

COMP2150 - Level Design Document

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[Your document must include images. To insert an image into your documentation, place it in the "DocImages" folder in this repo, then place the below text where you want the image to appear:

![Place any alt text here] (DocImages/<IMAGE NAME AND FILE EXTENSION>)]

1. Player Experience (~700 words)

1.1. Discovery

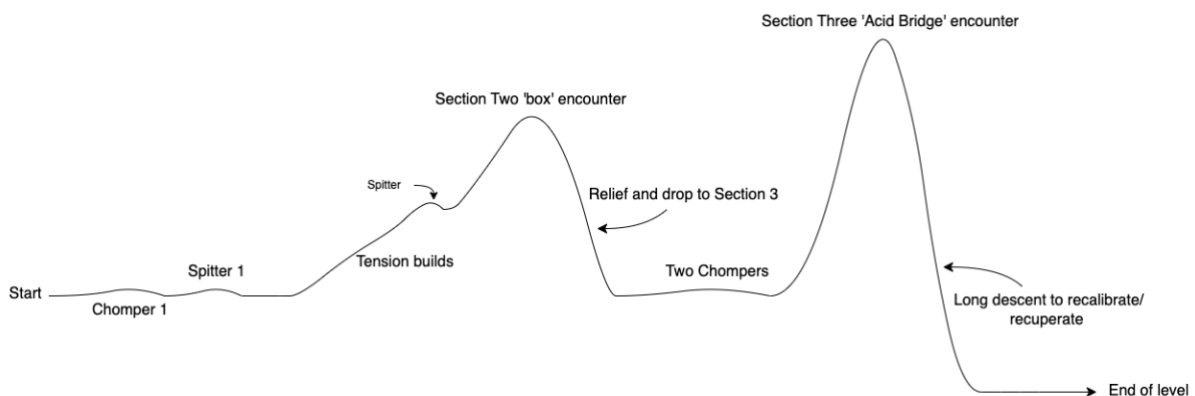
Section One slowly introduces game mechanics one at a time, making the player use them almost instantly after discovery to learn game play dynamics. For example, in the starting space the player is faced with three platforms, a high one on the left and two short ones on the right, which immediately introduces them to the jump mechanic. The player instantly learns that the character can perform two different jump levels – short or long. They will gain this knowledge by trying to immediately high jump on to the left ledge or by doing a short jump on the lower right ledge and then aiming and jumping to the left one. Once the player realises there is no further way to go on the right, with spikes blocking them from movement, they will continue gameplay to the right. By the time the player clears Section One and reaches the first checkpoint they will have learnt all game mechanics which they can now combine and use to finish the level. The player is never explicitly told through instruction how to play, they learn by *doing* and moving through the space.



1.2. Drama

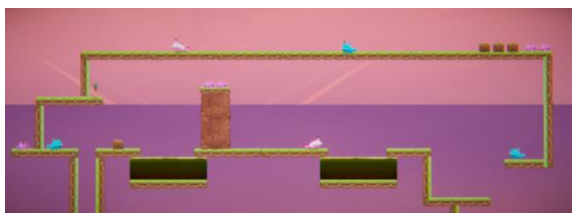
Section One has two enemies (one Chomper and one Spitter), teaching the player the mechanics of how to defeat them. These encounters are separate, with low intensity, to give the player time to explore the scene and get their bearings. Once Section One is cleared the player is rewarded forced up in the scene. Here there is a

build-up of tension as the player moves up and across on moving platforms, encountering no obstacles. This smooth tension is interrupted briefly as the player encounters a Spitter in the distance, which is an easy kill, giving a false sense of ease. When the player clears the moving platforms with topped up health they reach the first checkpoint, marking the beginning of Section Two. This section is placed inside a 'box' using the platforms to create a small, enclosed space, making the player feel cramped as the tension rises intensely by respawning Chompers, all while being spit on from an unseen Spitter on an above platform and trying to break through a wall. Once cleared and rewarded again, the player falls to checkpoint two, starting Section Three, which starts in a large open space to give them a sense of relief following the high intensity of the previous combat. After walking off the Section Two encounter, the player is then faced with one more high intensity battle on 'Acid Bridge' with respawning Chompers amongst tiers of enemies and more breakthrough walls. When successfully cleared, the player takes a long journey down on a moving platform to recalibrate and recuperate before reaching the end of the level.



