

REPORT IN EARLY ACCESS

This is an early access version which means this is a completed report after final revision but ahead of its inclusion in the published online journal issue.

More information: <http://www.replay.uni.lodz.pl/earlyaccess.html>.

Michał Mochocki

Kazimierz Wielki University

Gamedec.UKW in IGDA Curriculum Framework

1. History, Background and Vision

The founder of Humanities 2.0, Prof. Mariusz Zawodniak, aimed to create an innovative BA programme that would combine the traditional liberal arts background (such as literature, philosophy, history and language studies) with new technologies, digital culture and practical ICT skills. Unlike other humanities-based degrees in Poland, this one was officially labelled as ‘practical’ instead of ‘general-academic’ (Polish degrees must choose one of the two). It was employability-oriented, dedicated to hands-on project work and collaboration with stakeholders outside of university. Prof. Zawodniak had initially planned three specialisations: E-Writing & Computer Editing (for e-writers/editors), Online Journalism & Social Media (for e-journalists and marketers), and Information & Digitisation Society (for e-librarians). Responding to his call for curriculum contributions, I offered to create a fourth specialisation track: for game designers.

I had the necessary experience in higher-ed curriculum design, having been the head of the programme committee at the Institute of Modern Languages and Applied Linguistics for two years then, responsible for the redesign of BA and MA programmes in accordance with the National Qualification Framework. As highlighted by *Extra Credits* in their episode “On Game Schools” (2012, 5:51), it is also essential that at least some of the academics who run game degrees have real game industry experience. In the Humanities 2.0, the game staff comprised four teachers/researchers employed at the English Studies department. Dr. Paweł Schreiber had long been a video game critic, journalist and blogger, expert in interactive fiction, speaker at industry conferences and juror in game dev competitions (e.g. Indie

Basement). Dr. Aleksandra Mochocka: a tabletop RPG writer and translator, also speaker and juror at game conventions. Mgr Mikołaj Sobociński: a practitioner and proponent of game-based learning. Dr. Michał Mochocki: a tabletop RPG designer, editor, writer and translator, larp designer, juror and speaker at game events, and game-based learning consultant with Nowa Era edu-publisher. Except for Schreiber, we had all experimented with edugamification. Except for Sobociński, we had also been members of Games Research Association of Poland, involved in academic game studies.

Summing up the legal, institutional, and organisational aspects:

- 2nd Gen Humanities was a 3-year (6-semester) full-time undergraduate (B.A.) programme, the total of 1800 contact hours, each semester comprising 15 teaching weeks.
- It was offered to high-school graduates free-of-charge and without entrance exams, the selection process based on scores in high-school exit exam (matura).
- Specialisation tracks would start already in Semester 2 and continue to 6, the total of exactly 720 contact hours in 12 modules.
- In addition to the 720 h, each specialisation had a 30-h introductory lecture in Semester 1, two special modules (Project + Collaboration with Stakeholders) in Semesters 2-4, and BA Seminar in 5-6.
- The ‘practical profile’ of education focused on employability and skills, with the prospect of early start on the job market.

In line with the above, the Game Studies & Design curriculum prioritised hands-on design labs run by instructors with relevant professional experience. Given the humanities-based nature of the degree and the specific expertise of the involved UKW staff, a substantial part of the curriculum focused on non-digital games: board & card games, tabletop and live action role-playing, and urban location-based games. The digital section included interactive fiction and several (initially: 4) semesters of video games design labs with middleware tools (UDK, Unreal, Unity), which would be taught not by academics but by industry practitioners. There were also modules in educational games and gamification, their aim being to extend employability from commercial game development to serious games and also to non-game industries. Finally, there were game studies seminars to supplement the theoretical background provided by humanities and social studies modules in the general (i.e. non-specialisation) section of Humanities 2.0.

The semi-official name “Gamedec” was borrowed from a sci-fi novel series by Marcin Przybyłek, in which gamedecs are licensed investigators, experts and problem-solvers in virtual MMO worlds. They combine technical skills with extensive knowledge of gameplay, game design, world-building, human (player) psychology and social behaviour.

