The background is a pixel art landscape. At the top, there are three small, colorful hills. In the center, the word "STARTING" is written in a large, black, pixelated font. Below it is a large purple rounded rectangle containing the text "In Media Res" in white. Underneath the purple rectangle is a horizontal bar with a white segment on the left and a purple segment on the right. At the bottom, the text "LESSONS FROM GAME TUTORIAL DESIGN" is written in a smaller, black, pixelated font. On the left and right sides, there are two large, pixelated trees with green foliage and black trunks. The bottom of the image shows a pixelated ground area with green and purple pixels.

STARTING

In Media Res

LESSONS FROM GAME TUTORIAL DESIGN

About Me?

I'm a "Vintage Millennial" (TM someone else) who has been obsessed with games for 30+ years.

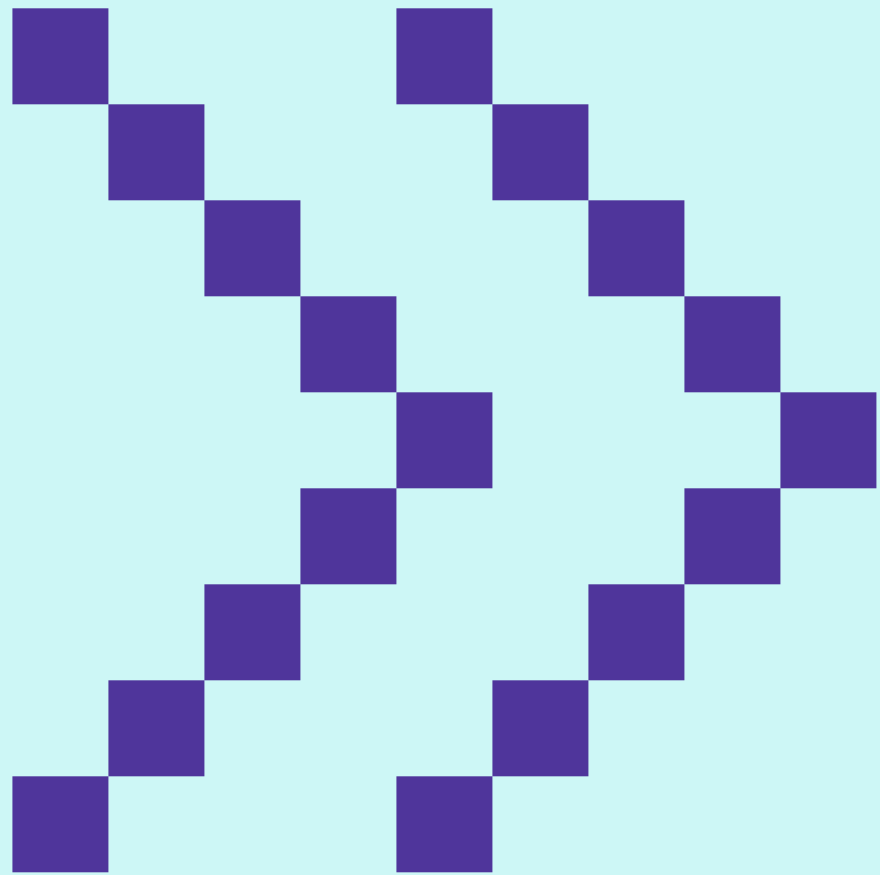
I had 2 big interests as a teenager that have never left me:

- Cognitive science
- Gaming and game mechanics



ALISON

THIS PRESENTATION



IS

Grounded in both research and lived experience examples

IS

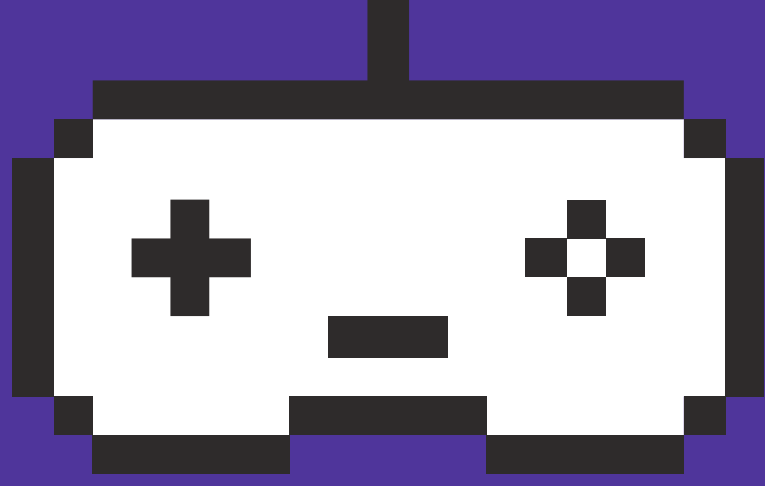
A (somewhat) interactive exploration driven by curiosity

NOT

Presented by a functional expert in game design

NOT

A how-to guide with concrete answers to all questions



CRITICAL

QUESTION

What can we learn

from game tutorial design?

