

Submission Worksheet

Course: IT265-002-S2025

Assignment: IT265 Case Study - Personal Choice

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Status: Submitted | Worksheet Progress: 100%

Potential Grade: 10.00/10.00 (100.00%)

Received Grade: 0.00/10.00 (0.00%)

Grading Link: <https://learn.ethereallab.app/assignment/v3/IT265-002-S2025/it265-case-study-personal-choice/grading/jvn>

Instructions

Step 1: Pick a game you plan to analyze

Step 2: Playtest your game choice (or review streamers playing the game)

Step 3: Analyze, research, and review your chosen game. Collect resources (website links, etc that you used during the exploration) include these with the responses in the related sections. Fill in the responses of the below prompts/checklist/etc.

Step 4: Export the PDF. Upload it to Github and upload the same PDF to Canvas.

100%

Section #1: (1.25 pts.) Game Overview

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Historical Context and Game Description

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Historical Context and Game Description*

Details:

- Game's title, developer, publisher, platform, and release date.
- Historical context of the game's release and its place in the industry.
- Game's genre and how it compares to similar games of the time.

Your Response:

Title: "Fields of Mistria"

Developer: NPC Studio

Publisher: NPC Studio

Platform: Windows PC

Release Date: August 5, 2024 (but only Early Access)

This game has been big for the recent indie game industry as it has been recognized as one of the best early access releases. It's been celebrated as a "sleeper hit" on gaming websites like Backloggd and is being considered the next big farming game after Stardew Valley.

Fields of Mistria is a farming simulator and RPG with dating simulator elements. It cites games like Harvest Moon, Stardew Valley, and Rune Factory as its inspiration, and these are clear in the gameplay and overall vibe. The gameplay loop is similar to games like Harvest Moon, where you have certain farming, mining, and fishing jobs that you must complete for villagers. It also has some Animal Crossing elements, but its art, music, narrative, and depth of character options/dialogue make it stand out from other games.

Source: https://store.steampowered.com/app/2142790/Fields_of_Mistria/,

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Gameplay Mechanics

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Gameplay Mechanics*

Details:

- Discuss the core gameplay mechanics and how they shape the player's experience.
- Explain how players control the game and interact with it.
- Identify and describe any unique aspects or creative elements in the game's gameplay.

Your Response:

The core mechanics include fishing, farming, mining, fossil collection, animal raising, cooking, and gift giving. This shapes the player's experience because choosing to spend time on certain mechanics and level those up instead of others will change how you play the game, making it so that every day or even every playthrough is a different experience.

Players control a customizable character and can walk through the map to find different tasks to complete before the day ends or their stamina runs out. They use WASD to walk and mostly use one key or mouse click to interact with most objects, so the controls are simple.

The pacing of the game and the spell mechanics were the most unique to me. Having the variety of mechanics mentioned above and the constant custom quests makes for a fast-paced and sometimes challenging experience. Combining spells into the farming gameplay also adds to the creativity and diversity of options the player has. The amount of detailed and unique dialogue that NPCs will say, the gifts you give them, and the rare chances to choose between dialogue options made the game even more special in my opinion.

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Section #2: (1.25 pts.) Software Architecture And Technology

100%

Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Technical Framework

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%**Objective:** *Technical Framework***Details:**

- Describe the game engine and any special software (middleware) used to make the game. Explain why these were important for making the game work.
- List the programming languages and software tools used to build the game. Discuss how these tools helped in creating the game's features.

Your Response:

Fields of Mistria was made using GameMaker Studio 2, which makes sense after playing the game and knowing that engine. GameMaker is great for 2D games, other examples of games made there are Undertale, Pizza Tower, Omori, and Chicory, so it seems like a good choice for something like Fields of Mistria. This is an engine that is known for being ideal for 2D development, especially for smaller indie teams and developers that want to use pixel art. Fields of Mistria has both those requirements, so GameMaker allowed this game to come to life.

GameMaker was the only software engine used and it has its own engine-specific language called GML code, which is similar to C++. You can also choose to code in C++, C#, or GML Visual Code, all which were not used. This easy to understand 2D engine made all the features like mining, fishing, dialogue, and exploration possible.

Source: <https://gamemaker.io/en/showcase/fields-of-mistria>



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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Innovations and Challenges

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Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Innovations and Challenges*

Details:

- Identify and describe any new or unique technical features in the game. Explain how these features made the game different or improved it.
- Discuss any major difficulties the developers encountered while making the game. Describe how they solved these problems.

