

Game Title: College of the Dead

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COLLEGE OF THE DEAD



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GAME PITCH

Game Concept

The game genre will be a 2D side-scroller featuring platform based elements. The player will control a singular avatar in the form of a college student, as they progress through 18 different levels through the game setting of York College. The time setting for the game will be near future (maximum 10 years into the future), with the main objective of the game being to graduate from the college by collecting as many coursework papers as the player can within a set time limit.

Throughout the game, the player will encounter enemies in the form of 'zombified' students and college teachers. In addition to this, the player will have various interactions with surviving students and teachers in the form of non-playable characters (NPCs), where they may be asked to complete in-game challenges where they will be rewarded with in-game perks and experience points (XP). This XP will be used by the player to use consumable items and weapon upgrades, giving significant advantages to the player throughout the game.

Gameplay Elements and Features

Interaction Model

As the game is single player only, the player will take control of a single avatar in the game. This will be the main character and will be in the form of a student from the college. The player will control the characters movement through selecting different movement controls that are provided to them, allowing the character to walk, sprint, jump and crouch.

The game will allow for the player to customise the visual appearance and the name of their main character at the very beginning of the game, prior to playing the first level. This will add an element of uniqueness to the gameplay as the player will become attached to their own personalised character, adding more depth to the storyline as the player will want to better their performance within the game as they want the character to survive.

Narrative

The time setting for the game will be within the next 10 years (near future) where on the last day of the college term, a freak lightning strike has struck the main building, causing the majority of students and teachers alike to turn into flesh hungry zombies. Returning from the local supermarket after collecting their lunch, the one and only student who was not in the building at the time of the strike has discovered the horrors that now lie within. More importantly, they realise that they must collect all their coursework before the day is up, or they will suffer the consequences by failing the entire course. What unravels is a race against time to collect their coursework, a battle of wits against the undead horde, and a rescue mission to save any survivors of this horrible predicament.

The game story is divided into 18 separate levels for each collectible coursework module, which gradually increases in difficulty as the player progresses through the game. All levels will feature the main objective of collecting the module coursework and then proceeding to

the exit door to complete the level. The player will encounter friendly non-playable characters in the form of surviving students and teachers, and will be given the non-compulsory challenge of escorting them to the exit in exchange for a reward. The game will end when the player completes all levels or when the time limit depletes, whichever comes first. The player's final score and overall ending will be calculated on how many levels they were able to complete before the time is up.

Graphical, Textual and Sound

The game will have the appearance and feel in similarity of a retro arcade game, featuring early nostalgic graphics as well as a simple, blockish texture design. The colours featured within the game world will be bold with grey blocks over a background for the College rooms, which change in colour depending on the level that the player is currently residing in. As each level will be situated within a separate room in the College, this will affect the background for each level. For example, levels that are situated within Information Technology classrooms will have computers situated in the background, whereas Design and Technology classrooms will feature art materials and paintings as a background choice. The player along with enemies and other NPCs will be represented as animated graphics that are observed from a side view.

The general appearance of each level will have the player beginning in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen, with each collectible coursework module glowing with a bright white outline at a randomised location around the level. Situated around the level will be various types of moving and stationary enemies, which will perform actions in the form of animations when the player is in close proximity to them. Due to the fact that the game will have 18 levels, the game will therefore feature 18 different platform map designs in both appearance and sound design.

Game Setting

As previously mentioned, all gameplay elements will take place in an alternate reality version of the non-fictional setting that is York College. The game will adopt a modern day time setting of up to 10 years in the near future, therefore the game environments will be heavily inspired from objects that currently exist in the real world. In addition to this, due to the game's narrative depicting a building being struck by lightning, the interior environments will adopt elements of a collapsing structure (such as cracked walls and falling debris). These environmental differences may also be implemented to offer obstructions to the player, adding to the overall platformer feel that the game is trying to achieve.

Market Consideration

The game will be primarily aimed at those aged between 15 and 19 years old. This is due to the game showing graphic violence through the use of using melee and ranged weapons, as well as the fact that the enemy zombies will be shown covered in blood and missing various body parts. However, it has been established that no content of a sexual nature will feature within the game.

Platform

The game will be produced for the sole platform of PC primarily. However, after a hopefully successful launch, it is hoped that the game will be re-released onto both of the major current generation of consoles (PS4 and Xbox One).