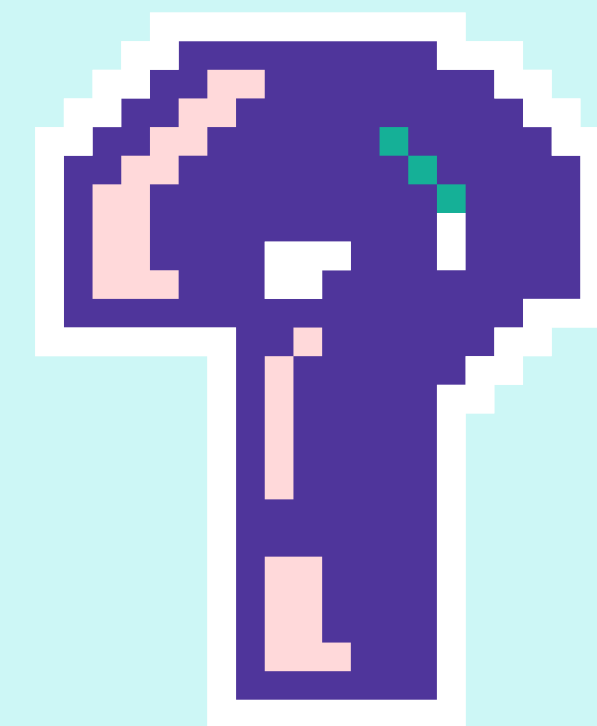




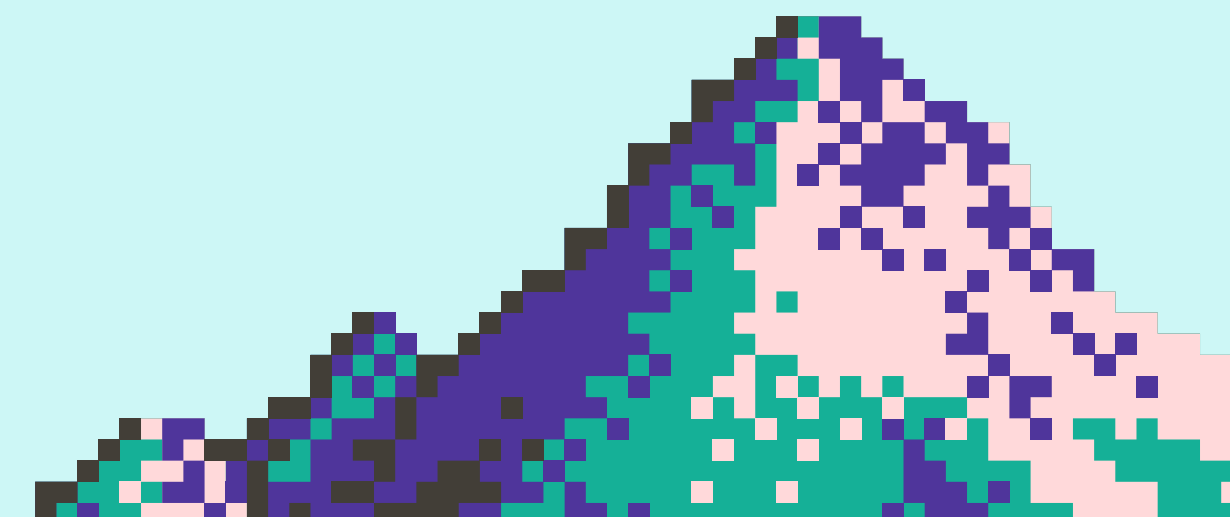
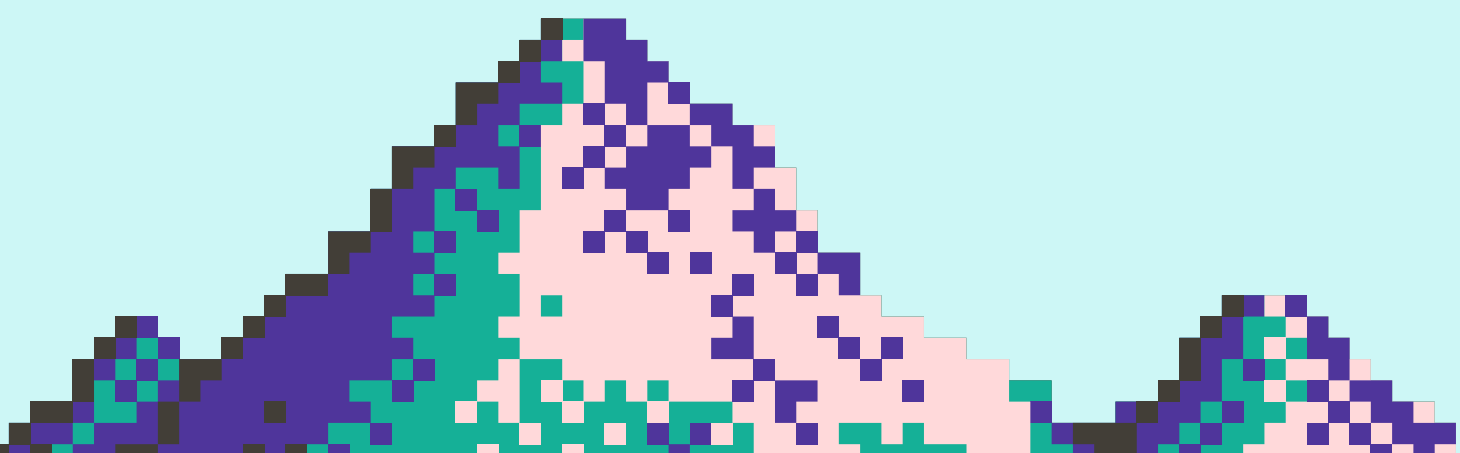