2. Literature Review: Academia and Industry

Back in 2008, IGDA Framework said: “Over the last ten years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number and type of programs related to games” (p. 2). Seven years later, Frans Mäyrä (2015) in his keynote speech at CEEGS conference talks about the game academia as well-established, well-funded and thriving. Curricula and syllabi can be accessed online, and personal insights from both game students and teachers are proliferating on blogs and social media. Nevertheless, academic publications on game curriculum design are scarce, especially those relevant for Gamedec.UKW: rooted in the humanities and focused on employability-oriented skills across digital and non-digital platforms. Beside the IGDA Framework and the study of industry expectations vs game curricula by McGill (2009), primary sources consulted in the Gamedec curriculum design process (in 2012 and early 2013) were books intended to be used in college-level game education.

The classic *Rules of Play* by Salen & Zimmerman (2003) helped define the scope and structure of the whole curriculum, its different chapters entering the reading lists of many modules across all three years. *An Introduction to Games Studies* by Mäyrä (2008) helped define the scope of digital game studies. *The Art of Game Design: A Book of Lenses* by Schell (2008) provided general guidance to practical game design and design thinking, applicable across all design labs. Also, together with *Game Design Workshop* by Fullerton (2008), it inspired the organisation of team-based game design projects and collaboration with industry partners. *Challenges for Game Designers* by Brathwaite & Schreiber (2009) helped conceptualise the integration of non-digital and digital modules, and provided excellent exercises for students. *A Theory of Fun for Game Design* by Koster (2005) and *The Gamification of Learning and Instruction* by Kapp (2012) resonated well with our view of games as learning environments and of game design as parallel to instructional design, and reinforced our will to include edu-gamification and edu-games among Gamedec design labs. Together with Kapp (2012), *The Multiplayer Classroom* by Sheldon (2012) guided our efforts to gamify the learning process (see Mochocki 2015). We also received personal advice

from people involved in game degrees at Brunel University (UK): teacher Justin Parsler and graduate student Tomasz Kaczmarek.

Equally important as the academic sources was the voice of game industry professionals. The prior involvement of the English Studies / Gamedec.UKW staff with game design, gaming media and communities translated to a large network of connections to people employed in digital and non-digital game companies. This proved useful in obtaining direct feedback on the curriculum and general advice on what skills and qualifications are valued by the industry, and in discussing options for partnership and collaboration. At the preparation stage, this took the form of:

1. Questionnaire about possible collaboration, internships and employment, taken by 13 game companies in May 2013 (results published on personal blog, Mochocki 2013).
2. Attendance at game industry events (e.g. Poznan Game Arena, Game Developers Convention, Game Industry Trends, Pyrkon Festival, Game-based Learning conference) in order to: a) present Gamedec.UKW to the audience, b) listen to presentations on starting a career in game dev
3. Early arrangements with Vivid Games and CI Games about hiring their staff to teach Video Game Design at Gamedec.UKW,
4. Informal personal communication with game dev professionals.

Given the number of conference talks and panels, invited guest lectures, and personal meetings, representing both digital and non-digital sectors in Poland (special thanks to Krzysztof Maliński, Maciej Miąsik, Rafał Bełka, Tomasz Kaczmarek, Ignacy Trzewiczek, Krzysztof Szafranski, Michał Stachyra) and abroad (special thanks: Justin Parsler, Sandy Petersen, Claus Raasted, Povl Heiberg Gad, Derrick Ferry, Yaraslau Kot, Gameforge team), it is not possible to recall precisely who-said-what. Other useful sources of industry opinion were *Extra Credits* episodes on game education (2012a, 2012b). Suffice it to say that all were strikingly similar, with many points overlapping, others complementary, never contradictory. They may be collectively summarised as follows:

Activities (what game students should do):

- Make games: the most important thing is actual practice of creating games.
- Start small and finish early: it is better to have a portfolio of small completed projects than grand visions which are never finished
- Learn the tools: work hard on mastering the technical skills and tools
- Play games: have an extensive player's knowledge of games and game genres

- Get inspired: look for inspiration beyond games, to other media, science, life experience
- Network: connect with people who are already working in the industry
- Be visible: attend industry events, have an online portfolio, participate in the community

Skills, personality, behaviour (what game students should be like):

- Be ready for criticism: do not get discouraged by online hate
- Kill your darlings: accept that a large part of your creative work will be abandoned
- Endure crunchtime: be able to stay productive and creative when working long hours
- Attention to details: pay it
- Teamwork: timeliness, team spirit, shared responsibility
- Respect partners: stay on good terms with co-workers and ex-partners
- Communicate: “single most core skill” (Extra Credits, 2012b, 0:48)

Based on both the industry and academic advice, it was obvious that design labs with team project work would constitute a significant, if not central, part of the curriculum. Such skills are valued even in programming-focused degrees in Computer Science departments (e.g. Bourdreaux, Etheridge & Kumar, 2011, p. 26; Brown, Lee & Alejandre, 2009, p. 240). Secondly, these skills should be integrated with game studies with a strong liberal arts background, as recommended e.g. by *Extra Credits* (2012a, 5:34), Elling (2013, p. 36), recently again by *Extra Credits* (2016, 4:27), and three fourths of respondents representing 73 higher-ed institutions granting video game degrees (HEVGA, 2015a, p. 4).