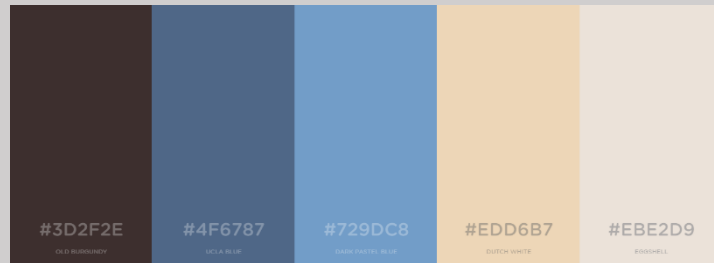
ART

Mood Board
(See below)

Story board
(See below)



Colour Palette: Environment



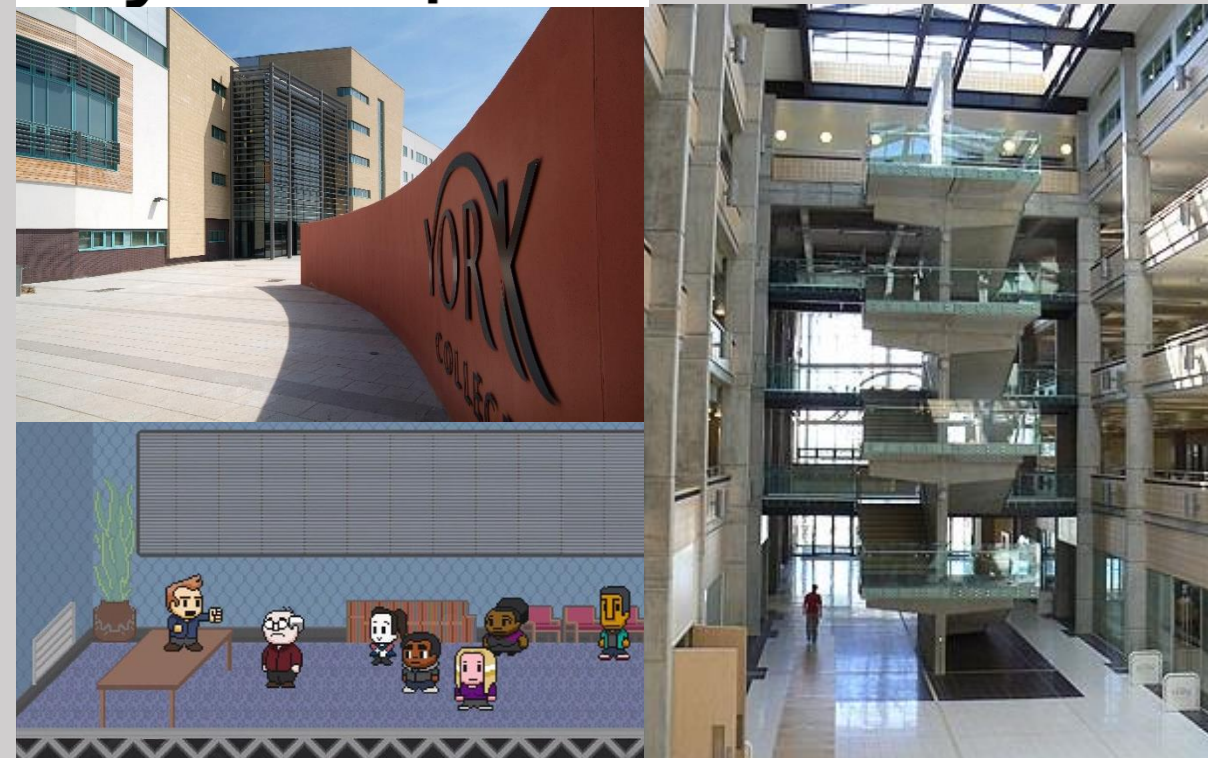
Colour Palette: Env. (Alternative)

