Rice:

Self-reflections of a resilient Chinese kid

Qin Jennia Deng

A thesis submitted to

Auckland University of Technology in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Design

2022

School of Art & Design

Contents

Abstract

This research examines my experiences growing up as a New Zealand-born Chinese kid with immigrant parents. First, through an autoethnographic lens, I examine different parenting techniques and how difficult it was for my parents to raise a Chinese kid in Western culture. Then, to understand these past events, I turn them into a 2D video game.

Immigrant Chinese parents can often share different values with their children, which in turn can cause disagreements and unstable relationships. My experience growing up held many such disagreements and arguments. Diverse parenting styles can alternate depending on their circumstances, with a few styles specific to Chinese culture. The contrasting values between immigrant parents and children stem from these traditional parenting styles conflicting with the child's expectations.

Therefore, this study focuses on the context of parenting and Chinese culture, implementing the methodology of autoethnography to gain insights into complex events from my childhood and turn those into video games.

To make the game, I used Iterative Design with the Forest Paths Narrative Design method to produce the narrative. Autoethnography bridges this research and my New Zealand-Chinese experiences and helps me turn my past into a video game medium to create an interactive, empathic journey.

Reflecting on my experiences with Chinese culture and applying these findings to a video game, I could better understand my parent, especially my mother. My relationship with them had since improved, as I learnt that they only take their actions based on their own perspective of correct parenting and that my anger was misplaced when I was younger.

Keywords: Parenting, Chinese Parenting, Autoethnography, Video game, Narrative Design, Iterative Design

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed: Date: 18/08/2022

List of Figures

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my parents, for your constant support and love throughout the years.

Thank you to my spectacular supervisors, Elliot Collis, Chen Chen, and Miriam Harris. You have aided me through this entire journey, and I will forever be grateful.

Thank you to Feanor for assisting me make the game, I could not have completed it without your talent and effort.

Thank you to my significant other, KL, for always staying by my side and always believing in me.

And finally, thank you to my grandmother up above; I will always appreciate and learn from your strong and beautiful spirit.

Introduction

'Rice' is the title of this research, the pairing with many Chinese dishes, and the central metaphor I will use to describe myself. Without rice on the side, it is not a complete dinner in my family, as without my presence at the dinner, it would not be a 'family' dinner anymore. My parents wanted to give me more responsibility as I started getting older. However, they did not trust me to cook or clean in case of food poisoning or broken plates. So, they gave me the sole task of cooking the rice, which involved measuring and cleaning the rice to combine it with water, thus making that perfect fragrant bowl of rice.

This was not an arduous task.
Nevertheless, little me would still sometimes fail to do this.

Sometimes it was because of the rice-to-water ratio, but there would still be rice, although a little soggy. This can represent my acknowledgement towards my parent's Chinese values, as I still follow their obligation, but with some differences.   Sometimes, I forget to cook the rice altogether. This can be the metaphor for how I constantly forget or ignorantly refuse to listen to my parent's different values and only see my perspective.

In this research I plan to discover how I saw myself as the problem within my Chinese family, because of the different values between my New Zealand upbringing and their Chinese culture. Looking at Chinese parenting, and parenting in general, using my experiences within the autoethnography methodology to provide a personal position within this paper. I will then conduct research 'through' design [1] and explore the context of Chinese parenting, and how I can implement this information towards a narrative-based video game artefact, produced through Iterative Design.

This research will include comprehending autoethnography, the complete process of Iterative Design, the creation of a narrative storyline based upon my memories, and the possible creation of assets, and to create an interactive story based on these memories. Overall, through this journey, I hope to heal through understanding and gain a better knowledge of myself and my parents.

---

[1] Petri Lankoski and Jussi Holopainen, *Game Design Research: An Introduction to Theory & Practice* (Pittsburgh, PA: ETC Press, 2017).

Research Question

"How can an auto-ethnographic lens be applied in creating a narrative-based video game addressing parenting in Chinese cultures and how can it affect my childhood and relationship with parents?"

I intend to inform and understand methods relating to me as a New Zealander and Chinese individual, and overall parenting methods that aid children in their upbringing and how different styles can affect my childhood's well-being and future. I will then use the knowledge obtained from these Chinese-oriented parenting traits to connect or differentiate how Chinese parents may vary in their methods. Additionally, linking these parenting values to my family's Chinese culture and my New Zealand culture; using the autoethnography methodology to reflect myself with culture and others. For the process of creating the artefact, I shall educate myself and practise the methods of Forest Paths for Narrative Design and Case Studies to generate my narrative and visual/story inspirations. In addition, knowledge of the Iterative Design methodology will be studied and utilised to assemble the video game artefact. Ultimately, together with the knowledge obtained about parenting, I will use the methodologies and methods to produce a video game artefact based on my childhood experiences.

Literature review

"Why didn't you cook the rice?!" A common thing I hear as a New Zealand-born Chinese, as I forget – with regret – is a menial task that will now take another 30 minutes. Situations like this example symbolised my struggles and reconciliations with my parents throughout my childhood. Through this literature review, I will metaphorically gauge the topics; rice, water, and cooked rice. I chose rice as a metaphor because it was mandatory in my family meals and was also one of the first 'adult tasks' my parents told me to do before they came home from work. Prior to this, my mum would fear my breaking or ruining items if I had washed dishes or done the laundry. Therefore, my grandmother taught me how to cook rice and do other household tasks, while my mum helped me with my schoolwork and co-curricular activities.

By rice, I mean the process of cooking rice, and I metaphorically equate this procedure to a particular mode of parenting. I will elaborate on the foundations of parenting, with specifics concerning my perspective as a New Zealand-born Chinese; the video game artefact will be in an autoethnographic format which includes my personal experiences.

Water is also an essential element, as, without the chemistry of rice and water, there would not be a final product but instead two segregated parts. This research includes the context of autobiographical video games and case studies that occupy the characters' perspectives. I will detail the emotional and empathic connections the viewer or player might have and how I can implement this within my own experiences.

Ultimately, cooking rice ends with a fragrant bowl of rice. I will likewise create a video game artefact of my experiences as a child of Chinese parenting and how I intend to create this game, using my research, case studies and personal life situations.

Parenting Context

Parenting Types

This chapter discusses how and why my viewpoint of parenting as a child will differ from others, not only because of cultural differences but also the different approaches to parenting within the same culture.

In this study, the essential aspect of rice – in which ways of parenting are communicated through metaphorical means – draws upon vital research to complete my artefact. There are various styles of parenting derived from Baumrind's typology, including four parenting styles:

"*Authoritative* parents are both demanding and responsive… *Authoritarian* parents are demanding but not responsive… *Permissive* parents are low in demandingness but highly responsive… *Rejecting-neglecting* parents are neither demanding nor responsive." [2]

The game I am creating is based on personal events throughout my childhood. As a child, I felt that the parenting I received was very demanding; I was constantly under pressure to succeed academically. My mother was always stricter with me than my father, as she would often help with my schoolwork and notice my lack of knowledge or enthusiasm for some subjects. I believe my perception of their strictness was because of her difficulties raising a Chinese child in New Zealand. She not only tried to replicate New Zealand's more relaxed teaching values but also still monitored and oversaw my education and learning, as this is considered an act of love in Chinese culture. [3]

Therefore, in my artefact, these attributes will be represented by the characters through my perspective as a child. My mother will have a more *authoritarian* approach, whereas my grandmother will be portrayed as *authoritative* and Dad as *permissive*. [4]

---

[2] Wenxin Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture: Subtypes, Stability, and Change of Maternal Parenting Style During Early Adolescence". *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 46, no. 5 (May 2017): 1117–36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0664-x.

[3] Qilong Zhang, "Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education among Chinese Immigrant and English Speaking Non-Chinese Parents in New Zealand".

[4] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

However, an animated case study of the violent *authoritarian* parenting style can be seen in one of the clips in "External World of David O'Reilly". [5] Examples of different types of parenting are found in media; here is an example of violent parenting in animation. This is important to my research because I want to see different variations of *authoritarian* parenting styles, and how they are showcased in media. This case study reveals the anthropology of short stories, which portray the escalating lives of each individual and how each climax is either a revelation or a gruesome solution. One story includes a father and son at a piano; the father continuously hits the son's head whenever he presses the wrong key. The very demeaning, irritated father yells, "No, do it again" [6] after every hit. Lack of empathy is shown through the lack of responsiveness to the child's needs; physically abusing him makes his playing worse after each hit. This clip eventually moves from a comedic approach – the father hitting with a fish – quickly escalating to the father hitting with the back of the gun. The father is using increased physical violence, rather than communicating with his son, which leads to the son shooting the father with the same gun. Conversely, the piano playing becomes fluent, with no mistakes, as soon as this happens; a tragic solution which showcases how abuse into submission has a negative effect and does not improve people's attitudes. Indeed, data has indicated that children raised in an authoritative parenting style have better self-esteem and a higher quality of life than children raised in authoritarian or permissive parenting styles.[7] If this abuse were to 'improve' the child, it would only be short-term, as the child will suffer long-term consequences of mental or physical abuse. Additionally, parents can accumulate stress from the responsibilities and hardships of being caregivers which can affect their children's mental state of anxiety and depression. [8]

The David O'Reilly case study draws upon the medium of animation; it makes me empathise with the character and feel relief when the hitting stops because the father has been shot. Although this is a cruel reaction, viewers can understand the struggles through O'Reilly's narrative, and I want to create a narrative where the viewer can sympathise with my characters and connect with my journey and growth.

---

[5] Random Stuff. "THE EXTERNAL WORLD DAVID OREILLY (Subtitulado)."

[6] Ibid.

[7] Niaraki, Fahimeh, and Rahimi. "The Impact of Authoritative, Permissive and Authoritarian Behavior of Parents on Self-Concept, Psychological Health and Life Quality", *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (14 January 2013): 81, 84.

[8] Beiming Yang et al., "Impacts of Parental Burnout on Chinese Youth's Mental Health: The Role of Parents' Autonomy Support and Emotion Regulation," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 50, no. 8 (2021): doi:10.1007/s10964-021-01450-y.

An illuminating study that has influenced my project, suggests that being *strict-affectionate* [9] is culture-specific to China. Although I was born in New Zealand, both my parents were born and raised in Shanghai, China and immigrated to New Zealand for my upbringing. Therefore, when I was younger, my parents used a *strict-affectionate* style of parenting to teach me. While not as alarming as David O'Reilly's example, [10] I was unmotivated and refused to do better, due to the verbal harassment I received from my mother. I now understand that I was also to blame because of my terrible temper; my rebellious phase peaked during my adolescence (10–12 years old). During this time, my mother used a strict parenting method to try and shape me into a better person; this style changed as I grew older and took more responsibility for my actions. Similarly, a study of "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture: Subtypes, Stability, and Change of Maternal Parenting Style During Early Adolescence" [11] shows that as children grow older, mothers become more lenient and change their styles after a while, with 70% maintaining their authoritative, strict yet affectionate style, but only 50-60% continuing with authoritarian parenting a year later. [12] I agree with this statistic – my mother's parenting style has changed since I was a child which has positively affected my teenage and adult years. Additionally, my positive outlook could be demonstrated by how "Chinese adolescent self-esteem is fostered through the greater use of autonomy-granting behaviour by Chinese mothers and fathers" [13], with autonomy-granting referring to the amount of freedom and individualism given to the adolescent.[14] Freedom was slowly gained throughout my adolescent years with increased communication between my parents and myself, less harassment if I made a mistake, and acknowledging my reasoning of why I made a mistake. Additionally, because my parents migrated from an authoritarian to a more authoritative style with boundaries, this gave me the space to grow and make my own decisions and narratives.

---

[9] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[10] Random Stuff. "THE EXTERNAL WORLD DAVID OREILLY (Subtitulado)."

[11] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[12] Ibid.

[13] Yang, "Impacts of Parental Burnout on Chinese Youth's Mental Health"

[14] Ibid.

Parenting Types within Chinese Culture

As my family were all born in China, my frustration towards my mother's parenting could potentially stem from the fact that I was the first in my family's generation to be born in New Zealand. The article "A Comparison of Child-Rearing Practices among Chinese, Immigrant Chinese, and Caucasian-American Parents" describes the differences between Asian and Western, specifically American, styles that can derive from family traditions and values.

These were the main four elements that factor into the variations:

1. "Chinese parents tend to control their children." [15]

This can link to the Confucian ideology of filial piety, which is to take care of parents, respect, support, and show courtesy to elders.[16] For example, "Paying attention to parents' emotional and instrumental needs, being respectful and obedient in order to increase family harmony…" [17] Confucianism is a strong emphasis in Chinese culture with collectivism and filial piety which values conforming to traditional norms, respecting parents and elders, and being obligated to take care of the family. [18]

2. "Chinese parents tend to be less expressive of their affection." [19]

An example, elaborated further in the chapter, 'The Ambiguity of Showing Love and Intimacy', is how Chinese parents, especially fathers, are less likely to show affection in an overtly physical or verbal fashion, and prefer to acknowledge their children indirectly. For example, my brother once told me that he was never given much physical love; instead, our parents acknowledged his achievements and gave him material love by giving him video games and books he enjoyed.

---

[15] Chin-Yau C. Lin and Victoria R. Fu, "A Comparison of Child-Rearing Practices among Chinese, Immigrant Chinese, and Caucasian-American Parents," *Child Development* 61, no. 2 (1990): doi:10.2307/1131104.

[16] Sik H. Ng et al., "Will the young support the old? An individual- and family-level study of filial obligations in two New Zealand cultures," *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2000): doi:10.1111/1467-839x.00061.

[17] Mao and Chi, 'Filial Piety of Children as Perceived by Aging Parents in China'.

[18] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[19] Ibid.