Your Response:

The gameplay variety and depth of character dialogue options really improve the game. The hundreds of handwritten quests and dialogue options required a lot of storage since they weren't artificially generated as they often are in many games. Knowing how Gamemaker works, this seems like it would've taken a lot of work to create. This improved the game for me because it made player feel more special and was entertaining because the writing was funny at times.

The developers initially had a lot of issues with random player actions crashing the game. The first major patch solved 7 things, for example trying to sell an animal in the item shop instead of the animal shop, that were causing crashes. The team solved bugs like these and many more through making the game early access and giving users a form to report bugs with. They then answered each report and fixed problems with occasional patches. There have been 10 patches so far since the game released in 2024, but everything is looking like it's more polished and will release officially this year. Source:

<https://www.fieldsofmistria.com/post/fields-of-mistria-s-first-patch-is-here>



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Section #3: (1.25 pts.) Gameplay Mechanics And Level Design

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Mechanics Analysis

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: Mechanics Analysis**Details:**

- Explore and describe the main rules and actions that players use in the game. Explain how these core mechanics define the game's playstyle.
- Discuss how the game's core mechanics keep players interested and involved. Describe the ways these mechanics make the game fun or challenging.

Your Response:

There are a lot of mechanics but at its core in Fields of Mistria you can either build your own farm, collect materials, increase relationships, or complete quests for characters. You start each day with stamina that refills after you eat/sleep and must make the most of it in the time period. This combination of mechanics makes the game both exciting and challenging at times because you must manage your time well and decide what aspects of the game you want to focus on. This means you and someone else can progress in completely different ways based on what core mechanics you tend to use.

It also makes it so that every day offers new gameplay variety, which stops you from getting bored. Even though it's called a "cozy" game, it can be very stressful in a fun way because of how much there is to do and the short time you have to complete it. Players can choose a set of core mechanics to specialize in and level up through skill trees, as each activity occasionally drops experience points. This makes the whole game feel more personalized and fun.



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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Level Design

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: Level Design

Details:

- Describe the design of the game's levels or environments. Focus on the layout, obstacles, and visual elements, and how they contribute to the game's setting.
- Explain how the level or environment design affects the way players play the game. Discuss how these design choices impact the overall experience, such as creating challenges, guiding the player, or setting the mood.

Your Response:

There aren't levels in the traditional sense but you can level up your different skills and your relationships with villagers. In the mines specifically, there are levels with increasingly hard monsters and better loot. The environments use different colors to inform the player about what will be dangerous or mysterious.

The layout of where fishing spots, the fossil dig site, stores, houses, and the mines are define the way you play.

The layout of where fishing spots, the fossil dig site, stores, houses, and the mines are define the way you play the game because going places takes time and stamina, so you must make the most of each area and strategize. There are certain challenges like specific rock types or creatures that need special tools in order to remove/catch so you'll have to avoid those until to reach aa higher level.

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Section #4: (1.25 pts.) Graphic And Audio Design

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Graphic and Audio Design

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Graphic and Audio Design*

Details:

- Describe the game's visual appearance and the artistic choices made. Discuss elements like color, art style, and thematic consistency, and how they contribute to the game's overall look and feel.
- Discuss the design of the game's characters and environments. Focus on aspects such as realism, creativity, and how they fit within the game's world. Explain how these designs enhance the player's immersion in the game.

Your Response:

Visuals are one of the main draws to Fields of Mistria and are a big part of what makes it unique to other farming sims and games in general. It's all 2D, with a soft and bright pastel color palette and 90s-anime inspired character sprites. I've seen people describe it as similar to old pokemon games. The detailed pixel art and animations of each character really make the game stand out. This overall nostalgic art style brings all the environments and resources together to make the game feel magical and cozy.

The character designs are unique, even though they feel like they could exist in an old anime, I feel like I've never seen characters that look like them in any video game I've played. Each one is very different, with detailed hair and outfits that change every season. This supports realism and makes you feel like you're actually in the game.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Audio Design

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Audio Design*

Details:

- Examine the game's sound design, focusing on the music and sound effects. Describe how they are used and their quality. Discuss any memorable or unique audio elements in the game.
- Explain how the game's audio contributes to its overall mood and setting. Discuss how sound and music influence the player's emotional response and enhance the gaming experience.

Your Response:

The music and sound design really support the 90s-anime feel that the game was going for. The characters are not voice acted but occasionally will laugh or make a sound, and the audio of the laugh is purposefully crunchy to make the game seem much older. One memorable theme was the song that plays whenever you uncover something magical/secret about the village's past. It's a slow and suspenseful song that disrupts the cozy vibe in a cool way.

The music is calming and catchy, and it changes just often enough to build atmosphere but also not have the player get sick of it. Toby Fox, creator of Undertale, was partially involved in some of the music, so that old synth style is present. I think the relaxing nature of the soundtrack and sound effects get you into the flow of the game and encourage you to keep playing.