Mood board

COLLEGE OF THE DEAD



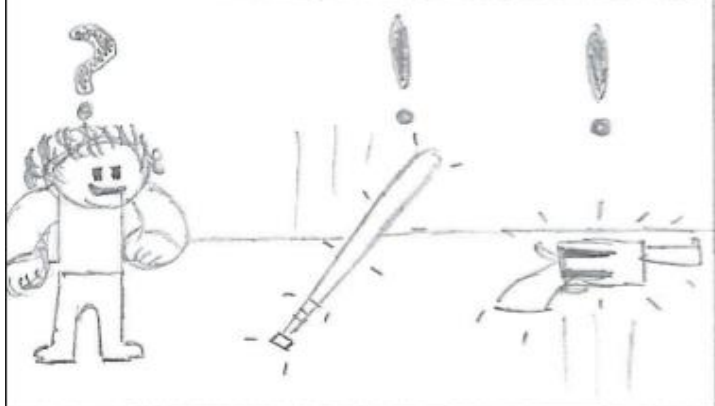





Images for Inspiration



Example Environments



College of the Dead - STORYBOARD

<p>1.</p> 	<p>2.</p> 	<p>3.</p> 
<p>Melee and ranged weapons that can be found around the game world and will hover and glow.</p>	<p>To equip the weapon, stand the character over it and the player will be prompted with an action.</p>	<p>Currently equipped melee and ranged weapons will be displayed in the inventory.</p>
<p>4.</p> 	<p>5.</p> 	<p>6.</p> 
<p>Weapons will have to be dropped if the player wishes to equip a different one of the same variant.</p>	<p>Enemy health bar is shown when character has successfully made a hit using a weapon.</p>	<p>Player is notified when their weapon has successfully defeated the enemy.</p>

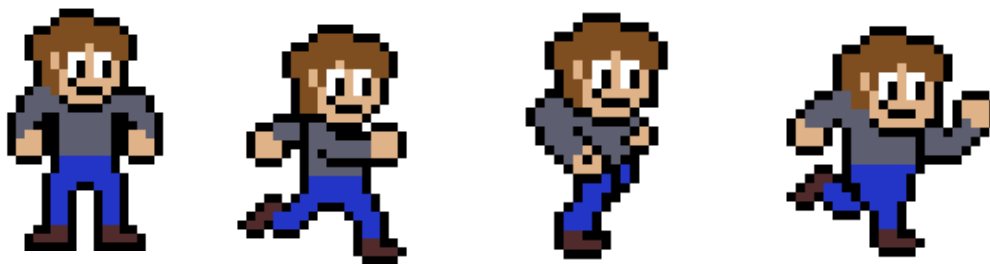
Visual Style

Perspective

The game will be played from a third person perspective. Due to the fact that third-person allows the player to see the controlled character as well as a large proportion of the game environment, it is the superior choice when constructing a platform based game. The third person perspective will be placed alongside the game world to deliver a side view of the character moving through the environment. The viewpoint of the environment will follow the character and will change depending on the position that the character is in (e.g. jumping, crouching and running to a new area in the game world).

Animation

Below are 4 separate frames of movement for one example character within the game. When animated together, they will form the basis for the general running animation for all characters and non-playable characters, creating the illusion of movement.



In addition to character movement, the game will feature a variety of other animation types. For example, certain levels may feature degradable terrain that is triggered by the player moving within close proximity of it (e.g. falling platform floors, exploding fire extinguishers). These environmental animations are designed to create a visual style that feels alive to the player's actions, instead of remaining with a static, bland look that may drive the player to boredom. Finally, items of interest that are littered around the terrain will be more visible to the player, due to the fact that they will be presented with a hover type animation, allowing them to rise above the surface in full view of the player.

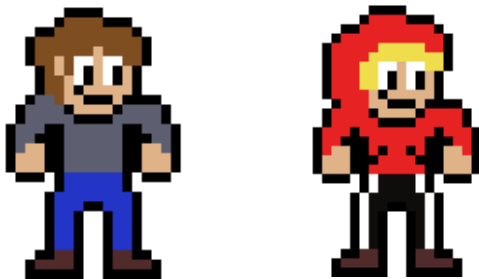
Terrain & Buildings

The terrain will consist primarily of the inner rooms and floors of a college building. This means that a large proportion of the environment will feature a grey tone of similar doors, windows and walls, with the addition of a scattered debris, in growing vegetation and traces of the undead enemies littered about the game world. These additions are in place to coincide with the narrative of the game, however it is hoped that because each level is set within a different classroom of the college, extra inanimate objects placed around each level will vary in design depending on the type of classroom that the player is navigating through. An example of this would be having computers and games consoles in computing classrooms, as well as musical instruments scattered around music rooms and food and rubbish placed around the cafeteria level in the college.

