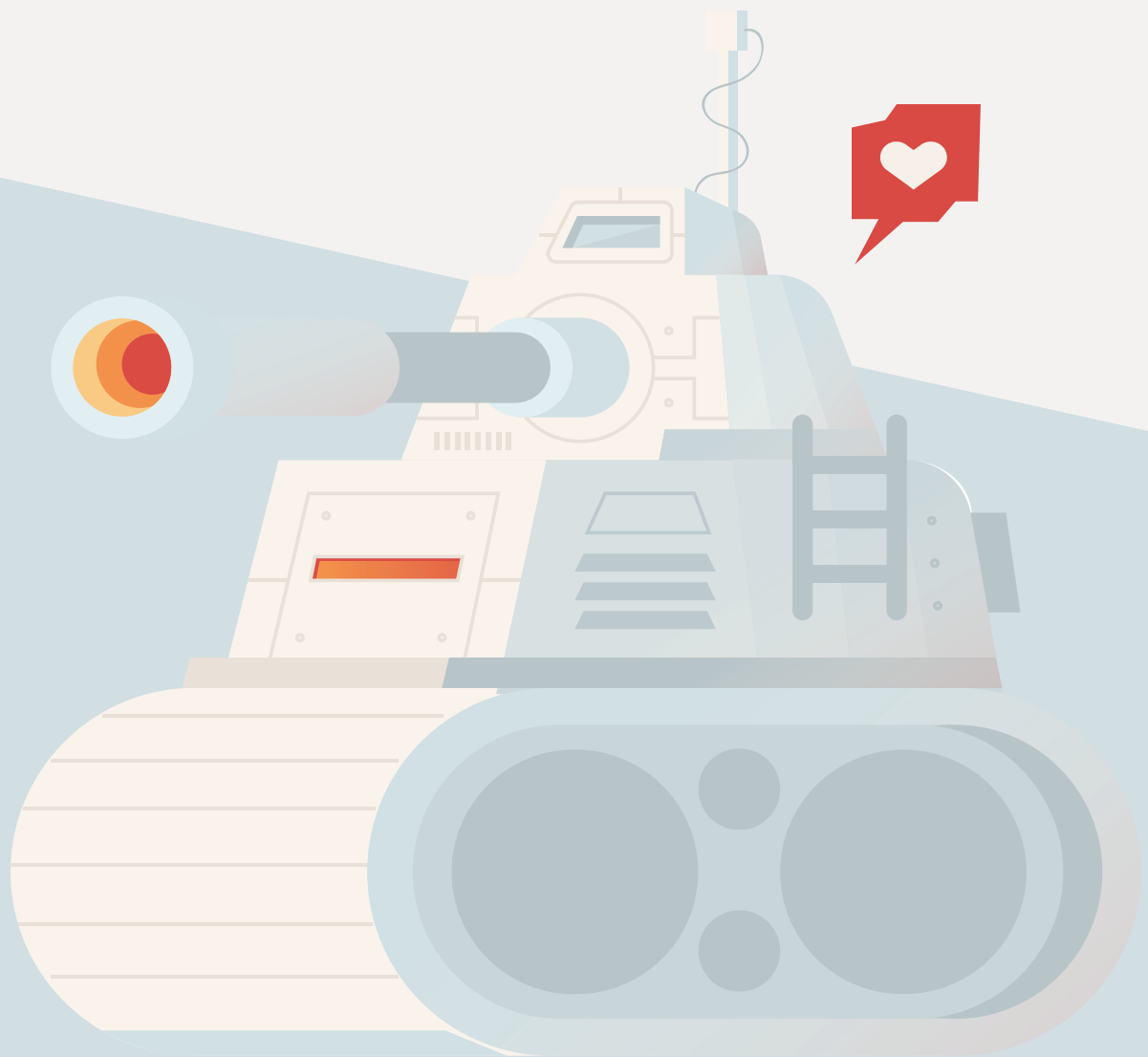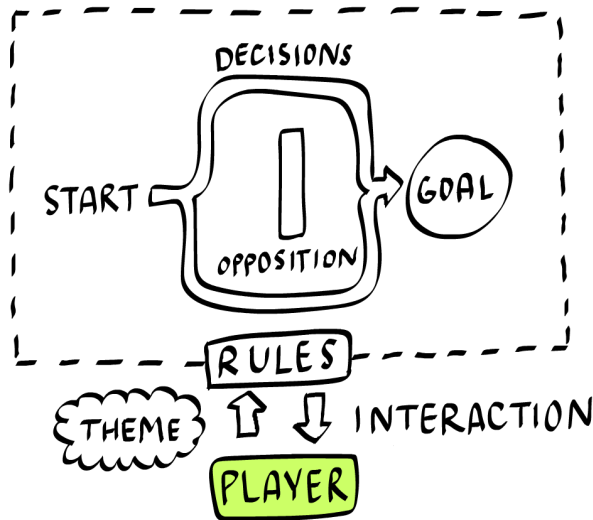# Module 1:
Game Feeling &
8 Kinds of Fun

Big Ideas

🎯 Purpose

This module **focuses on the Player** portion of the Game Design Framework. It discusses the **holistic experience** that a game should deliver, framed from the player perspective.