3. "Chinese parents are less likely to encourage independence." [20]

This also stems from Confucian beliefs and how a child needs to always take care of their parents, after they have spent long years raising you.[21] This also stems from the older generation's dependence, which accords with the experiences of a multigenerational household.[22]

4. "Chinese parents emphasise the value of academic achievement more." [23]

Academic achievement is acknowledged within the Chinese community, as described in the article "Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement: A Cross-Cultural Study" conducted with students from Hong Kong, Australia, and the United States, which shows that Chinese parents were "significantly higher in general authoritarianism" [24] than the other two countries in terms of academic success and progress. This parenting type, as shown previously, is more controlling, and the parent manages their children's decisions and work ethic. For example, my parents scheduled my after-school classes and dictated with solemnity the importance of doing well academically as a priority, playing being second (or last).

From my perspective, these four points reflect my childhood and how I saw my mother as another teacher rather than a loving parent. In the film "Turning Red", [25] Chinese versus Western parenting themes can be seen. This feature follows a 13-year-old girl called Mei Lee, who undergoes hormonal changes with a supernatural twist. Mei obeys all her mother's wishes and commands, ranging from excelling in academic studies and music to helping her with work after school. Their relationship is seen as joyous at first, but we later see the strain Mei experiences when it comes to expressing her feelings. Mei was never truly able to say how she was stressed or if she wanted to do a leisure activity, as the mother would either dismiss her daughter's feelings or say she was disrespecting her. [26]

---

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ruth K. Chao, "Beyond Parental Control and Authoritarian Parenting Style: Understanding Chinese Parenting Through the Cultural Notion of Training," *Child Development* 65, no. 4 (1994): doi:10.2307/1131308.

[22] Vern L. Bengtson and W. A. Achenbaum, "Of Deeds and Contracts: Filial Piety Perceived in Contemporary Shanghai," in *The Changing Contract Across Generations* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

[23] Ibid.

[24] Leung, Kwok, Sing Lau, and Wai-Lim Lam. "Parenting Styles and Academic Achievement: A Cross-Cultural Study." (1998), http://www.jstor.org/stable/23093664.

[25] *Turning Red*, directed by Domee Shi. (2022; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures), Film.

[26] Ibid.

Furthermore, the previous four elements are emphasised in the 2018 game, 'Chinese Parents'[27], where the main character goes through several common life events in a Chinese household. For example, when our (Chinese) mother encounters another mother, a mini-game occurs; the mothers argue passive-aggressively about how their child is better, be it more talented, successful, or better at academic studies. It was comical to witness how important 'being better' was in a game format, since, as a child, I was compared multiple times to other children, which led to me being disappointed in how much I lacked. Both case studies show an "authoritarian" mother who pushes their child to achieve, but unlike the film study, I felt more sympathy and amusement when I played the game. Through this thesis, I will look back at my past in an endearing sense, as these experiences have contributed to making me the person that I am, and admittedly some of my actions were also reckless; I want my project to showcase how I view my parents' parenting style, but also provide light humour throughout, as I was still a silly child.

The Ambiguity of Showing Love and Intimacy

Additionally, the Chinese cultural philosophy of Confucianism and other values, traditions and beliefs have always emphasized Chinese fathers and males being stern disciplinarians and lacking in emotional expression. [28] Chinese fathers and their familial interactions have been the subject of limited research, as most empirical studies feature data from the mother's perspective, despite the Chinese community containing one of the largest populations of fathers.[29] This study interviews several Chinese fathers and children from different class backgrounds. However, a particular quote I found interesting concerning authoritative parenting is: "Sometimes Dad would protect me when Mom cannot take me any longer and is about to smack me (Child 108)" [30]. Although my mum has rarely physically abused me, a hit or two for my disobedience would occur now and then. Additionally, from my experience, my grandmother would protect me and defend my side. Consequently, my grandma will be more involved in the video game project than

---

[27] Moyuwan Games, *Chinese Parents* (Coconut Island Games, 2018)

[28] Xuan Li, "How do Chinese fathers express love? Viewing paternal warmth through the eyes of Chinese fathers, mothers, and their children," *Psychology of Men & Masculinities* 22, no. 3 (2021): doi:10.1037/men0000312.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

my father, but both showcase a more freeing authoritative parenting style towards me, in contrast to my mother – a feature that I want to display in the video game.

Balance of strictness and warmth

Overall, parental control over children can be seen in a negative light.[31] However, some degree of control is needed to create an organised, respectful environment that runs smoothly. It has been shown "that adolescents prefer to live in an orderly, not chaotic and unpredictable, environment".[32] By drawing upon a variety of articles [33] [34] [35] that display the parent's perspective, and through looking at my own experiences, I have realised the difficulty and struggles a parent goes through, from working in a job to teaching homework to their children.

Not only was I a rebellious child from a young age, but neither did I understand or respect my parents' perspective. Therefore, I want to visualise and summarise what I learned and integrate this into my project's gaming medium. Furthermore, I intend to display the parenting types within Chinese culture from my perspective and provide empathy for my parents' actions, as it has been "shown that adolescents prefer to live in an orderly, not chaotic and unpredictable, environment".[36] I may have wanted more freedom and chaos during my childhood, but I now understand the important balance involved in maintaining order and imposing restrictions.

---

[31] Lau, Sing, and Ping Chung Cheung. "Relations Between Chinese Adolescents' Perception of Parental Control"

[32] Ibid.

[33] Li, ""How do Chinese fathers express love?"

[34] Yang, "Impacts of Parental Burnout on Chinese Youth's Mental Health"

[35] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[36] Lau and Cheung, "Relations between Chinese adolescents' perception of parental control".

The Autobiographical Experience: As Viewed by Others and Myself

Within the context of rice, I have earlier equated the procedure of cooking rice with parenting. Another critical element within my autobiographical game is water, which is essential for cooking the rice. To create the final video game artefact's steaming rice bowl, I need to research these two factors and detail how their emotional and empathic views impact the player and how I can implement this with my own experiences. I consider the autobiography as a creative vehicle for showcasing, and possibly reflecting on vulnerabilities, through creative practice. Therefore, I have researched some media case studies in order to gain a better understanding of possible directions for my project.

Chinese? Kiwi? Banana?

'Banana in a Nutshell'[37] is a short documentary film by New Zealand director Roseanne Liang. The resemblances between my life and hers are almost uncanny; from being the youngest sibling, learning piano and ballet from a young age just in case a prodigy could be formed, and both of us attending the same high school. Both her parents were academically smart with successful businesses; my parents were always at the top of their schools. Within my family, humility is something to be shown on the outside; a home is where you can let loose. The abundance of success stories about other people's children only belittled my story further. Like Roseanne, I felt an overwhelming pressure to do my best to please and meet my parents' standards. In the film, her mother says, "You need to learn the Chinese way" [38] I find this relevant as my mother would often question my mathematics learning habits and point out how I was doing it incorrectly. Although, rather than incorrectly, mine would just be a prolonged version of her strategy. Additionally, the 'Chinese way' sounds ambiguous, but it directly shows how an adolescent should learn by listening and obeying. This is considered 'filial piety', in which children are taught to respect elders and always see them as correct. Filial piety or *xiao* (with the Chinese character; 孝) is an adjective or a noun. As a noun, it is evaluated as a core value of Chinese families, displaying obedience and respect towards parents. This is done by adult children giving their elderly parents emotional, financial, and physical support. *Xiao* as an adjective is a characteristic that signals in both attitudes and behaviours, just how virtuous a person is. A person

---

[37] *Banana in a Nutshell*. Directed by Roseanne Liang. 2005. New Zealand Film.

[38] Ibid.

may be referred to as "*xiao* (being filial) or not *xiao* (being unfilial)".[39] Being obedient in a Chinese household relates strongly to being a good child. In the words of a 62-year-old mother of three children, "an obedient child is a filial child". [40] Additionally, another participant of the study, a 65-year-old father of four, said that a "lack of respect is an absolute no-no. A filial child always talks to the parents in a kind manner and never talks back".[41] This comment intrigued me as indeed children should not argue back with their parents, but the logic seems more prevalent in East Asian cultures. [42] [43] [44] However, the older I got, the more instances where I talked back, as I wanted to become independent by voicing my opinions more. Since I was born in New Zealand, I have a blend of New Zealand and Chinese values; Western cultures are seen as more individualistic, whereas Asian cultures are more collectivistic.[45] Individualism values "achievement" and "self-direction" while striving for independent growth from personal experiences. A collective mindset values "conformity" and "tradition"; it views respecting and obeying previous rules as more important and seeks "security" as a group or family, rather than being independent.[46] Therefore, in my video game, I will showcase the player as myself, from a first-person perspective, and how I wanted more individuality for creating my own rules, rather than following my mother's obligations.

---

[39] Luo and Zhan, 'Filial Piety and Functional Support'.

[40] Yang, "The Meaning of "Filial Piety" to Older Chinese Parents"

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Luo and Zhan, 'Filial Piety and Functional Support'.

[44] Mao and Chi, 'Filial Piety of Children as Perceived by Aging Parents in China'.

[45] Mehwish Shahid et al., "Asian Americans' mental health help-seeking attitudes: The relative and unique roles of cultural values and ethnic identity," *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 12, no. 2 (2021): doi:10.1037/aap0000230.

[46] Schwartz, "An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values"

Autobiographical Games/ Biographical Games

In the course of conducting research into several case studies, I noticed there are autobiographical accounts relating to the topic of parenting and specifically Chinese parenting, such as "Banana in a Nutshell". [47] I will discuss more case studies within this sub-chapter, as I want my project to be additional to the body of video games about Chinese culture and parenting, but from a New Zealand perspective.

'Golden Threads' is a video game created for the Auckland Museum to showcase the history of 175 years of Chinese culture within New Zealand.[48] Renee Liang, the writer who channelled her storytelling skills with Chinese history, also considered this one of the first exhibitions that expressed Chinese history in New Zealand within Auckland specifically. [49]. This game journeys through the different lives of Chinese migrants, their goals in coming here and what might be achieved. Although I am not a migrant, my parents and grandmother immigrated from Shanghai to raise me, so this game helped me understand the obstacles Chinese immigrants had to face in the past. Additionally, as there were few stories, they could conduct research into, the narrative of this game became filled with stories that weave together the experiences of the past and the stories of the present.[50] Another interesting element was that this game did not just elaborate how 'difficult' or 'challenging' it was to be in a different environment, but also how hardworking and strong everyone was. This is because they were empowered with their own opinion and did not wish for pity, but equality. [51] Similarly, I see my parents and grandmother as very resilient and selfless for coming to New Zealand.

'Before Your Eyes' is a 2021 game developed by GoodbyeWorld Games, which explores revisiting life after death. [52] This story from a first-person perspective, revolves around the child's life growing up and how he moves from excelling at the piano to becoming a painter, but all with a sorrowful twist in between. The piano aspect in this game was prominent in the beginning and

---

[47] *Banana in a Nutshell*. Directed by Roseanne Liang. 2005. New Zealand Film.

[48] Allan Xia, *Golden Threads* (Itch.io, 2017)

[49] Auckland War Memorial Museum, "Being Chinese in Aotearoa".

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

[52] GoodbyeWorld Games, *Before Your Eyes* (Skybound Games, 2021).

showcased how easily a hobby one loves can turn into a hated chore, whether through too much stress or pressure to do well. Similarly, my video game project will mostly revolve around the piano and my relationship with my mother, as I think the experiences around that piano were a vital part of my childhood, in both negative and positive ways. The story in my project will outline how I saw playing piano as being subjected to my mother's *authoritarian* style, in contrast to my grandmother's *authoritative* style. [53]

The charm of the story 'Before Your Eyes' comes from the mechanics of capturing the player's eyes blinking, which I believe communicates the metaphorical concept of 'we cannot grip onto the past, as time will keep moving forward. This game made me very emotional because of the realism of a child's adventures throughout the years, the hardships and failures of life, and how empathetic I felt towards both the child and parents. The overall elements from this case study that I want to encapsulate are the child's perspective of their life and the childlike atmosphere, as seen from the dreamy stylistic art direction, with the scene looking like a watercolour painting memory. Additionally, I want to incorporate how the player can feel empathy for the parents, the childhood friend and the main character, and implement these traits into my game to emphasise how the story comes from my own life and experiences. I will do this by showing my (the player's) stress from practising with the mother and the unreasonable nature of my temper and selfishness. Thus, my mother's *authoritarian* style may stem from my lack of respect for her and my wrongdoings. I intend to use these elements to create a video game encasing a story that feels genuine.

Another game which involves an atmospheric storyline of parenting, relationships and food is 'Inbento'. The title refers to a 'bento', which is a Japanese-style packed lunch that consists of items like rice, vegetables, and sashimi.[54] In the game a storyline is produced by completing levels of puzzles and rewarding the player with pictures of the major events in the child and mother's life. Throughout the game, we see how the kitten grows older and more distant but still comes back to the mother at the end. There is a continuous theme of food in their relationship; for example, how food was the factor that connected them initially, from the child's love of his mother's bentos, and how a warm cup of hot chocolate connected them again at the end.[55] The main game technique from this 'Inbento' resembles a sliding grid puzzle; rather than the main

---

[53] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[54] John A. Simpson, The Oxford English Dictionary; Vol.1 – (1991).

[55] Afterburn, *Inbento* (Afterburn, 2019).

mechanics, I want to implement the narrative and connection of food and relationships. Hence, my project will communicate the important connection of love and Chinese food within my family; how there will always be unpredictability and disagreements in life, but that it is only through these events that we grow.

The Project: What am I making?

Ultimately, the procedure of cooking rice ends with a fragrant, steaming bowl of rice. This is metaphorically represented as the video game artefact, communicating my experiences as a child of Chinese parenting. The idea of actively participating in the storyline makes the player feel seen, even if the interactions are limited. [56] By using the knowledge gained from my case studies and research, I will create a narrative from my personal experiences about growing up as a Chinese kid in New Zealand, the differences in parenting styles, and how I perceived and reacted to my parents when I was a child. The active participation demanded by the game medium will provide a first-person insight into my feelings and how I dealt with the obstacles and challenges in my life at that time. However, this game would be seen as a form of expression for my experiences rather than as an achievement or success-based game. Therefore, the game will not involve challenges or quests, as it is narrative-based, with the primary goal being to involve the player in my story. The mechanics will be similar to 'Before Your Eyes',[57] in the sense of little interactions which resemble phone game simplicity. Another game with mechanics that is a big source of inspiration, is 'Florence'. [58] Although the storyline is not relevant to my experiences, the small tasks allow the player to acknowledge the characters' daily routine and how this routine slowly changes positively or negatively. The small tasks include brushing their teeth, connecting puzzle pieces, and choosing dialogue when speaking with their mother. Similarly, I want to involve interactions like cooking with grandma to create a level of empathy and connection with the player. For example, 'Nainai's Recipe' is a charming cooking simulator, in which the player messages their grandmother while cooking during the pandemic.[59] The mechanics required by my game are the actions of picking up, clicking, and dragging items – resembling a phone game – with space for freedom of creativity. This freedom is evoked by the fact that there are no direct

---

[56] Sears and Jacko, 'Human-Computer Interaction'.