Source: <https://www.ign.com/videos/fields-of-mistria-official-trailer-wholesome-direct-2023>



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Section #5: (1.25 pts.) User Interface And User Experience

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - User Interface and User Experience

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: User Interface and User Experience

Details:

- Describe the layout of the game's user interface (UI) and how it functions. Discuss elements like menus, icons, and on-screen prompts, and how they help players navigate and understand the game.
- Evaluate how well the game's UI communicates important information to players. Discuss aspects such as clarity, readability, and the ability of the UI to provide necessary game details without overwhelming or confusing the player.

Your Response:

The on screen UI during the game is similar to Minecraft with your itembar on the bottom. On screen at all times is your stamina bar in the top left corner, the date, time, and coins in the top right corner, and the bottom right has 3 icons representing spells, map, and menu. At first the icons on the bottom right can be confusing but they're pretty simple once you learn the meaning. Each time you try something new, a small tutorial box appears with clear information and pictures. Each menu has a consistent cute pastel style and helps bring the atmosphere together instead of breaking it.

There are a lot of menus and sometimes the crafting ones can become a little cluttered. There are times where the tiny pixel icons that represent items in the shop are also hard to decipher. Other than that, everything is very readable and the white background of the menus contrasts nicely against the colorful backgrounds. The amount of information can get a little overwhelming but it's sorted well so you only read what you need at the moment.



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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - UX Analysis

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: UX Analysis

Details:

- Discuss the overall feel of playing the game, focusing on how different aspects of the game contribute to the player's experience. Analyze how these elements, such as ease of use, game flow, and feedback, affect the gameplay.
- Evaluate the design decisions made to enhance the player's experience. Consider factors like tutorial design, learning curve, and player engagement. Discuss how effective these choices are in making the game enjoyable and accessible to players.

Your Response:

Fields of Mistria does a good job at stimulating touch with animations and sound effects that make actions

like harvesting a carrot or mining a rock feel like they have weight to them. The overall feel of the game is immersive and satisfying because all UI, menus, and icons fit with the cozy theme through colors and sound effects that aren't out of place or jarring.

Each of the tutorials are simple but thorough and they only pop up once you start a new action that you've never done before. They're all skipable, short, and show little clips of each action so it's accessible and easy to understand but also doesn't take away from players who don't need it. The learning curve is very smooth as the controls are basic and easy to get used to once you finish the first few days.



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Section #6: (1.25 pts.) Narrative And Storytelling

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Narrative Structure

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Weight: 50%

Objective: *Narrative Structure*

Details:

- Describe the game's story, including its narrative structure, main plot points, and the setting in which it takes place. Discuss how these elements come together to create a cohesive and engaging story.
- Analyze the storytelling techniques used in the game, such as dialogue, cutscenes, or environmental storytelling. Evaluate how effectively these techniques convey the story and engage the player.

Your Response:

You create your own character and you have been hired by the leaders of the village of Mistria, which has just been destroyed by an earthquake, to help rebuild and get the town back to its former glory. Many fled after the disaster so only a few remain, each with their own purpose in the town, there's a blacksmith, doctor, carpenter, barkeep, shopkeep, and more. The plot moves forward when you complete specific story quests, which are bigger than the normal villager quests, though those also help you learn more about the characters. The quests and dialogue come together to engage the player in this story.

The story is mostly told through character dialogue but there are occasional cutscenes that tie everything together. There's some environmental storytelling through the different items, crops, and outfits that show the changing of seasons. Also some strange ruins and fossils that you collect show that there is something mysterious happening in the town. These are all effective at engaging the player because you are the one who chooses which aspects to learn more about and the narrative depends on your actions in the game world.

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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Character and Integration

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Character and Integration*

Details:

- Discuss the development of the game's characters. Describe their roles within the story, their personalities, and how they evolve throughout the game. Consider how the characters contribute to the overall narrative.
- Examine how the game's narrative and characters are integrated into the gameplay. Discuss how story elements are woven into the game mechanics and how this integration affects the player's experience.

Your Response:

There's over 30 characters that you can interact with and build relationships with, though not all are dateable, you can still become closer friends with each. Every time you talk with someone, you learn more about them and gain points, once you reach a new level with them you hear more about their story and the secrets of the town itself. Each of the villagers interact with each other too, so you can learn about the families and relationships that already exist.