3. Gamedec.UKW in IGDA Curriculum Framework

As said above, in the first two iterations of the programme, the Gamedec specialisation block comprised 720 contact hours in 12 modules, plus three special modules conducted mainly in non-contact form: Project, Collaboration, and BA Seminar. Internal university regulations insisted that at least 50% of all contact hours be lectures. As much as possible, the lecture hours were concentrated in the general Humanities 2.0 modules so that labs and seminars could dominate in the specialisation blocks. The 50% requirement was later lifted for practical programmes, leading to a significantly higher number of practical classes in iterations 2015/16+. Table 1 (below) shows these changes for all versions of the programme.

3.1 Gamedec.UKW Modules in Semesters

Table 1 lists all modules in the Gamedec block, their assigned number of hours and class format (lecture, seminar, lab), as well as placement in semesters.

Table 1: Gamedec.UKW Modules in Semesters

| Semesters (Levels) | GAMEDEC: Game Studies & Design Modules | |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| | 2013/14 and 2014/15 | 2015/16 and 2016/17 |
| Level 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro to Game Studies & Design: 30 h lecture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro to Game Studies & Design: 15 h lecture [2015] / 30 h [2016] ● Interactive Fiction: 30 h lec*** ● Logic with Elements of Application Logic: 15 h lec**** |
| Level 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board Games Design: 30 h lec + 30 h lab ● Role-playing Games Design: 30 h lec + 30 h lab [2013] / 60 h lab [2014]** ● Video Games Design (Scratch): 30 h lab [2013] / none in [2014]** ● PROJECT 15 h* ● COLLABORATION w/Stakeholders 15 h* [2013] / none in [2014]** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board Games Design: 30 h lec + 45 h lab ● Role-playing Games Design: 30 h lec + 30 h RPG-Lab + 45 h Larp-Lab ● Law & Economy of Game Industry: 15 h seminar ● PROJECT 15 h* |
| Level 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video Games Design: 30 h lab ● Gamification of Education & Management: 45 h lec + 30 h lab ● PROJECT 15h* ● COLLABORATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video Games Design: 30 h lab ● Gamification of Education & Management: 30 h lec + 45 h lab ● Game Theory for Designers: 30 h seminar ● Grant Writing: 30 h seminar ● PROJECT 15h* |

| | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| | w/Stakeholders 15h* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● COLLABORATION w/Stakeholders 15h* |
| Level 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video Games Design: 30 h lab ● Game Studies: Ludology: 30 h lec + 30 h seminar ● Game Studies: Narratology: 30 h lec + 30 h seminar ● PROJECT 15h* ● COLLABORATION w/Stakeholders 15h* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video Games Design: 30 h lab ● ARG & Urban Games: 30 h lec + 45 h lab ● Game Studies: 60 h seminar (with submodules) ● PROJECT 15h* ● COLLABORATION w/Stakeholders 15h* |
| Level 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video Games Design: 30 h lab ● Interactive Fiction: 30 h lec + 30 h lab ● ARG & Urban Games: 30 h lec + 30 h lab ● BA SEMINAR: 30 h* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational Games Design: 30 h lec + 45 h lab ● Games in Adaptations & Transmedia: 30 h seminar ● Game Studies: 60 h seminar (with submodules) ● History of Digital Games: 30 h lec ● BA SEMINAR: 30 h* |
| Level 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational Games Design: 45 h lec + 30 h lab ● History of Digital Games: 30 h lec ● Gamer Communities in VR and RL: 30 h lec ● Games in Cultural Context: 30 h lec ● BA SEMINAR: 30 h* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● BA SEMINAR: 30 h* ● Industrial Placement: 3 months <p>(no contact hours at university)</p> |

* Project, Collaboration with Stakeholders, and BA Seminar are not regular contact classes. The hour count is there only for the purpose of calculating salaries.