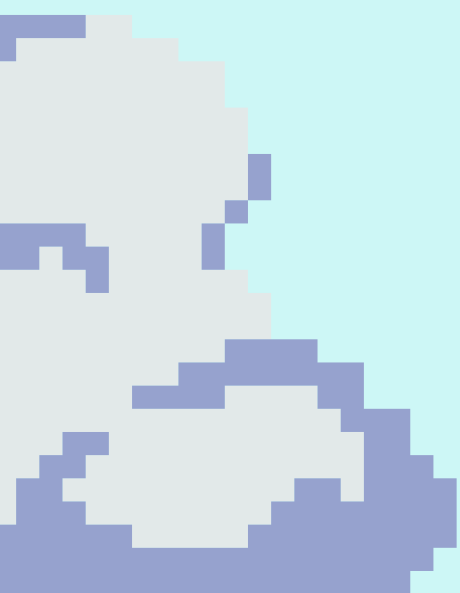
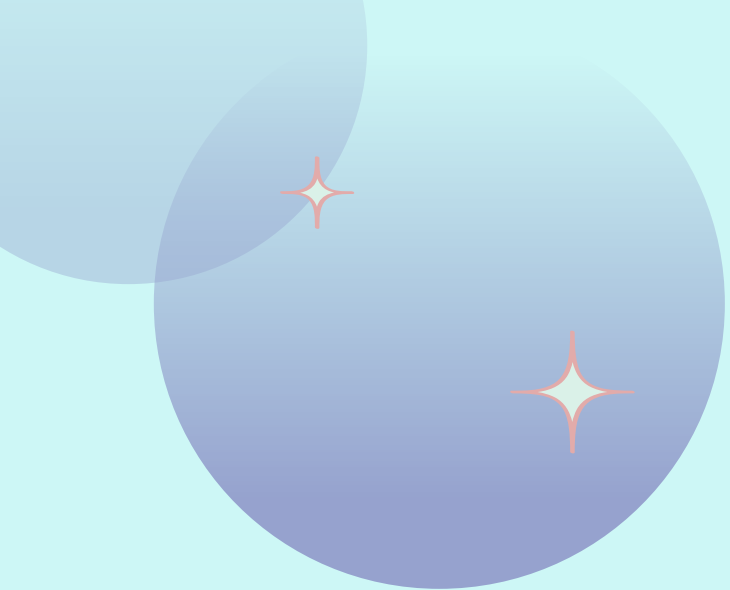
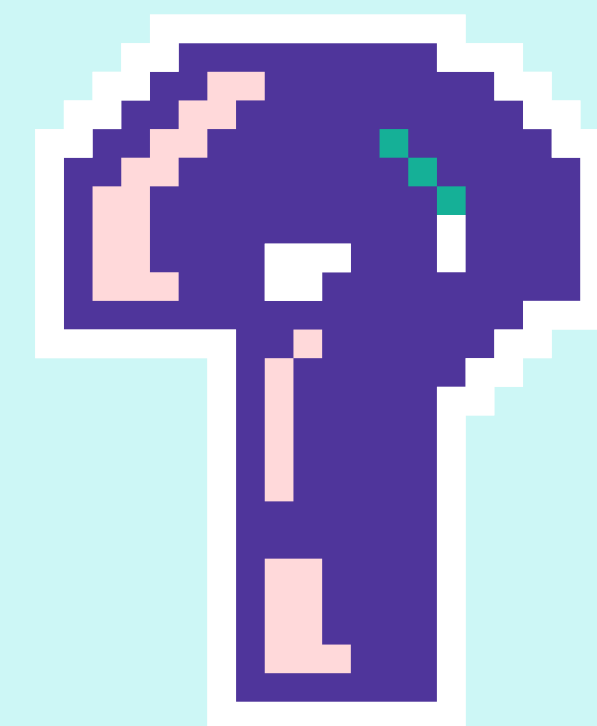
THE RESEARCH

