Matthew Hadick

San Francisco Bay Area, CA

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Designer and researcher focused on game UX, player comprehension, and interaction design, with a background spanning game communities, long-form game criticism, Unity-based prototyping, and HCI research. Six years of teaching shaped my expertise in structuring learning, sequencing challenge, and analyzing behavior. My work emphasizes clarity, accessibility, and systems thinking – identifying friction points, interpreting user signals, and refining experiences through iterative design.

Education

Master of Human Computer Interaction (MHCI) – *Iowa State University — 2025 (GPA 4.0)*
Teaching Credential (Multiple Subjects/English) – *CSU Monterey Bay / UCLA — 2017*
B.A., Political Science & Communication – *UC Davis — 2011*

Experience

Product Design Lead - Special Projects
Alo Consultation | Benicia, CA | September 2022 – April 2024
- Led design of a complex training environment using rapid prototyping and user testing to surface friction points and improve task success rates.
- Created an inclusive design system emphasizing clarity, consistency, and accessible interaction patterns across modalities.
- Synthesized qualitative and quantitative signals to refine workflows, simplify decision paths, and improve orientation for new users.
- Partnered with cross-functional teams to translate research insights into clear interaction models and implementable design direction.

Senior Community Development Specialist / Content Designer
Wikia/Fandom | San Francisco, CA | May 2013 – August 2016
- Supported large-scale game communities (Elder Scrolls, Fallout, Battlefield), analyzing behavior and restructuring information architecture to improve navigation, mastery, and contributor retention.
- Authored 100+ video game guides and systems-oriented frameworks, including editorial analyses of gameplay mechanics, progression models, and conceptual structures.
- Conducted mixed-methods research across high-volume user groups to identify knowledge gaps and refine content structures around player reasoning patterns.
- Collaborated with PM, Design, and Engineering to implement clarity-focused content models that improved wayfinding and understanding for new and returning users.

Elementary Teacher

Oakwood School; Benicia USD; Magnolia Sci. Academy | CA | August 2016 – August 2022

- Designed structured learning systems using progressive challenge, feedback loops, and pacing models to support diverse cognitive profiles.
- Conducted iterative observation cycles to identify confusion points and refine sequencing, flow, and task clarity using structured evaluation heuristics.
- Developed multimodal materials—visual anchors, interaction supports, and rapid feedback mechanisms—that reduced cognitive load and improved comprehension.
- Used performance data and behavioral trends to adjust progression, strengthen user retention, and enhance engagement across varying skill levels.

Marketing Communications Specialist

Rakuten LinkShare | San Francisco, CA | Jun 2011 – Jul 2012

- Designed and tested high-clarity instructional content using A/B experimentation to improve task completion and comprehension across user segments.
- Streamlined structure, hierarchy, and multimodal elements to reduce cognitive load and support rapid information processing.
- Optimized templates for accessibility and performance across devices and contexts.

Core Skills

Game UX Evaluation · Player Behavior Analysis · Systems Thinking · Difficulty Curve Design · Game Narrative Structure · Onboarding & First-Time User Experience · Inclusive Design & Cognitive Accessibility · Mixed-Methods Research · KPI Interpretation for Player Engagement & Retention · Telemetry Interpretation · Usability Testing · Rapid Prototyping (Unity) · Information Architecture · Data-Informed Design · Cross-Functional Collaboration · Structured Writing & Reporting · Presentation & Communication

Relevant Graduate Coursework (MHCI Program, Iowa State University)

- **Design Research** – *Crafting Optimal Experience: A Mixed Methods Approach to Identifying Design Features that Evoke the Flow State* (Research Proposal)
- **Virtual Environments, Virtual Worlds, and Applications** – *Sonic Sculptures in Space - A VR Synthesizer Experience* (Unity VR Interaction & Spatial Audio Systems Design - Final Project)
- **Perspectives in HCI** – *From Frustration to Flow: Optimizing Onboarding for Cognitive Accessibility in Gaming* (Research Synthesis)
- **Digital Accessibility in HCI** – *An Overview of Accessible UX for Video Games* (Final Presentation)
- **Models & Theories in HCI** – *Designing for Discovery: Affordances and Player Cognition in Super Metroid* (Final Presentation)
- **Design Ethnography** — *Evaluating Onboarding Clarity in a Unity-Based VR Interaction Prototype* (Usability Study)

Interests

Games as Learning Systems · Interactive Storytelling · Cognitive Psychology · Tinkering · VR/XR · Ambient Music Production · Sound Design · Speculative Worldbuilding · Joyful Interfaces · Gardens · Books · Film · Bikes · Coffee · Nature