Programming Track Written Interview

**1. What programming languages do you know, and where did you learn them?**

Ever since I was a kid, I knew that programming was my calling. Before high school, I took two years of private lessons with a programming teacher who taught me to use GameMaker Studio. GameMaker Studio used a specific language called GML or GameMaker Language, and I was able to produce and distribute a game of my own called Twin Dragons. After GameMaker, I went into a technical high school that had a Computer Science major. There I learned HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Java, and even went on to compete in the national competition, Business Professionals of America’s game design program. We created a Tetris-like game called Cube Chaos that placed in the top 10. Since high school, I have learned C, C#, Haskell, F#, and basic C++ here at UCF. Additionally, I have been honing my skills in the languages I already knew, learning things like how to make a database backed web application.

**2. What was your favorite undergraduate class and what did you like about it?**

My favorite undergraduate class to this day would be my Graphics class with Richard Leinecker. In this class, we were given a set of five assignments that were all game projects. In order, I designed 3D Pong, a 3D projectile shooter (similar to Angry Birds), 3D Pacman, a 3D representation of the dice game Farkle, and my own original game demo called The Cycle. Each of these games taught me new aspects of game design and built up my toolset to become a game developer. The Cycle was originally a game I started building in Unity using the knowledge I learned in class, but Professor Leinecker loved the idea so much, he allowed me to build it as my final project. It was a great experience and is still a side project I plan on polishing into a fully functioning game. The demo for The Cycle is included in my portfolio and can be viewed as a reference.

**3. Describe experience you might have working with others on projects, especially game projects.**

Throughout my years as a programmer, there are many occasions in which I have had to work in a group. The major projects I developed in a team were Cube Chaos, a Queuing app for the on-campus coffee shop Pop Parlour, my Senior Design Dungeons and Dragons game, and a game called Primordial for my AI for Game Programming class. In these teams, I was able to hone my group skills and constantly improve on aspects of our collaboration such as team management, source control, and accountability. Additionally, I played multiple different roles within these teams such as lead UI programmer, lead AI programmer, team leader, and basic programmer. Most of the time, I elected to take a leadership position in which I had to delegate tasks to others, as well as be held accountable if my section of the team was slacking. On the other hand, for my Senior Design project I have attracted a great team leader and have learned to value my contribution as a basic team member. All in all, they have been great experiences and have prepared me immensely for the large-scale team projects to come.

**4. What types of games do you play in your spare time?**

In my free time, I love playing and analyzing new video games. My tastes are very diverse, and I can be found playing 2D pixel art games, multiplayer FPS, single player RPG, strategy, mobile, and more. If the game can hook me and bring me into a state of game flow, I can lose myself for hours. One of the most interesting parts of playing games, since becoming a computer scientist, is my ability to view the games in a new light. I often find myself contemplating how the developers coded specific parts of the game, or even simply recognizing something like fire as a particle effect and analyzing it to see how they made it feel real.

**5. Elaborate on anything else about yourself that makes you unique.**

One unique aspect of myself is that I am a world traveler. I was homeschooled from an early age and travel was a major part of my educational experience. I have explored such exotic places as Egypt, Kenya, Paris, London, China, Australia, and more. Through travel, I have been introduced to numerous cultures and have learned to value the diversity of human thought and expression. This exposure has expanded my own diversity in thinking, thus allowing me to have a more open-minded problem-solving process. Additionally, I have friends all over the world with whom I converse about video games and advances in technology. I feel that a global mindset is essential for bringing together our world through technological advancements, and thus I am thankful for my unique upbringing.