** The only modification in the second iteration of Gamedec curriculum was the deletion of Video Games Design on Level 2 in order to add the saved 30 h to Role-playing Games Design lab. The deletion of Collaboration with Stakeholders on Level 2 was a general decision for the whole Humanities 2.0.

*** In 2015, Interactive Fiction was moved to the general Humanities 2.0 block on Level 1. Technically, it was removed from the Gamedec block, leaving spare hours to be added to other Gamedec courses. In fact, gamedecs take this class anyway, together with all Level 1 students before they choose specialisations.

**** In 2015, Logic with Elements of Application Logic replaced Elements of Philosophy on Level 1. It does not belong to the Gamedec module block, but was added at the request of Gamedec staff as a welcome introduction to mathematical / algorithmic thinking (compare: Extra Credits, 2016, 5:15).

3.2 IGDA Core Topics and Gamedec.UKW Modules

The IGDA Framework outlines ten Core Topics relevant for game education. In Table 2, the topics are paired with the respective Gamedec.UKW and general Humanities 2.0 modules. Table 2 is based on the third (2015/16) iteration of the curriculum (almost identical with the 2016/2017).

Table 2: IGDA Core Topics and Gamedec.UKW Modules

| IGDA Core Topic | Covered in Modules (2015/16): |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 3.1.1 Game Criticism | |
| Game studies | Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design Lvl 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: History of Digital Games Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia Lvl 2-5: lectures + labs for specific platforms (board, larp, etc.) |
| Experience-centered criticism | Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design Lvl 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management General H2.0 Block Lvl 3: Sociology of the Internet Lvl 4: Methodology of Social Research (in Cyberspace) |
| Consumer-oriented criticism | Lvl 2: Law & Economy of Game Industry Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| | <p>General H2.0 Block Lvls 1-2: Language of Social Communication</p> |
| Genre analysis | <p>Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design Lvl 2: Board Games Design Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design Lvl 4: ARG & Urban Games Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: History of Digital Games</p> |
| Auteur studies | <p>Lvl 2: Law & Economy of Game Industry Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia</p> |
| Analysis of Game Design | <p>Lvl 1: Interactive Fiction Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: History of Digital Games Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia Lvls 2-5: lectures + labs for specific platforms (board, larp, etc.)</p> |
| 3.1.2 Non-Game Media Studies | |
| Media Research Methods | <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> <p>General H2.0 Block Lvl 1: Popular Culture and the Internet Lvl 1: 2nd Gen Humanities: Fields & Disciplines Lvls 2-5: Correspondence of Sciences and Arts Lvl 4: Methodology of Social Research (in Cyberspace)</p> |
| Core Experiences | <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Lvls 2-5: lectures + labs for specific platforms (board, larp, etc.)</p> <p>General H2.0 Block Lvl 1: Popular Culture and the Internet</p> |
| 3.2 Games and Society | |
| Gaming | Lvls 4-5: Game Studies |

| | |
|--|--|
| Demographics | <p>General H2.0 Block</p> <p>Lvl 2: Society of Knowledge, Information and Digitisation</p> <p>Lvl 3: Sociology of the Internet</p> |
| The “Cultures” of Gaming | <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> <p>Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia</p> <p>General H2.0 Block</p> <p>Lvl 1: Popular Culture and the Internet</p> <p>Lvl 3: Sociology of the Internet</p> <p>Lvls 2-5: Correspondence of Sciences and Arts</p> |
| History | <p>Lvl 5: History of Digital Games</p> <p>Lvls 2-5: lectures + labs for specific platforms (board, larp, etc.)</p> |
| Experience of Play/ Historical aspects | <p>Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design</p> <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> |
| Experience of Play/ Social aspects | <p>Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design</p> <p>Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design</p> <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> <p>Lvl 5: Educational Games Design</p> |
| Experience of Play/ Psychological aspects | <p>Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design</p> <p>Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design</p> <p>Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management</p> <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> <p>Lvl 5: Educational Games Design</p> |
| Experience of Play/ Economic aspects | <p>Lvl 2: Law & Economy of Game Industry</p> <p>Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management</p> <p>Lvls 4-5: Game Studies</p> <p>Lvl 5: Educational Games Design</p> <p>Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia</p> |
| Experience of Play/ Human-machine interaction | <p>Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management</p> <p>Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design</p> |
| The Construction | <p>Lvl 5: History of Digital Games</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| of Games / Historical aspects | |
| Anthropology of the Game Industry | Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia |
| 3.3 Game Design | |
| Atomic parts of games | Lvl 2: Board Games Design Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management |
| Play Mechanics | Lvl 2: Board Games Design Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management Lvls 4-5: Game Studies |
| Approaches to Game Design | Lvl 3: Game Theory for Designers Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Guest speakers |
| Boardgame and Roleplaying Design | Lvl 2: Board Games Design Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design Lvls 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: Educational Games Design |
| Ideas | Lvl 2: Board Games Design Lvls 2-4: Project Lvl 5: Educational Games Design Lvls 5-6: BA Seminar (diploma project) |
| Fun | Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management |
| Abstract Design Elements | Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management Lvl 5: Educational Games Design |
| Psychological Design Considerations | Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management Lvls 4-5: Game Studies |
| Interface Design | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Iterative Nature | Lvls 2-4: Project Lvls 5-6: BA Seminar (diploma project) |
| Serious Game | Lvl 1: Intro to Game Studies & Design |

