Abstract

The purpose of this Action Research investigation was two-fold. The first was to better understand how post-secondary faculty mentor self-regulatory behaviours in a project-based learning environment (PjBL). The second was to understand mentoring practices through a self-reflective process. The research context was the Master of Digital Media Program in Vancouver, Canada. The MDM Program specializes in providing learners, organized in project teams, the opportunity to work on real-world digital media projects. Three faculty mentors and three student teams participated in this study; each team was tasked with co-constructing video-game prototypes for three game companies over a four-month period. Pre-research interviews with established members of the video game industry in Vancouver were conducted in order to determine what qualities and skills they looked for when hiring new recruits. Data from these interviews revealed characteristics of self-regulation, such as self-motivation, ‘ownership’, the ability for recruits to manage their own learning, and self-reliance as being of primary importance. A pilot study was then undertaken to operationalize self-regulation as reflected in the mentoring practices of one MDM faculty member and assess the effectiveness of the planned data collection procedures. The primary investigation consisted of video recording the mentoring sessions of three faculty and three student teams, a total of 18 students. Video recorded mentoring sessions were observed and discussed by the researcher and each faculty member in a one-on-one interview setting. Final faculty and student interviews were conducted. Data from pre-research interviews, the stimulated recall sessions, and final interviews were analyzed and triangulated. Triangulation of learner interviews revealed that mentors supported self-regulatory behaviors using a variety of strategies, which are described in detail. Triangulation of pre-research interviews revealed that mentors were supporting learners in their development of specific characteristics expected of new recruits transitioning into the video game industry.