“This is the information we want.” That’s what John Shepherd, consultant with Spinal Cord Injury University (SCI-U), is hearing in reaction to the e-learning modules video-animated by game design and digital design students at George Brown College. The animations are targeted to people with spinal-cord injury and their caregivers, and form part of the SCI-U online curriculum.

Shepherd explains why these e-learning modules are important. During their time at a rehab centre people with spinal cord injury “need to learn everything they need to know about how to take care of themselves.” As he sees it, the current practice is not efficient, as people learn one-on-one with therapist and there is, as he observes “no way for people to learn in a self-directed way.”

The idea behind SCI-U was to harness the e-learning technology increasingly common in corporate environments...and apply it to rehabilitation.

With funding provided by NSERC and Lawson Health Research Institute, four George Brown students created companion animations for voice-over lessons on self-care. Shepherd explains that the “difficult subject matter” of some animations added to the design challenge, the greater challenge was technical. “Standards for visuals were very high,” he notes, adding that the student-team created, essentially, ten 30-second short films in the space of one semester.

Shepherd reports that feedback has been “really enthusiastic.” SCI-U has launched the e-learning modules on spinalcordconnections.com and is beginning work on Phase 2 of the project.

Game Design student Josh Mohan says that while