| | |
|--|--|
| Design | Lvl 3: Gamification of Education & Management Lvl 5: Educational Games Design |
| Practical Game Design | Lvls 2-5: all design labs + lectures Lvls 2-4: Project Lvls 3-4: Collaboration with Stakeholders Lvls 5-6: BA Seminar (diploma project) Guest speakers |
| 3.4 Game Programming | |
| Game Engine Design | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Design/Technology Synthesis | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Graphics Programming | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| 3.5 Visual Design | |
| Basic Visual Design | General H2.0 Block Lvl 1: Basics of Computer Editing & Design Lvls 2-3: Visualisation of Knowledge & Information |
| Visual narratives: painting, comics, photography, film | General H2.0 Block Lvl 1: Basics of Computer Editing & Design Lvls 2-5: Correspondence of Sciences and Arts |
| Motion Graphics | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Visual Asset Generation | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Architecture | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Working with 3D Hardware | Lvls 3-4: Video Games Design |
| Information Visualisation | General H2.0 Block Lvls 2-3: Visualisation of Knowledge & Information |
| 3.6 Audio Design | None |
| 3.7 Interactive | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Storytelling | |
| Story in Non-Interactive Media | Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design Lvl 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia |
| Narrative in Interactive Media | Lvl 1: Interactive Fiction Lvl 2: Role-playing Games Design Lvl 4: ARG & Urban Games Lvl 4-5: Game Studies Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia |
| Writing for Other Media | General H2.0 Block Lvl 1: Popular Culture and the Internet |
| 3.8 Game Production | Lvl 2-4: Project Lvl 3-4: Collaboration with Stakeholders Lvl 5-6: BA Seminar (diploma projects) Guest speakers |
| 3.9 Business of Gaming | Lvl 2: Law & Economy of Game Industry Lvl 3-4: Collaboration with Stakeholders Lvl 5: History of Digital Games Lvl 5: Games in Adaptations & Transmedia Guest speakers General H2.0 Block Lvl 1; 5: Internet Law |

3.3 IGDA Institutional Considerations

IGDA 2008 Framework lists the following nine qualities as “some of the components of a strong program” (p. 33). Gamedec.UKW meets 7,5 of these, the missing one being (4.) local IGDA chapter, and the missing half being (6.) labs and libraries.

| IGDA Institutional Considerations (p. 33) | How they apply to Gamedec.UKW |
|--|--|
| 1. Advisory Board (local professionals if available) | An informal network of consultants and sponsors in local and national digital and non-digital game |

| | |
|--|--|
| | companies: HUUUGE Games, Remivision, Insane Code, Rebel.pl, Fabryka Kart Trefl. Never officially formalised as Advisory Board, but a good functional equivalent. |
| 2. Focus on portfolio development (graduation requirement, professional/academic judges) | Mandatory game projects created in all design labs, in all Project modules. Evaluation by industry professionals highly recommended in all projects, and mandatory in BA diploma projects. |
| 3. Internship network with studios, companies and community organizations including non-profits. | Established with local video game companies: HUUUGE Games, Vivid Games, Remivision (all of which have already employed gamedecs full-time), with local board game store Centrum Gier Pegaz and board game blog Przystanek Planszówka. |
| 4. Relationship with local IGDA chapter (student memberships) | No IGDA chapter exists in Poland. |
| 5. Faculty with industry experience (especially for development-focused programs) | Beside the initial four UKW staff (see above: History, Background and Vision), Gamedec was joined by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Krzysztof Chmielewski, larp designer and educator ● Piotr Milewski, larp designer, board & card game designer, game-based learning expert ● Piotr Pieńkowski, long-time editor-in-chief of video game magazines, video and board game designer ● Łukasz Juszcak, editor at board game blog “Przystanek Planszówka” ● Vivid Games professionals teaching Video Games Design (W. Dziuk, G. Brol, M. Dzikowski, F. Kucharski) |
| 6. Labs and libraries (access to hardware/software/games students don't have) | Available but underequipped, especially in high-quality computer hardware. |
| 7. Speaker program (bring | Guest speakers from local and national digital and non- |

