



ANDY JESSOP | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Graduate student Esteban Garcia presents his game, "Beto the BT Corn", during a presentation of projects by Envision Center students Tuesday.

Students given a chance to design games

BY ASHLEY MIKUTIS
Assistant Campus Editor

Some students enjoy playing video games, but a group of Purdue students are getting to design them.

Using 3-D game development software – Unity3D – students were able to design gaming applications outside of the classroom.

The 3-D gaming workshops, offered by ITaP's Envision Center for Data Perceptualization, emphasized the importance of implementing strategy and education in game design.

Fabian Winkler, assistant professor of visual and performing arts, said opportunities like the workshops promote collaboration among academic disciplines at Purdue.

"It exposes students to ideas and concepts beyond their field – seeing one's own discipline through the eyes of another can be the first step toward the creation of truly novel work," Winkler wrote in an e-mail. "Educational incentives such as these furthermore allow students to collaborate with peers from other academic disciplines on creative projects that can be either artistic, scientific, educational in nature or they can be real prototypes of new technological systems."

The workshops were offered over a four week span and students who were able to participate presented their work Tuesday night.

Esteban Garcia, a graduate student, presented his game design which consisted of a mixture of education

and first-person scenarios. He said he was hesitant at first using 3-D design techniques.

"I didn't like 3-D at first – it seemed sort of cheesy to me," Garcia said. "But, the workshop got me excited about it."

Garcia described his approach to game design as finding something he could relate the audience to. His game focused on information related to high fructose products, which allowed users to collect the products as well as learn about the effects of the additive.

Bruce Davis, a graduate student, created a game that focused on combining education and commercial gaming. Davis' game was meant to educate users on algorithms in an educational but fun way.

Other games designed included mazes, minigames and interactive art galleries.

Christian Barrett, a sophomore in the College of Technology and workshop co-organizer, said the workshops served as a pilot program and there may be a possibility of future seminars in game design.

"We wanted people to interact with interactive media," Barrett said. "Everyone has played a game one time or another, but not many people have access to the tools to make them.

"(The workshop) was really about introducing students to technology and concepts. With really a little bit of work, they can access this kind of media."

Winkler said a class, A&D 417, "Computer Games," will be offered Fall 2011 for students interested in gaming design and artistic content.