💡 Student Objectives

Lesson 1: Game Feeling

- Games evoke emotions and feelings from their audience.
- Constructing a game to evoke **specific emotions** is likely to lead to the most cohesive experience.
- The **same game experience** can lead to **different feelings** for **different audiences**.

Lesson 2: 8 Kinds of Fun

- Fun can be sorted into 8 different categories.
- Specific kinds of fun produce different feelings in games.
- Different kinds of fun appeal to different players.

Overview

Table of Contents

Materials

Teacher

- Computer / Projector
  To present external links

Students

- Computer / Phone
- Paper / Pen
- Sheets of Cardboard
- Scissors

TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Lesson 1

Game Feeling

In this lesson, students are exposed to the idea that games seek to evoke specific feelings from players.

This section also serves to give teachers a better feeling for what games and game experiences their students enjoy.

40 MINUTES

Game Feeling Exercise

SETUP: 15 MINUTES

1. **Divide the students into groups of 4.**

2. **Instruct them to write down 3 feelings on 3 separate cards (positive and negative) when they play games (two words maximum).**

   E.g., I feel X (accomplished, triumphant, satisfied, excited, clever, wonder, adrenaline, frustrated, angry, impatient, bored, etc.)

3. **Students place their cards face down on the table.**

DISCUSSION WITHIN GROUPS: 15 MINUTES

4. **Each student then takes turns to flip one of the feeling cards face up.**

5. **The owner of that card explains why they wrote that feeling on that card.**
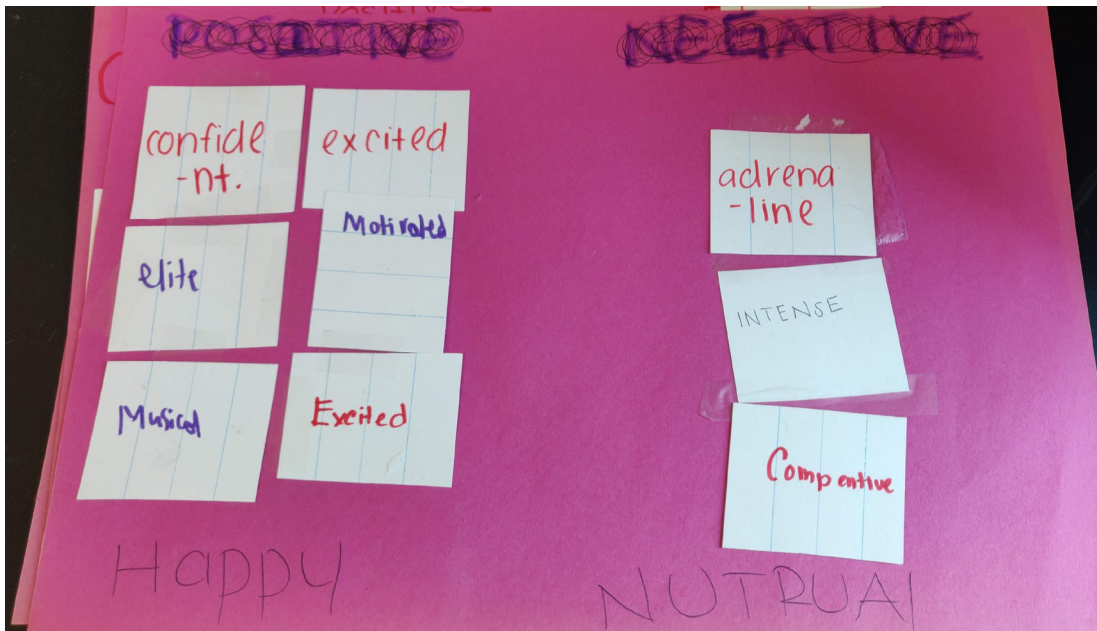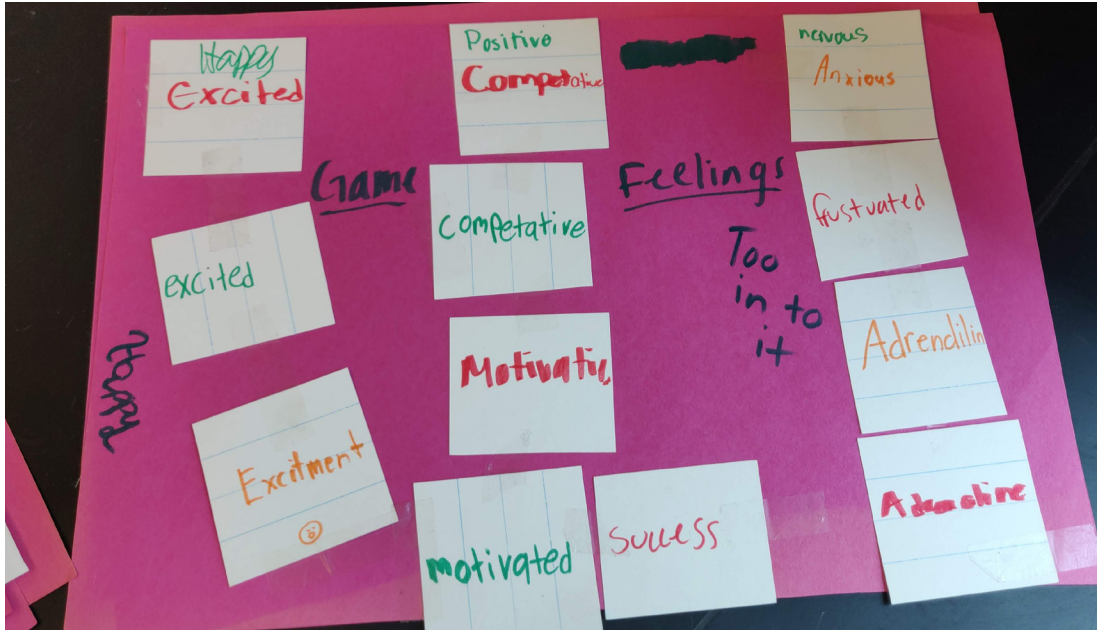
   Encourage them to share the game and experience that made them feel that way.

