

AN INFORMATION PLATFORM TO PROMOTE IMPROVED COLLEGE UNIVERSITY PATHWAYS IN THE STUDY OF GAMES

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COLLEGE UNIVERSITY PATHWAYS FOR GAMES (CUPG) PROJECT

Supported by ONCAT Credit Transfer Innovation Fund

28 February 2013

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This project proposes possible improvements to pathways in programs related to games at Ontario Colleges and Universities that:

- share affinities
- are multidisciplinary in nature
- do not have MTCU program standards

Our initial goal was to identify what students from College game programs needed to succeed when transferring to a University degree program

- What is natural exit point from College programs?
- What is the threshold of knowledge and skills required by Universities?
- Can a predictable block of credits be transferred?
- Are bridging courses required?

A GUIDING SET OF ASSUMPTIONS

- University programs - game/interactive media in particular - thrive on diversity.
- Students entering year 3, whether having studied in the College or University environment, will inevitably be asymmetric in knowledge they possess. They will have different foundations in disciplinary concepts as well as in practical and critical methodologies upon which to complete their degree.
- All students must be ready at the start of year 3 to deepen and extend their knowledge and abilities in the study and creation of games. Some students will struggle to catch-up while others will be in a position of review.
- The natural variability in the discipline itself and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration makes this asymmetry in student preparation a virtue rather than a demerit.

CUPG PROCESS

Began work in 2012 with small working group representing 4 colleges and 2 universities with game-related programs.

Project has expanded to include a wider group of 10 Colleges and 8 Universities which have contributed to process

Assessed the context surrounding game education

Identified systemic issues as well as discipline-specific issues that impact the development of pathways.

- 12 game-related College diploma/advanced diploma programs and 15 University game-related degree programs in Ontario

- Significant variation in program types

College programs

Game Art and Design, Interactive Media Design, Game, Game Development, Game Programming, Software engineering

University programs

Interactive Arts and Science, Interactive Multimedia and Design, Multimedia, Digital Futures, New Media, Media Theory & Production, Digital Media, Computer Science – specializations or minors in Computer Game Development, Software Engineering (Game Design), Electrical Engineering – Multimedia Systems, Game Development & Entrepreneurship

- University programs broad in scope and with limited affinities to College programs.
- Significant variance between the type of knowledge/skills that Universities bring to an advanced level as compared to those that Colleges bring to an advanced level.
- Sequence of learning at Colleges often not aligned to University programs.

- New integrated, dual credential programs with concurrent study at partnering Colleges and Universities addresses issues of sequence and alignment.
 - Fanshawe College and the University of Western Ontario - Interactive Media Design & Production
 - Algonquin College and Carleton University – Interactive Multimedia Design
 - Niagara College and Brock University – Computer Games – Game Design and Game Programming (in approval stage)
- MTCU Program Standards do not exist for College game-related diploma programs
- Broad MTCU Program Goals exist for the following programs:
 - 51900 Game Development Technician
 - 61900 Game Development
 - 61850 Game Programming
- The category of Game Development is too broad and ambiguous
- Result is the evolution of highly varied College programs without common program outcomes.

- Identified five main types of study within the game space:
 - Game Art
 - Game Design
 - Game Production
 - Game Programming
 - Game Studies
- Identified an array of core topics in each of these categories
- Examined learning sequence followed in the curriculum of Colleges and Universities participating in the working group.
- Devised game education matrix template within which to develop a common framework for expressing and sharing
 - knowledge required by the field and levels of achievement
 - specific nature of each College and University programs
- Challenged ourselves to test the value of this matrix by applying it to our own programs

FEATURES OF THE GAME EDUCATION MATRIX TOOL

Is online and interactive

A graphic way to compare programs

Shows learning along a continuum that profiles the level to which students are educated in defined areas of game knowledge in all College and University programs

Distinguishes between levels of learning rather than year of study

Describes these levels within a common language for achievement

Allows for variation in description of learning topics

Seeks a balance between simplicity and granularity

Can be designed to display for interactive comparison and evaluation

Can be designed to facilitate search

Can be designed to reveal embedded detailed, nested information

THE GAME EDUCATION MATRIX TOOL WILL HELP

find convergence between programs and institutions known for divergence

frame and define the whole of what game-related education is (can be)

discover how individual programs relate within the larger context of game education

map alignments between College and University programs

define where natural transfer can occur

identify gaps between existing programs and possible bridges

in the design or revision of programs for future alignment

promote programs and pathways to students

students plan their futures

develop Program Standards and define relation to UDLES

It can be applied to other multidisciplinary domains

It is a new way to think about pathways

as an ongoing process

as structured and shared information

**THE GAME EDUCATION MATRIX TOOL
IS FUNDAMENTALLY A PROCESS
FOR SOLVING THE PUZZLE OF PATHWAYS IN THE GAME SPACE**

It will require:

Further development refinement and construction in
consultation with Colleges and Universities

The Commitment of Colleges and Universities to providing
accurate, consistent, up-to-date information

NEXT STEPS

- We have invited a broad group of stakeholders to work with us to use the matrix to profile their programs
- We are working with stakeholders and subject experts to define what constitutes the levels of achievement in each learning category and topic using shared language
- We aim to have a prototype of the Game Education Matrix with profiles of 3 – 4 College programs and 3 – 4 University programs ready by the end of March 2013.

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