[57] GoodbyeWorld Games, *Before Your Eyes* (Skybound Games, 2021)

[58] Mountains, *Florence* (Annapurna Interactive, 2018)

[59] Fan Fang and Mai Hou, *Nainai's Recipe* (Itch.io, 2020)

instructions unless you ask your grandmother; the player can simply choose and cook anything and show it to her. Consequently, I want to implement the overall beauty of cooking and interacting with my grandmother and how she told me to do chores and work, but how she also gave me the freedom to choose. For example, if I were to play the piano, she would let me choose and play anything rather than a specific song. Although this did not aid my exam result, it still helped me practice and have fun.

Additionally, to emphasise this individualised journey, my project will be set from the first-person point of view, with my own 2D watercolour assets to create a stylised effect. I enjoyed the child-like mystic of the animation case studies and want to continue that concept by using inspirations from childrens' books and how other media implements watercolour. For example, 'Genius Loci' was a beautiful piece that showcased what the main character, Reine, saw and how chaotic, yet hauntingly beautiful, everything was in her eyes.

Figure 1. First watercolour pot [60]

Figure 2 Second watercolour pot spilling.[61]

Figure 3. Third watercolour pot.[62]

Figure 4. Fourth abstract watercolour pot.[63]

A characteristic of painting with watercolours is distinctive colour contrast that gives strong visual impact and creates a sense of space throughout a variety of hues and colours.[64] For

---

[60] Vitória Assis, "Genius Loci (2020)," *Vimeo*, 2020, https://vimeo.com/538338925.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Zhu, 'Expression and Application of Watercolour Art in Computer 3D Animation Design System'. 4, no. 2 (n.d.): 6.

example, in this case study, these figures show how the pot transitions from basic watercolour to gradually becoming more and more abstract. This coincides with Reine's ideology as she remarked, "all around me... I see chaos". [65]

The first pot has negative space from the steam spilling out but is, overall, a simplistic watercolour. I enjoy this negative space and hope to apply it to my project, as it creates a calming ambience with the little details. The second transition has a more psychedelic array of colours spilling out with more motion lines down the pot's sides. These 'lines of motion' are seen multiple times, creating more movement and (depending on the line formation), fluidity. There will be a scene in my project that showcases the player describing the events of her day to her grandmother. Using these motion graphics might give me a magical mysticism about how I imagined things as a child. The third watercolour has much bleeding, with the colours blending.

Consequently, I will create the assets using watercolour on traditional paper, so there can be organic bleedings and colour blends. Eventually, the fourth pot is a highly abstract composition with barely any recognition that it was initially a pot. Although I want to avoid such abstraction for my project's style, I enjoy the colours and want to use the idea of different hues and saturation for vivid pieces.

Watercolour art gives people "visual appreciation and sensory enjoyment" by integrating different colours, compositions, and hue coordination. [66] Therefore, another dominant inspiration I will use for my project assets is the stunning work of Hayao Miyazaki. For example, in *My Neighbour Totoro* [67], their 'new' house is antiquated and barely standing up, as seen in the wood splitting. I also enjoy how the pencil outlines are sometimes still visible; the lines of the trees or the outline of the kids. Instead of beginning the painting from a sketch, pencil and paint are combined within the scenery to create a stylised, children's-book atmosphere. I will also incorporate this technique within my watercolour assets as I do not want a 'clean-cut' scene, but one with imperfections. Not only does this metaphorically represent me, my mother, and our relationship, but also how this is a memory and only some things will be in focus or clear. Additionally, the airy white space in this figure creates a source of light and delineates the objects around it. Marcel Duchamp observed that using a transparent background can outline the subjects more vividly. [68] Similarly, Don Nice took inspiration and used a neutral ground to isolate the singular objects as "emblems".

---

[65] Vitória Assis, "Genius Loci (2020)," *Vimeo*, 2020, https://vimeo.com/538338925.

[66] Zhu, 'Expression and Application of Watercolour Art in Computer 3D Animation Design System'.

[67] *My Neighbour Totoro*.

[68] Stanley Marcus, 'PAINTING FROM MEMORIES.' *American Artist: Watercolour*, 1990, 82–141.

[69] I will also use both the white space and the isolating technique to outline and focus on the important items of the scene. I find these techniques helpful, as they create more depth within the environment and help the player understand where to look and press, if there is an interactive element.

Ultimately, my artefact's game concept will involve my childhood experiences, how some of my parents' interactions affected my emotions negatively at the time, and how I grew to understand their frustrations and reactions towards me. Therefore, I hope the player feels empathy towards all the characters' struggles—not only my emotional brawls as a child, but the difficulty of choosing or migrating between a Chinese *authoritarian* parenting style and a New Zealand *authoritative* style. [70] Along with the obstacles my parents and grandmother faced when raising me in a different country from what they were familiar with.

The specific objectives of my research are as follows:

1. To inform and understand universal parenting methods that aid children in their upbringing and how different styles can affect a child's wellbeing and future.

2. Using the knowledge obtained from these universal parenting traits to connect or differentiate how Chinese parents may vary in their methods. Additionally, linking these parenting values to my family's Chinese culture and my New Zealand culture.

3. To research various mediums that explore parenting and their affect upon children, in both a generalised environment, as well as ones located within a Chinese cultural context. Together with the knowledge obtained about parenting, varying techniques from the game examples will be implemented to create a video game artefact drawing upon my experiences as a child.

---

[69] Ibid.

[70] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

To encompass these objectives, I have developed the following research question to aid my research intentions:

'How can an autoethnographic lens be applied in creating a narrative-genre video game addressing parenting in Chinese cultures and how can it affect my childhood and relationship with parents?"

Methodology and Methods

Methodological statement

My research intends to explore parenting within Chinese culture and, through this knowledge, create a narrative-based video game artefact with an autoethnographic outlook. I chose the methodology of autoethnography, as "autoethnographers offer accounts of personal experience to complement, or fill gaps in, existing research." [71] By undertaking this investigation using autoethnography, I can directly address my cultural situations from personal experiences. Therefore, I shall examine personal events from my childhood and analyse them against the context of parenting and the sociocultural context of my environment. Additionally, I shall utilise the methodology of Iterative Design [72] to prototype my video game artefact and the assets within the game. Autoethnography lays the conceptual groundwork for my practice, while Iterative Design is instrumental in the creation section.

Moreover, I will be discussing the 'Forest Paths Narrative Design Method' [73] and how this technique was explored and achieved for the storyline of my artefact. However, the storyline will mainly consist of my personal experiences. Lastly, the method of Case Study will be used to investigate various mediums and findings to both support and give contrast my own experiences and biases.

---

[71] Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis, and Stacy H. Jones, "Autoethnography," *The International Encyclopaedia of Communication Research Methods*, 2017, doi:10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011.

[72] Gjoko Muratovski, *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice* (SAGE, 2015)

[73] Swords, *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design.*

Methodologies

Autoethnography

I will begin this research journey with the methodology of autoethnography. A main conceptual framework from Heewon Chang's book of *Autoethnography as Method* is that "culture is a group-oriented concept by which self is always connected with others." [74] The idea of "individual culture" [75] is not from the isolated individual, but instead, the individual within the cultural group that is "formed, shared, retained, altered, and shed through human interaction". [76] Therefore, this methodology will be mostly draw upon my personal experiences, but I understand I had to do prior research on the context, as well as discuss with friends and acquaintances with a similar situation to me being a Chinese New Zealander. Autoethnography also suggests the reading and writing of self-narratives can be examined by self and/or others. As, telling your own story does not automatically qualify as a 'cultural' understanding; further research and analysis is required. Another concept of autoethnography I will consider is that "individuals are not prisoners of culture" [77]. Rather, the self-governing quality of autonomy can be exercised when acquiring, altering, and shedding cultural traits when interacting with others. This becomes the foundation for inner-group diversity. Through my literature review context and discussion chapter, I researched knowledge and skills to understand and acknowledge the cultural difference between my parents and me; along with how I have learned to alter and intertwine the cultures together.

Autoethnography allows self-narratives within the cultural context. "Self-narratives employ various writing styles such as descriptive/self-affirmative, analytical/interpretive, and confessional/self-critical/ self-evaluative". [78] The descriptive style is prominent in literary memoirs, whereas, analytical and interpretive styles are often seen in anthropological and sociological scholarly writings, where the autobiographical stories are seen as materials to analyse, rather than a centrepiece to admire. [79] Thus, my research will be communicated with a

---

[74] Heewon Chang, *Autoethnography as Method* (London: Routledge, 2016), 13.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid, 39.

[79] Ibid, 40.

more "descriptive" and "self-critical/self-evaluative" style, where I detail some of my experiences through the video game artefact, while self-evaluating through both the artefact and my research context.

The methodology of autoethnography can be split into "auto- (self), -ethno- (the sociocultural connection), and -graphy (the application of the research process)." [80] Therefore, this will prompt exploring myself as an individual within the sociocultural connection of Chinese parenting and how this affects my New Zealand upbringing. This methodology is seen with many definitions and variations between each individual, with Heewon Chang referring to autoethnography as combining "cultural analysis and interpretation with narrative details". [81] This follows the anthropological and social scientific approach, rather than through descriptive or performative storytelling, but I can still implement the research to provide more validity and variance from my resources as autoethnographers utilise personal experience to accompany, or fill gaps in, existing research. [82] In addition, another reason that I can apply autoethnography is that it can "articulate insider knowledge of cultural experience." [83,] as combined with the research context and my own memories, this ultimately gains knowledge and understanding for both my parent's culture and my own.

This research will be implemented from an "autobiographical ethnography" [84] perspective as my personal culture is the information I am studying, in which I understand and further evaluate and connect with the cultural and myself. One reason I choose autoethnography a methodology is because of how "researcher-friendly" it is; as the researcher is the primary source of data and is also privileged with "familiar data", [85] and showing the "accessibility of autoethnography." [86] This indicates the foundation of the video game artefact data and aspects of this thesis that comes from

---

[80] Sarah Wall, "Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7, no. 1 (2008): xx, doi:10.1177/160940690800700103.

[81] Chang, *Autoethnography as Method,* 46.

[82] Adams, Ellis, and Jones, "Autoethnography".

[83] Ibid.

[84] Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*, 47.

[85] Ibid, 52.

[86] Ibid.

my memories and experiences. Although this may limit resources due to unavailability, there is also the problem of my memory bias [87], and how it is only my perspective and emotions at the time. Therefore, it is vital that my research context elaborates and validates my experiences. Additionally, autoethnography also provides a vehicle where researchers can understand themselves and others, [88] which I will discuss further in the discussions of my acknowledgement of this knowledge. Sharing, and reading autoethnography also helps transform researchers and readers in the process.[89] Therefore, I hope to use my "personal narrative" to address social debates, among my family and friends,[90] and to display my findings in the video game prototype to help others acknowledge their differences as children with immigrant parents; ultimately embracing a family's dissimilarities.

The book *Autoethnography* [91] examples show the researchers utilising one or more other perspectives on the issue, then collaborating them with the more comprehensive social issue. Therefore, I can use the "auto" part as the journaling of my experiences, and the "ethno" part to critically reflect on the experiences, and then finally observe how I would overcome the situation and "offer my personal insights" on the cultural issue of parenting types within cultures. However, over-relying on personal memories as the primary data source can make the readers question their validity. Although memories are a great source of information, this information needs to be complemented or supported by "external" data sources. This enhances the accuracy and validity of autoethnographic writing. [92]

The term 'autoethnography' can be seen in various way by researchers. Therefore, there needs to be a divide between autoethnography from other self-narrative inquiries, so the reader can understand the research method by "what it stands for", rather than the highly descriptive

---

[87] Ibid.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Ibid, 53.

[90] Sparkes, Andrew C. "Autoethnography and Narratives of Self: Reflections on Criteria in Action." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17, no. 1 (2000), 21-43. doi:10.1123/ssj.17.1.21

[91] Ibid.

[92] Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*, 55.

equivalent of autobiographies and memoirs. [93] If this thesis were purely implemented with a 'memoir' outlook, I would only have experiences and no research to support this. On this account, I gathered and implemented the knowledge from parenting context research, along with discussing and understanding the experiences of my friends and colleagues as Chinese New Zealanders, to reflect on the "others" within the cultural surroundings. However, I will implement the fact that memoirs tend to capture fragments of the author's life, rather than their whole life, [94] as the video game artefact will not include my entire life journey, but a fragment of when I was eight years old.

As mentioned previously, personal memory is a vital asset with autoethnography and ethnographers, as "recalling" [95] is the main form of collecting data. Consequently, this gives the author the privilege of past experiences and their personal interpretations of those experiences. [96] However, memory can serve as a foe with this methodology. Memories can fade, alter, and can also be acquainted with strong emotions. These factors can impact the source of information and cause inconsistencies. [97] Heewon [98] suggested the process of collecting personal memory data combines with recalling the events and experiences in chronological order with structure. Using visualisers and crucial information (critical artefacts, mentors or celebrations from these experiences) can be the foundation for an autoethnography researcher's needs. [99] I will use physical artefacts of photos and the piano to support my childhood memory and talk to my parents about their perspective of my memories. Therefore, to accomplish the methodology of autoethnography, I can compare and contrast personal experiences against existing research on parenting, considering my Chinese New Zealander friends' experiences.

