

“Creating something that is unique which has never been done before is endlessly fascinating” (Williams 2009: 11).

My accomplishments so far

During my second rapid ideation, I designed a game about a robot or pho-bot who helps a little girl conquer her fear. The theme for my Development practice could be titled 'Conquering my fear.' I was anxious about my skillset, two intense periods of rapid ideation and afraid of failure.

Week 3 was a turning point - I reverse engineered *Frostpunk* as a mini-game in *Twine*. I have always had a proclivity for technology and a love for research. I was surprised by the positive feedback for my narrative prototype which bolstered my confidence. I realised that the accumulation of my prior skills is working for me. As I started to create ‘something that is unique’ with ever more complex software successfully, I started to grow.

Rapid Ideation

Rapid Ideation One was tough. After two weeks I had an accurate picture of how long everything takes, planning, character design, drawing and importing images. I built a point-and-click adventure hiding 5 boxes for the player to find. While my game felt incredibly short considering how hard I had worked, Unity and the building blocks of making games felt less scary.

My big problem was my complete failure to animate anything. After Rapid Ideation 1 I felt disheartened. My animation was poor and I struggled with the in-built animation software in Unity.

The “idea of animation is aeons older than the movies or television” (Williams 2009: 11). “Just like an anatomy course in life drawing it shows you how things are put together and how they work. This knowledge frees you to do your own expression” (Williams 2009: 9).

Rapid Ideation 2 and Spine was a game-changer for my 2D art and animation. Working over a short space of time pushed me through my animation woes. Now I feel that with practice, I’ll be able to get better. I was pleased with my progress, animation gave Phobot a personality and encapsulated the embodiment of fear.

Sharing a creative vision and collaborating as part of a team was also a valuable experience. GitHub was a major time saver version and in a team, you can achieve so much more. I could focus on inspiration and research to create a finer narrative.

Key areas of practice

I am excited about forming a basic understanding of other elements of indie games development in the next module Game Development but the reflective practice has highlighted key areas I am passionate about 2D illustration and writing narratives for games.

“2D visuals were reinstated” with *Broken Sword: The Serpents Curse*, “as were the classic mouse-driven controls, inventory system and conspiracy-filled narrative. ‘Characters were modelled and animated in 3D and then turned into 2D artwork’ (Bitmap Books 2020: 444).

Hade’s recent winner of Best Indie Game uses similar techniques and combinations of 2D and 3D artwork. The love of 2D illustration is very much alive.

Point and clicks were “building on the foundations of the graphics and text adventures that came before them, the offered an intuitive control system, free of typing and random word guessing that had never been seen before. And this of course meant that everyone could finally enjoy them” (Bitmap Books 2020: 3).

A key area of my practice is building games that as many people can enjoy as possible. I want to build games for everyone.

Why do I want to make games for everyone, impact and educational value?

I loved working for the Open University, and offering learner support. Supporting my learners to achieve their goals brought me so much joy but I also enjoy creating and making things. I love using new technology and I feel that I am good at making up stories and creating fun experiences. I'd like to combine my love of learning and sharing that love with my passion for designing, writing and creating interactive stories.

Further research and self-exploration

“Regardless of your medium, there are no shortcuts to research and planning” (Gurney 2009: 7).

I'd love to create a game that incorporates my interest and research into Ancient History and more specifically ancient greek and roman mythology. Euripides *Medea* or Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* might make for fun and violent inspiration for games with educational value.

To define my ideas I look for further research and self-exploration in literature like *The Art of Point and Click* (2020), *The Animator’s Survival Kit* (2009), *How Games Move Us* (2016), *Game Feel* (2009), *Understanding Comic Books* (2017) and so on. Attending Events like *Develop: Brighton* (2020). Participating in communities of practice like *Women In Games* where there is also informal advice from female founders and creators of games whose number one takeaway tip is to take hold of the business side of things.

SMART goals for the future:

- Research funding opportunities for indie games developers
- Listen to the experiences of other indie games studio founders, especially female founders
- Analyse games for impact, games with educational value and games that are based on ancient history, look for industrial case studies in this area
- Consider opportunities for further academic study, whether it would be an option to receive funding for a project proposal for me and how I would go about it

List of figures

Figure 1. Sarah MASTERS 2020. *Conquering fear*.

Figure 2. Sarah MASTERS 2020. Timelapse of Jungle drawing for Rapid Ideation.

Figure 3. Sarah MASTERS 2020. *The animated embodiment of fear*.

Figure 4. Sarah MASTERS and Elliot HANDLEY 2020. *Night Phantasm* [game].

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