- Even inexperienced players (who benefit in outcomes) from explicit tutorials call them "boring" at similar rates to experienced players in many studies
- Explicit tutorials almost always lead to better performance, whether mastery is measured by score, use of specific mechanics correctly, progression through levels, or achievements
- Preference and "fun" of tutorials is not necessarily linked -- it depends on what was asked of the users

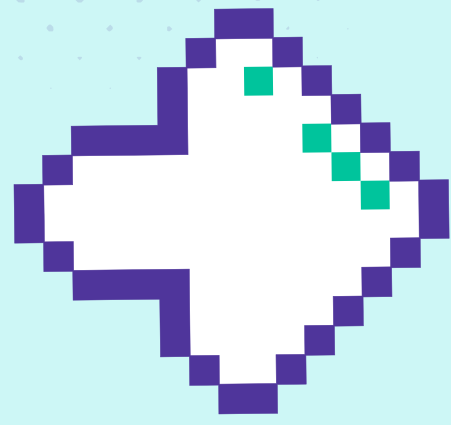
WHAT ABOUT FEEDBACK?



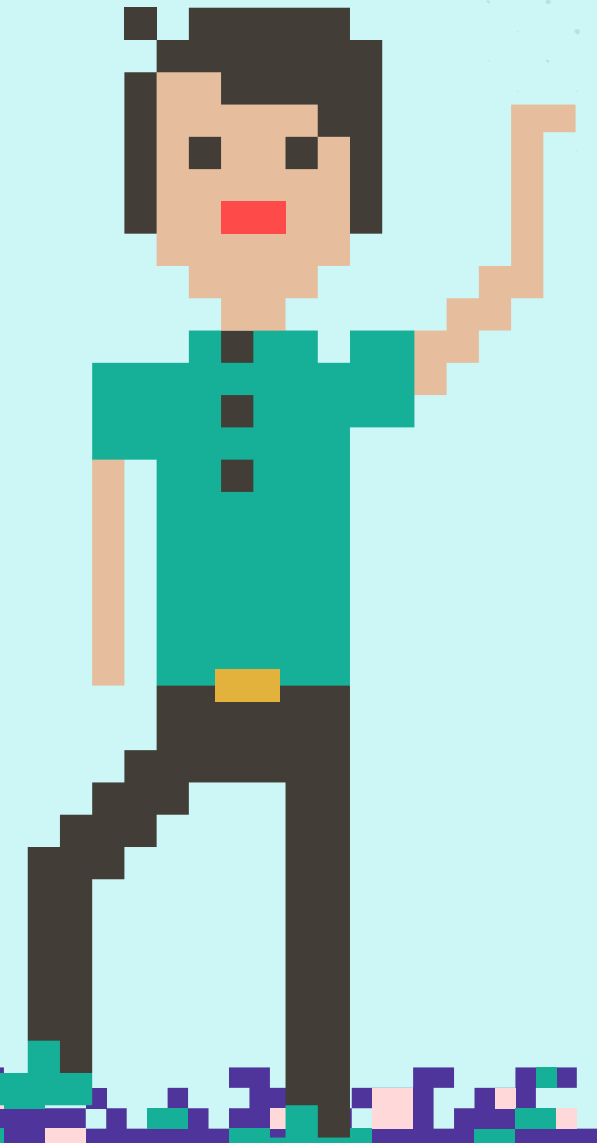
WHAT ABOUT FEEDBACK?



