1. While I have many important memories related to games, one that stands out is a game called Chrono Trigger. The gameplay is fairly standard for a Squaresoft game. It used the active time battle system similar to Final Fantasy 4 and on. Turn based combat was improved using a bar that would fill over time for each character determining the order in which characters could take action. They further improved the system in Chrono Trigger using location as a factor of combat. Certain moves could target multiple characters within a set radius or line, for example. The important memory, however, stems from a moment in the story, which I usually hate to spoil for those who have not yet played the game. Half way through the story, the main character sacrifices himself to save his friends, allowing them to escape a deadly situation. Not only was this emotionally detrimental, but it completely changed the gameplay as the main character, until now, was forced to be a member of your party. The player could now use multiple characters as the leader, changing dialogues with previous non-player characters (NPCs) and affecting different parts of the story.

2. My focus in designing a game is AI. For me, an important keyword is a technique in AI design called the blackboard design. In a blackboard design, a programmer has individual NPCs communicate with each other by posting to a blackboard. Using the data the NPCs have posted, the blackboard or NPCs can formulate strategies to work together and become a more effective force when challenging the player. For me, this creates numerous possibilities to create intelligent AI and unique situations that make a game more enjoyable overall.

3. My favourite game is Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic 2 (KOTOR2). Being a huge fan of RPG style games, this one really personified what makes an RPG great. A great story is always what draws me into a game, but KOTOR2 takes this a step further by giving players the choice to guide the story however they see fit. During the time this game was released, branching paths were still a fairly new concept. Even so, KOTOR2 still holds a place as one of the best examples. Choices the player makes effect not only the direction of the story, but the affections and actions of your followers, which will then in turn effect the story further. Aside from blatant directional choices in story, direction is also affected by a karma system known as “force alignment.” Performing evil or good choices will sway your alignment, which positively or negatively effects the alignment of your followers, leading to interesting story outcomes. What makes KOTOR2 unique is the option to remain “grey,” essentially balancing your choices between light and dark resulting in even more outcomes. The elaborate amount of choices keeps me playing and finding new things with each unique play through.

4. Games are important for everyone, regardless of age. Games can do many things for different people, such as relieve stress, allow for competition, or improve various skills. As an entry into playing video games, I would suggest Super Smash Brothers or another simple fighting game. I feel that games such as these are simple and straight forward and can be both enjoyable and rewarding for first time players. This creates a great opportunity for anyone, even those who don’t like video games, to see the enjoyment that others see, potentially leading them to expand into other genres they might enjoy. It also helps if these people play in groups with others, as that typically leads to more enjoyment overall and hooks someone more into the world of video games.