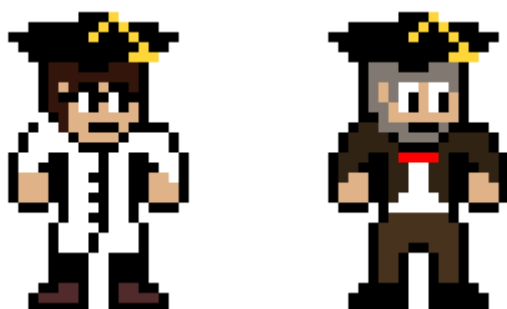
Characters and NPCs

The player is only given control of one character throughout the entirety of the game. At the start of the game, the player is given the opportunity to customise the appearance of their

character through a selection based system. The system will allow the player to choose their characters hair colour, hair style, skin colour, eye colour, clothing, and facial expression from a list of premade choices. By giving the player more creative freedom with their character choice will make the gaming experience more personal to them, encouraging them to return and play more of the game over time. Below are two possible examples of what types of character can be designed.



In addition to the main character, the game will feature a variety of non-playable characters (NPCs) that are critical to the overall narrative that the story is trying to tell. For example, due to the fact that the plot involves a college, it is evident that a few NPCs will be in the form of teachers. These teachers will play a major role in extra missions for the player, and will also provide helpful advice and tips for players as they progress through the game, in the form of small pieces of dialogue. The visual appearance of NPCs will alter depending on the current level that the player is in, in similarity with the terrain (e.g. a science professor will be present in levels designed around a science classroom). Below are two possible examples of what types of NPC teachers that will be featured within the game.



Enemies

The game narrative involves the inhabitants of the college being transformed into an undead horde of flesh eating zombies. It is important to focus specifically on the various possible designs that will take the form of computer controlled enemies. The childish, pixelated stylistic appearance of the game will contrast to the demonic, scary tone that these enemies possess, allowing for challenge that is tough but not too frightening. The enemies are aimed to increase in strength and durability in the higher level, in order to present a challenge to the player. In addition, each enemy zombie is planned to have a specific trait that will stick out amongst each other, allowing for a variety of strategies that can be played out in order to overcome them. Below are two examples of the type of enemies that will be encountered as the player moves through the levels.



GAMEPLAY

Game objective

The main purpose of the game is to provide a challenging, yet enjoyable experience for those who choose to play it. The overall goal that the player must complete, is to collect as many pieces of coursework before the end of the set college day. The day will be displayed as roughly 6 in-game hours, by which once the time has depleted or all pieces of coursework have been the collected, the game will end. One piece of coursework must be collected in each level in order to complete it. The player's overall score will be determined on the amount of levels completed after the time runs out. Below is an example of what a piece of collectible coursework will look like within the environment.



In addition to the main objective, the game will feature plenty of side missions that will reward the player with temporary or permanent advantageous bonuses (e.g. extra in-game time on the timer or more powerful weapons for the player to utilise in future levels). These side missions are not compulsory however they are a rewarding venture should the player wish to pursue them. The content of side missions would involve minor tasks that can be completed in each level, depending on the difficulty of the mission and the level that the player is currently positioned in. Examples of side missions could include:

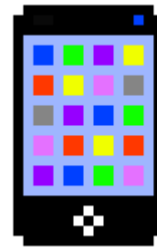
- **Kill 10 enemies in this level**
- **Rescue a survivor by escorting them to the level exit**
- **Locate a particular item of interest in the level**
- **Only use melee weapons in this level**
- **Complete this level in under 10 minutes**

Game Objects

Collectibles

Players will be able to collect and utilise various items placed around every level to use to their advantage. Not only do these include the pieces of coursework that forms the main

mission for the game, but they can utilise consumable items when they desire to give them a powerful but temporary advantage in the game. Examples of these items are shown below and include a medical kit used to regain lost health and an energy drink which grants the player invincibility for a short amount of time.