PLAYER 1

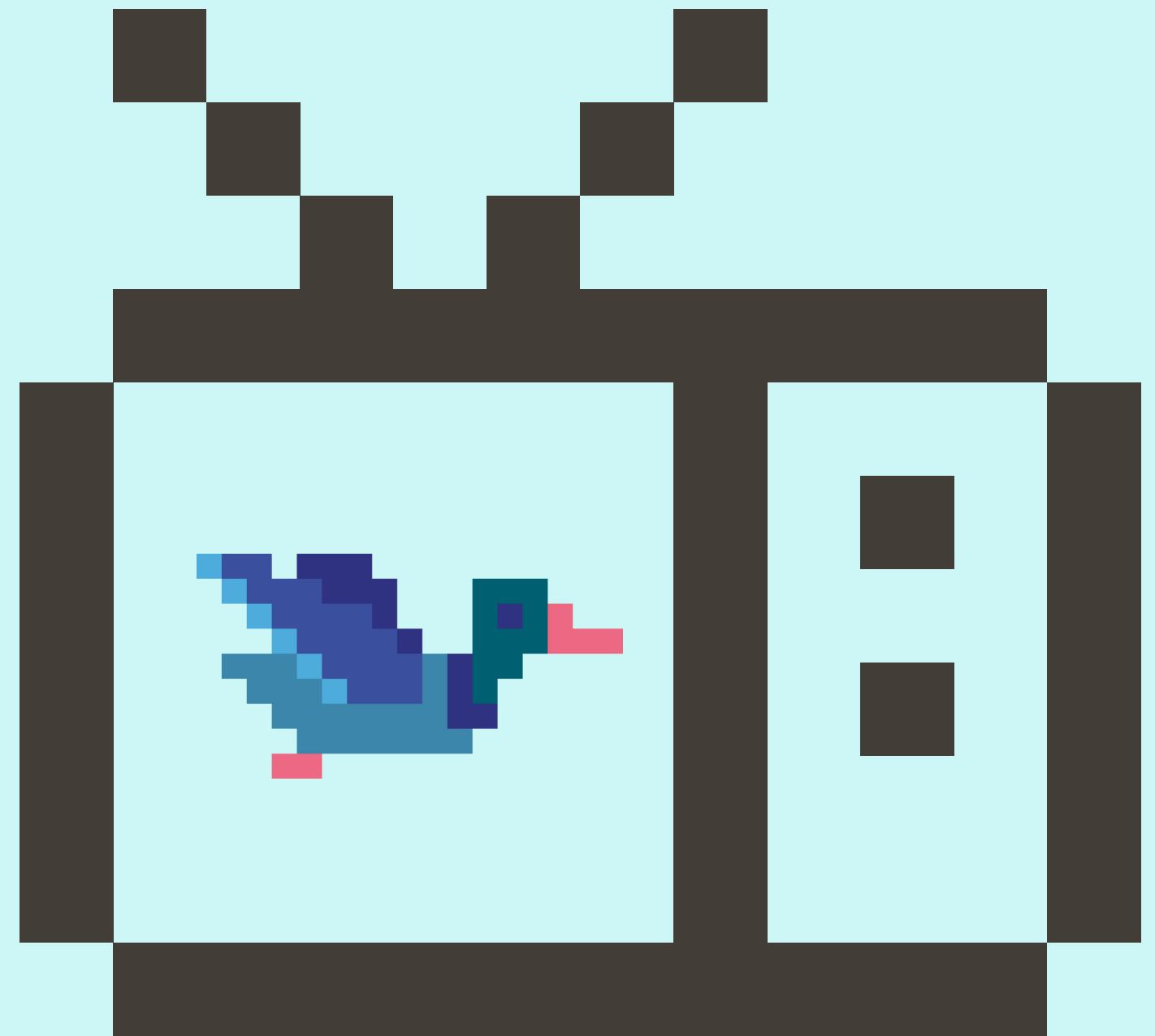


NOT ABOUT
FUN

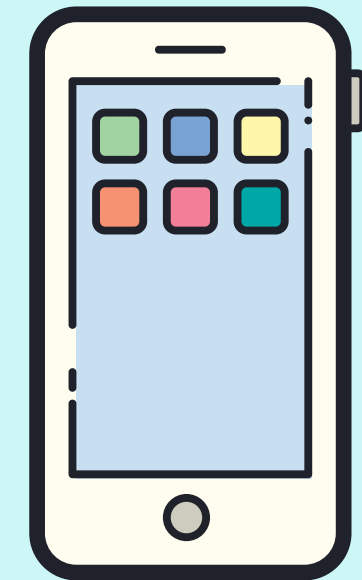
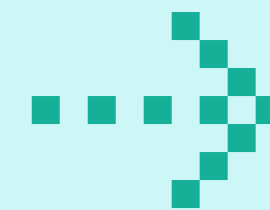
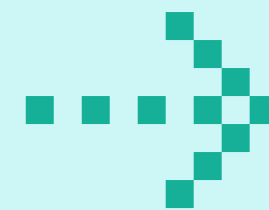
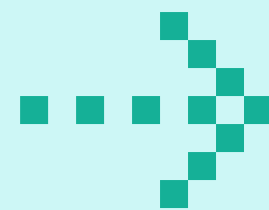
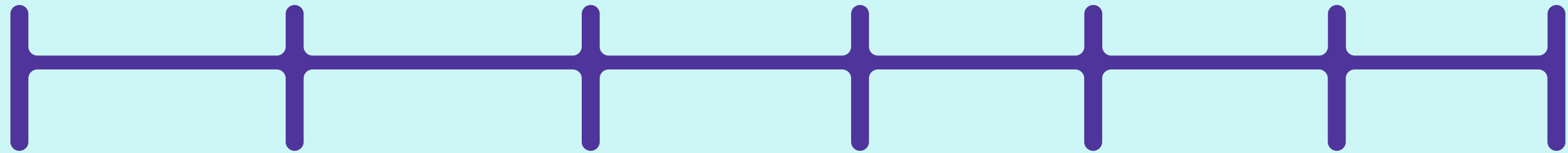


