

Gaming as a Form of Experiential Learning: Career Ready Project—Bloom Virtual Village

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Abstract

George Brown College students, in collaboration with industry partners Baycrest Health Sciences and Microsoft, worked with experts to imagine, design, create, validate and employ simulated field experience models. Under close supervision of George Brown's faculty from two academic divisions, students converted the field placement experience in long-term care into a simulation gaming solution. Upon completion of this initial pilot, George Brown College will begin to integrate the game in several programs in our Centre for Community Services and Health Sciences. Students worked collaboratively to develop a unique digital experiential learning opportunity.

Article History

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Introduction

The Career Ready Fund project began in May 2018 and consists of multidisciplinary teams of faculty and students from George Brown College's Community Services and Health Sciences (CSHS) and Centre for Arts, Design & Information Technology (CADIT), in collaboration with Baycrest Health Sciences and Microsoft, with funding provided by the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities. The task was to create a game that would simulate "real world" situations within a long-term care setting for students while supporting seniors living in and transitioning to long-term care.

The objective of the game is to prepare students in CSHS disciplines for training, placement, and potential work in long-term care or clinical settings. Students will be exposed to a variety of realistic situations encountered in the workplace and, through experiential learning, will be allowed to practise work-related skills. The game is meant to be highly interactive and immersive, as well as preparatory for students entering placement for the first time. It offers live-action decision making and best-practice feedback and resources to enhance the development of skills needed working in long-term care.

The Career Ready Fund project is an example of a multidisciplinary team of students who, by working together, effectively embraced the design process. There was an opportunity to create an innovative and unique

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***Presentation Summary** These brief reports are summaries of the presentations that were given during the annual conference, May 15-16, 2019, in Richmond, B.C.

teaching tool that would be used by future students to better prepare them for their placements. CADIT and CSHS students then conducted extensive research, interviews and site visits to better understand some of the main challenges that are faced in long-term care.

The team became familiar with the current state and needs of long-term care facilities. This, along with extensive brainstorming sessions, began to influence the design process, concepts and direction of the project. The students determined they would create a role-playing game where players experienced being a placement student in a virtual long-term care facility, interacting with characters. Over the course of 14 in-game days, the player learns to communicate through highly curated dialogue and storylines created by students and faculty alike. As players progress through the game, they meet several primary and secondary characters and their interactions/responses influence the course of the game; at the same time, they receive feedback. The result is a fun and interactive teaching tool that provides students with potential scenarios they may encounter during their first field placement, and the opportunity to learn best practices and approaches in dealing with realistic situations.

Below are several key points that further explain what makes this project unique and innovative:

- The Career Ready Fund project focused on solidifying knowledge exchange between interdisciplinary student teams from a number of different backgrounds and disciplines, including nursing, personal support, activation/gerontology, social service, denturism, game design, game art, concept art for entertainment, video design and production and theatre arts.
- The content and design of the game were created by George Brown College students, for future students to use in preparation for entering their field placements.
- Industry partners Microsoft and Baycrest Health Sciences provided an extra layer of expertise and supported the project throughout the process.
- In addition to students, faculty and partners, the team engaged with Simulated Education in

Gerontology Education Simulated Participants—older residents who were sourced as actors and portrayed some of the characters throughout the game and in live-action video scenes. The concept artist team then took the images of these participants and created avatars for each character.

- While the content in this game is specific to placement students in long-term care facilities, we envision this model of role-playing game as applicable to any learning discipline. Bloom Virtual Village was created with modularity in mind. Learning topics can be added or removed as the content is created, adapts and changes.
- Bloom Virtual Village also has a wide range of applications, and while this iteration is specifically tailored for long-term care placement prep, the game can be redesigned and new content can be created that would allow it to be used for a variety of disciplines.
- The entire process has been inclusive, not only for all participants directly involved in creating the game and its content, but as the game has progressed through iterations, many classes of current students, faculty and partners were involved in game demos and focus groups to obtain feedback and ensure that changes were made based on that feedback.
- Bloom Virtual Village includes several game components that were to complement the main content developed.
- The game components include the following:
 - **Learning Outcomes** were written for each scenario, providing student players with a framework for the objectives they will achieve by the end of the game.
 - **Summary Chart (Best Practices)** appears at the end of each in-game topic, focusing on suggested best practices as well as summarizing what the player did well or can improve on, based on their interactions with the game characters.

Resource Library shows examples of various resources and websites that students can access to obtain additional information and reading material on each topic.

Glossary Tab was created to assist the student player in navigating the long-term care setting and the various health care terms.

In summary, the Career Ready project Bloom Virtual Village is an exceptional example of how an a multidisciplinary approach to learning can foster innovation. The process and development of the game enabled our students to interact with industry partners,

and incorporate theory into practice. Bloom Virtual Village provides a non-traditional approach to the way we deliver education. Faculty can present key material and best practices in health care in an immersive and interactive manner. Furthermore, the additional components of the game engage the learner and encourage further research opportunities.

To learn more about the Career Ready project, contact Lori Cranson, George Brown College, Dean of Community Services & Health Sciences at lcranson@georgebrown.ca.