Each one plays a role in the town and you'll have to go to them to complete certain tasks. For example, Adelaide is the town leader, Eiland is investigating fossils, Balor is a traveling merchant, Ryis is a carpenter, and Juniper is a witch who owns a spa. You'll need to help each one if you want to restore the town and build your own farm. This means that quests and narrative happen simultaneously, making the story pretty seamless.



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Section #7: (1.25 pts.) Impact And Reception

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Reception and Impact

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: Reception and Impact

Details:

- Research and summarize how the game was received by critics and players. Include key reviews, ratings, and player feedback. Discuss any notable praise or criticism the game received.
- Analyze the game's impact on the gaming industry. Discuss how it may have influenced game design, trends, or inspired other games. Consider any lasting effects it has had on the industry.

Your Response:

Though it's still a relatively small and new indie game, Fields of Mistria has made a big impact in the indie scene. It has overwhelmingly positive reviews on Steam and is at around 20,000 total reviews there. It has already been featured in some big gaming publications like Polygon and PCGamer, with PCGamer saying "Fields of Mistria has a shot at becoming the face of a new generation of farming games". It also received an official 2024 recommendation from Polygon, it won PATCH's "Game of the Year", and twitch's "Wholesome Game of the Year".

It's too early to tell what impact Fields of Mistria will or will not have on industry, but we can make some guesses based on what both critics and players are saying. Multiple articles have described the game as genre-defining or revolutionary for early access in particular, with GamingBIBLE saying it's "the new gold standard for the genre" and Polygon saying it's "the best early access game they've played in ages".

Sources: https://store.steampowered.com/app/2142790/Fields_of_Mistria/,
<https://www.polygon.com/review/444036/fields-of-mistria-review-pc-early-access>,
<https://www.pcgamer.com/games/life-sim/fields-of-mistrias-town-full-of-well-written-characters-and-charming-game-boy-advance-aesthetic-immediately-make-it-stand-out-from-other-cozy-farm-sims/>,
<https://www.gamingbible.com/reviews/fields-of-mistria-review-499745-20240814>



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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Cultural Significance

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: Cultural Significance

Details:

- Examine the game's cultural significance and the legacy it has left behind. Discuss how the game has been remembered over time and its status in the gaming community.
- Describe the game's presence and representation in media, such as films, books, or online content. Discuss its role in fan communities and any influence it has had on broader cultural aspects, such as art, music, or social trends.

Your Response:

The game only came out last year so it hasn't really left a legacy behind. As mentioned above, it has already generated a lot of positive reactions so I expect this to continue, especially when it's finally fully finished. I do think it will be remembered as a must-play farming sim for all fans of the genre. I think it could also be seen as a unique indie success story and set an example for future early access games to improve their quality instead of simply releasing an unfinished product. There also hasn't been much presence of Fields of Mistria in any media except online through social media, especially with YouTubers and Twitch streamers posting their playthroughs. I've also seen it talked about on Twitter and Instagram a little bit, and have even heard people at NJIT talking about it too.



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Section #8: (1.25 pts.) Reflection

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Task #1 (0.63 pts.) - Describe your personal experience playing the

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: *Describe your personal experience playing the chosen game*

Details:

- Was it "fun"? What made it fun or not fun?
- Is this genre/game-type aligned with personal interests?
- What made you pick this game? Was it a good choice?

Your Response:

I played this game for 15 hours so far and I think it's been really fun. I think the most fun part was how satisfying the gameplay loop is, there always is something to do and you're constantly trying to get as much done in one day as possible. The progression is clear and it keeps you motivated to keep playing.

Usually I don't like farming simulators because they can get a little boring/slow or require too much commitment, but this one was different because of how fast-paced the gameplay is.

I picked this game because it's one of the most recent ones I've played and it's made in an engine that I'm familiar with. I think it was a good choice because it's an indie developer so they post all of their dev logs online so it's easy to find information. It also has similar aspects to the game I'm trying to make like fishing, gifting systems, battles, character relationship mechanics, and a focus on detailed 2D pixel art.



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Task #2 (0.63 pts.) - Assignment Reflection

Text Prompt

Weight: 50%

Objective: Assignment Reflection

Details:

- What interesting or new "thing(s)" did you learn during your research and analysis?
- Did you find it was easy to come across the information you were looking for? What was your primary means of research/analysis?

Your Response:

I didn't even know that the game was made in GameMaker which was cool because that's something I know how to use a bit. I also didn't know the game was so well received or that the developers had all their development logs and patch notes publicly available on their website. It was interesting to look at a game I like from a more thorough lens.

It was easy to find some information because the developers post all of their updates with detailed logs onto social media and their own website. Other information was kind of hard to find because this is such a new/semi-small game and there aren't any interviews with the creators. Source:

<https://www.fieldsofmistria.com/blog>



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