WHAT HAS CHANGED

- Audience
- Technology
- Style of games



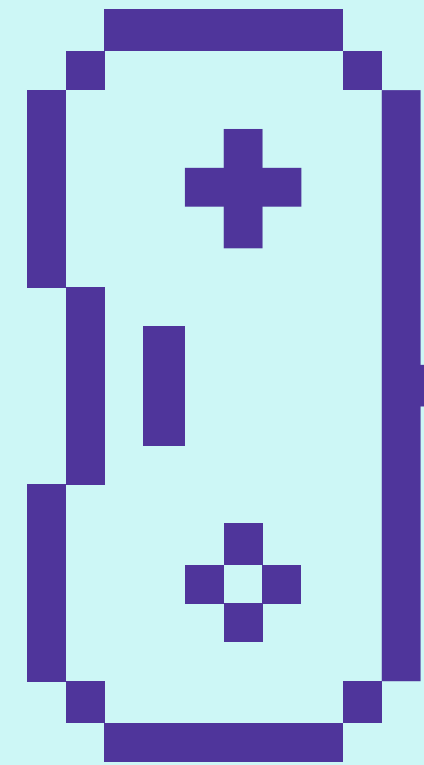
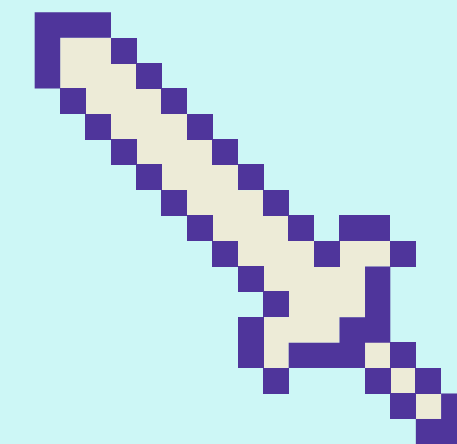
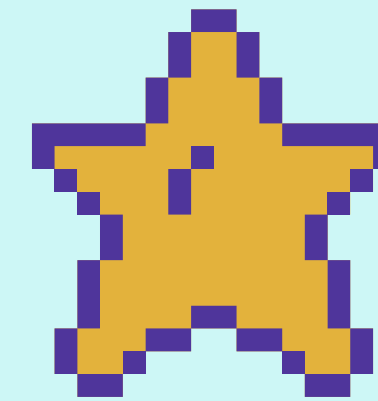