---

[93] Ibid, 56.

[94] Ibid, 36.

[95] Ibid, 52.

[96] Ibid, 71.

[97] Ibid, 72.

[98] Ibid, 88.

[99] Ibid.

Ultimately, autoethnography seeks beyond the traditional research practices of other perspectives and cultural understandings but gives the unique, personal reflections of the researcher. Although this deep exploration of experiences might be complex and potentially intrusive, there are positive prospects of furthering my cultural understanding, reflecting on the broader societal perplexities while building empathy with shared responsibilities. [100]

Iterative Design

"Research is a practice, writing is a practice, doing science is a practice, doing design is a practice, making art is practice" [101]

In addition to using autoethnography to support the foundation of my video game artefact, I will be using an Iterative Design [102] methodology, as it uses a systemic framework that allows the researcher to manoeuvre through complex ideas and objectives. This methodology is applied with one complete circle of iterative design as the process of producing the final research artefact, and creating the visual and mechanical assets.

Research 'through' design emphasises on discovering the design knowledge, rather than the project solution; "it provides an explanation or theory within a broader context" [103]. I will apply this form of research, as the wider context is my autoethnography research within Chinese parenting and culture. Additionally, my research's main theme is to provide and understand the information, rather than creating the final artefact. Therefore, this research will focus more on the

---

[100] Robin S. Grenier, "Autoethnography as a Methodological Approach in Adult Vocational Education and Technology," *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* 7, no. 3 (2016).

[101] Lankoski and Holopainen, *Game Design Research*, 99.

[102] Gjoko Muratovski, *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2015).

[103] Lankoski and Holopainen, *Game Design Research*, 99.

context, so I shall follow Colleen Macklin's interpretation on iterative design with the four steps of; "conceptualise, prototype, playtest, and evaluate." [104]

The conceptualisation and research of the parenting context, along with my reflections will exist in autoethnography. I will be using my own memories as the foundation of the video game idea, and conceptualising them with the parenting research of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. [105]

The prototype design will stem from 'case studies' and 'forest paths narrative design method'; this will range from visual, narrative and video game case studies which I have analysed and studied upon, to input the stylisation and linear narrative I will use. The 'forest paths narrative design method' [106] is implemented for narrative foundation and ideation for the artefact.

The next step is developing the video game and determining the assets and procedures needed to create the prototype. For example, this will include the process of assembling my watercolour experiments (with background, characters, and interactable objects) to photograph the assets, then, transfer to Photoshop, and animate them into the game engine. Another element would require code for interactivity, animation, and additional in-game effects and audio. The interactivity includes a document containing a list of interactions [107] describing the essentials for each scene, including scene description, transitions, player tasks and what the player achieves. The in-game effects, audio and background music, are studied through video game 'case studies' research, and personal bias on what combines best with my experiences in the artefact. In addition to the mechanic, I will be implementing the LeanTouch [108] asset to help with controls and allow similarity to smartphone interactions. As this game is planned to be playable on touch devices because it adds familiarity to the experiences of the past; the video game artefact will be set from a child's perspective, and the simplicity of swiping and dragging might help the player to focus on the environment and narrative of the game. Therefore, the video game artefact will be set in first-person perspective, in a 2D watercolour-styled video game that uses touch controls to

---

[104] Colleen Macklin and John Sharp, *Games, Design and Play: A detailed approach to iterative game design* (Addison-Wesley Professional, 2016), 228.

[105] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

[106] Swords, *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design.*

[107] See Appendix 2.

[108] Carlos Wilkes, "Lean Touch - Documentation - 3.0.0," accessed July 17, 2022, https://carloswilkes.com/Documentation/LeanTouch.

showcase my experiences and feelings as New Zealand-born Chinese child with Chinese parenting.

From the application of these steps, I hope to gain "a better understanding of research in practice" [109], by embracing the 'messy' [110] process of video game creation and how there is no fixed way to research game design, but rather through more experimentation.
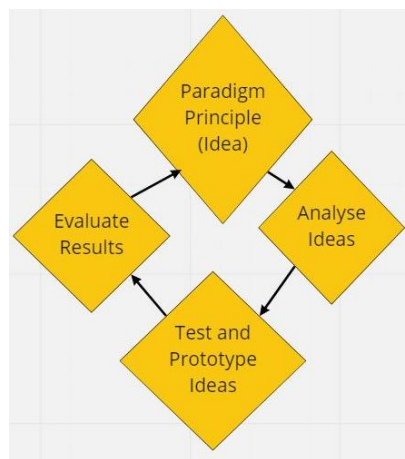

Figure 5. The 'iterative design' process I created through the research contexts.

---

[109] Muratovski, Research for Designers.

[110] Lankoski and Holopainen, *Game Design Research*, 99.

Methods

Case Studies

 'Case Study' is used in design research "to analyse a phenomenon, to generate hypotheses, and to validate a method" [111]. This process is applied and repeated for all the cases to support my research findings. It is useful for one who wishes to understand a phenomenon by researching relevant variables and to seek and assess complex situations or phenomena.[112] In my video game concept, I will be using this method to play, assess, and reflect upon auto-biographical games, to gain further knowledge upon these experiences and my own, and to execute the inspirations within my artefact.

John Gerring refers to one perspective of a case study as "An intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units The single unit is parenting within Chinese cultures, to learn the larger unit of parenting overall. Along with researching games, films and stories relating to Chinese culture and parenting, I will study the narratives and mechanisms of video games and film. Two areas that are crucial for a case study method to be helpful are reliability and validity. [113] Reliability, in this case, refers to gaining knowledge, different perspectives, and the connection to the literature of the research context (parenting). I believe the reliability of the literature texts can also be reinforced by the number of citations and possibly the year of production. Validity in my scenario can refer to playing, and watching various contexts to get the experience of the media and make a critical relation upon it.

The importance of 'case studies' towards my research, is to understand other perspectives and emotions in video games, film, social media, to further understand my own experiences, and synthesise them into a game. Any video or section I watch of a video game may induce empathy

---

[111] Teegavarapu, Summers, and Mocko, "Case Study Method for Design Research: A Justification".

[112] Larrinaga, Oskar. "Is it desirable, necessary and possible to perform research using case studies?" ?." Cuadernos de Gestión 17, no. 1 (2017):147-171. Redalyc, https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=274349307007

[113] Fidel, Raya. "The case study method: A case study." *Library and Information Science Research* 6, no. 3 (1984): 273-288.

from me, and this pushes me to understand how this occurs, while implementing the questions to my own experiences and thoughts.

However, there are limitations for this Case Study method. For example, "case studies are biased". [114] As the case studies are based on the subjectivity of the research, biases will inevitably occur. An "observer bias" refers to a less 'controlled' method in which the observer may only see things that fit their preconception and perspective. Thus, no specific theory or hypothesis will impact the observation, [115] as acquiring the resources will come from my judgement. However, the researcher can also debate against their knowledge, as this method requires data from multiple sources of evidence, so occasionally, the researcher will use case studies to prove their hypothesis wrong. Conversely, a searcher's bias is seen when the investigator aims to create an 'objective' description of individuals based on their own opinion. [116] I find this method more challenging, as it is difficult for me to establish my opinion while being objective and not influenced by any bias. Another way to minimise bias from findings is to require each interpretation to be based on several pieces of evidence. [117] Hence, this knowledge will be acquired from the autoethnography of myself and others, and parenting literature content. Case studies are also limited to the "representativeness and generalisability of the cases".[118] Since the researcher can only analyse the selected studies, they cannot produce a 'casual' effect of variables across all cases. However, I found this beneficial as the variations between the case studies gave different perspectives, and there were still associations between the studies and literature content.

---

[114] Teegavarapu, Summers, and Mocko, "Case Study Method for Design Research: A Justification".

[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

Forest Paths

The Forest Paths Narrative Design method is a narrative writing method designed by Alexander Swords specifically for writing narratives for video games. [119] This is different from traditional script-writing techniques as game narratives need special considerations for the interactions available to the player[120] This method uses a "feelings first" [121] approach which will allow me to write a personal story based on my lived experiences.

The method has two main stages, developing the high concept formula, then filling out a narrative design matrix. The 'High Concept Formula' establishes what the player is doing and why. It follows the template of how the player (protagonist) performs (activities) to manage (resources), overcome (obstacles), and achieve (goal/s). The writers then fill out the 'variables' in the brackets. For example, my story template would be: the player performs everyday activities to manage their day, overcome mum's anger, and achieve a better relationship with mum.[122] Additionally, the 'High Concept Formula' provides a 'statement of intention' for the narrative. The narrative design matrix tracks several story beats along the top row with the several prompts down the left-hand side. These prompts should change depending on the theme of game, so the initial ideation will be mostly brainstorming, with the next step of ideation including prompts of 'Story', 'Activities', 'Resources', 'Obstacles' and 'Goals'.[123] In addition, a matrix grid for 'game loops' can also be added to the story beats to align with the narrative. [124] These loops are created between the tasks within the kitchen, dinner, and piano scenes, as shown in figures 6 and 7. This loop is created to resemble my daily routine as a child and how the activities became more of a menial chore as they were repeated.

---

[119] Swords, *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design.*

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid, 2.

[122] Ibid, 8.

[123] Ibid, 13.

[124] Ibid, 48.

The foundation of my video game artefact will be based on the theme of an "aesthetic game/walking simulator narrative design/pattern." [125] This theme is not solely focused on 'winning', rather, the playthrough should focus on both the feelings and themes. Thus, some recognised patterns of this genre is defined by a "transformation" of the player's perspective. The art and music can reflect this perspective (using synergy of the elements), and the story should coincide with the other dramatic forces. Sword also mentioned that this theme can draw strongly from personal memories and experiences, which flawlessly aligns with my autoethnography methodology. In addition, a 'dramatic question' can be introduced to create understanding between a story's cultural conventions. [126] This can be reflected into the 'dramatic forces' of 'Reversal', 'Escalation', 'Transformation' and 'Interventions'. [127]

Using all these elements will create a 'Narrative Design Pattern', which is seen as a 'living document' that can and should be regularly changed. [128] This will allow me to gain knowledge of *Analyse* and *Evaluation* [129] and the prediction of how the narratives flows, to further improve the narrative of the video game.

---

[125] Ibid, 55.

[126] Ibid, 24.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid, 38.

[129] Branch, *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*, 2.

Discussion

Within this section of my thesis, I will evaluate my decisions, reflections and artefact created throughout the thesis journey; my contribution to the field and identify the limits of my research.

To understand these objectives, I restate my research question:

"How can an autoethnographic lens be applied in creating a narrative-genre video game addressing parenting in Chinese cultures and how can it affect my childhood and relationship with parents?"

In that respect, the problems and themes of my research are Parenting within Chinese culture, including my perspective on Chinese parents, and implementing this research to practice Iterative Design, Forest Paths for Narrative Design, and Case Studies to generate my video game artefact.

Before I begin reflecting upon the themes, I want to clarify the contrasting topic I began my research on, and how more knowledge and understanding encouraged the change.

At the very beginning of this research journey, I was also at the forefront of New Zealand's COVID-19 lockdowns. As a result, rather than exploring my freedom and what creativity I could invoke from this research, I was isolated at home with my parents. Everyone was unhappy, whether it was caused by emotional or financial stress; arguments would occur over little mistakes, and the claustrophobic nature of our house was suffocating us. Consequently, the last time I spent this much time with only my parents was in Intermediate, when I was 13 - I am now 22. All of this built-up tension led to discussions of my sleep deprivation, lack of enthusiasm and stress; my parents just brushed this aside as "too much internet". Because of this, my first thesis theme of researching the stigma of mental illness within East Asian cultures occurred. As I realised, a common theme was that my parents undermined my mental health needs and shifted the blame onto me. Thus, the entire first year of research revolved around this emotionally biased negative concept with a plan to create a video game artefact similar to a horror game reflecting these emotions.

However, as I researched more about Chinese families and their viewpoints on mental health, I discovered articles on Chinese parenting and how some suggest the contrasting values stemmed from cultural differences. This made me remember how my grandmother mainly cared for me, as my parents would always diligently work. Consequently, I started researching the first themes of *"universal parenting methods and different styles that can affect a child's wellbeing and future."* and

how to use *"knowledge obtained from these universal parenting traits to connect or differentiate how Chinese parents may vary in their methods."*

Nonetheless, as the research of goals began, I recognised that I never considered the obstacles my parents had to face, immigrating from Shanghai to New Zealand, the cultural differences in values, beliefs and norms. My parents believed in Chinese traditions within Confucianism, and values like 'filial piety' were an essential part of their lives. They were taught from childhood to respect their parents and elders and obey all their demands as the parents provided them with life and support in adolescence. [130] Children had to be obedient and were considered more "filial" [131] if they listened well and did not argue back. My mother would tell me that if a child was more "filial", they were more likely to have a better relationship between the parents and child. They would also gain respect from others (whether strangers or extended family) to acknowledge that the parents raised the adolescent correctly.

As for my personal insights on the cultural aspect of parenting types in Chinese culture, I now understand culture is something one is raised with and can be added to, but ultimately cannot be erased. I was born in New Zealand and have been taught by New Zealand teachers since childhood. Their tolerant teaching styles allowed me to be more disobedient and create my own choices and decisions. Since I was a baby, my grandmother would take care of me and been my primary guardian at home. My parents were too busy with work to accompany me fully. Therefore, my mother barely spent time with me unless it was to aid my studies. I started associating her presence with my academics and knew that I would be stressed again once she came home. This began a very toxic connection and triggered many arguments, as my short temper would ignite my mother's anger, which would make me more annoyed at her. This cycle would rotate regularly and cause the built-up rage. However, I have now come to understand that she had to be a motherly figure and a businesswoman, piano, ballet and academic tutor for me. She would juggle multiple roles, spend her free time teaching me and helping me be better, and sacrifice her leisure time for me. My mother saw these actions as an act of love, but I sadly rejected them and even harboured some hatred. Even in recent years, I still amassed some (unnecessary) anger towards her because of my childhood. Her idea of teaching me as a form of spending time and motherly love could stem from when she was a child. She was very independent with her studies and rarely got help from her parents as they did not have many opportunities for education in the past. Since my mother received a good education and training, she wanted to make my education easier, as I am gaining the academic support she never had. This also

---

[130] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture"

[131] Luo and Zhan, 'Filial Piety and Functional Support'.

suggests that "general values and beliefs about child rearing are characteristic of Chinese culture rather than a specific subtype of parenting style." [132] As many Chinese children have been taught independence when it comes to studies, with many hours either at school or prep school; including my brother, before he came to New Zealand. This specific characteristic of allowing children to succeed in academics is implemented within Chinese culture, which almost became a tradition among Chinese parents. Researching through autoethnography allowed me to reflect upon my memories and grow and understand my mother's perspective when learning about parenting.

