

When R.Q. finally put down my phone and slowly moved his finger away from the screen, he smiled. I glanced at him and we smiled together.

In high school, I designed my first game, Alpaca Village, to cheer up my best friend, R.Q., who had been very depressed after a sports injury. One of my friends and I decided to make him a game because we are all fanatic gamers. The process was very hard because we had limited programming experience. To cheer R.Q. up, we decided to make the mechanics youthful and the theme cartoonish. We prototyped several mechanics before we decided on the player erasing cartoon pigs from the screen to defend the village of alpacas. After endless building and testing different levels, we finalized it in a month and showed it to our friends. As soon as I saw the joy my game brought to R.Q. and others, I realized my passion for building games that could bring other people joy.

I have always been interested in game mechanics. Since video games are perfect combinations of technology, art, and interaction, I chose an undergraduate university that encourages interdisciplinary studies. I majored in Computer Science hoping to learn more about the technology world to create more diverse mechanics for my game, but I also minored in Art to gain creative insights. During my first year, I created my first strategy video game, Cannon Splash, which focused on the complexity of the mechanics. The players can find challenges at every level as well as explore the depth of the game. I rapidly prototyped several versions of the core mechanics and refined them again and again until their interaction with the players went as smoothly as possible.

Even though Cannon Splash was quite fun to play, I knew it was somehow different from Alpaca Village. But I did not understand what was missing until I made my second personal video game, Duot. The idea came to me when I was sitting idly in my behavior science class, listening to the stories of entrepreneurs and how great partners built thriving business together with productive relationships. Then I suddenly had the idea: why not make a game addressing the partnership between two individuals who help each other out in a chaotic world and conquer all obstacles? This idea struck me so deeply that I started prototyping the game that same day. I tweaked the mechanics repeatedly, from initially two balls following each other, to them mimicking each other's actions, to finally having them rotate around one another, all based on the idea of showing the players what great partnerships should be like. In my mind, the two people should be supporting each other and solving what the other one cannot. I made my game demonstrate the partnership by letting one protagonist serve as the axle-center while the other defends them both from invading enemies. However, the two protagonists can rotate and switch positions in order to adapt to new situations. While making this game, I realized what was missing from Cannon Splash that made Alpaca Village and Duot unique: creating a game is about creating an experience. We built Alpaca Village based on trying to convey the feelings of happiness, and I built Duot based on the idea of addressing how a partnership works. Even though all three games are built focusing mainly on mechanics, Cannon Splash's mechanics serve only as a way of fun interaction, while those of the other two serve to express my feelings and understanding of the world.

After Duot, I understand what I am trying to do by developing games. I am trying to convey my ideas, my feelings and my fantasies through the unique experience I created for the players. When players are interacting with the game, they are actually interacting with me, communicating with me through my pre-written messages that I buried in the mechanics. Players are like film viewers or book readers that way, except they read the messages through interactions rather than videos or text.

My dedication to my goal drove me to pursue two internships, hoping to learn more about the game industry. Over two summers, I worked as a game designer in two incredible game companies, and I learned a lot about the industry design method and tools for developing games. I gained knowledge of and got my hands on game system's flow design, MMO's quest design, basics of storytelling and tools like Behavior Tree and version control. Most importantly,

I learned about how to collaborate with and express my ideas clearly to team members. I made three games afterward, utilizing some of the knowledge I gained from the internships. All are included on my website and please feel free to check it out (<https://diaosuyidsy.github.io/>).

Northeastern University's Game Science and Design Program (GSDP) is a unique interdisciplinary program that not only mingles technology and design but also has a strong focus on the skill sets that are crucial to the selective game industry. The comprehensive coursework around all aspects of games is essential to my career goal of becoming a game producer. Also, I always address the game's core mechanics first and I wanted to learn, improve, and expand on other parts of the game such as play psychology and game evaluations, which are also focused fields of GSDP. As a person who has strong initiative, experience with both game development and the industry, and interdisciplinary skill sets such as coding, visual arts, and game design, I want to join and hope to become a great addition to the GSDP. In academic studies and group projects, not only can I contribute to the programming side, but I can also utilize my experience to provide visions, clear communications, and insights for more attractive and interesting mechanics and levels. So, in all, GSDP is a perfect program for my future path.