

Before enrolling in 247G, my understanding of play and game design was conventional, viewing games primarily as sources of entertainment, without much additional thought. However, this course profoundly shifted my perspective, teaching me that successful game design involves creating immersive experiences that resonate emotionally and intellectually with players. I found the MDA (Mechanics, Dynamics, and Aesthetics) framework particularly useful and applicable to various design contexts, inside and outside of the classroom.

The MDA framework, which breaks down game design into Mechanics, Dynamics, and Aesthetics, can enhance my skills as a product manager at Autodesk as I graduate this quarter. Mechanics, the rules and basic components like algorithms and actions, form the foundation of a product. Dynamics, the run-time behavior of these mechanics, highlight the importance of user interaction and feedback, helping to anticipate and design for user behavior. Aesthetics focus on the emotional responses evoked by the product, including visual style and narrative, ensuring an engaging and appealing user experience.

In developing "Train Game" for P2, I consciously applied these concepts to craft a cohesive and engaging experience. I meticulously designed the mechanics to ensure they were not only intuitive and engaging but also in line with our unfolding narrative. By focusing on how these mechanics would dynamically interact during gameplay, I aimed to create emergent behaviors and plot points that would keep players intrigued. Additionally, I paid close attention to the aesthetics, ensuring that the narrative depth and visual style contributed to a compelling and immersive atmosphere.

Implementing these concepts was both challenging and rewarding. Ensuring puzzle difficulty gradually increased while maintaining player engagement required meticulous planning and iteration. Feedback from playtests guided adjustments to puzzle difficulty, narrative coherence, and overall pacing. This project highlighted the importance of iterative design and player feedback, teaching me to balance narrative depth with engaging gameplay and maintain high levels of immersion. The experience also underscored the value of leadership and collaboration, as I aspired to take on a more significant leadership role than I did with P1, coordinating efforts and incorporating diverse ideas into a final product.

Looking ahead, I plan to explore further the psychological and emotional dimensions of game design, creating narratives that resonate deeply and experimenting with innovative mechanics. Throughout the summer, I will be playing the recommended games and replaying my favorites to analyze them using the MDA framework. The journey in 247G has not only enhanced my technical skills but also shaped my understanding of the emotional and psychological impact of games. This course has laid the foundation for future endeavors, where I aim to refine my leadership skills and guide projects towards creating impactful and immersive gaming experiences.