**Defining a game** (Categorising – page 15-17)

• A game = a systematized form of play

• Adams:

* A **game** is a form of **interactive entertainment** where **players** must overcome **challenges**, by taking actions that are governed by **rules**, in order to meet a **victory condition**

• Salen & Zimmerman

* A **game** is a **system** in which **players** engage in **artificial conflict,** defined by **rules**, that results in a **quantifiable outcome**

• System

* A set of parts that interrelate to form a complex whole

• Players

* One or more participants actively play the game
* Players interact with the system in order to experience the play of the game

• Artificial

* Games maintain a boundary from “real life” although they occur in the real
* Conflict
* All games embody a contest of powers
* Against others, against “the system”, “the rules”

• Rules

* Provide the structure out of which play emerges, by delimiting what the player can and cannot do

• Quantifiable outcome

* At the conclusion a player has either won or lost or received a numerical score
* Distinguishes games from less formal play activities

**Core Mechanics = Gameplay gestalt** (Categorising – page 26)

• Identify the **core mechanic** of a game

* The essential play activity players perform again and again in a game, and why The purposeful interaction that occurs the most frequently.
* Used to describe the **experience** of a game when placed in context

**Action-adventure genre** (Categorising – page 42)

• Combine elements of action and adventure genres (!)

• Long-term obstacles and challenges as found in adventure games

* Exploration
* Item collection and use
* Puzzle solving

• Many immediate challenges as found in action games

* Combat
* Reactions and hand-eye coordination

**Meaningful Play** (Interactivity – page 5)

• **Meaningful play** in a game emerges from the relationship between player action and system outcome; it is the process by which a player takes action within the designed system of a game and the system responds to the action. The meaning of an action in a game resides in the relationship between action and outcome.

* + Every game lets players take actions, and assigns outcomes to those actions

Provides internal structure

* + Interaction between the player and elements of a system are made meaningful by rules which describe their relationship

• Includes a context

* + Assigns meaning to actions that are taken

**Formal Elements of Game Play** (Formal Design – page 9-25)

• Players

• Goals and Objectives

* + Exploration / rescue or escape / solution / race

• Procedures

* + Methods of play and actions players are allowed to take to achieve the game objectives

• Rules

* + Define game objects and allowable actions by the player
  + Can’t have too many or too few

• Resources

* Lives
* Health, currency, weapons and power-ups, armour, potions
* Time

• Conflict

* + Obstacles
    - Physical and mental challenges
  + Enemies
  + Dilemmas
    - Choices player has to make

• Boundaries

* Boundaries separate game from non-game

• Outcomes

* + Completing the game
  + Completing the game in the shortest time

**Coordination Challenges** (Dramatic design – page 24)

• Test the player’s ability to perform many simultaneous actions

* + Moving while aiming

• Coordinating inputs with onscreen action

* + Time a jump over a chasm while avoiding enemies
  + Steering
  + Not unrelated to pattern recognition challenges

• Learning sequences of controller inputs

* + Complex sequences inputs to trigger a special move as different from basic procedures
  + Trick jumping, strafe jumping, ”surfing”

Level Design (Progression Balance – page 4)

• The space in which the game takes place

* + Creating the space

• Initial conditions

* + Number of opponents, amount and location of resources

**• The set of challenges the player will face**

* + Often a linear sequence of levels, linear or non-linear sequence within a level

• The termination conditions

* + Winning or losing

• Interplay between gameplay and story

• Aesthetics and mood

Progression and Longevity (Progression Balance – page 5)

• Challenges can be…

* + Concurrent
  + Contiguous
  + Nested

• Good game design is about **generating a series** of interesting challenges

* + Player has inefficient means to achieve their objectives
  + Players become more skilled over time, more adept at using means
  + A “good” game is one where success of the player is largely determined by the skill of the player

Progression (Progression Balance - page 21)

• Stage 1

* + Slow progress, high frustration
  + A lot to learn, freedom to make mistakes without punishment
  + Design should support the player in gaining a sense of control

• Stage 2

* + Skill increasing
  + Aware of success
  + Ideal state, extend for as long as possible

• Stage 3

* + Mastery of the challenge
  + Boredom
  + Unlikely to complete the game

Progression (Progression balance – page 28)

• Skill “gates”

• Exploration

• Unlock new areas

• Re-use an existing area with new challenges

• New opponents, obstacles and environments

• Conflict

• New abilities

• Reset of ability

• New opponents and obstacles