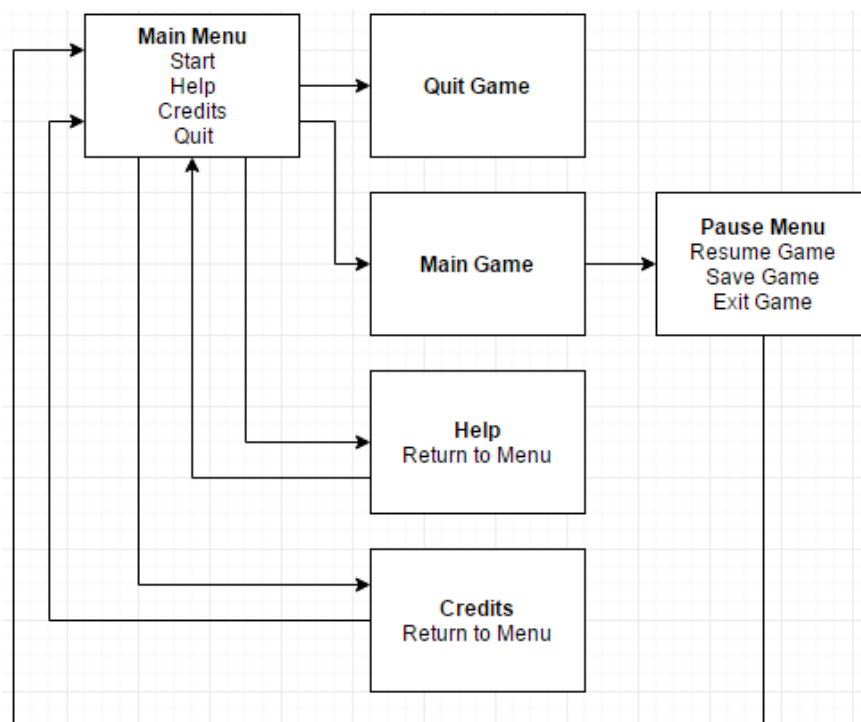


Weapons

All weapons and objects that are available to be picked up at random locations within the game. The more enemies that are killed using weapons will earn the player experience points (XP), which can be used to level up the character up so they can utilise an improved selection of weaponry. Below are a few possible examples of weapons that could feature in the game. This includes a baseball bat and a sharp knife for close range encounters, as well as a powerful but ammunition-limited revolver that is able to kill enemies at a longer range.



Menu systems



Key:

- **Main Menu** – Menu that the player is greeted with when they open the game
 - Start – Enters the player into the game, previously saved games will be loaded automatically
 - Help – Sends the player to the menu that list the instructions on how to play the game
 - Credits – Sends the player to the menu showing the credits of everyone who contributed in making the game
 - Quit – Option for player to select if they want to close down the game
- **Quit Game** – If player selects this action, the game will close down entirely
- **Main Game** – Player begins playing the main content of the game
- **Help** – Menu page that list all instructions and controls for the game to the player
 - Return to Menu – Allows for easy access back to the Main Menu
- **Credits** – Menu page showing the credits of everyone who contributed in making the game
 - Return to Menu – Allows for easy access back to the Main Menu
- **Pause Menu** – Menu screen displaying in-game options to the player
 - Resume Game – Player begin playing the game from the moment they paused
 - Save Game – Player saves current progress within the game
 - Exit Game – Player stops playing the game and is returned to the Main Menu. Player is prompted to save their progress before exiting the game

Controls



Key:

- **W** – Jump
- **A** – Move left
- **S** – Crouch
- **D** – Move Right
- **Shift** – Sprint
- **1** – Equip melee weapon
- **2** – Equip ranged weapon
- **Left click** – Use weapon
- **Space** – Talk to NPC

In-game information

The game's Head Up Display (HUD) will be present, however it is aimed to be as minimalistic as possible in order to not clutter the entire screen. The main character's health bar will be displayed in the top left-hand corner along with the character's XP meter directly underneath it. Finally, there will be three small boxes in the top right-hand side of the screen which will be utilised to display what melee and ranged weapon the character currently has equipped. The third box will be used to display whether the player has successfully collected the piece of coursework for that level. There will also be a small area in the bottom left-hand corner of the screen that will display how much time the player has left before the game automatically ends.

Character movement and interaction

As shown in the *Controls* section on Page 10, the game will primarily utilise simplistic movement features in order for inexperienced gamers to become quickly familiar with them, should they spend a long time period not playing the game. These movements are limited to moving left or right, jumping and crouching and using weapons. The way in which the character animations are displayed when using weapons is described on the created mood board on Pages 3 and 5 of this document. Weapons have a short delay between uses to prevent the player from constantly spamming the attack buttons to win easily. Depending on the weapon that is being used, it may also have an impact on the movement that the character can have. For example, using melee weapons prevents the player from moving the character whilst the melee attack animation is ongoing.