| | |
|--|---|
| current professionals on campus) | digital game industries on campus: video game publishers, game/level/sound designers, media workers, marketers, community managers, translators; board/card game designers, publishers and retailers; larp designers and event organisers; tabletop RPG designers and editors. Additionally, foreign guest lectures via Skype: Sandy Petersen (USA), Claus Raasted (Denmark), GameForge team (Germany), Mads Haahr (Ireland). |
| 8. Mixed classes (courses involving programmers and artists on same project, team-based) | Project module on semesters 2-4, with three mixed team projects per semester. Also, platform-specific design lab. |
| 9. Extracurricular projects (student-led mods, projects outside the classroom) | Project module is based entirely on student-led projects developed beyond the classroom. Collaboration with Stakeholders is carried out with partners outside of university. |

3.4 Special Modules, Employment Rate & Retention Rate

In the Project module (Levels 2-4), teams of gamedecs are required to create three small game projects per semester, using some professional project management tools (e.g. Gantt chart). In the Collaboration module (Levels 3-4), they collect experience in collaboration with stakeholders outside university; preferably, as long-term internships in game dev companies. In the BA Seminar, each gamedec develops their own game project supervised both by an academic supervisor and an informal 'supervisor' (consultant) from a relevant industry.

Emphasis on constant project work in contact with industry professionals contributes to a high employment rate: as of July 2016, as many as 39% of seniors and sophomores found full-time employment in video game dev **before** graduation (Gamedec.UKW 2016), with the number rising to 47% in January 2017 (Gamedec.UKW 2017)- to be compared with 55,8% within a **year post** graduation among graduates of Western (mostly US-based) degrees focused specifically on video games (HEVGA, 2015b, p. 3). On the other hand, the amount

of hard work required systematically across semesters contributes to a high drop-out rate. The freshman-to-sophomore retention was only 55,5% in the first two cohorts, compared to 88% in video game degrees in the USA and 64,2% on average in US-based academic degrees (HEVGA, 2015a, p. 4).

This paper focuses on the composition of the curriculum in the view of the IGDA framework, thus the section on special modules, employability and retention is only briefly sketched. For a more detailed analysis of these aspects, see Mochocki 2016.

Summary

The curriculum of Gamedec.UKW specialisation within the Humanities 2.0 BA degree has a very strong coverage of the following IGDA core topics: 3.1.1 Game Criticism, 3.1.2 Non-Game Media Studies, 3.2. Games and Society, 3.3. Game Design, and a strong coverage of 3.7 Interactive Storytelling. It has a relatively weak coverage of 3.8 Game Production and 3.9 Business of Gaming, very weak for 3.4 Game Programming and 3.5 Visual Design, and zero for 3.6 Audio Design. Also, it meets 7.5 out of 9 Institutional Considerations which refer mainly to collaboration with the industry environment and the organisation of after-class student assignments. The two leading sections of the curriculum are: practical game design team projects and rich liberal arts background, in line with recommendations from both academia and game industry.

The curriculum has undergone a significant modification in its third year (2015/2016+), including the removal of regular classes from Semester 6, leaving only the BA Seminar and 3-month industrial placement. This provides students with a greater mobility: they do not need to be present at university, contacting their BA supervisor online. Also, they can merge the industrial traineeship with the seminar, building their BA project upon the design work they do for the company in the traineeship.

In my opinion, the 2015/16 version of the programme is the best that we could achieve given the 'glass ceiling' of institutional, financial and organisational constraints as a specialisation of Humanities 2.0. Hence, no significant changes were introduced in the newest (fourth) iteration for 2016/2017. Further improvement of the curriculum would require the 'emancipation' of Game Studies & Design as an independent degree with its own specialisations.

APPENDIX

Table 3 lists all modules taken by gamedecs in the 3-year programme, including those in the general Humanities 2.0 section.