Over time my mother's parenting style has been changing as she gets accustomed to the New Zealand environment. Being on more modern social media, she has gained a greater perspective and become more open-minded. My mother helping me with my studies might have been the start of her shift in parenting styles as she wanted to be more involved and supportive of my academic life. Likewise, when lockdown rules started changing, my parent's viewpoints and behaviours started changing too. They became more lenient towards my studies and allowed me to follow my schedule and rules. It felt to me like their parenting style had changed entirely. This made me realise my selfishness in neglecting my parent's stress from lockdowns and how I would complain about their 'strictness' without much regard for their feelings. Parenting is a learning curve, as every child has different attitudes, behaviours and personalities that cannot be combined into one category. The accumulated anger I had with her as a child was dispelled and replaced with gratitude. Gratitude towards my parents and gratitude for the articles and research that enabled this growth.

My current research question and direction were formed in response to these personal developments to allow further investigation into parenting types within Chinese culture from an autoethnographic perspective.   In my research, I found that Chinese mothers who adhered to more traditional Chinese values and beliefs were more likely to have a mixture of authoritative and authoritarian traits.[133] This could indicate my mother's current leniency towards me now. This change in style could have also started arising in my past, but I would have been too young and self-centred to acknowledge it properly.

I chose this methodology because I wanted to realise my own experiences as a video game and, in doing so, understand myself and others more. The quote "individuals are not prisoners of culture" [134]

---

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.
[134] Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*, 21.

has helped me accept that I did not need to obey every Chinese value and not ridicule them. As I obtained a closer connection with my parents, I started respecting their contrasting opinions while being able to share my own. While completing my research, I would often talk to my friends with similar experiences of having immigrant parents. I found there were many similarities between their stories and my own. This helped me realise I was not alone with my experiences and even had everyday situations with them as children, which helped us gain sympathy and made me feel heard and understood. I hoped to convey a similar empathetic reaction to the video game prototype.

There, to bring my story to life I needed to turn it into a narrative that can work in a video game artifact. Game design is where practices are vital to creating the projects. Throughout this journey, the narrative has changed several times. I used the Forest Paths Narrative Design Method to create an initial sequence of events that I wanted to include (see fig.6). This was a chaotic splurge of ideas, with ages and events that were too segregated to connect into a cohesive story.
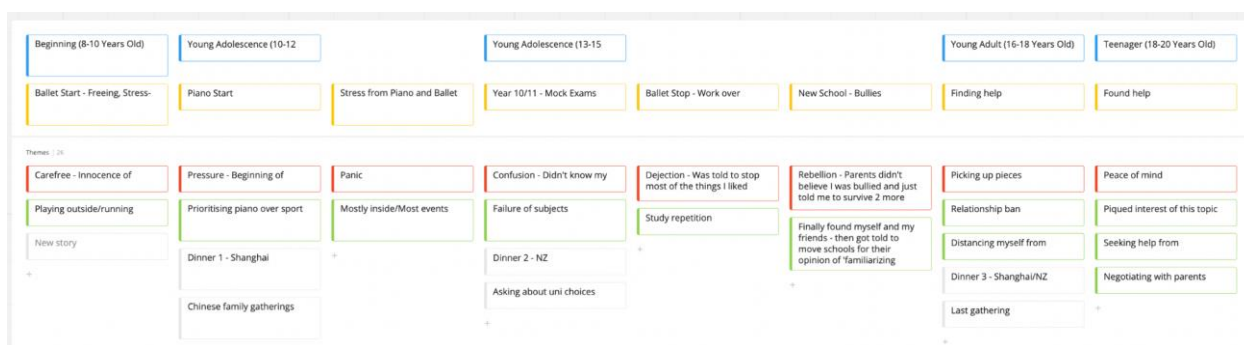

Figure 6. Initial narrative matrix.

In next iteration of this method, I decided to elaborate on a more specific time frame in my adolescent years. Thus, the Forest Paths timeline changed to between the ages of 8 to 15 years old (see fig. 7). This allowed more of my specific childhood experiences and activities to be enhanced.

Figure 7. Second iteration of the narrative matrix.

This (fig. 7) was the first detailed draft of the narrative, which included the vital experiences of my childhood and how I emotionally grew from it. The method allowed me to detail many game interactions and how the player felt during each scene. However, this iteration was not used because of time contrasts towards creating all the assets, and animations and showing the emotions. As I only had my grandmother, father, mother and brother here in New Zealand, the sections within China were meant to bring a cultural contrast of how vastly different China and New Zealand people were; not only from the barrage of questions relating to my studies and success, but also the language barrier as I was still a child, with English being my native language. Hence, I still included the language barrier and the aspect of dinner events; I saw dinner gatherings with my Chinese family as a place to spend quality time and discuss how everyone's lives and if there have been any updates.

	Inciting Event	Family Dinner SH (Checkpoint 1)	Piano & Ballet (Event)	Family Dinner (Checkpoint 2)	Piano & Ballet (Event)	Conclusion	
Settings/Locations	Big backyard full of greenery; fences behind (blue/natural lighting)	Restaurant in SH; big table full of food (yellow lighting)	NZ home: Living room = piano Garage = ballet	NZ home: Dining room	NZ home: Living room = piano Garage = ballet	NZ home: Walk back outside to open door	
New Zealand	Individualism	X	Ballet; western standards of praise often means well	How we can express what we're feeling	Ballet	Individualism	Understanding I can have a mix of both Ethnocentric
Chinese	X	Collectivism/Tradition Value; needing to think of face and filial piety	Piano; very little praise, not buts ands or ifs	Negligence and fear of isolation if emotions are expressed	Piano	Collectivism	
Player Tasks/Activities	Freedom; Free dancing around, cartwheeling, hopping around very big backyard (smaller when you look back later)	Learning; Mom teaching me various things while on the side (how to hold chopsticks, listing auntie's names, eat food properly, hands on bowl)	Piano; Mom telling me the beats, just says good every-time I get it right. Grandma claps in the background Ballet; Grandma saying she's proud of me and watches my ballet	Connecting words together e.g. piano = success = happy parents	Piano; Mom yelling and jabbing on side every-time I get key wrong or timing wrong. Back hit straight every-time head starts dropping Ballet; Grandma consoling me	Mom explaining to me (face clearer with smile) Clearing tears with hand on beat	
Characters in Scenes	Only MC (Main Character)	MC, parents, aunties, grandma - others are blurry	MC, Mom, grandma	MC, parents, grandma	MC, parents, grandma	MC, Mom	
Players Discoveries	Enjoy themselves.	Try and decipher/hear muffled words clearer.	Play piano for grandma.	Not getting mom angry.	Learn more things e.g. piano and ballet moves.	Finding peace and love within mom's actions.	

Figure 8. Third iteration of the narrative matrix.

For the third iteration I tried to organise the feelings, settings, and interactions with the context of differences between New Zealand and Chinese values, as well as how differently the parenting styles were between the cultures (see fig. 8). As my grandmother would spend more leisure time, rather than studying with me, I saw her as a more *authoritative* figure, which would evoke the parenting style contrast. Moreover, during the third rendition of the narrative, I deducted more events to provide quality over quantity for the scenes.

In addition to this storyline, 'dramatic questions' provide a rollercoaster of emotions and a form of "understanding different cultural story conventions." [135] Through the previously shown figures,

---

[135] Ibid, 24.

I tried to implement 'dramatic' alterations which could provide a contrasting emotional response of shock, anger, or joy with the player. These can be supported with 'dramatic forces' which create dips, ups, and 'roundabouts' of a story; ranging from 'Reversal', 'Escalation', 'Transformation' and 'Interventions'[136] that can occur over time. Two of the most relevant and ones which aid my experiences were, 'Reversal', which refers to when an element is changed to the opposite and providing a certain aesthetic towards the design choices. In addition to, "aesthetic interventions", which provides a contrast deliberately placed to stop or invoke a certain (emotional) response from the audience. [137]

While writing the story for my artefact, the relationship between my parents and I grew closer, and I started to feel guilty displaying my mother in such a negative light. Apart from myself, the main characters of this third iteration focused on my grandmother and mother. Because of this, I decided the narrative would be more vital to focus on our interactions and limit the game space to my family home in New Zealand. It also became apparent that my father did not appear in the story. This was because he was not completely involved in my life. He was busier than my mother and could not help me with much of my academic or school studies. I did not want to display my father as absent from my childhood, as he would try to play an unbiased role in calming down my mother and me during arguments. He would often convey his love through small actions, like gifting me chocolate when I was sad or picking me up from school. Chinese father's warmth has a "preference for nonverbal expressions"[138] and fulfils the duties of supportiveness and responsibility while emotionally distant. From this, I decided to add my father into the narrative in a supportive role, reflecting my experiences with him.

The current span of the game, 8-15 years, can also be focused to give a better focus to the story. I remember that I would obey everything my parents told me to do when I was a child. It was around eight years old when I started disliking this obedience. This was when I started misbehaving and listening less to my mother's demands. For the final story, I will keep the player character the 8-year-old to allow for a more natural flow from day-to-day events.

---

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid, 28.

[138] Xuan Li, "How do Chinese fathers express love? Viewing paternal warmth through the eyes of Chinese fathers, mothers, and their children,".

The final iteration of the story [139] described my events as an 8-year-old within a week. This will including some eventful tasks and activities that could support the difference in parenting types. The game will display my character regretting their actions and reconciling with my mother, while showing aspects of my grandmother's kindness and my father's supportiveness. I think this narrative can show my mother's authoritarian parenting style, in comparison with my grandmother's authoritative parenting style, and my father's more permissive parenting style. The 'arguments' leading to the climax, and the climax itself, will show my mother less angry without reasoning, but rather someone who was annoyed from accumulated stress. Both my grandmother and father in the game help me realise this and help to resolve the anger with patience and understanding.

This research allowed me to delve further into my "self" [140] and connect each situation to my cultural environment. For example, food was always relevant in my childhood, as this was the primary means to gather everyone together; with rice being a consistent element with meals. I utilised the memories or these dinners and made it a core factor towards aspects of the narrative. The dinner gatherings can associate with collectivism and co-dependency with families in Chinese culture [141], this can differ from New Zealand culture's value towards individualism. Chinese dishes are mostly shared, whereas my experience of meals in New Zealand are individual plates of food. Rice can be shared from a pot but will ultimately be in individual bowls for each person. In a sense, I relate to this bowl of rice. I can still be combined with the collectivist culture of Chinese but will still be separated as an individual. This is where the title of the project came from, my metaphorical expression of "self" [142] as 'Rice'.

Initially, I had planned to make the game a first-person walking simulator [143] with realistic 3D assets. While this style of gameplay allows for a certain level of immersion[144] and atmosphere it didn't feel personal enough for my narrative. I decided to create 2D touch experience. Because of time constraints, the prototype will only be playable on PC; the design of the game allows for it to be played on mobile and tablet devices. This touch to interact mechanic felt a lot more personal and

---

[139] See Appendix 1.

[140] Wall, "Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography,".

[141] Shahid, "Asian Americans' mental health help-seeking attitudes".

[142] Wall, "Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography".

[143] Swords, *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design,* 55.

[144] Sears, Andrew, and Julie A. Jacko. *Human-Computer Interaction: Designing for Diverse Users and Domains*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2009.

could allow the player to feel a connection to my digital younger self. The game 'Florence' [145], is a mobile narrative game showcased like an interactive comic, which has been used as a source of inspiration for the mechanics. The reason for this choice is because I enjoyed the narrative with the mechanics in the childhood scenes, as the interactions made me feel like I was doing the action myself, I felt more involved with the character itself. Games produce this by using dynamic events to produce "dynamic experiences" [146], where it captivates the audience to know more. However, some areas of this game included interactions for the purpose of playing, rather than supporting the narrative. Therefore, I wanted to create simplistic mechanics, but ones that also reflect and support moments of the narrative.

In addition, to the narrative matrix (as seen in fig. 7 and 8), I created a flow map to better understand the players' progression through the game and their experience with the narrative. [147] I created this map, because I wanted to see how the scenes would flow together with brief descriptions and interactions. This helped me focus on the overall story. A game loop/repetition [148] was recognised by the brackets on the left side, to maintain this map's simpler layout; the repetition is elaborated within the 'list of interactions'.[149] This list was the draft of the narrative, which included the player's goal, interactions, and achievements from the particular scenes. This helped me organise what I needed to create and lay out the framework. However, due to my multiple changes in both narrative and topic, I plan to complete a prototype that can be further enhanced in the future. As I gained a large amount of knowledge from the process of understanding and experimenting with the elements of this video game; I see it as a journey of learning. Along with the 'list of interactions', I also created a draft animatic for the third rendition of the narrative (see fig. 8), [150] with thumbnails of the storyline to visualise what it would look like within the game. Although this was not used, I enjoyed this creation's process, and it allowed me to see that the story was still to fragmented to work as intended.

I thought the final narrative of my video game prototype truly portrayed my most memorable experiences and life-lessons. As, I used a self-narrative approach to autoethnography [151], this story

---

[145] Mountains, *Florence* (Annapurna Interactive, 2018).

[146] Andrew, et al. *Human-Computer Interaction: Designing for Diverse Users and Domains*.

[147] See Appendix 1.

[148] Swords, *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design,* 63.

[149] See Appendix 2.

