Reflections

Repository: <https://github.com/NoHop3/via-sem6-gmd-unity>

YouTube: [Link here]

As a lone game developer, the task of creating an entire game from scratch can be daunting. But armed with a tutorial and a creative mind, I was able to develop a game that I am proud to call my own. During development many things were indeed presented to me but I took the knowledge gained and went on directions that my creativity was hinting me. I was aware of the initial requirements that it is not a great idea to just copy/paste from a tutorial one can find online, however, faced with the fact I was on my own and with no prior experience with Unity I took that path. Nevertheless, it is crucial to add that I did not fully submerge in the tutorial without a drop of my own creativity and desire to do it myself. Throughout the tutorial I was doing scripting, designing, researching & implementing on my own plenty of times, because, even though, it was mentioned a lot in the tutorial I also could notice that it is, indeed, a little bit rushed and many things were left without refining & perfecting. The reason for that was very simple – the tutorial was showing us the basic of how to implement, design & build a game but the “toppings” were supposed to come from us – the viewers. The audience is the one supposed to take this skeleton of a game and turn it into a walking figure. Therefore, I took my time and on many of occasions I was doing hours and hours of coding and implementing for 20 minutes of tutorial advance time. That was one more reason to think that I have spent the required amount of work on this GMD assignment.

The tutorial provided me with a foundation to work with, that is true, but I took it upon myself to add my own creative touch to the game, as well as, additional personal ideas I found intriguing. From using different assets than those in the tutorial to creating unique scene structures altering from the ones I saw, I made sure to inject my own personal flair into the game. I also experimented with different materials and designs, allowing me to create a game that is not just a 1-1 clone from a tutorial on YouTube. Hence, I am confident that this would still count towards my assignment in GMD, due to the fact, that even if a assignment reviewer decides to spend time comparing the two games, they will find out that they are not the same game. Maybe they are similar in the way the game feels, but definitely not the same in comparison to atmosphere and scene designing. Personally, I think the similarities can come from the main story as I kept that. A guy walking in the forest, coming across a odd-looking shed, gets hit on the head and wakes up in a dungeon – but I think this is a classic horror game opening and so is the reason I left it like that. However, there were many things I had to figure out on my own. For instance, I had to script the AI for the mutant & zombies characters, something I had never done before. But with persistence and determination and many, many hours of searching the web, I was able to code a zombie character from scratch and later - master said logic even better in the mutant character, while adding an extra layer of complexity to the game. The difference between how the zombie AI and the mutant AI are played out is immerse and there can also be noticed my growth as a game developer, as the latter (mutant) is just so much better. One can notice immediately that there are at least 15 hours of development and building on my unity knowledge between the logic behind the zombie and the mutant with the zombie being more laggy with the animations while the mutant playing out their animations more smoothly and in a controlled way.

Speaking of animations, another challenge I faced was with animation and animator components. I struggled to understand these concepts initially, but with the help of the tutorial and some experimentation, I was able to grasp the basics. By the end of the development process, I felt confident in my ability to animate basic downloaded assets in Unity, a skill that I am excited to continue developing. Of course – it was not easy. I even ended up having to change one Zombie package for another just because I was not sure how the Animator component worked in the beginning and was only working with Animations at this point of development. Now I am confident to say that if I take upon the original Zombie package I was intending to use I can most likely make it work with the Animator. I am definitely not a pro with the Animator, but looking back with what I started as knowledge I can say for the past 2 months I learned an enormous a lot of Unity, Unity player, Unity Animations & Game development in general.

Moving on with 2 more challenging things I want to touch upon. Navigating the mutant character was another challenge I faced. I had to carefully follow the tutorial to understand how to modify the navigation area of the mutant, preventing it from moving through corners and edges. It took time and patience, but I was ultimately able to master this aspect of the game and continued working on baking the navigation area on my own without the help of the tutorial. There was one particular obstacle I faced during the development of this game. It was with a trigger not working properly and me looking at countless of solutions online but not having found a solution until 14 days later when I actually stumbled upon my code using “onTriggerEnter” instead of “OnTriggerEnter”….. And that was not stated anywhere as an error or at least a warning of some sort. I was really thinking what if an complete beginner to C# wants to develop a game and is unaware that variables and methods should start with a capitalized letter…? So I am uncertain whether this problem was completely my fault not knowing what the trigger functions should start with a capitalized letter, the IDE fault for not showing me there is a problem or the Unity itself not presenting me with a way of “Hey, this function is probably not what you intent to use” in the window after compiling the script, but nevertheless, after 2 weeks of constantly being stuck on the trigger not activating and gradually losing motivation I finally found this comment on YouTube saying the function should be capitalized and I could not thank this person enough.

Despite all these challenges, I was able to create a game that was unique and stood out from the tutorial's foundation. While the skeleton of the story was provided, I took it upon myself to modify the narrative to fit my vision for the game and in the end, developing this game was a challenging but rewarding experience. It was up to me to make sure that the game was engaging, unique, and fun to play, but it was also up to me to do whatever I want with it in the end. That is the precious and fun aspect of making your own game and not copy/paste from a tutorial. I am more than confident to say I did not do that and I was enjoying developing and working on this game project on my own, because that way I think I learned more than from working with other people in a group. The reason being – I faced the obstacles myself, resolved myself and moved on myself, without the need of other people that I should rely on. Of course, with the help from a tutorial, but a lot of hard work, I was able to create a game that I am proud to call my own.