Table 3: Complete Gamedec.UKW 2015/16 Curriculum

| |
|--|
| Level 1 |
| <p>Interactive Fiction</p> <p>2nd Gen Humanities: Fields & Disciplines (includes: Intro to Game Studies & Design 15 h)</p> <p>Human Capital: Soft Skills</p> <p>Philosophy & New Technologies</p> <p>Logic with Elements of Application Logic</p> <p>Language of Social Communication</p> <p>Popular Culture and the Internet</p> <p>Introduction to IT</p> <p>Introduction to Applications</p> <p>Basics of Computer Editing & Design</p> <p>Internet Law</p> <p>Foreign Language</p> |
| Level 2 |
| <p>Human Capital: Soft Skills (II)</p> <p>Society of Knowledge, Information and Digitisation</p> <p>Language of Social Communication (II)</p> <p>Visualisation of Knowledge and Information</p> <p>Correspondence of Sciences and Arts</p> <p>Foreign Language (II)</p> <p>Tech Incubator</p> <p>Gamedec Spec-Track:</p> <p>Board Games Design</p> <p>Role-playing Games Design</p> <p>Law and Economy of the Game Industry</p> <p>PROJECT</p> |
| Level 3 |

| |
|--|
| <p>Human Capital: Soft Skills (III)</p> <p>Visualisation of Knowledge and Information (II)</p> <p>Sociology of the Internet</p> <p>Correspondence of Sciences and Arts (II)</p> <p>Foreign Language (III)</p> <p>Physical Education</p> <p>Tech Incubator (II)</p> <p>Gamedec Spec-Track:</p> <p>Video Games Design (I)</p> <p>Gamification of Education and Management</p> <p>Game Theory for Designers</p> <p>Grant Writing</p> <p>PROJECT</p> <p>COLLABORATION with STAKEHOLDERS</p> |
| <p>Level 4</p> |
| <p>Ideas of Contemporary Humanities</p> <p>Human Capital: Soft Skills (IV)</p> <p>Methodology of Social Research (in Cyberspace)</p> <p>Correspondence of Sciences and Arts (III)</p> <p>Foreign Language (IV)</p> <p>Gamedec Spec-Track:</p> <p>ARG and Urban Games</p> <p>Video Games Design (II)</p> <p>Game Studies (I)</p> <p>PROJECT</p> <p>COLLABORATION with STAKEHOLDERS</p> |
| <p>Level 5</p> |
| <p>Human Capital: Soft Skills (V)</p> <p>Correspondence of Sciences and Arts (IV)</p> <p>Internet Law (II)</p> <p>free elective (lecture)</p> |

| |
|--|
| Gamedec Spec-Track: Educational Games Design Games in Adaptations and Transmedia History of Digital Games Game Studies (II) B.A. SEMINAR |
| Level 6 (no contact hours at university) |
| Gamedec Spec-Track: B.A. SEMINAR (II) INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT (3 months) |

REFERENCES

- Bourdreaux, H., Etheridge, J., & Kumar, A. (2011). Evolving Interdisciplinary Collaborative Groups in a Game Development Course. *The Journal of Game Design & Development Education*, (1), 25–37.
- Brathwaite, B., & Schreiber, I. (2009). *Challenges for game designers*. Boston, MA: Course Technology/Cengage Learning.
- Brown, Q., Lee, F., & Alejandre, S. (2009). Emphasizing soft skills and team development in an educational digital game design course (p. 240). In *FDG '09 Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Foundations of Digital Games*. ACM Press. <http://doi.org/10.1145/1536513.1536557>
- Extra Credits*. (2012a). On Game Schools. (2012). YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmdGZk-fF98>
- Extra Credits*. (2012b). So You Want To Be a Game Designer - Career Advice for Making Games. (2012). YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQvWMdWhFCc>
- Extra Credits*. (2016). Educating Game Designers - Too Much 'Game' at Game Schools. (2016). YouTube. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kNscZCrke4k>