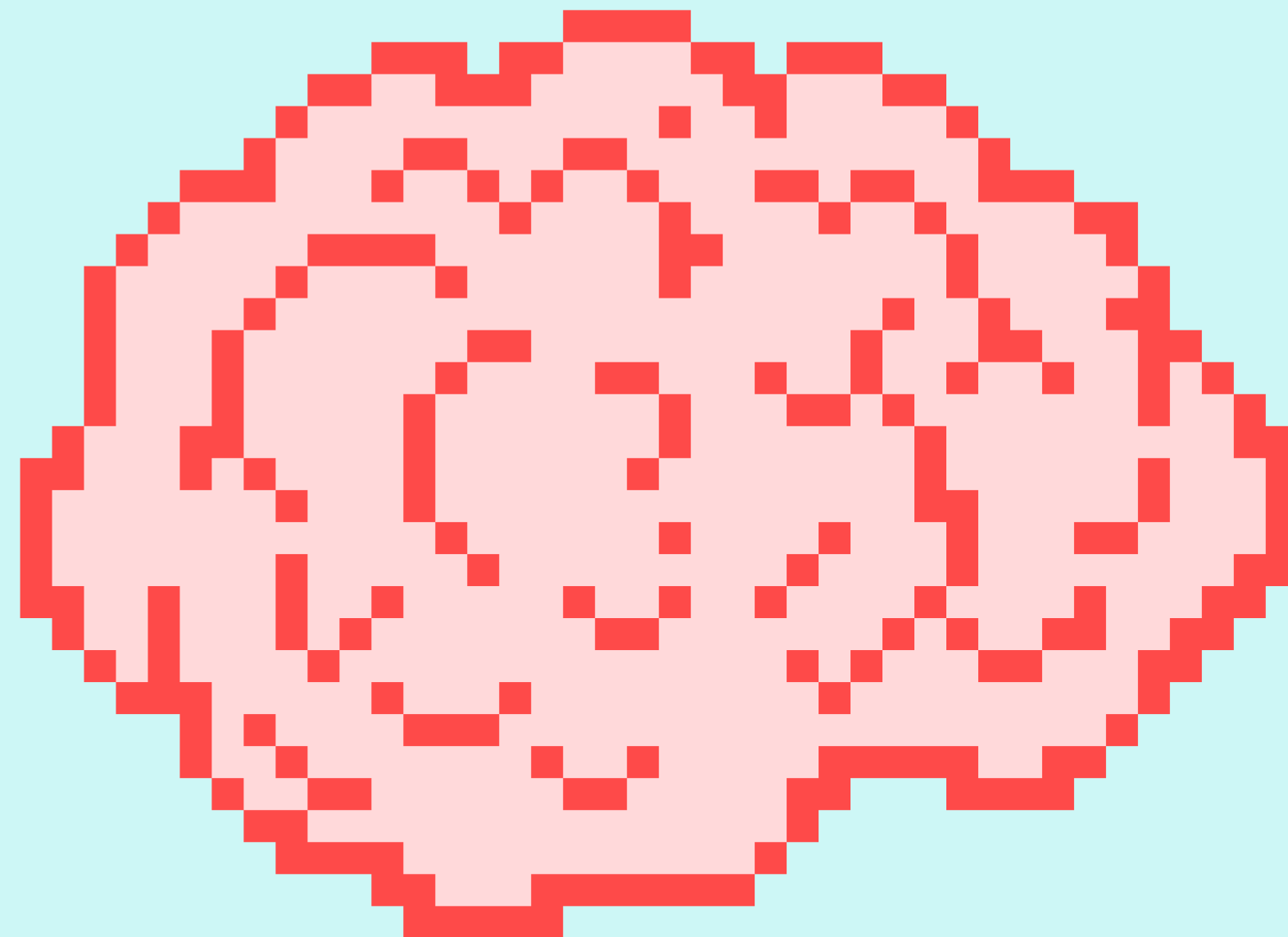
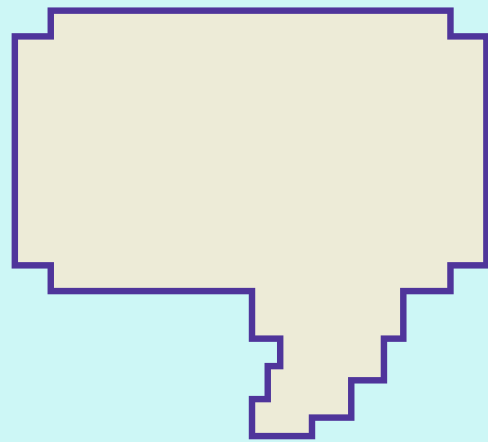
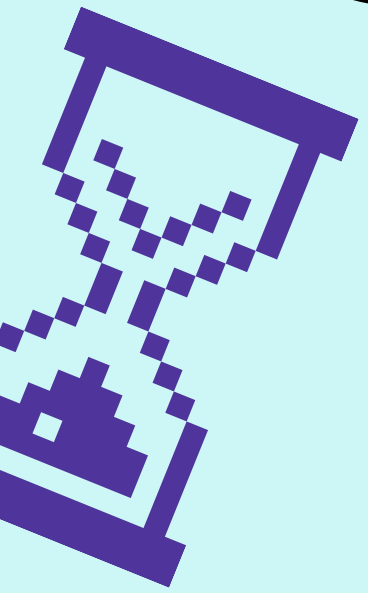
Some (incomplete) history...