[150] See Appendix 3.

[151] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

formed a bridge between creating my journeys into a playable experience that others could know and understand. In addition, the creation of this narrative supported my methodology as I analysed my cultural values [152] when documenting the memories, scenes, and their importance to me.

Linking back to the case study mechanics, I tried to practice smartphone interactability within my video game using LeanTouch [153], a plugin from the Unity asset store (fig. 17). This asset allowed me to create dragging, rotating, and enlarging game objects. Although I am not playtesting this on the phone for this research, I intend to polish it further to go on mobile devices. An example of the touch mechanics in my game can be seen in figure 17, where the player must follow Grandmother's orders on how to cook the rice. This section is important, not only because it is this paper's title but also because this was one of the first things my grandmother taught me to do in the kitchen. Preparing and cooking the rice was the first responsibility I was given without supervision, and I wanted to showcase this journey within different stages of knowledge in the prototype. Thus, the player will learn the same way I was taught and given a first-hand experience of this part of my childhood.

While creating my game, I experimented with the most suitable art style. I researched through case studies of children's book illustrations, as I enjoyed their charming outlook with colours, perspective, and composition. This style was initially engaging because I wanted the game to represent the mind of my eight-year-old self. Some of their colours were striking and complementary and had a child's lower angle or slightly wrapped perspective. I tried a gouache brush in Photoshop to produce a crayon-like effect (see fig. 12). However, I thought this effect was too strong, in both colours and textures, to represent my experiences. I wanted a technique that could showcase the imperfect elements, whether uneven lines or purposely 'messy' compositions, which give a child's charming perspective alongside the delicacy of my memories used for the narrative. I also noticed a connection from various studies, [154] that I enjoyed the watercolour effect of showing the sketching layer, and the colours being in both organised and 'messy' forms to not show a "perfect picture".[155] This began my experimentation with digital watercolours (see fig. 13). Although I enjoyed this texture and style, I still felt discontent with the feeling of the piece. When I started with digital painting, I did not consider the agency the art was used upon. This made me examine how a medium on traditional paper

---

[152] Chang, *Autoethnography as Method*.

[153] Wilkes, "Lean Touch".

[154] Fidel, "The case study method: A case study".

[155] Kinch, 'Experimentation & Emotion in Watermedia.'

would differ from its digital counterparts. So, I created all the assets through the traditional means of paint and paper, with the animations connected digitally.

I researched visual case studies like the watercolour works of Hayao Miyazaki and wanted to create something similar to his charming and mystical pieces. He would sometimes merge the sketch lines and conjoin them with the colours to provide a seamless composition highlighting the characters' focal points. Miyazaki also utilises highlights beautifully and creates the illusion of light from the perfect amount of paint, not overusing and covering everything. This stems from how a sense of space can be created to create a strong visual impact. [156] The feeling that every line has a purpose, he uses thinner lines for delicate people or objects and thicker lines to show background objects, dimension, and perspective. The colours are also vibrant and complementary to manoeuvre the audience's attention to the centre or other main points of the art piece. I found this method perfect for conveying emotions in my video game because of how magically colourful everything seemed through a child's eyes. I was curious about everything as a child, and I could discover something new every corner I looked at; this mystical touch faded away as I saw them more, but I still wanted to try and capture a child's curiosity within the game. While I am familiar with painting, this was my first time using watercolours.

Thus, I started trialling watercolours on paper and began with small assets I wanted to use in the game (see fig. 14 and 15). For the first scene painting trial (see fig. 16), I tried to practice using the highlights of the paper more strategically, and to provide a contrast of colours with the vibrant greenery in the background. This contrasting greenery is also vital to my personal experiences, as New Zealand always has trees and nature everywhere I look. Another positive from this design trial was, not only learning how to use the watercolour medium, but also how it sparked my love of painting again.

The final prototype conveyed my childhood story and connected to my research by creating characters concerning parenting types and the autoethnography reflection of my childhood experiences and their impact on me. I thought the gameplay showcased my experiences well, and I personally enjoyed how it was more of an interactive story rather than a game. This was because a large amount of the game had animations and dialogue as the main source of play, with interactions as a connecter for these assets. The animations were simple, but I enjoyed the frame-by-frame style of it, as I wanted to keep the concept of an imperfect game; I wanted to showcase my imperfections and misunderstandings as a

---

[156] Sha, Zhu, 'Expression and Application of Watercolour Art in Computer 3D Animation Design System' 4, no. 2 (n.d.): 6.

child through this unpolished look. However, for future goals, I hope to edit this to make a smoother flow of transitions.

Because of the reflective nature of autoethnography, this project has changed drastically as I learnt more about myself and what I wanted to create from that. While this is not the first game I have made, many of the techniques used to make this game and research were new to me. As a result, the end game is not as finished as I would have liked, and if I had made everything on my own, I would have needed to be able to get it to the level needed to reflect on. This is also why I sought assistance in implementing the mechanics into the prototype. For the game interactions and animations, I wanted them to seem simplistic and easy to navigate; as the player was playing from my perspective as a child, I wanted to avoid involving too many opinions or distractions within the scene. This is important, as I wanted to avoid overwhelming the player with various colours and options because I wanted this game to be more calming than hyperactively chaotic. I enjoyed the result of LeanTouch[157] with smartphone mechanics of dragging, enlarging, or tapping game assets because it produced a carefree nature for the player's possibilities. For example, in the first scenes, the player can do a finger trail method while listening to the grandmother; this is quite fun, and the player can freely use the trail without any boundaries, apart from their screens.

During the examination, although most of the scenes I wanted to showcase were present, there was a fatal error in the note placement for the piano scene. This careless mistake could be seen as a metaphor for my Master's journey and the game story itself. This inattentiveness could be seen in my childhood and again through current times. Despite this error, I was ultimately satisfied with the prototype. However, I understand I still need improvement in creating games and becoming more conscientious overall, with this thesis as only the beginning of this awakening.

Ultimately, creating the narrative and the video game prototype helped me understand my own culture's values with my parent's cultural beliefs and to remember that I was still a child that was too ignorant and selfish to see my mother's help and love.

---

[157] Wilkes, "Lean Touch".
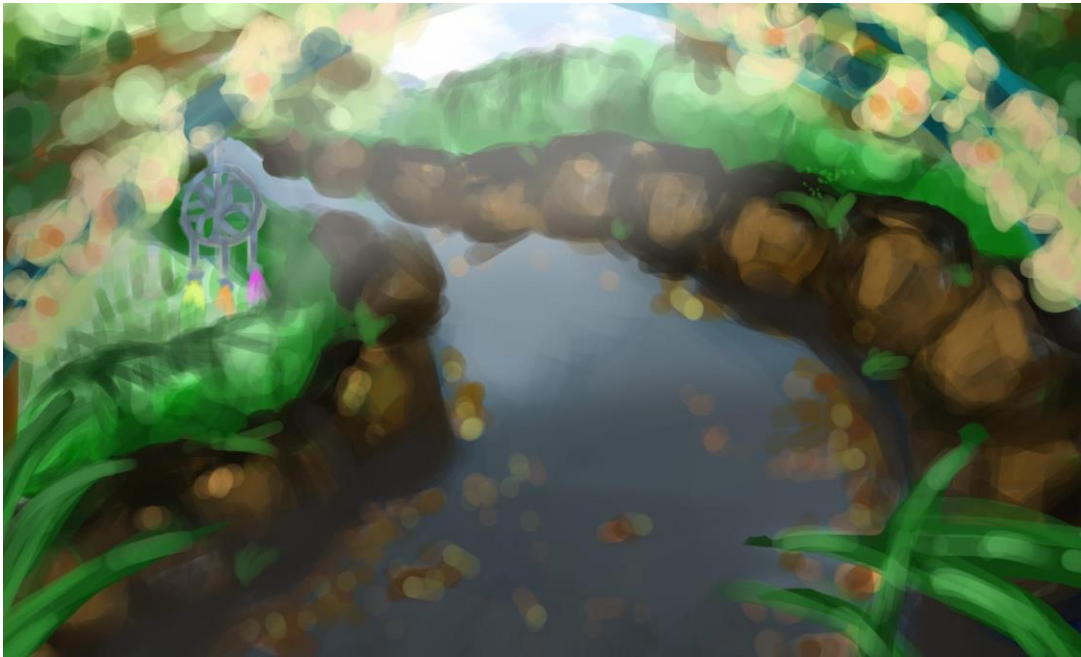
Figure 9. One of the first attempts of a 'blurry' atmosphere created digitally.

Figure 10. Trial digital drawing of a scene from my third narrative rendition.
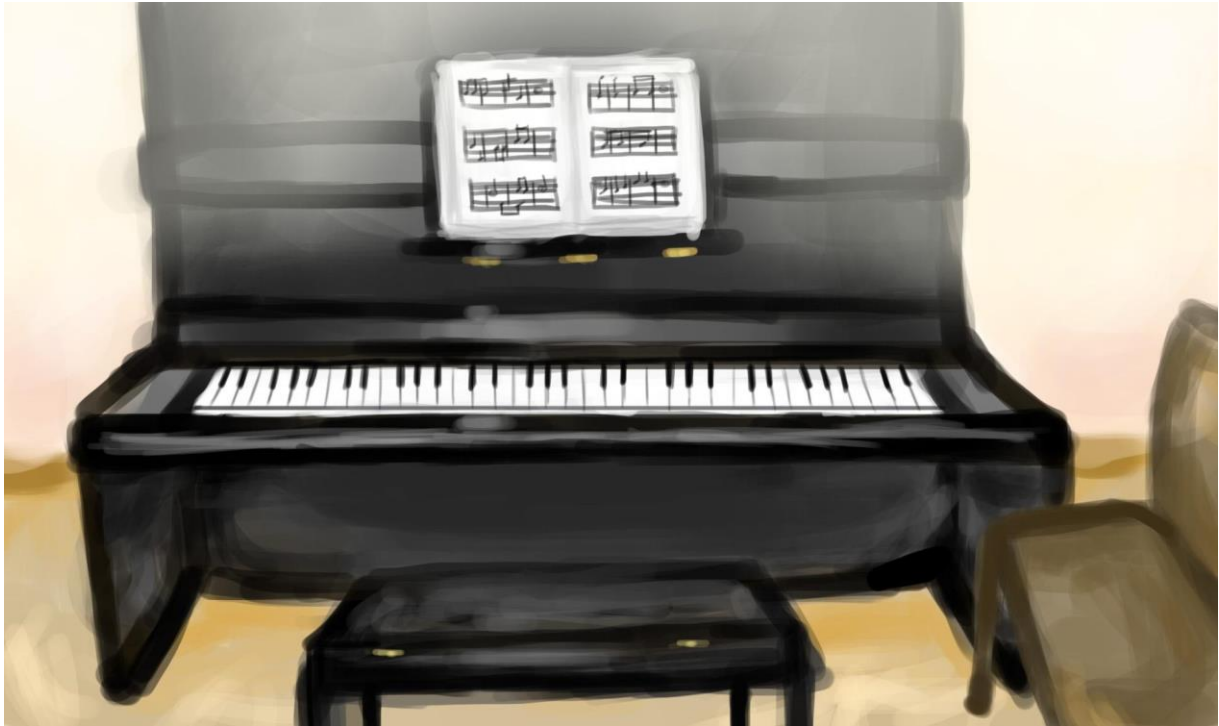
Figure 11. A trial of digital drawing for the piano scenes in the video game artefact.

Figure 12. Trial of Gouache/Crayon effect.

Figure 13. Digital experimentation with various textural brushes to invoke the feeling of watercolour.

Figure 14. The first experimentation with watercolour on paper.

