

# Tips and Tricks for Teaching an Interactive Fiction Course

Mike Spivey

NarraScope  
May 28, 2020

# Workshop overview

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- ▶ Tips and tricks from all of you!



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- ▶ Tips and tricks from all of you!
  
- ▶ IF speed dating exercise (if time)

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- ▶ Learning the rudiments of Inform 7 for students in a general writing course (Brendan Desilets)
- ▶ Tips and tricks from all of you!
- ▶ IF speed dating exercise (if time)
- ▶ Final questions/comments

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    - ▶ Written *A Beauty Cold and Austere*, *Junior Arithmancer*, *Sugarlawn*, contributed to *Cragne Manor*

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- ▶ Why not a Connections IF course, connecting computer science and literature?

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- ▶ No prerequisites!

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  - ▶ Characterization, puzzles, narrative structure and choices
- ▶ Large IF project presentations (three weeks)

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- ▶ Some really good student projects!
  - ▶ Students with no programming experience generally learned Inform 7 and created some interesting IF works.
- ▶ Positive student responses
  - ▶ English major: I had a bad experience with programming in high school. I probably would never have touched programming again if not for this course.

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- ▶ More comparison of IF writing and mainstream storytelling
- ▶ Another language: Twine?



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- ▶ Student response
  - ▶ At first, students are a bit tentative and don't have much to say.
  - ▶ By the third or fourth “date,” though, I often have to push them to get them to stop talking to each other and move on.
  - ▶ Their feedback was that this process was really helpful: It helped them refine their ideas, consider new ones, and think about aspects of their projects that they hadn't considered before.

# Works studied

- ▶ Introduction
  - ▶ Sam Barlow, *Aisle*
  - ▶ Marc Blank and Dave Lebling, *Zork I*
- ▶ Mystery
  - ▶ Chandler Groover, *Toby's Nose*
  - ▶ Christopher Huang, *An Act of Murder*
  - ▶ Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band"
- ▶ Fantasy
  - ▶ Admiral Jota, *Lost Pig*
  - ▶ Emily Short, *Bronze*
  - ▶ Madame de Villeneuve, "Beauty and the Beast"
- ▶ Suspense/Horror
  - ▶ Andrew Plotkin, *Shade*
  - ▶ Elizabeth Smyth, *Bogeyman*
  - ▶ Ambrose Bierce, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"

# Works studied

- ▶ Comedy
  - ▶ Buster Hudson, *The Wizard Sniffer*
  - ▶ J.J. Guest, *Alias 'The Magpie'*
  - ▶ P.G. Wodehouse, "Leave It to Jeeves"
- ▶ Drama
  - ▶ Stephen Granade, *Will Not Let Me Go*
  - ▶ Victor Gijbers, *De Baron*
- ▶ IF as Education
  - ▶ Harry Giles and Joey Jones, *The Chinese Room*
  - ▶ Mike Spivey, *A Beauty Cold and Austere*
  - ▶ Aristotle, *Physics VI*, Part 9, on Zeno's Achilles paradox
- ▶ IF as Argument
  - ▶ Jonathan Laury, *Ostrich*
  - ▶ Zoe Quinn, Patrick Lindsey, and Isaac Shankler, *Depression Quest*

# Works studied

- ▶ Bonus: Pace Smith, *Limerick Heist*
- ▶ Characterization
  - ▶ Emily Short, *Galatea*
  - ▶ Stephen Bond, *Rameses*
- ▶ Puzzles
  - ▶ Emily Short, *Counterfeit Monkey*
  - ▶ Arthur DiBianca, *The Wand*
- ▶ Narrative, the Parser, and Choice
  - ▶ Victor Gijssbers, *Terminal Interface for Models RCM 301-303*
  - ▶ Serhii Mozhaiskyi, *I.A.G. Alpha*

## Works studied (nonfiction)

- ▶ Kevin Jackson-Mead and J. Robinson Wheeler (eds.), *IF Theory Reader* (selections)
- ▶ Don Knuth, “Literate Programming”
- ▶ Aaron Reed, *Creating Interactive Fiction with Inform 7*