

The brief was to produce a vertical slice of a concept game. The game was intended to be an explorative platformer and was aesthetically to resemble ruins within a swampland. However, with the assets I had available this aesthetic shifted to one of an abandoned man-made fountain structure. The

The visual research for the project was extensive during the beginning of the project. Images relating to the aesthetic feel, such as jungle temples and mangrove forests, were consulted. Various kinds of diorama were also viewed in an attempt to see what was possible. However, I do believe more research into vertical slices and levels were required in order to more clearly define the essential assets and how they would be used within the level. Unreal Academy (<https://academy.unrealengine.com/>) and tutor support were both key sources of research for more technical elements of the project, primarily with the creation of materials and alphas.

Overall I am not happy with this project. There were many delays caused by a lack of communication which negatively impacted the project outcome. However, I do feel that I explored Unreal Engine more through the creation of materials and lighting. Outside of tutor support, I did look to outside sources for information on how to use the engine. This I feel has been greatly beneficial to my understanding of the program. While I remain uncomfortable with creating elements such as particle effects or more key aspects of coding, this has led to me becoming more comfortable with Unreal Engine as a whole. The project has also encouraged my understanding of Maya and taught me a new program in Substance Painter.

I did not improve much between this project and the last when it came to designing a level layout. This was also due to a lack of planning for the level. Because of this, I feel that in future projects the level design needs to be planned and white boxed early in the project. This would allow more thought to be placed into how the level would function as well as the key elements of it's design. Much of my focus for this project was in the assets and the creation of a diorama. This did not end up translating well to the level due to a lack of forethought on my part as to how the assets of the diorama would translate to the level design. On reflection, I can think of several ways assets could have been developed to ensure they remained flexible for both purposes. So for future projects, I aim to take that into further consideration.

This project did go through an iterative process however, I feel it was too restrained by an attempt to "simplify" what needed to be done. This "simplification" was in response to the shortened period of which I had to make the assets and was likely the cause of at least some of the inflexibility in the assets I created. Further issues in relation to assets also occurred due to a lack of access to assets made by other members of the team. This caused me to have to rethink about how my level was to be laid out in order to best incorporate the assets I had to hand. In future projects, I aim to have a larger list of assets to build - from most to least important. The conditions of this project have led me to believe that the pressure of having more to build would have incentivised me to spend more time on the project and the larger pool of assets may have reduced the issues I had with moving onto the next stage of development. Despite this, I am aware that this may be an unreasonable goal that could impact future projects negatively.

My skill in time management varied over the course of the project. There were many delays that caused the start of the project to be pushed back, which narrowed the timeframe in which it could be made. Despite this, I initially was happy with my time management as I had Assets built quickly and ready for texturing. Some difficulties did arise when building up the base of the diorama which required the asset to be rebuilt. The same asset also caused setbacks while unwrapping however these were resolved relatively swiftly. Poor group communication was the main cause of delays within the project as it led to myself becoming hesitant to move onto the next stage of the project.

On reflection, I feel that I should have pushed myself to complete and move onto other elements of the asset creation. Despite the hesitancy, I felt, moving forward regardless would have given me more time towards the end of the project timeframe to not only complete the project to a much higher standard but to also push myself further when it came to Unreal Engine. Furthermore, I should have used the time the project was delayed to focus on how the level could be laid out and how the assets could work for both the diorama and the level. Throughout the project meetings that showcased what had been completed alongside plans on how to move forward should have been implemented from the start.

While I am happy with the standard the assets are at; I am extremely disappointed in the level. One issue I found was that one asset did not interact with the player properly, leaving the player to be standing above the top of the asset where it dipped at its centre. Furthermore, there are elements I wanted to add but found myself without the time to - for example "water" the player could walk through or other functional coded elements. The vast majority of these issues were the result of poor planning.