Figure 15. Experimenting with traditional watercolour on paper.
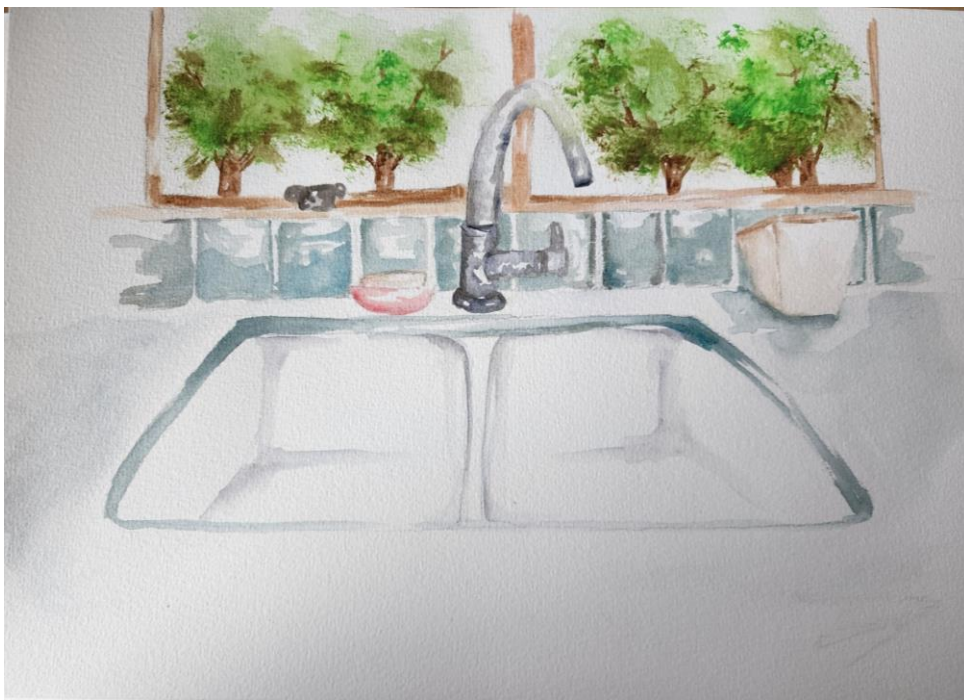
Figure 16. The first experimentation with a full scene background with watercolour on paper.
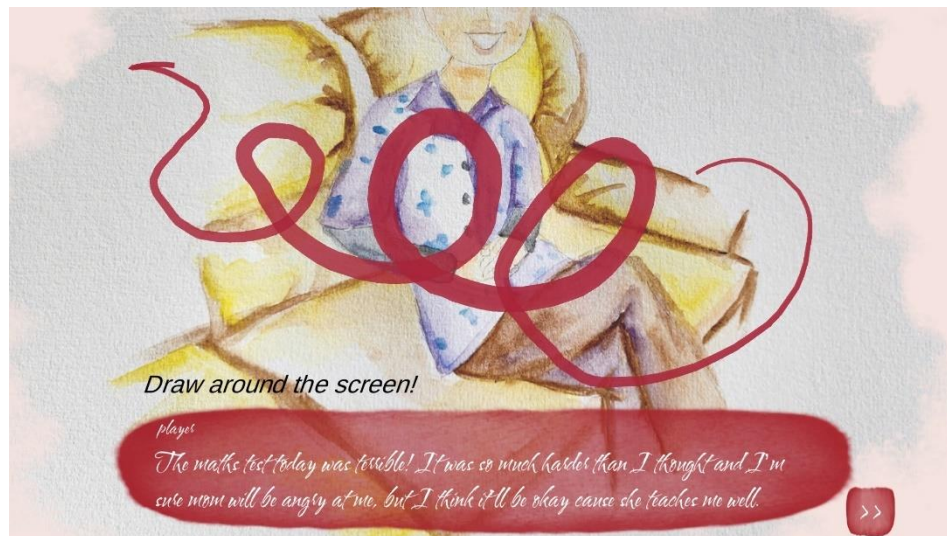
Figure 17. Screen Capture of LeanTouch coding in action.
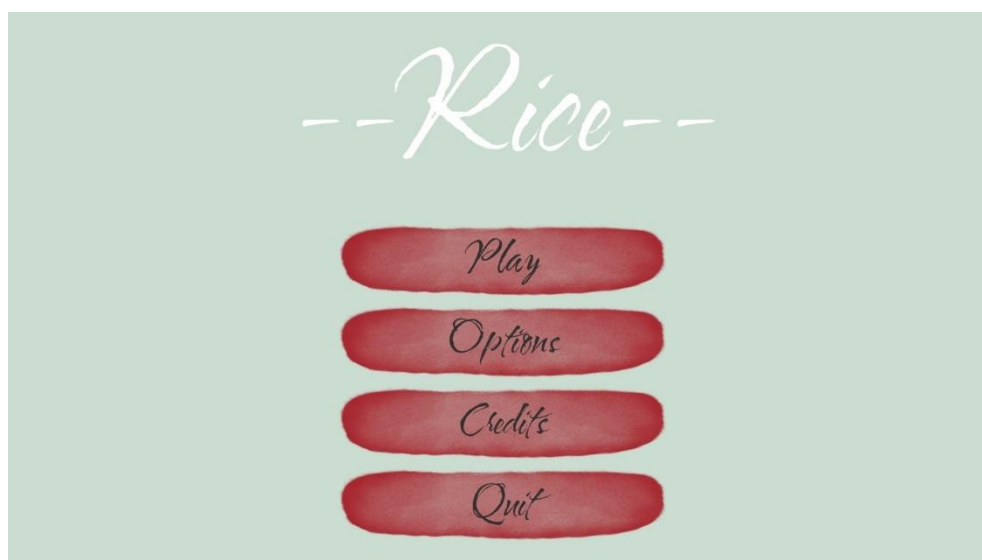
Figure 18. Screen Capture of Main Menu.

Figure 19. Screen Capture of Scene 1.

Figure 20. Screen Capture of the first 'Rice' Scene.

Figure 21. Screen Capture of trial Ballet Scene.
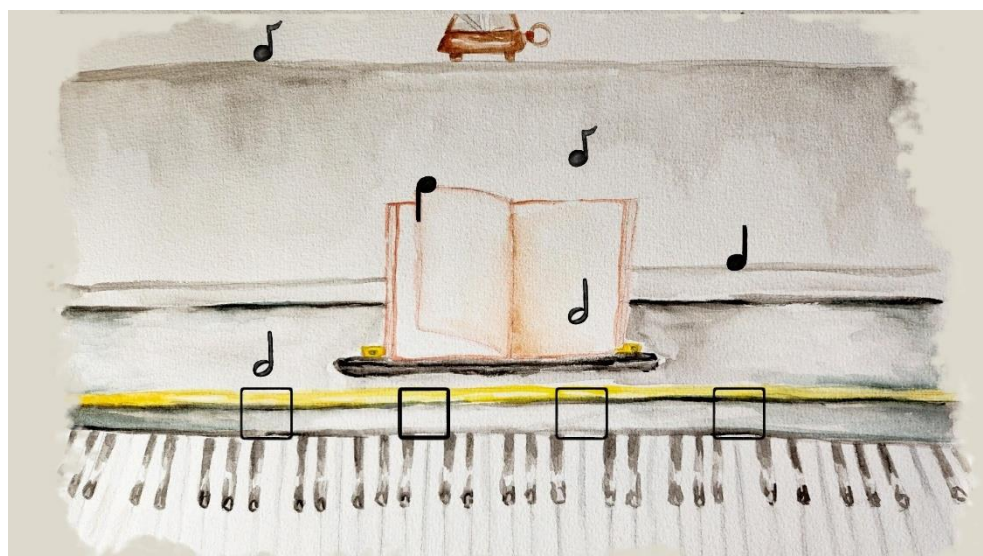
Figure 22. Screen Capture of Piano Scene with Mother.

Limitations of Study

The most challenging aspect of this research was putting together the final game, which became a prototype instead of a polished piece, which made the evaluation process of the artefact harder. My time was impacted due to COVID-19 and lockdowns, and my mental and physical health became unstable during the thesis completion.

The autoethnography methodology analyses between self and others in relation to my New Zealand upbringing and Chinese culture, but this data collection could still be considered biased as they are my own experiences and had things I could not control (like emotions and feelings) because they were pure memories.

Regarding suggestions for future research, I hope to discover more research that can be done with autoethnography to create greater data that could connect with or against my experiences. More time was also needed to polish the complete video game, which could have included an entire week, rather than three or four days. However, this was due to not comprehending how to write a narrative with my experiences and not settling on a storyline faster.

Contribution to Field

I hope to add to the areas of autoethnography within video games, as this was an educational experience for me to appreciate and acknowledge myself and others. The power a well-written personal narrative can give players emotional influences [158] and an engaging discovery of growth for the characters.

Through autoethnography, I also used my personal experiences and outlook to add to the knowledge of children born from immigrant Chinese parents, and how Chinese parenting can differ to each child's different opinions and values overall.

I consider this research important as methodologies like autoethnography rely on different perspectives and understanding these cultural variations. Although I could not provide fieldwork of other perspectives on Chinese parenting, I hope I have implemented enough information to showcase the journey of my emotions, personal discovery, and relationship improvement between myself and my parents.

---

[158] Andrew, et al. *Human-Computer Interaction: Designing for Diverse Users and Domains*.

Conclusion

The question begs, will I still forget to cook the rice? Probably.

However, I now understand my parent's anger was not only towards my negligence but their strong beliefs in filial piety and individual parenting style. My parents tried to provide a more authoritative environment by giving me independence in cooking the rice before dinner started. They also depended on me through *xiao* beliefs (filial piety) [159] that I could be trusted to respect their wishes. Although I thought it was only silly forgetfulness; accumulated actions like these lowered my parent's trust in me, thus changing their parenting style from authoritative to authoritarian, because of these 'silly' mistakes. As like this bowl of rice, I sometimes may not be up to standard, but need to understand that rice is just an accompaniment to the main dishes; like how my parents would always try to support my life journey through little ways, and only through connecting with them, can I achieve complete happiness.

This journey had helped me understand and reflect upon the wider world of parenting and how truly difficult being a parent can be, let alone an immigrant parent [160]. Not only were they always busy working, but my mother also had the responsibility to help me pass school, and dad with the tasks of transporting me from home to school. This allowed me to understand why I was closer to my grandmother, as my parents did not have enough time. To turn these experiences into a game and interactive narrative, I brainstormed experiences from my childhood and implemented the knowledge of parenting by showcasing my mother with a more *authoritarian* approach, my grandmother as *authoritative,* and my father as *permissive* [161]. The story was created using the Forest Paths Narrative Design Method, this provided me with a template to write an interactive narrative inspired by my experiences. The Iterative design cycle started with research context, which was implemented into the narrative. The process also included creating all the visual assets through watercolour experimentation, with assistance in implementing the game mechanics into the prototype.

Overall, this thesis has helped me grow in technical aspects, mentally and emotionally. I also have a much better relationship with my mother and father, as I acknowledge and respect their decisions and values, and they respect mine. I am only an incomplete bowl of rice, but with the dishes of my family's love, this singular bowl has now become complete.

---

[159] Luo and Zhan, 'Filial Piety and Functional Support'.

[160] Ran and Liu, '"Forced" Family Separation and Inter-Generational Dynamics'.

[161] Zhang, et al. "Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture".

Literature References

Branch, Robert M. *Instructional Design: The ADDIE Approach*. Basingstoke: Springer, 2009.

Chang, Heewon. *Autoethnography as Method*. London: Routledge, 2016.

Chao, Ruth K. "Beyond Parental Control and Authoritarian Parenting Style: Understanding Chinese Parenting Through the Cultural Notion of Training." *Child Development* 65, no. 4 (1994), 1111. doi:10.2307/1131308.

Fidel, Raya. "The case study method: A case study." *Library and Information Science Research* 6, no. 3 (1984): 273-288.

Gerring, John. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *The American Political Science Review* 98, no. 2 (2004): 341–54. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4145316.

Grenier, Robin S. "Autoethnography as a Methodological Approach in Adult Vocational Education and Technology." *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology* 7, no. 3 (2016), 42-50. doi:10.4018/ijavet.2016070104.

Lankoski, Petri, and Jussi Holopainen. *Game Design Research: An Introduction to Theory & Practice*. Pittsburgh, PA: ETC Press, 2017.

Lau, Sing, and Ping Chung Cheung. 'Relations Between Chinese Adolescents' Perception of Parental Control and Organization and Their Perception of Parental Warmth', n.d., 4.

Li, Xuan. 'How Do Chinese Fathers Express Love? Viewing Paternal Warmth through the Eyes of Chinese Fathers, Mothers, and Their Children.' *Psychology of Men & Masculinities* 22, no. 3 (July 2021): 500–511. https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000312.

Lin, Chin-Yau Cindy, and Victoria R. Fu. "A Comparison of Child-Rearing Practices among Chinese, Immigrant Chinese, and Caucasian-American Parents." *Child Development* 61, no. 2 (1990): 429–33. https://doi.org/10.2307/1131104.

Luo, Baozhen, and Heying Zhan. 'Filial Piety and Functional Support: Understanding Intergenerational Solidarity Among Families with Migrated Children in Rural China'. *Ageing International* 37, no. 1 (1 March 2012): 69–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12126-011-9132-1.

Macklin, Colleen, and John Sharp. *Games, Design and Play: A detailed approach to iterative game design*. Addison-Wesley Professional, 2016.

Mao, Weiyu, and Iris Chi. 'Filial Piety of Children as Perceived by Aging Parents in China'. *International Journal of Social Welfare* 20, no. s1 (October 2011). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2397.2011.00826.x.

Marcus, Stanley. 'PAINTING FROM MEMORIES.' *American Artist: Watercolor*, 1990, 82–141.

Muratovski, Gjoko. *Research for Designers: A Guide to Methods and Practice*. SAGE, 2015.

Ng, Sik Hung, Cynthia S. F. Loong, James H. Liu, and Ann Weatherall. 'Will the Young Support the Old? An Individual- and Family-Level Study of Filial Obligations in Two New Zealand Cultures'. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2000): 163–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-839X.00061.

Qilong Zhang. 'Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education among Chinese Immigrant and English Speaking Non-Chinese Parents in New Zealand', 2016. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2354.5369.

Ran, Guanyu Jason, and Liangni Sally Liu. '"Forced" Family Separation and Inter-Generational Dynamics: Multi-Generational New Chinese Immigrant Families in New Zealand'. *Kōtuitui: New Zealand Journal of Social Sciences Online* 16, no. 1 (2 January 2021): 148–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/1177083X.2020.1801772.

Rezai Niaraki, Fahimeh, and Hassan Rahimi. 'The Impact of Authoritative, Permissive and Authoritarian Behavior of Parents on Self-Concept, Psychological Health and Life Quality'. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (14 January 2013): pp.78-85.

Salter, Anastasia. "Playing at empathy: Representing and experiencing emotional growth through Twine games." *2016 IEEE International Conference on Serious Games and Applications for Health (SeGAH)*, 2016. doi:10.1109/segah.2016.7586272.

Schwartz, Shalom H. "An Overview of the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values." *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture* 2, no. 1 (2012). doi:10.9707/2307-0919.1116.

Sears, Andrew, and Julie A. Jacko. *Human-Computer Interaction: Designing for Diverse Users and Domains*. Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2009.

Shahid, Mehwish, Nicole H. Weiss, Gary Stoner, and Bryan Dewsbury. "Asian Americans' mental health help-seeking attitudes: The relative and unique roles of cultural values and ethnic identity." *Asian American Journal of Psychology* 12, no. 2 (2021), 138-146. doi:10.1037/aap0000230.

Simpson, John A. *The Oxford English Dictionary: Vol. 1-*. 1991.

Sparkes, Andrew C. "Autoethnography and Narratives of Self: Reflections on Criteria in Action." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 17, no. 1 (2000), 21-43. doi:10.1123/ssj.17.1.21

Swords, Alexander. *Forest Paths Method for Narrative Design*. 2020.

Teegavarapu, Sudhakar, Joshua D. Summers, and Gregory M. Mocko. 'Case Study Method for Design Research: A Justification'. In *Volume 4: 20th International Conference on Design Theory and Methodology; Second International Conference on Micro- and Nanosystems*, 495–503. Brooklyn, New York, USA: ASMEDC, 2008. https://doi.org/10.1115/DETC2008-49980.

