

Reflection Essay

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Introduction

I have learned many skills in my time at ODU through my multiple major related courses and experiences. Those skills have been Game Industry analysis which belongs to the game studies discipline and can be attributed to courses such as Comm 495: The Video Game Industry and Game 240: Game Criticism. The second skill would be my research abilities with classes such as IDS300W: Interdisciplinary Theory and Concepts, Stem 251G Computer Literacy: Communication and Information. The last skill is my Game Programming and development skills, with Game 360 Development with Game Engines being the course that taught me the most in that regard and where all my artifacts in that skill section come from in my portfolio. In this reflection of those skills and courses I will use previous artifacts as well as scholarly sources to help reflect on those skills and how they connect together to form a basis of knowledge and skill necessary for my field and discipline. I will also reflect on why I chose the artifacts that I did for my e-Portfolio and how I believe they are able to connect together to show off my skills as best as possible.

Skill one/Artifact: Game Analysis/DLC In The Video Game Industry

This project was one that was meant to be an analysis of a component in the video game industry. I chose to discuss the state of DLC in the industry as I thought it important to know the current status of DLC and the impacts it has had on the industry on a broad scale. The discipline this falls into is game studies and is a very important part of becoming knowledgeable of the industry you will be working in, how it functions and how to apply what you know and be able to compete in the industry. “Tough competition, time- and resource constraints, and changing consumer demands in the video game industry requires business models that can cope with the pressure” (Eriksson & Almér, 2019). In the process of making this paper I struggled to find the right sources and get the info that was needed in order to analyze it correctly. This led to me putting more effort into finding the sources required in order to make this paper as while DLC is a common subject for discussion in the game development field it simply does not have as much research on it as I feel it should.

Artifact 2: Game Industry Simulation

This project was intended to simulate a game company from being a startup. With those involved voting on measures to be taken at each checkpoint and then seeing the results of their actions later on. Throughout this project the struggle really came with keeping everyone connected and organized to be able to discuss the next move, as well as keeping everyone involved in the process. Everyone had to individually do their own journals to discuss the current state of the company and this all eventually ended with the company falling onto hard times. Ending with the decision to stay with the company or leave and form your own.

Artifact 3: Dead Space Analysis

This analysis was intended to be used as a way for me to look at video game remakes and how the success of the original game could happen again. Specifically horror game remakes, which in the past have been either hit or miss. I also talked about how they added to the atmosphere of the game, with a big change being the main character speaking. Going from a character that felt almost removed to one that is also just as terrified as the player.

Skill 1 reflection

These projects took multiple disciplines in order to help me reach my goals with these tasks. Using game studies and data analysis I was able to connect the current state of DLC in the video game industry and why it is the way that it is. With connections that show a general dislike of microtransactions attached to an already paid for game and the acceptance of those microtransactions in games that are free to play. This also allowed me to make the distinction between DLC and expansions. With the latter being a significant expansion of the game itself that requires more work than standard DLC. “Using player telemetry data to identify specific points in the game where players spend excessive time or quit playing, in order to help developers in quality assurance, for example” (Eriksson & Almér, 2019). Also using game studies and research as I had to learn how the game industry felt to work in, with sometimes doing almost everything right still resulting in failure. These skills will allow me to better understand the industry I am attempting to break into and how I will be able to use my knowledge of the industry as a whole in order to better prepare myself for the challenges that are to come.

Skill 2/Artifact(s): Research/ LootBox Research Paper

The skill being discussed now will be my research capabilities, throughout my time at ODU I have written multiple research papers and while many of them are not related to the game industry there are many that are. Instead of simply looking at game content and the industry, the artifact I have chosen is a paper discussing the connection between Loot Boxes in video games and gambling and the problems it causes. Throughout the process of writing this artifact I found it difficult to come off as impartial and non biased in my review. This artifact taught me how to avoid my biases at the time and to still do valid research and draw conclusions on sources and research rather than personal feeling, even if my conclusion at the end was the same as how I felt before writing the paper. I still have a ways to go in becoming a better researcher as I've had my struggles at times presenting my research.

The disciplines that were used in this artifact were game studies and research. Being able to study games is crucial and is why two of my skills lend themselves into research capabilities. With developers having to keep up with trends in video games as well as how to be effective. They also have to be able to research how to create the things they want in video games and how it will impact the game they are creating.