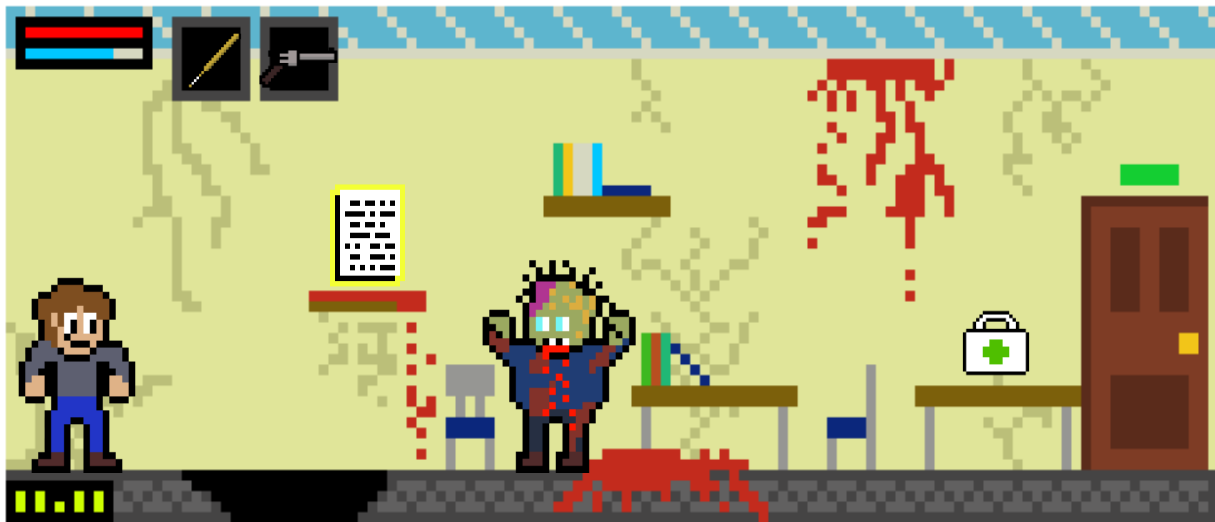
In terms of interaction with other characters, the player is given the opportunity to converse with other non-playable characters (NPCs), by walking up to them and right-clicking using the mouse. Dialogue between the character and the NPCs may be purely aesthetic or it could feature some helpful information that may guide the player on how to finish a level, these occurrences are randomised to give players a fair chance at beating the game.

Character health and power

The character begins with a relatively short health bar once they begin the game for the first time, however as they kill enemies and gain experience points (XP) to level up the character, one of the perks is that the health bar will increase in size. This benefits players in the later levels when things get tougher and players will find themselves coming across more dangerous enemies. If a player's character receives some damage, the health bar can only be replenished if the character levels up, or if the player locates and picks up a medical kit (*See Collectibles section on Page 8*) which are placed at random locations throughout the game.

Characters die if they fall into an abyss off one of the level platforms, or if they receive enough damage from enemies that the health bar depletes completely. If this happens, the player will respawn at either the start of the level, the last saved area in the game, or the most recently passed in-game checkpoint.

Game walkthrough



The above image displays the environment layout for the first level within the game. The player must navigate their character to the exit (*the door marked with the green light*) once they have collected the yellow glowing piece of coursework. They must avoid the enemy NPCs (*in this case, the large zombie*) if they want to survive. A medical kit (*seen in the bottom right-hand corner*) can be picked up if the player receives damage from the enemy, so their health can be replenished. The current melee and ranged weapons that the player has equipped will feature in the top left-hand corner, along with their current health status and XP level (*the red bar and light-blue bar respectively*). Finally, the bottom left-hand corner will be the area where the remaining time that the player has left, will be displayed. Players can use the provided shelves and tables as platforms to jump across to avoid enemies and other environmental obstacles (*e.g. the large hole in the floor on the bottom left of the diagram*).

Game engine

Due to the instance that *College of the Dead* is primarily based on the PC, the game engine that will be utilised to make the game will be GameMaker. This engine is suitable because the Graphical User Interface (GUI) that is being created along with the sprites will be simplistic in design, therefore it will be able to easily manage the animation and rendering process for the simple 2D sprites and interface elements.

Sound design

The game is based on a horror genre so the sound design is aimed at creating an eerie but fast paced tone to the game. This is mainly because that there needs to be a correct balance between a spooky overtone and the fast paced sprint of navigating a platformer under a time limit. The game will also feature a variety of sounds to imitate the noises made by NPCs and enemies. For example, a variety of groaning sounds will be used to depict the zombies interacting with players, and small noises of footsteps traversing on different surfaces will be implemented, depending on the level that the player is currently moving through.

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- ➔ Dark Font | dafont.com. 2017. Dark Font | dafont.com. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.dafont.com/dark.font>. [Accessed 01 January 2017].

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