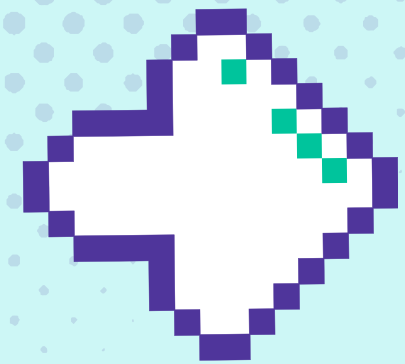
Explicit or implicit does NOT mean less contextualized!

NARRATIVE

PRACTICE

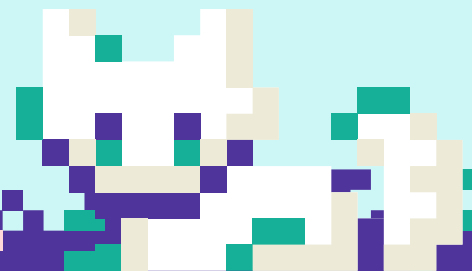


PLAYER 1



WHY

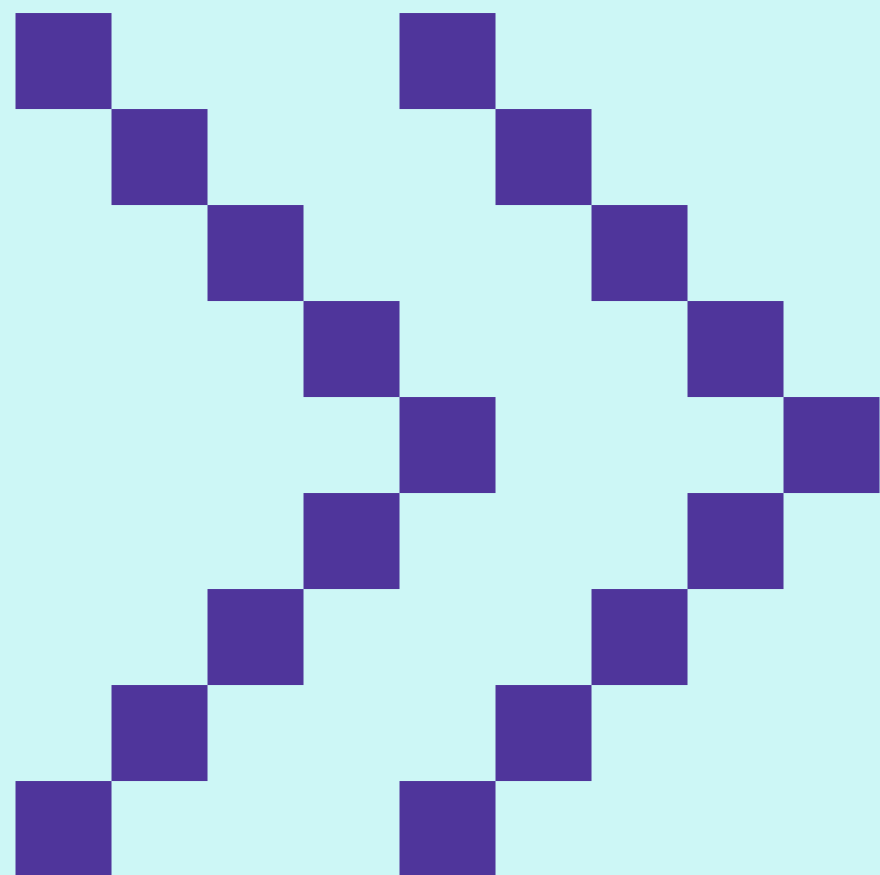
CONTEXTUALIZE



Other Lessons from Game Design Principles

- Design around a core mechanic (chunking)
- Build in mechanics thoughtfully, adding complexity over time (scaffolding, practice)
- Announce steps and changes (explicit direction)
- Make focus and goal clear (with progression and success criteria)
 - “Immersion”
 - Sense of reward?
- Making things feel connected (ties in to contextualization)

MW TAKEAWAYS



Be careful if you are thinking of ditching explicit feedback

Contextualizing learning helps both with engagement and learning effectiveness

Not about FUN: while we can learn much from games, we must not get lost in 'edutainment'