# WSOA3003A/Micro Project Analysis3

## Turn-Based Combat Game – part 3 – Level Design.

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In the last paper, communication design was the focus for the build – how the player would communicate with the system presented to them and how they would respond to the intent behind the developer's design. This week's paper will focus on level design; how the player interacts with the mechanical aspects of environment of the game and how the level itself can be manipulated/designed to present a challenge or obstacle to the player and how a game's level can tell the different parts of a game's narrative.

The focus of this iteration was to expand on the free roam environment of the prototype instead of the turn-based combat. Very little was changed about the battle system due to its mostly rigid nature and how unrelated to level design it is in this instance. The free roam environment was first created to pursue the goal of an RPG-adventure 2D platformer game, but no progress was made on it until now. This iteration focused on adding challenge to the free-roam environment – where the player would eventually be able to discover the game's lore, collect artifacts along the way, unlock more rooms with more enemies roaming and find ways to avoid instant game overs from deadly obstacles. These, however, are long term design goals, and thus a smaller design goals were written up in order to manage time for both macro and micro level design. Namely, updating the level's overall visual aesthetic design as to situate an eventual theme and narrative, create an obstacle that would be representative of future obstacles for the final product (which would consist of the player making use of objects around the level to avoid obstacles or reach certain areas), and create collectibles in areas requiring more footwork from the player to attain.

The visuals of the free-roam environment were important to establish due to it being the first scene the players encounter when opening the game. This was extremely time-consuming despite being left to be iterated last, and while the visuals were of satisfactory quality (See Appendix A and B), the programming suffered for it and many mechanics in the design goals were discarded. This however, allowed for a better vision into the future and how the game's theme and overall narrative would influence the game's level design. The main character is a

doll, and the environment is a doll house invaded by cursed toys, where the doll must fight through hordes of evil toys, find keys and escape. This theme influenced which obstacles were chosen, and which objects would eventually help the main character cross those obstacles (ie in this iteration, a lamp to cross a hole caused by cursed toys ravaging the area as seen in Appendix C). This connection between mechanical and narrative design aids extremely in planning out which obstacles will be placed around each level, and how the player must behave to cross them. While the iteration to the game may be small, the intention of immersion in the game world is carried across to the player. While this can be considered a victory, many mechanical bugs came along with it; for example, the player was at first completely unable to move across the makeshift bridge caused by the fallen lamp. If not designed to fall at a specific angle and if the player does not follow the in-game instructions, they may need to reset the game entirely, which is simply a design oversight that will be fixed in the next iteration. The game also resets after pressing "continue" after a battle, where a continuation of free-roaming was supposed to be in place. An error such as this can disturb the entire level's gameplay flow and was not intended to remain this way.

Collectibles were also an intended element to be added in this iteration and were designed to be keys the player would find in chests scattered across the game world; these would eventually be used to open doors which would carry the player to another scene/level depending on the game's progression. This however was not accomplished in this iteration despite the addition of chests, keys, and doors to the game (See Appendix D). This was due to a fear of over-scoping as well as too deep of a focus on visuals instead of mechanics. Time constraints also made it difficult to accomplish such a huge change in such a short time. Therefore, collectibles were reported for a different time; a disappointing decision for the time being, but a decision that could possibly ameliorate the game in the long term.

In conclusion, this iteration of the turn-based game had, like the two prototypes before it, many ideas, designs, and elements completely discarded or reported for the next iteration due to reasons mostly to preserve time and keep on brief in relation to level design. While some design goals were accomplished, some were not and many errors ensued afterward. These oversights, however, are not for the long term and will be fixed in due time as the prototype continues to be developed.
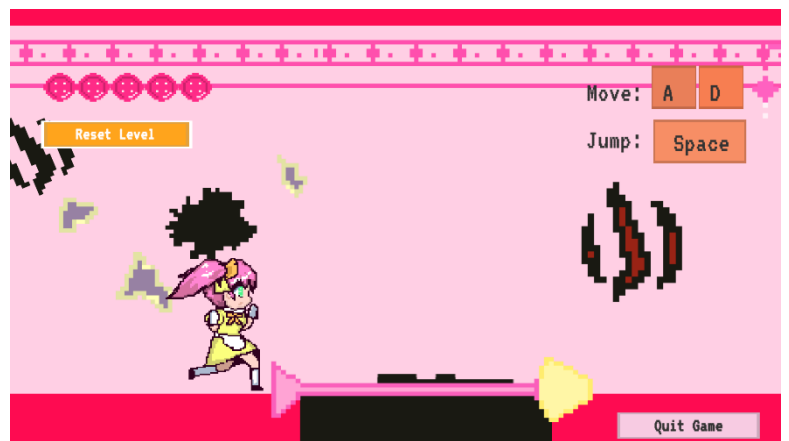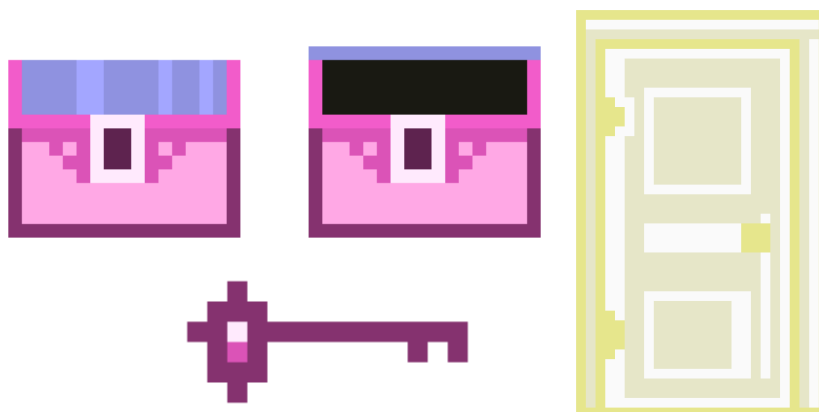
# Appendix List



*Appendix A: An in-game screenshot of the game containing new elements.*



*Appendix C: in-game screenshot of the first obstacle in the game, a hole*

*Appendix B: new design of the main character, the Doll*



*Appendix D: Key collectible, chests (opened and closed) and doors.*