SORT FEELING CARDS: 10 MINUTES

6. **Finally, as a group, the students should create categories that best describe their cards and sort the 12 feeling cards that they have accumulated into these categories.**

Keep these sheets as we will use them in Lesson 2.

+ Examples

10 MINUTES

Discussion

Enduring Understanding

- Games evoke emotions and feelings from their audience.

- Constructing a game to evoke **specific emotions** is likely to lead to the greatest, most cohesive experience.

- The **same game experience** can lead to **different feelings** for **different audiences**.

Essential Questions

What is the point of talking about feelings in games?

- Designers can create the most memorable experience for their audience when they target a specific feeling.

Were there any interesting results?

- Memories may have been more negative than positive.

- Games don't always produce positive feelings in players.

- Students may have pretty similar/simple feelings listed throughout the class (even though groups may have a bit more variance). They will most likely be centered around mastery, challenge, excitement, or frustration.

Which groups had all the same answers?

- Within their groups, students are likely to have different answers due to there being different types of players.

- No two players are the same. Even within the same game, two different players will have affinities for different experiences.

10 MINUTES

Video

Lesson Summary

Mark Rosewater is the Lead Game Designer on Magic the Gathering (one of the greatest designers of all time and one of the most successful games of all time, respectively).

He explains why it's important that a game evokes player emotions and how being intentional about the intended emotional response will lead to the best result.

Show the following video:

▷ 3 MINUTES

Magic the Gathering: Twenty Years, Twenty Lessons Learned
https://www.youtube.com/embed/QHHg99hwQGY?start=965&end=1157

Don't spend too much time on this topic, but this should give the students a good grounding for what this module is all about. Explain that we'll return to **game feel** and cohesion in a later module when we start talking about mechanics in depth.
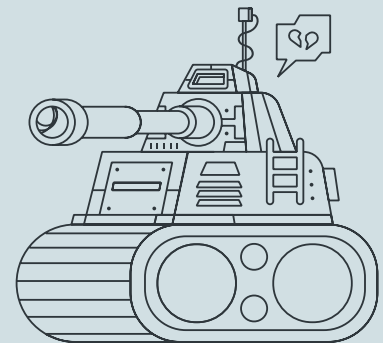
TOTAL TIME: 60 MINUTES

Lesson 2

Teacher's Context   5 MINUTE READ

The "MDA Framework" is a model co-authored by Robin Hunicke, Robert Zubek, and Riot Games designer Marc Leblanc, that attempts to formalize an approach to designing games. The "8 Kinds of Fun" is a component of the "Aesthetics" portion of this framework.

