

# LOST BORDERLINE

## FINAL POSTMORTEM EMILEE CHOATE (TEAM LEAD)

I began this project with the original prototype team as the producer. Since then, our team has grown, and so has my job responsibilities. I became team lead of our project when we joined up with 8 new team members. I now produce for a team of 16 individuals. I still create the task lists and schedule, organize meetings, run stand ups, and keep communication flowing; however, I now do it for twice as many people. Fortunately, we received two other producers in the “merger” who are excellent at handling our market research, team efficiency and burn-downs, and user research.

The work I did for this game was leading this ragtag bunch of students towards the goal of completing nearly all of our lofty Alpha milestone goals, and to still be friends at the end. I am in charge of “protecting the vision.” As the lead, I took charge of all of the tasks most people absolutely hate to do:

- Gathering and distributing the team’s contact information
- Creating a team availability schedule to ensure meetings and tasks worked around the team’s schedule
- Creating the team Slack channels (general, engineering, art production, producers, design, leads, and problems)
- Creating the team Trello boards (engineering/design, art production, audio) and updating/maintaining the cards through the sprints as our project backlog
- Organizing and attending team and specialized team meetings
- Running the bi-weekly standup meetings
- Sending class/meeting summaries to leads and team members that could not attend
- Generated the project feature and asset lists (every game object engineering will need to script and every asset art will need to create) which would be turned into spreadsheets
- Submit all team assignments/builds
- Researched licensing information for the two plugins we have purchased thus far to ensure legality
- Created all sprint presentation slide decks
- Facilitated all sprint presentations
- Recorded sprint presentations to provide team with class/panel feedback
- Contributed to design during meetings (concepting enemies, weapon types, etc) as we have one true designer
- Wrote the narrative backstory for the project to provide direction and cohesion
- Created the team mascot, the PigeonCube, as a prop for EAE Play Day
- Created a “feedback” poster with thumbs up and thumbs down stickers for quick responses
- Lead the team in operating the booth during EAE Play Day and gathering user research
- Created all materials for the wrap kit, except the trailer (nice job Josh!)
- Started negotiations with a local printmaker for team apparel
- Provided team members difficult feedback when necessary
- Provided team members positive feedback often
- Encouraged and fostered a positive team atmosphere
- Generally made the difficult decisions that nobody wants to make

I learned so much in this semester, as I feel it was my first real opportunity to lead and produce for a team, especially one of this size and caliber. I will pick the biggest “learns” I’ve had thus far:

- **HOW TO WORK WITH MULTIPLE PRODUCERS:** I have generally been the only producer on projects in previous semesters, and I often didn’t get the chance to produce as another artist was always needed. This semester, I find myself on a team with two additional producers. At first, I found it difficult to delegate tasks. I’m a perfectionist, and I often just end up doing things myself to ensure they’re done to my liking. I’ve had to learn to trust that other people are just as capable, if not more so at some things, than I am. I have given my other two producers plenty to do, and so far the relationship between us all feels great. We work well as a team, and can talk out the difficult issues. I’ve learned to trust those around me to get things done, and to get them done well.
- **GITHUB:** As a producer, engineers of the past have not let me touch the repository for fear than a non-engineer would break the project. Fortunately I have Justina as my lead engineer, and she has encouraged everyone to become familiar with GitHub
- **Unity:** I also didn’t get much unity experience in my previous semesters. Our team has one designer, and he cannot do the job alone. I am learning Unity so that I may assist the design “team” with implementing new levels and tweaking the player mechanics.
- **TOOLS:** There are so many cool programs and websites available at no cost to assist with project management. My other two producers , and a lot of research of my own, turned me onto WhenIsGood for team availability schedules.
- **WORKING WITH A LARGE TEAM:** The largest team I have been on for a game project prior to this class was four people, including myself. It has been a challenge to keep track of so many people and all of their tasks. Seeing as though I actually can just be a producer for this project has made it easier to focus my attention and effort, but it’s still 16 people...

To be a better game developer next semester I hope to:

- Keep better track of team members who struggle to complete tasks on time. I did not personally check in with each team member about their tasks until it became a problem. Students are still not industry “adults,” so they need to be reminded, and sometimes nagged, to complete their tasks. I let some team members get away with not contributing or not communicating struggles for too long, and it impacted the third sprint (no play testing was able to be done, and the build was broken for the presentation). Since then, I have started having regular check-ins with all team members. I ask them about their tasks, life in general, and feelings/feedback about how the project is going. This keeps me better informed, and I can keep my ear to the ground for future problems.
- Use Unity. Even though I’m a producer, everybody is a designer. And this is particularly the case on our team, as we only have one self-proclaimed designer who doesn’t have Unity experience. This coming semester, I will have to help contribute to level design if we want to meet our goals for the number and quality of dungeons.
- Organize team activities outside of classwork. I think it will be critical in the coming months to bond the team beyond getting assignments done together. We all get along well enough, but I feel as though velocity will skyrocket if the team feels like they are working for each other, not just with each other. They will hopefully take on more tasks and take more pride in the project. It has been difficult enough to organize meetings, but I think a funtivity is crucial for the development of this team.