

To whom it may concern,

My name is David Fahey. I am 17 years old and have nearly a year and a half of experience using Unreal Engine 4. I also have six years of experience in audio engineering and music production using programs like Ableton and the Ozone mastering suites. I am self taught in both fields. The major difference between Unreal and Ableton is the price. Both programs have rather steep learning curves but only one is free. Unreal Engine gave me the tools I needed to create a medieval town perched atop a dust ridden cliff for a class I want to run, for no cost. That is why I am writing the following.

What am I trying to accomplish?

I would like to lead a program on game design in Unreal Engine 4. This program will help children, who might otherwise not have the tools to use the engine, create masterpieces of their own, and inspire them to be creative.

There has been interest from many families in my local homeschooling community and at my local YMCA (at which I am currently the head Parkour Instructor). I plan to run this program at the YMCA multiple times as well as on my own for any other students interested in it. I am currently designing a more advanced session in which students will create NPC dialogue, friendly and enemy AIs, and a more advanced character with the ability to attack and dodge.

Another one of my goals is to bring this class to children with special needs or who suffer from a major illness. This would be done with the help of the Hole In The Wall Gang and the YMCA but these classes are still in the "early design phase". Therefore the equipment provided by your grant, if you decide to do so, will be used for many future programs.

However, the main problem I am facing right now is cost. I am only 17 so I do not have the earning potential to acquire all the necessary hardware to create this program. I have provided a list of exactly what I need and how much it would cost.

What I need.

I need 6 computers to run the engine. (I plan to have a class size of 12 and want to pair students): \$9000.00 (based on the computers costing \$1500.00 including OS)

6 monitors (one per computer) : \$600.00 (@ \$100.00 each)

6 keyboards and mice \$180.00 (@ \$30.00 per keyboard/mouse combo)

1 main computer for demoing and examples. This would be a much needed upgrade from my current 2008 iMac. : \$2000.00 (based on computer plus monitor and OS)

Total Cost : \$11780.00

If you could grant this much to the class it would lower the cost that families would have to pay per child, as well as actually make this class possible! My goal is to have the price as low as possible to open this class to as many students as possible.

What will the class be like?

The first session will be 6 weeks long. Once a week class will be held for an hour and a half.

Class 1: Class 1 will consist of an hour long introduction to the editor and its tools, and how to use them. We will also be doing a half hour of basic level design.

Class 2: Class 2 will focus on creating a landscape for the students to base their game in. Students will learn how to use the foliage tool as well as the landscape editing tools such as sculpt and paint.

Class 3: The 3rd class will be about placing the finishing touches on the level. The class will focus on lighting and how to avoid lighting errors, as well as particle systems.

Class 4: Class 4 will focus on the ThirdPerson Character. The class will add a second camera to enable FirstPerson view when the P key is pressed. This action can be toggled. The class will also add the ability to "LeftShift-Sprint" which changes the walking animation to running and ups the character's speed when called.

Class 5: During the 5th class students will create a matinee that controls both an object in the world and a camera. This matinee will be trigger-able from within the level.

Class 6: Class 6 will be an hour and a half free build. Allowing the students to use what they have learned to make their own changes.

I apologize for the lack of gameplay and screenshots. My computer has a 50% chance of taking a screenshot correctly let alone video. There is an attached link to the project file.

Have you tried getting a grant elsewhere?

Yes, since I work at the YMCA I brought this class idea to their attention but sadly they do not have the funds to acquire the necessary hardware.

Do you have any experience teaching?

Yes. As mentioned before I am the head Parkour Instructor at my local YMCA. I have taught there for almost two years now. I design the classes and teach students ranging in age from six to sixteen. I have been teaching parkour at AMParkour (parkour gym located in Connecticut U.S.) for 2 years.

Why not make a YouTube tutorial series?

This class is aimed at bringing students, who don't have the necessary equipment to run the engine, a safe, positive, and effective environment to learn about Unreal Engine 4. YouTube is great if you already have a powerful enough computer but YouTube would not accomplish what I am looking to do.

Do you really use a 2008 iMac?

Yes. When creating this project I would turn everything in the editor to low and unlit. When I needed to see the lighting or materials in greater detail I would position my viewport facing whatever I needed to see and set everything to medium and lit. If I tried moving my viewport during this the editor would crash. As mentioned before the editor would crash 50% of the time when I would try taking a screenshot. Fun times.

Final Message

Thank you for reading through all this. I ask that you please consider this class. Any money granted will be happily and graciously accepted and appreciated. This is a dream of mine. To be able to bring a positive and creative change to students lives.

Again, thank you for your time. Sincerely,

David Fahey

If you have any questions or there is anything you need me to do to make this possible please contact me. If required I can provide references at the YMCA and AMParkour.

DISCLAIMER:

I am not contacting you as an employee of the YMCA. I am requesting this grant of my own personal accord. The YMCA is simply a place that I can hold the class.