

Oulu Game LAB's Impact on Individual Work Performance

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Abstract

Demand for 'T-shaped' professionals is on the rise, particularly among knowledge workers, due to their recognised role and effectiveness in tackling 'wicked problems'. Consequently, there is growing emphasis on refining higher education methods to prepare the next generation of knowledge workers.

The study explores the impact of the Finnish higher education study programme, Oulu Game LAB (OGL), on Individual Work Performance (IWP). From 2012 to 2016, OGL operated as a full-time, one/two-semester undergraduate program specialising in game development and business incubation. It utilised the LAB Studio Model (LSM), an award winning structured studio pedagogy designed to foster pre-start-up collaboration among interdisciplinary, international, and intergenerational participants.

Retrospectively by using a grounded theory framework with a structured survey on IWP, the study evaluated how participants' experiences in OGL have influenced their professional performance today. Demographic, quantitative, and qualitative data was collected from the participants in spring 2025 to identify the program's most significantly shaped key areas of IWP.

The findings will provide valuable insights into the impact of both the OGL program and the LAB Studio Model (LSM) on participants' professional development several years after their studies completion. Furthermore, the findings will help to guide future research efforts and the implementations of studio based educational settings contributing to the advancement of education for T-shaped knowledge workers.

Keywords: T-shaped professionals, Individual Work Performance (IWP), Oulu Game LAB (OGL), LAB Studio Model (LSM), Game industry