Artifact 2: Nuclear Energy Research Paper

This paper required a lot of time to get organized, with there being so many conflicting sources on the safety of nuclear energy. This paper was intended to show bias and how the state of nuclear energy had been determined by few disasters. It also discusses the cost benefit of using nuclear energy and how even though the plants themselves individually are more

expensive they make up for that with significantly higher levels of power output. The paper also attempts to offer a solution to the energy crisis, which after research I concluded should be nuclear energy, at least in some regard.

Artifact 3: Plasma Donation Research Essay

This paper was intended to be a call to action for plasma donations. As blood donations are very common plasma donations have been in significant demand while being significantly lower than blood donations. This paper showed my ability to dive into deep research and finding out just how many plasma donations are required to help someone who requires it. Like those with hemophilia and Immune Deficiency. It also delves into shortages in every country except Germany as they are the only one that was in surplus at the time. While the previous two artifacts are not inherently game related they show my ability to research what could be considered useful in future game projects that follow issues that are not usually covered by the game industry.

Skill 2 reflection

Being able to research also means collecting your own data, using data from other games and projects is important, however, getting data for your own projects is also important and knowing how to is just as important. “A wide range of qualitative and quantitative approaches have been deployed for researching games, play and players. Surveys are the most widespread methods to collect data, followed closely by interviews.” (De Angeli & O'Neill, 2020). This skill will allow me to keep up with the playerbase for my games and help me understand the issues that the community is facing and what I can do to fix those issues.

Skill 3/ Discipline: Game Programing/ Game Development

The artifacts I will be discussing are from a recent Game Development project I worked on for one of my courses at ODU. The disciplines involved were Game Development and Research. As I had to on multiple occasions research the limitations of the Game engine I was working with and how to get around those limitations. This also meant I had to research how to program certain features into the game I was creating. This research led me to understanding more of the basics of Game Development and programming and how to apply research and prior knowledge to create the game that I wanted at the time. I struggled with certain aspects, with me wanting to create an AI for my game which was able to see the player, as well as its behaviour when attacking the player. I also needed to be able to be edited on the fly and be adaptable for the future . This took some time as I had to understand how the game engine and the programming language interpreted certain code in order to create the AI and all the systems required in order to make it work within the context of the game and to make sure it was flexible enough to be added onto later down the road.

I was able to bring some of my knowledge from Java, as some of the syntaxes were similar to the programming language used in the Game Engine used, however since it was a different language I had to spend lots of time learning what certain functions did. The disciplines involved were Game Development and Research. As a game developer you have to be able to connect the research you do in the game industry and different programming languages and

apply it to the game development process or you will struggle to make progress with the game projects you work on.

This can be in multiple forms, and is crucial in being able to problem solve as a game developer. In my courses I learned how to adapt to the circumstances affecting me and how to move forward and handle the issues at hand. “Furthermore, the creative process involved in game development helps students enhance their critical thinking and technical skills.”Azis, Farhan & Juhana, Agus & Nurhidayatulloh, Nurhidayatulloh. (2025). This skill will be crucial to me as I continue my journey to becoming a game developer, as it is a core skill in being able to program as well as being able to find ways to get past the issues you are having. You also, quite simply, need to be able to code in order to develop a game, it's not going to just appear, you have to be able to make it yourself.

Conclusion

Throughout my time at ODU I have developed many skills that will help me to become a game developer. When I got to ODU I didn't have much experience and wasn't sure how I was supposed to go about learning to develop games and how to become a game developer. But through my courses, whether directly or indirectly, I was able to develop the skills necessary not only to become a game developer but to also be a better game developer in the future. “ Just what skills and identities are emphasized as crucial for such employability varies pending on the

program's institutional context—ultimately showing that combining creativity and technology is neither a straightforward nor neutral process.”(Keogh & Hardwick, 2023).

IDS300W was one of the courses that was transformative in helping me understand game development better as well as how to apply my research of the industry to games I will create in the future. Another course was Game 360: Development with game engines. This course taught me many things such as how to program from scratch, which I had little experience with as most projects I had done had at least some of the groundwork laid out. This course made me struggle and also learn how to develop with a game engine that required a lot of effort to learn. My degree has prepared me to enter the game development scene by giving me a deeper understanding of the industry as a whole. As well as how to program at an effective level and be able to develop from the ground up. I will apply all I have learned in my time at ODU to advance in the game development field and be able to create games that I want people to enjoy.

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