The "8 kinds of fun" sort fun into 8 categories. This is because fun as a generic concept is not particularly useful, due to its subjective nature. Instead, using a game experience to target a specific kind of fun will lead to a better result.

8 KINDS OF FUN

- **Sensation**
- **Challenge**
- **Narrative**
- **Expression**
- **Fellowship**
- **Fantasy**
- **Discovery**
- **Submission**

The descriptions for the kinds of fun and some examples from video games can be found here:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marc_LeBlanc

The full paper can be found here, but is not required reading to teach this module.
http://users.cs.northwestern.edu/~hunicke/MDA.pdf
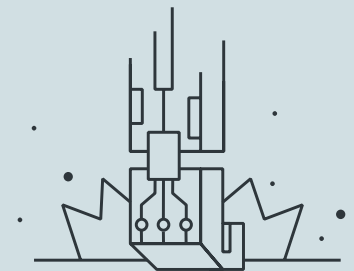
25 MINUTES

8 Kinds of Fun Introduction

As seen in the video from Lesson 1, Mark Rosewater explains that designers are focused primarily on the idea of curating an experience for players.

When we know what type of feeling we want the player to experience, we also want to know what **kinds of fun** can best create this experience and **how** our game can produce these **kinds of fun**.

We also talk about how types of fun can be combined to create a more cohesive experience for players.

TYPES OF FUN THEORY: 25 MINUTES

1. **Show students the following video to further their understanding of how focusing on a type of fun can guide the overall player experience.**

    ▷ 2 MINUTES

    So You Wanna Make Games? Episode 10: Game Design - Riot Games
    https://www.youtube.com/embed/yYYtBFSxoCg?start=119&end=191

2. **Explain to the students about merging types of fun, below.**
    Explain to the students that the types of fun are not exclusive. Some types of fun lend themselves well to being combined with others. For example, sensation, fantasy, and narrative can typically form a cohesive package as they tend to create immersive and resonant experiences. Some types of fun don't blend well together. E.g., challenge and narrative (as shown in the video).

3. **Briefly explain the 8 types of fun.**
    Use the list of games provided in the lesson instructions below **(lecture format)**, or create your own list populated by the students **(interactive format)**.

Lecture Format

- Explain each of the types of fun from the supplied list below and supplement with examples that the students may have had exposure to.

- Talk about specific examples from the games that lead to the type of fun being exhibited.

Interactive Format

- Give a brief description of each kind of fun.

- Students come up with specific game examples and anecdotes for each of the types of fun and populate their own list.

+ 8 Kinds of Fun

01 Sensation

Some examples of fun derived from the senses:

- **Touch:** Collecting objects, moving board game pieces around.

- **Auditory:** Music or audio feedback that can create a response in the player.

- **Visual:** Splendor that can create a sense of wonder or magnificence, visual effects, such as rewards that play on the screen or victory screens.

  Game Examples
  Candy Crush (visual and auditory stimulation), board games with little pieces (touch), Warhammer (touch), Telltale Games (visual storytelling).

02 Fellowship

- Players working together to complete an objective or to have fun through a shared experience.

  Game Examples
  World of Warcraft (forming guilds, raid teams), One Night Werewolf (multiplayer party games), Pandemic Legacy (co-operative board game), basketball

03 Challenge

- Players make meaningful decisions to overcome challenges and gain mastery over time to overcome increasingly difficult obstacles.

  Game Examples
  League of Legends (never ending mastery of characters and the game), Street Fighter (1v1 fighting game), basketball

04 Fantasy

- Living out a game experience as if you were a character in that world.

- Role playing games typically index strongly on this type of fun.

  Game Examples
  Legend of Zelda (play out a character fantasy in an immersive setting), Dungeons and Dragons

05 Narrative

- Players experience a story as it develops, usually combined with sensation and fantasy to increase immersion.

  Game Examples
  Telltale Games (narrative heavy games based on the Walking Dead, Guardians of the Galaxy, etc.), films adapted to games (Lego Star Wars)

06 Discovery

- Players explore hidden things, discover new content/areas/quests and are rewarded for it.

  Game Examples
  God of War (many hidden areas to find and explore in the world), Legend of Zelda Breath of the Wild (no set completion structure, the player is free to explore the world and complete the game in their own way)

07 Expression

- Players are able to make choices where they can showcase their creativity, to create something unique or express their individuality.

  Game Examples
  Minecraft (create your own environment), League of Legends (many different item builds/ combinations to explore)

08 Submission

- Players are able to relax and complete tasks with minimal effort or mental burden.