- Elling, K. (2013). 100 things every game student should know. Retrieved from <https://k0k0k0.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/100-things-every-game-student-should-know.pdf>
- Fullerton, T., Swain, C., & Hoffman, S. (2008). *Game design workshop: a playcentric approach to creating innovative games* (2nd ed). Amsterdam; Boston: Elsevier Morgan Kaufmann.
- Gamedec.UKW. (2016). 7-2016 Employability in Numbers. Retrieved from <http://gamedec.ukw.edu.pl/7-2016-employability-in-numbers/>
- Gamedec.UKW. (2017). Employment. Retrieved from <http://gamedec.ukw.edu.pl/employment/>
- GameForge. (2014, March). Guest lecture. Bydgoszcz.
- Higher Education Video Game Alliance. (2015a). Our State of Play Higher Education Video Game Alliance Survey 2014-15. HEVGA. Retrieved from http://higheredgames.org/wp-content/themes/hevga_theme/assets/2015_HEVGA_Survey_Results.pdf
- Higher Education Video Game Alliance. (2015b). Priming the Pump 2015: Higher Education Video Game Alliance Survey of Program Graduates. HEVGA. Retrieved from http://higheredgames.org/wp-content/themes/hevga_theme/assets/HEVGA_6-15-15des2.pdf
- IGDA. (2008). IGDA Curriculum Framework. The Study of Games and Game Development. IGDA. Retrieved from http://www.igda.org/resource/collection/0DBC56DC-B7CB-4140-BF3A-22A9E92EC63A/igda_curriculum_framework_2008.pdf
- Kaczmarek, T. (2013, November). *Od Isaaca po mistrza gry, czyli jak nieznany rodzimy indyk podbił Polskę i wpłynął na studia gamedesignu w Anglii*. Guest lecture, Bydgoszcz.
- Kapp, K. M. (2012). *The gamification of learning and instruction: game-based methods and strategies for training and education*. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Koster, R. (2005). *A theory of fun for game design*. Scottsdale, AZ: Paraglyph Press.
- Maliński, K. (2014, October). *Jak zacząć jako programista w branży gier*. Presented at the Game Developer Convention, Poznań. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKBOeMCEBp4>
- Mäyrä, F. (2008). *An introduction to game studies: games in culture*. London: SAGE.

- Mäyrä, F. (2015, October). *The Identity of Game Studies: The Widening Range of Research in Games and Play*. Presented at the Central and Eastern European Game Studies. Distributed Game Studies, Kraków.
- McGill, M. M. (2009). Defining the expectation gap: a comparison of industry needs and existing game development curriculum (p. 129). In *FDG '09 Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Foundations of Digital Games*, ACM Press. <http://doi.org/10.1145/1536513.1536542>
- Mochocki, M. (2013, March 6). Gamedec New Info [blog post]. Retrieved from <http://mmochocki.blogspot.com/2013/06/gamedec-new-info.html>
- Mochocki, M. (2015). Gamedec. UKW: A case of edu-gamification for game designers. In *Proceedings of 2015 International Conference on Interactive Mobile Communication Technologies and Learning (IMCTL)*, Red Hook: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, pp. 323-326, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/IMCTL.2015.7359612>
- Mochocki, M. (2016). Humanities-based degrees and game dev employability. In *Computer Game Innovations*, Łódź: Lodz University of Technology, pp. 80-105
- Parsler, J., Majkowski, T., Miąsik, M., Mochocki, M., & Drews, M. (2012, October). *Games and Education*. Presented at the Game Developers Convention, Poznań. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x37GVQZB3c>
- Petersen, S. (2014, May). Guest lecture. Bydgoszcz.
- Raasted, C. (2014, June). *Larp as a teaching tool*. Guest lecture. Bydgoszcz.
- Schell, J. (2008). *The art of game design: a book of lenses*. Amsterdam; Boston: Elsevier/Morgan Kaufmann.
- Sheldon, L. (2012). *The multiplayer classroom: designing coursework as a game*. Australia; Boston, Mass: Course Technology/Cengage Learning.
- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2003). *Rules of play: game design fundamentals*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.

Abstract

Launched in October 2013, GAMEDEC: Game Studies & Design is a specialisation track within the 2nd Gen Humanities (aka Humanities 2.0) 3-year BA programme at Kazimierz Wielki University (UKW) in Bydgoszcz, Poland. The curriculum was created by UKW academic staff with game design experience, guided by the IGDA 2008 Framework and consulted with game dev professionals. It underwent slight modifications in 2014 and a significant transformation in 2015. This paper aims at a thorough analysis of the structure of

the curriculum as seen through the lens of the IGDA Framework (2008), including the coverage of both Core Topics and Institutional Considerations. The analysis is conducted in the context of foreign (mostly U.S.-based) game degrees and supported with comments on its design, implementation and modifications.

Key words: curriculum, game design, game studies, IGDA Curriculum Framework