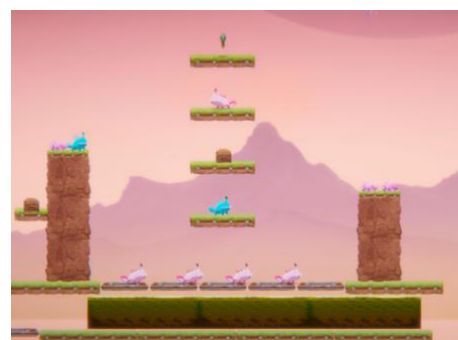
1.3. Challenge

After defeating the first three isolated enemies easily in Section One and feeling



powerful, the player is then properly challenged in Section Two the 'Acid Box'. While they are trying to break through a barrier to clear the section, they are also forced to combat multiple respawning Chompers all while being spit on from an above Spitter that they are not able to see or kill. They are blocked from simply running away from these enemies so they must reflexively use melee attacks to fight and escape simultaneously. This challenge is intense but not entirely too difficult. The player is then rewarded with health boxes to feel like they are in control and still able to progress. Section Three has a similar set up, where there are breakable barriers to clear the level and

powerful, the player is then properly challenged in Section Two the 'Acid Box'. While they are trying to break through a barrier to clear the section, they are also forced to combat multiple respawning Chompers all while being spit on from an



respawning Chompers, but there also tiers above the ‘battleground’ that allow the player to escape temporarily to problem-solve how to clear the section. The tiers also have rewards, one health box and one key, which give the player a feeling of relief and power even within the challenge.

1.4. Exploration

The spikes mentioned above that are placed to the left of the starting space (pictured)



subconsciously show the player that the other spikes throughout the rest of gameplay act as guidance on where a path ends or where to go to move forward in the level – even if ‘forward’ means moving up, down, or left, instead of constantly right. The spikes are a deliberate choice with the use of moving platforms, as it still gives the player the sense that they can freely move around and

explore. The platforms push the player in the correct direction, but each section is multilayered, giving the opportunity to move up and down to follow a non-linear path and still go in the right direction.

The first key is in the direct path of the player, the second key is in view, but the player must jump to it, and the final key is not in direct sight for the player. This intentional ramp up of visibility forces the player to explore the space to find the final key, which also increases difficulty in this section. Also, in Section Two, the unseen Spitter above the player lets them know there is another tier that they can potentially explore, if they do happen to explore this, they are rewarded with three health boxes.



Rewarding them in this way encourages further exploration of the level when more seemingly unreachable places arise in Section Three.

2. Core Gameplay (~400 words)

[A section on Core Gameplay, where storyboards are used to outline how you introduce the player to each of the required gameplay elements in the first section of the game. Storyboards should follow the format provided in lectures.

Storyboards can be combined when multiple mechanics are introduced within a single encounter. Each section should include a sentence or two to briefly justify why you chose to introduce the mechanic/s to the player in that sequence.

You should restructure the headings below to match the order they appear in your level.]