- This type of fun is usually combined with **sensation** to create a baseline level of fun for the player that doesn't require much effort to engage with.

  Game Examples
  Slot machine games (press play and the game plays for you), Stardew Valley (plant and water your crops each day)

10 MINUTES

Exercise

1. **In the same groups as Lesson 1, students take each card from Lesson 1 and identify the type of fun from each of the feelings listed.**

   Students should write the type of fun on each of the cards they created in Lesson 1.

15 MINUTES

Discussion

Enduring Understanding

- Fun can be sorted into 8 different categories.
- Specific kinds of fun produce different game feelings.
- Different kinds of fun appeal to different players.

Essential Questions

What is the point of categorizing fun?

- Different kinds of fun lend themselves to different kinds of design choices (for mechanics, depth of strategy, overall complexity, etc).

- Knowing what type of fun to target in the design results in a more cohesive and immersive game feeling (E.g., Challenge vs Fellowship or Challenge AND Fellowship). Each of the parts should work towards the whole.

- Each game will have different sets of player audiences. Catering for the different player audiences within a game is likely to create the strongest offering.

  Can students name the different types of audiences supported in their favorite games?

Do all players like the same kinds of fun? Did any group have the same feeling listed, but a different kind of fun associated with it?

- All players are unique and find fun from different sources.

- One player that finds an experience frustrating, another player may find fun because they enjoy a challenge.

- Multiple students may have written the same feeling (E.g., joy), but its root cause may be a different kind of fun or experience.

- **Types of fun are a tool to service the greater game feeling.**

Some of the students may have listed negative emotions. Are negative emotions like frustration bad?

- Frustration frequently emerges from games that target the **challenge** type of fun or games with **fellowship** due to having to cooperate with people that may have different motivations to you.

- Sometimes, if a game is frustrating from being challenging, it can be more rewarding when the challenge is finally overcome.

- Designers should strive to ensure that their challenges remain **hard, but not unfair**.

- *Optional - Section on Frustration*

    ▷ 2 MINUTES

    So You Wanna Make Games? Episode 10: Game Design - Riot Games
    https://www.youtube.com/embed/yYYtBFSxoCg?start=119&end=191

**Were there any kinds of fun that surfaced from the lesson that you weren't initially aware of?**

- The notions of submission, sensation, expression, and discovery are less likely to be identified by students compared to more prominent ones, such as challenge and fellowship.

- As the purpose of this module is to have students recognize the breadth of experiences a game can offer, spending more time discussing the lesser known types of fun will be of value.

Summary

A game consists of several core features.

Each of these will be covered throughout this course. In these last two lessons, we covered the Player portion of the framework. In this course, we discuss some of the key things to think about when designing each of these components.

The components are **player** (Module 1), **goal** (Module 2), **meaningful decisions & opposition** (Module 3), **rules and thematics** (Module 4), and **interaction** (Module 5).
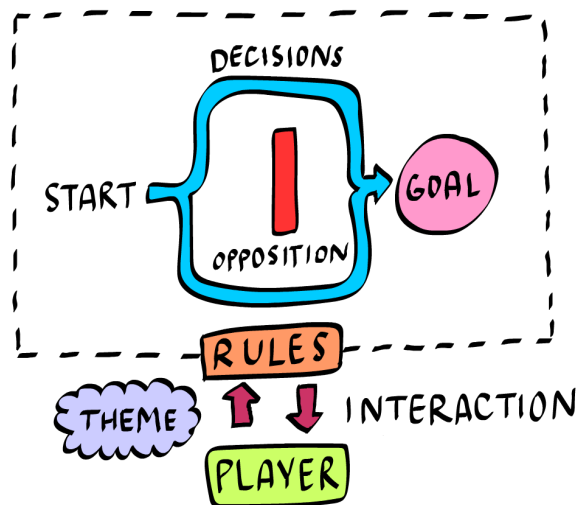
10 MINUTES
Final Lesson

1. **Introduce students to the Game Design Framework diagram.**

2. **Explain that most games will have each of these features, but these features need to be designed well and work together for the game to be good.**

3. **Explain that we've just covered the Player portion of the framework and that each module will cover a new part of the framework.**

4. **We'll be working through the course to document our learnings and ultimately apply them to the game we design in the final module.**

Homework

Game Design Framework Worksheet

1. **Students are to fill out what they learned from the Player portion and important takeaways (at least 3, probably 5).**

   - The focus should be on how these learnings apply to games generally or to the game they will create in the final module.

     E.g., Targeting a type of fun aids in delivering an overall game feeling.

   - The responses should be open ended.