ideas to develop Steam pages or the layout of physical boxes to reflect and discuss what USP:s, other attractive features and differentiations from competitors that an idea would have. We also walk through some great examples and discuss consumer psychology and drive to buy or try a game.

Elevator pitching

Session where we come up with 15 second long game pitches and then practice seeing games from the view of a gamer to determine what has the potential to spike interest and funnel in players.

Each pitch both needs a target audience, USP:s, to differentiate itself versus competitors and address a need or opportunity in the market.

Game Vision improvements

Sessions where we look at your vision and together sharpen it according to your creative goals

USP workshop

Workshop where we look at your game, compare its feature set to its competitors, lend ideas from other genres and find potential USP's that could make your game stand out. We then evaluate their fit with the current design direction and discuss which to pursue.

Takeaway: Better USP's, clearer priorities

Scope & Structure

Workshop for teams that have a lot of ideas that might or not all fit together, and not enough time. Together, we will sit down and lay a design puzzle that helps the team determine what's core in the game - and which darlings to put on hold.

Takeaway: Alignment, clear priorities, more solid design structure

Pillars & Experience Goals

In this workshop, we refine (or create) the game's pillars and experience goals to some that are clear, connected, inspirational, aspirational and unique enough to inform and guide team members in which game they are making.

Takeaway: Improved design direction

Player Goals & Motivations

In this session, Marie presents design theory on different player traits and motivations. We then discuss which ones your game already caters to, evaluate if there are any additional ones it could potentially cater to, and if so - discuss how.

Takeaway: More rounded game design that speaks to a broader target audience.

Beats and intensity

In this workshop, we lay out the intensity of emotions a player feels at different phases in the game, and ensures there is both enough excitement, recuperation and stimulation happening at the right time intervals for maximal enjoyment and to prevent players from churning.

Takeaway: A more enjoyable game experience

Creative Process Reviews

Review of your processes to improve them according to your people, culture and needs

Creative Pipeline

Session where we discuss improvements to the studio's creative pipeline. How are new ideas entering the system, and who can give them? When is feedback given, and how is it actioned on? What does the sign-off process look like?

Takeaway: Clearer expectations, more efficient flow, increased creative contribution from team

Designer Responsibilities

Team workshop that restructures design area responsibilities and gives designers room to own and focus on work whilst also keeping everyone (including directors) informed and aligned.

Takeaway: Clearly defined areas of responsibility, clear delegation hierarchy, clear information and approval flow.

Team Playtest Structure

Workshop where we discuss and restructure the playtest schedule, groups and feedback formats to ensure that everyone's time is used efficiently, designers get valuable and relevant feedback from the right target audience and the feedback is easy to sort and action on.

Takeaway: Higher efficiency and quality feedback

Design Reviews

Who should review which designs, and when? How can we keep the workload on creative leadership down, whilst ensuring everyone gets feedback and can move their designs forward? In this session, we discuss different approaches and decide which one suits your studio the best.

Takeaway: Timely feedback, higher quality designs

Design Doc Best Practices

In this session, we will walk through some best practices for design docs, see some examples and discuss their benefits. We will then review any existing best practices and decide what to infuse to help the team author documents that are clear, concise and inspirational to read.

Takeaway: Improved design documentation

Design Structure

In this session, we walk through which different layers design exists on, from the highest vision statement until the smallest implementation detail. Are there too many layers? Are there not enough? How can we ensure to always stay aligned when we are designing many things at the same time?

Takeaway: Better design structure

Custom Sessions

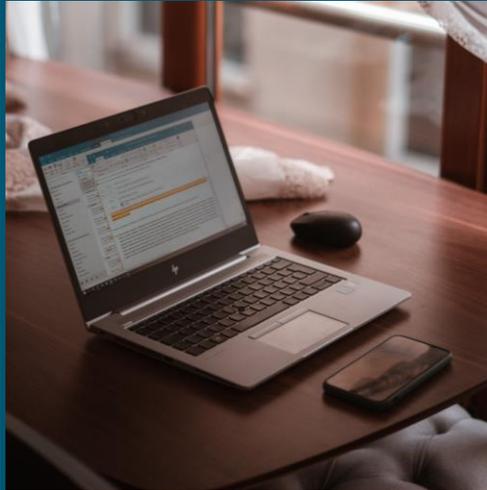
Didn't find anything that fits your needs?

But wait, there's more!

You can also get **get in touch** to tell Marie about your situation and needs, and she can advise on how she can help.

She also does commissioned talks and exercises on request as long as it falls within her areas of expertise (game design, creative processes, leadership, esports, diversity).

Contact



For questions or interest in services, please get in touch by email:

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To learn more about Marie, visit:

<https://mejerwall.com/about>

Marie also offers advisory services as well as event hosting & speaking:

<https://mejerwall.com/services>