2.1. Acid

2.2. Checkpoints

2.3. Chompers

2.4. Health Pickups

2.5. Keys

2.6. Moving Platforms

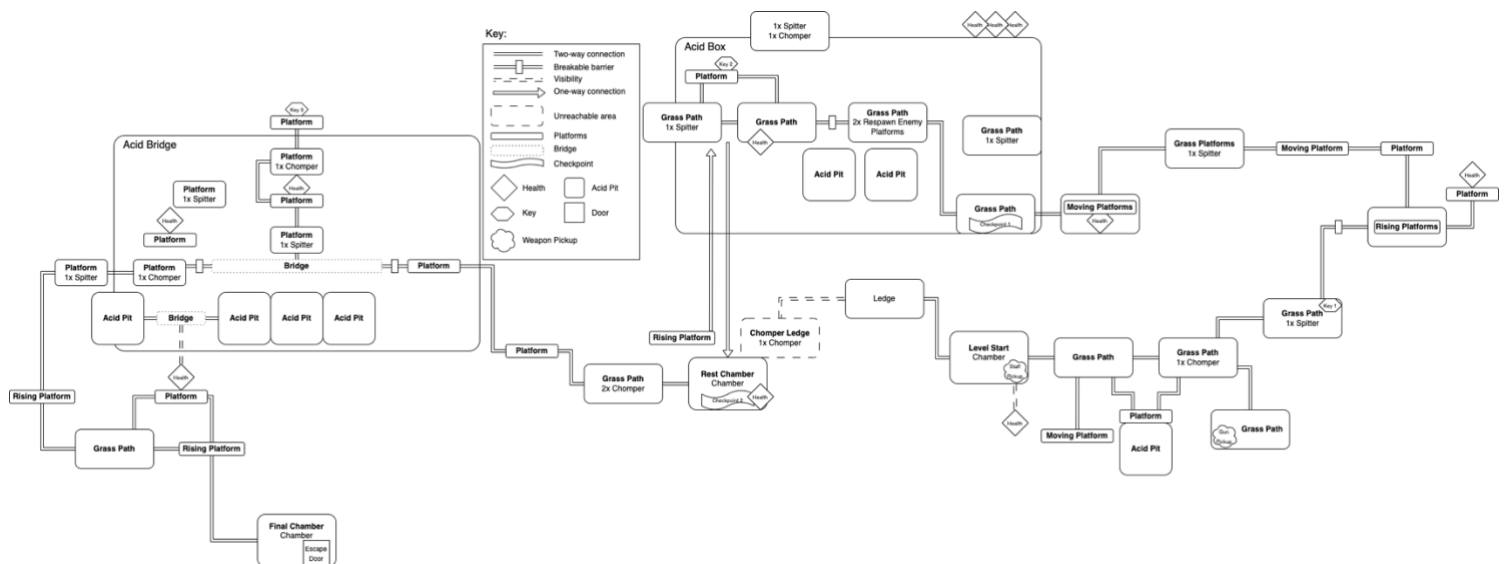
2.7. Passthrough Platforms

2.8. Spikes

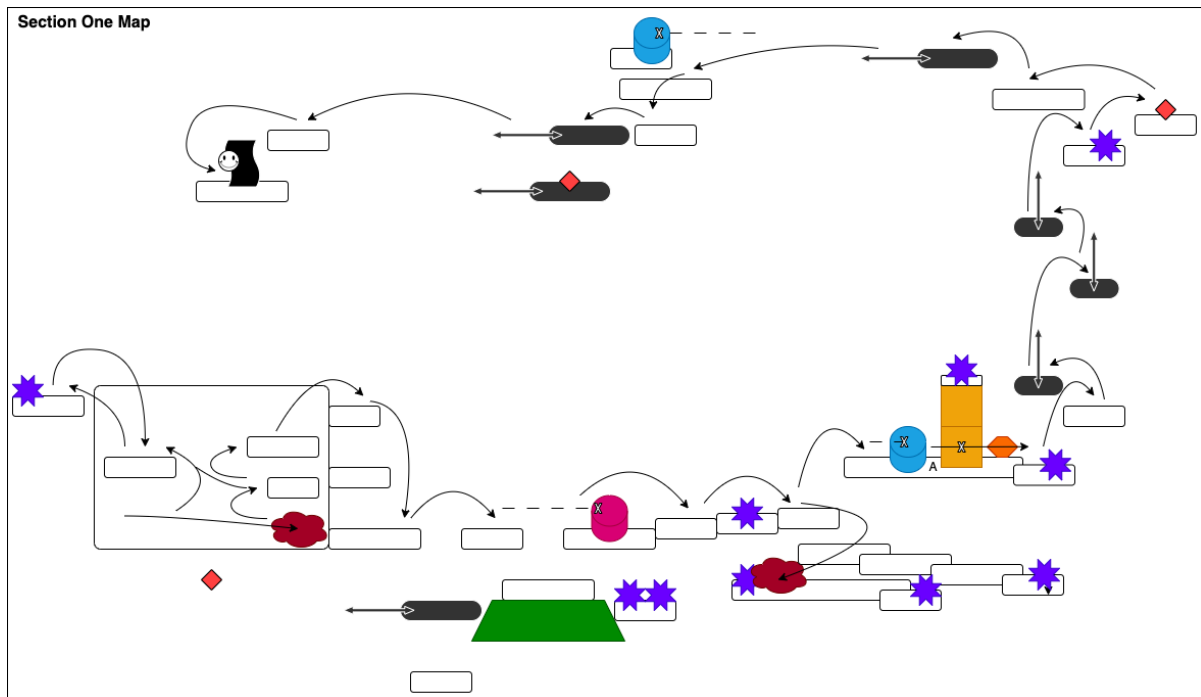
2.9. Spitters

2.10. Weapon Pickup (Gun)3. Spatiotemporal Design

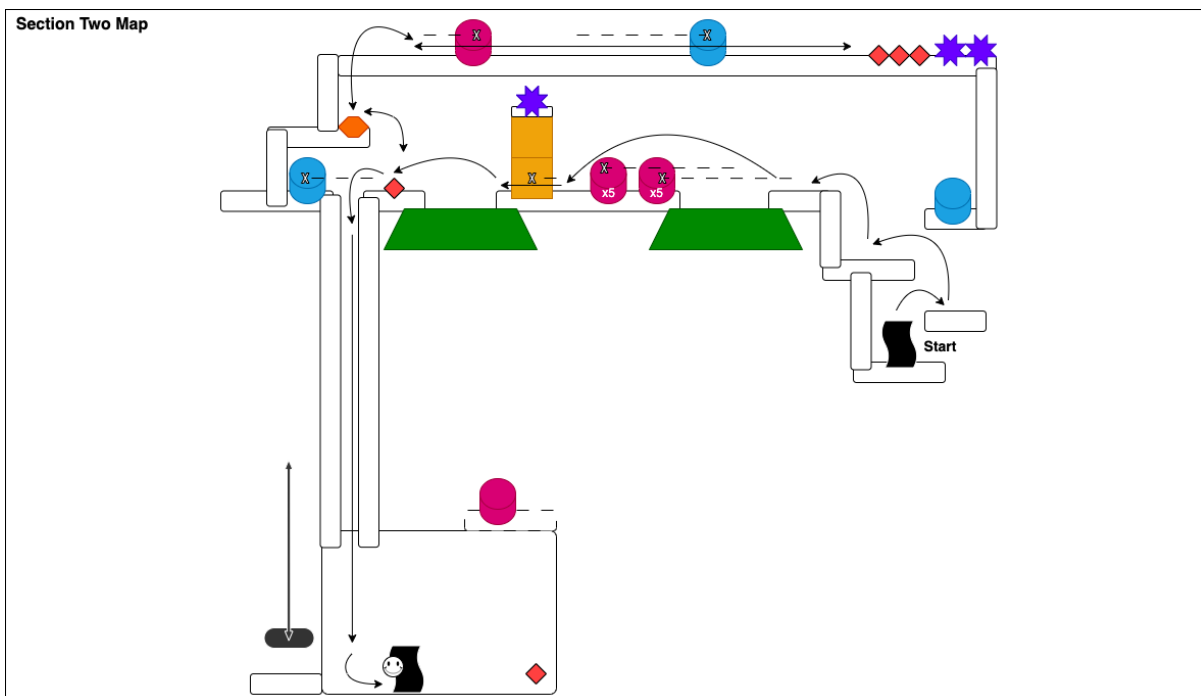
3.1. Molecule Diagram



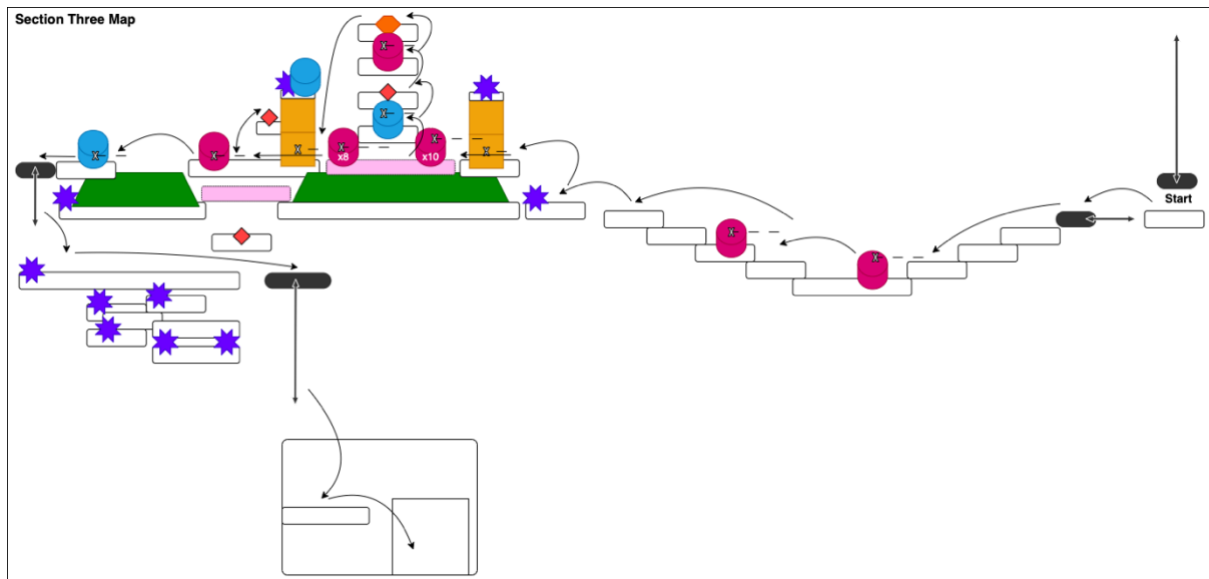
3.2. Level Map – Section 1



3.3. Level Map – Section 2



3.4. Level Map – Section 3



4. Iterative Design (~400 words)

Iterative design was instrumental in the development of my level, however my approach to this design was non-traditional – in that I did not produce early grey boxed specs and work from there. My approach to iteration was to create, test, recreate, and retest until I was satisfied. Once satisfied I had another person playtest, provide feedback, to which I would recreate and retest until I felt my design was what I wanted for the level. I initially started with a brainstormed idea that I had recorded verbally through a voice note that I had sent to myself. This approach worked for me for this project though I understand it is not a feasible approach to all design projects, however I do believe my outcome was successful and fit the scope of my initial 1.5 seconds of rambling in the voice notes. Had



