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Thinking about our game some more, I’ll start with lens 53: The Lens of Control. Our interface is currently the most complete part of the game, with almost all of the functionality working. I have a particular interest in making useable interfaces, so I tried to get it working well. The main non-intuitive part is that you need to use middle click to rotate the camera around the battlefield, which is a button people don’t usually think to try unless you tell them. Aside from that, once the know that they can press that button, they seem to move the camera around easily, it looks like it’s doing what they want. The UI is currently placeholder, but I made sure to include buttons for showing and hiding the different UI elements so the players could pull them in or out if they want, when they want. We’ll need to see how well the flicking works when that’s finished, but what we have now feels very easy to use and natural.

The Lens of the Raven asks if making the game is worth my time. Yes! Kind of important for passing this class and getting a degree. Though, given that I *have* to make the game, looking at the Lens of Passion, it is more difficult to be filled with passion for the project. All the same though, there are definitely things that I really like about way we’ve designed the game, and I do really want to make it, but it’s definitely more difficult to keep myself passionate than with a project of, well, passion.

Looking at the Lens of Emergence - the players really only have one verb in our game. They can flick the cubes. The number of objects the one verb lets them act on is a lot higher. They act on their own cubes, leading to indirectly acting on the other player’s cubes as well. I predict two main methods of achieving their goals, by either aiming for the enemy king and going directly for him, or by attacking the enemy units to make the king an easier target.

The Lens of Fairness asks if your game is fair, and how so. Ours is not necessarily symmetrical, because it allows each player to choose their own units to bring to the battle. They are both limited to the same number of points that they can use to choose units, but the choices they make on which, and how many of each they bring beforehand will greatly change the way each battle would go. It gives asymmetrical gameplay, but should still be fair, because both players have the same amount of resources at their disposal to choose their team composition.

The Lens of Triangularity asks about the risk vs. reward in your game. Ours still hasn’t been tested, but based on the original game, it should have a good deal of triangularity. Specifically, the harder you flick a cube at your enemy, the more likely you are to knock them out, but you also more likely to send your own cube out. In the original, the triangularity was not good, you were far more likely to send your own cube off the field than to hit anything you were aiming at. In ours, we’re trying to make the cube flicking more easy to control so that the risk reward is actually balanced.

Looking through the Lens of Simplicity/Complexity, our game is focused on a very simple system, with just one action, from which we are hoping to create emergent complexity. The complexity, rather than coming from lots of different systems or actions, centers around all of the complex decisions that can be made based on what you do with your cube. What type do you choose? How does it compare to the other cubes near it? How does its positioning affect the options of you and your opponent? Those are the sorts of complex decision making effects we hope to see.

The Lens of Moments looks at the interesting moments in the game. The key moments in our game are when the player flicks a cube, and it hits another, and how that plays out. The faster, harder, and further they go to hit another cube, the most interesting it will be. One thing I worked on a little to try making those particularly interesting moments better is by using micropauses. I don’t have it working yet, but I put together a system like they use in fighting games, where the game can be paused for just a few frames at a time to add more impact to an event. If it works as I hope it will, it would be possible to add micropauses for emphasis, with the biggest hits getting longer pauses to really bring out their impact.

The Lens of Indirect Control asks what systems you use to shape your player’s actions in the game. For ours, it relies on the limited number of possible actions the players can take, and anticipating those actions. For instance, the game starts off where the players can place their cubes on the field. The interface always shows which player’s turn it is, so they will go at the right time. The only thing they can do is go back and forth, placing their cubes. When they are done, there is an interface button to move onto the next stage of the game. By not giving them an option to pass their turn, we force the players to take turns, so one player cannot place all of their cubes second, in response to those the other player has already chosen. Similarly, there is no way to (easily) move cubes you have already placed. Anticipating players attempting to break the game, we also implemented a system where if they do manage to knock one of their cubes out of the map, they will be removed from the player’s list, as well as points used, and it will still be their turn to continue placing cubes, so they cannot continuously throw their cubes over the edge of the stage as a way of passing their turn until their opponent has placed all of their cubes. Nothing forces the players to play the way we want them to, it’s just that doing anything else does not move the game forward, it only progresses when they take the actions that will move it forward, that it will continue.

The Lens of Inner Contradiction asks about inner contradictions in your design. So far, I don’t believe our game has any inner contradictions, though we’re likely to find at least a few during testing. The purpose of our game is to offer a multiplayer, physics turn based strategy experience, where two players can take turns moving their cubes to try to defeat one another, taking advantage of the various options at their disposal. Among the systems, there are ones to differentiate unit types, giving them specific niches to fill, so that the players can make meaningful choices in leveraging their units strengths and exploiting their enemies’ weaknesses. An inner contradiction that could likely appear, would be having units too similar to one another, thus not offering any meaningful decision points between them. Alternatively, if the balance between units is off, it will remove the weaker ones from offering a meaningful choice. Taking away the meaningful choices of the players would contradict the core design of the game, so we will need to take care to remove any problem like these if they show themselves during testing.

The Lens of the Team looks at the team rather than the game. Overall, I’m satisfied with mine. They are the right people for the project, because we cover (almost) all of the required disciplines to get it done effectively. We have a good, trusting atmosphere and can communicate clearly and easily. It’s simply a good team to be a part of. There are a couple hiccups from time to time, a miscommunication causing someone to do work incorrectly, or an overall hesitation to pull the trigger on a decision leading to team members doing unnecessary work that we have to discard later, but I believe the overall experience and effectiveness of this group to be great.