Game Mechanics

Spring 2016
Albany IGDA at SUNY Global Game Jam 2016 Registration

http://www.igda.org/blogpost/1322883/GGJ16-Albany-Site
http://www.cogsci.rpi.edu/~destem/gamemech/
LeBlanc's MDA Framework

Mechanics → Dynamics → Aesthetics

Rules → Play → Culture
boardgamegeek.com

- Acting
- Action/Movement Programming
- Action Point Allowance System
- Area Control/Area Influence
- Area Enclosure
- Area Movement
- Area-Impulse
- Auction/Bidding
- Betting/Wagering
- Campaign/Battle Card Driven
- Card Drafting
- Chit-Pull System
- Co-operative Play
- Commodity Speculation
- Crayon Rail System
- Deck/Pool Building
- Dice Rolling
- Grid Movement
- Hand Management
- Hex-and-Counter
- Line Drawing
- Memory
- Modular Board
- Paper-and-Pencil
- Partnerships
- Pattern Building
- Pattern Recognition
- Pick-up and Deliver
- Player Elimination
- Point to Point Movement
- Press Your Luck
- Rock-Paper-Scissors
- Role Playing
- Roll/Spin and Move
- Route/Network Building
- Secret Unit Deployment
- Set Collection
- Simulation
- Simultaneous Action Selection
- Singing
- Stock Holding
- Storytelling
- Take That
- Tile Placement
- Trading
- Trick-taking
- Variable Phase Order
- Variable Player Powers
- Voting
- Worker Placement
Common Dynamics

• Be able to sum it up in two sentences
  • “This game is the experience of being...”
  • “This game simulates...”
  • *not* “This game is about...”
Territorial Acquisition

• Usually zero-sum

• Only so much area to go around, and once it’s gone, it’s gone

• Sometimes about controlling a particular area for a length of time conditional on other rules or game state

• *Risk*, *Carcassonne*, and many turn-based strategy games feature this core
Prediction

- Be at the right place at the right time
- Many children’s games, many carnival games
- Guess what will happen, and you are rewarded for making an accurate prediction (often involves consideration of probability)
- Roulette, Rock-Paper-Scissors
Spatial Reasoning

- *Tetris* makes you think about how the active piece fits into the accumulation, but also how to build structures that would take maximum advantage of pieces that will (hopefully!) come soon

- Very common in board games, e.g. *Tic-Tac-Toe, Connect Four, and Pente*
Survival

• Our primary directive, so often a powerful dynamic

• However, a “lose condition” shouldn’t be confused with a core dynamic, so this is typically used as a support activity
Destruction

• Wreck everything in sight. It’s spectacle, and you evoked it!
Building

• We’re wired to make things – studies have shown that working with your hands can help alleviate depression

• Level characters, build cities, develop resources

• Most RPGs, Caesar, SimCity, Settlers of Catan
Collection

• We match similar items almost instinctively – pattern-matching and categorization are two of our most prevalent brain functions

• CCGs, platformers, getting the most resources
Trading

- There can be cooperation, even among opponents.
- Common with games that have multiple resources belonging to each player.
- *Pit, Settlers of Catan, Pokémon, Animal Crossing*
Race to the End

• Faster is better! It signals mastery over a given skill
• Be the first to learn a new technology, or just get across the street
• Very common in children’s games, and often the easiest to create and play
Design Challenge

• Design a game that explores a competitive “race to the end” dynamic

• Allows for 2-4 players, is about progressing on a path, getting from Point A to Point B, with the winner being the first player to get to Point B

• Your job is to figure out the theme, the game bits, and the mechanics
Suggestions

• Determine theme and goal
  • Where are the players going? Why are they going there? Use something that will allow players to interact with each other

• Design the space and the movement
  • How is the track discretized? Squares on a board? A set of cards/tiles? Is it fixed?
  • How will players move? Roll some dice? Can it be more interesting? How does it fit the theme?

• Identify player conflict
  • How can you interfere with an opponent’s progress? How can you boost your own? What’s the tradeoff involved?

• Playtest!
  • Every time you add a mechanic. Does it work as expected? Does it support the theme? How does it make the game more fun?
Homework

• 2-3 paragraph summary of your design progression, and where you would like to take this next

• PDF (please, .docx and I hate each other) submitted to LMS by Thursday at 4PM.