I not used an iterative approach, as unconventional as it was, and went with my initial layout then my game would have been very short and near impossible to complete. With my respawning enemies in Section Two and Three, had I not trial-and-errored the number of respawns versus number of respawn locations, balanced with the respawn time and initial enemies, then the player would have been overwhelmed with enemies and given up. Early layouts were also linear and without reason, through iterations I changed direction of gameplay with more purpose. At first all three sections simply followed each other however they flowed, but once I play tested and watched others playtest, I decided to have the layout of the map have more meaning. After section one the player goes upwards to build tension and then travel right through the first challenge to create unease, then fall to break tension and finally

across and down to give the player a sense of recuperation before the end. All changes were to add subconscious senses to the player.

Although iteration was present in my design and significantly impactful, further iteration could improve my level further. Section Three specifically, on Acid Bridge, could go with further iteration. I provided the player with tiers above the bridge for brief periods of interval, but also included enemies in there to keep intensity and challenge high. After watching playtesters I could iterate more respite spots for the player to 'catch their breath' or play more with different levels, rather than having all tiers above the bridge.

Generative AI Use Acknowledgement

[Use the below table to indicate any Generative AI or writing assistance tools used in creating your document. Please be honest and thorough in your reporting, as this will allow us to give you the marks you have earned. Place any drafts or other evidence inside this repository. This form and related evidence do not count to your word count. An example has been included. Please replace this with any actual tools, and add more as necessary.]

Tool Used: ChatGPT

Nature of Use Finding relevant design theory.

Evidence Attached? Screenshot of ChatGPT conversation included in the folder "GenAI" in this repo.

Additional Notes: I used ChatGPT to try and find some more relevant design theory that I could apply to my game. After googling them, however, I found most of them were inaccurate, and some didn't exist. One theory mentioned, however, was useful, and I've incorporated it into my work.

Tool Used: Example

Nature of Use Example Text

Evidence Attached? Example Text

Additional Notes: Example Text