Tony E. Adams, Carolyn Ellis, and Stacy H. Jones, "Autoethnography," *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*, 2017, doi:10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011.

Vern L. Bengtson and W. A. Achenbaum, "Of Deeds and Contracts: Filial Piety Perceived in Contemporary Shanghai," in *The Changing Contract Across Generations* (Piscataway: Transaction Publishers, 1993).

Villarreal Larrinaga, Oskar. "Is it desirable, necessary and possible to perform research using case studies?." Cuadernos de Gestión 17, no. 1 (2017):147-171. Redalyc, https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=274349307007

Wall, Sarah. "Easier Said than Done: Writing an Autoethnography." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 7, no. 1 (2008), 38-53. doi:10.1177/160940690800700103.

Yang, Beiming, Bin-Bin Chen, Yang Qu, and Yuanfei Zhu. "Impacts of Parental Burnout on Chinese Youth's Mental Health: The Role of Parents' Autonomy Support and Emotion Regulation." *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 50, no. 8 (2021), 1679-1692. doi:10.1007/s10964-021-01450-y.

Yang, Yiqing. 'The Meaning of "Filial Piety" to Older Chinese Parents'. In *Contemporary Perspectives in Family Research*, edited by Patricia Neff Claster and Sampson Lee Blair, 141–54. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1530-353520210000017008.

Zhang, Wenxin, Xing Wei, Linqin Ji, Liang Chen, and Kirby Deater-Deckard. 'Reconsidering Parenting in Chinese Culture: Subtypes, Stability, and Change of Maternal Parenting Style During Early Adolescence'. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 46, no. 5 (May 2017): 1117–36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0664-x.

Zhu, Sha. 'Expression and Application of Watercolor Art in Computer 3D Animation Design System' 4, no. 2 (n.d.): 6.

Film and Video References

Assis, Vitória. "Genius Loci (2020)." *Vimeo*. 1. 2020. https://vimeo.com/538338925.

Auckland War Memorial Museum. "Being Chinese in Aotearoa: Behind-the-scenes with Renee Liang and Allan Xia." *YouTube*. July 10, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DDJ6QBwHUek.

Banana in a Nutshell. Directed by Roseanne Liang. 2005. Auckland, New ZealandFilm.

My Neighbour Totoro. Directed by Hayao Miyazaki. 1988. Japan: Troma Entertainment, Walt Disney Pictures, Toho Co., Ltd., Film.

Random Stuff. "THE EXTERNAL WORLD DAVID OREILLY (Subtitulado)." *YouTube*. April 17, 2014. Accessed August 10, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXrDPF7qhXw&t=2723.

Turning Red. Directed by Domee Shi. 2022. Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures, Film.

TV Junkie. "Banana In A Nutshell (2005)." *Youtube*. May 13, 2018. Accessed August 10, 2021. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71KRu3F4nXo.

Game References

Afterburn. *Inbento*. Afterburn, 7Levels, 2019.

Allan Xia and Renee Liang. *Golden Threads*. Itch.io, 2017.

Fan Fang and Mai Hou. *Nainai's Recipe*. Itch.io, 2020.

GoodbyeWorld Games. *Before Your Eyes*. Skybound Games, Skybound Entertainment, 2021.

Mountains. *Florence*. Annapurna Interactive, 2018.

Moyuwan Games. *Chinese Parents*. Coconut Island Games, Littoral Games, 2018.

Wilkes, Carlos. "Lean Touch - Documentation - 3.0.0." Accessed July 17, 2022.
https://carloswilkes.com/Documentation/LeanTouch.

Appendix 1

Last Narrative Ideation Flow-map

New Location

Dad

Grandma

Mum

Food

Classic Chinese dishes on table with Dad, grandma already sitting down

Can't hold chopsticks properly - Grandma comes to help

Do nothing when grandma tries to help, but yank interaction when mom tries to help

Puts vegetables that mom gave me on grandma's plate

Interaction to eat after a short moment

Grandma

Mum

Looking down at hands from dinner table - blinking to black and then opening eyes to homework scene

Homework chaos

Mom teaching Jennia last minute maths homework on desk

Jennia zones out - interaction to keep focus again

Interaction of dragging answers to objects (putting the right shape in the right outline)

Mum

New Location

Wake up to shape of metronome from homework

Piano Stress

Mom next to me clapping to the beat of piece

In front of piano with Mom

Rhythm tapping game will get obscenely fast so player can't keep up

Piano playing will merge with metronome, clapping from mom and her screaming "Wrong" and "Again"

Can only choose 1 song (other 2 songs are scribbled off)

Rhythm type of game with matching notes

Mum

Continuously gets timing wrong

Each mistake = jab from mom with chopstick

Peak of the conflict?

3rd jab = Player grabs and breaks chopsticks

miro

Ballet

Ballet with Grandma

Dance freely

Grandma

Ballet with Mom

To follow the correct order of steps – Simon's Says

Mum

Looking down at hands of broken chopsticks - blinking to hands at desk

Realisation

In front of desk again, at first by myself, then dad comes shortly after

Dad comes in with fruit to cheer me up from yelling

Click fruit to eat

Dad

Dad sits next to you on the bed and only says "Your mom may be crazy sometimes, but at the end of the day, she'll always love her daughter" before leaving

Blink transition from door close SFX

In front of piano again

Interaction to choose song

Playing song normally until you hear footsteps and see mom sit next to you

Mom tells you to "stop", expecting a chopstick jab, she sits with you instead

Mum

Mom plays the chord next to you

Interaction x2 to follow her playing

No matching game.

Hitting keys for fun

Mum

Grandma

Interaction to look up and see her smile and say "I'm sorry for yelling at you" and then hugs you

Interaction to hug her back and then say "I'm sorry"

miro

Resolution

Back to a much happier dinner environment with grandma, dad, mom and Jennia

Interaction to eat dinner

Mum

Dad

Grandma

Mom in background saying "Mei mei..."

Mom gives food on my plate

Interaction to pick it up and look towards grandma's plate

Mom laughs and says, "It's an improvement at least"

Eats food instead with a disgusted SFX
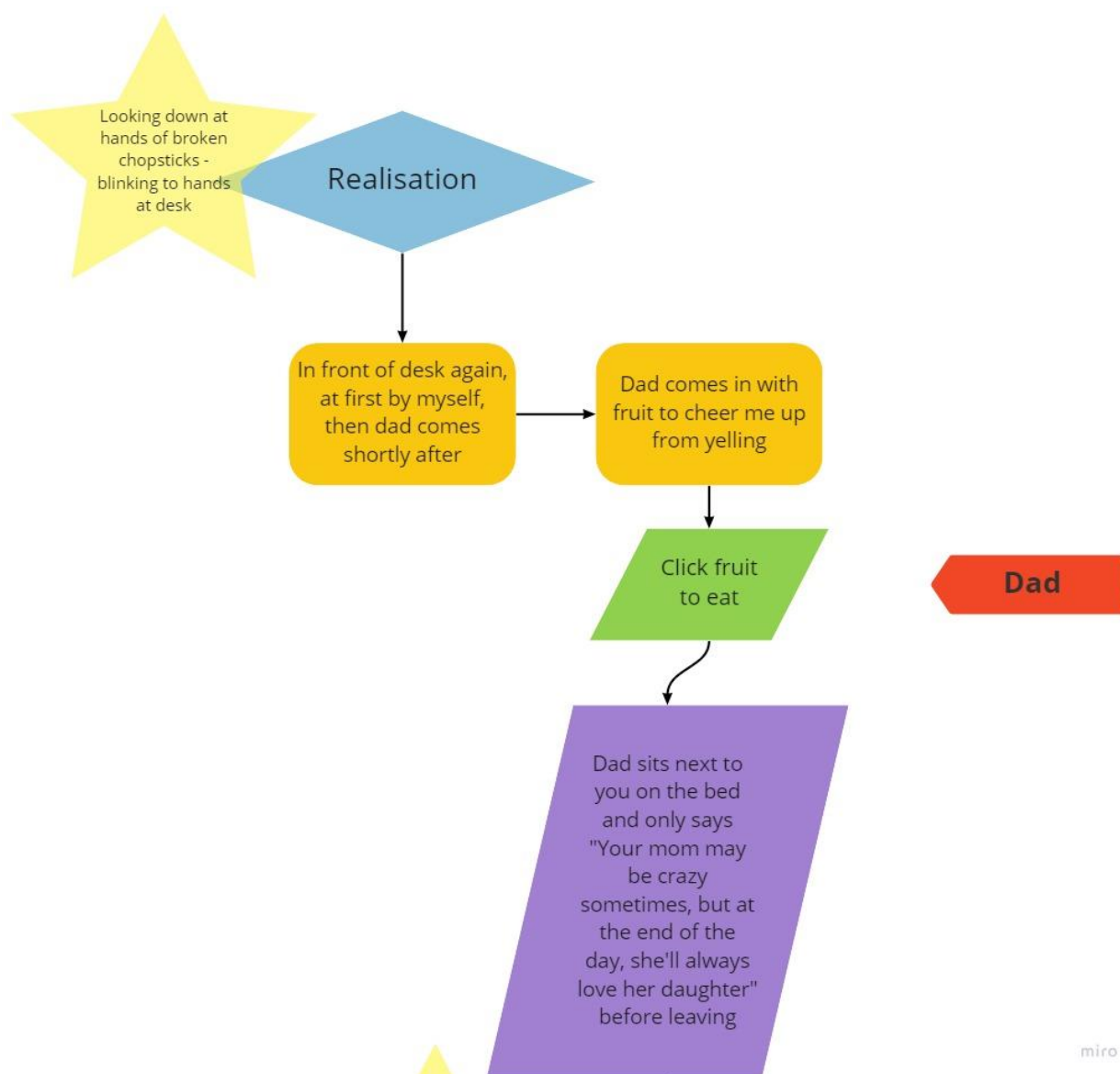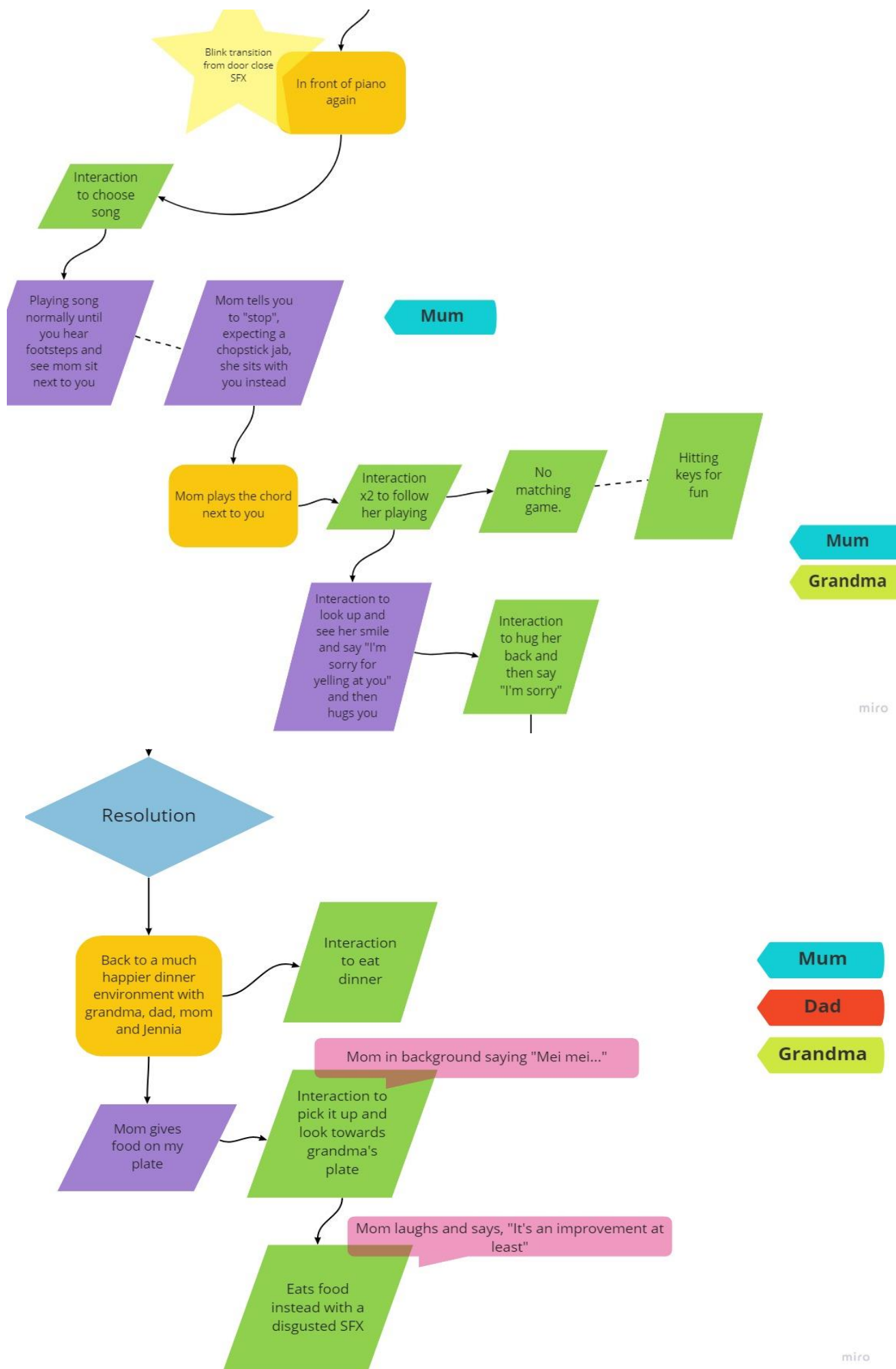
miro

Appendix 2

List of Interactions for video game artefact

Main menu Play/Options/Credits/Quit

Intro Scene goes from a black screen to the entrance of the dining room after Grandma calls my name, "Mei Mei"

1. ## Dining Room

Set up:

Zoomed out scene of dining room and living room at first and then will slowly pull focus closer to a first-person perspective. The player will move forward, past the dining room, to reveal grandma sitting on the left side with a TV in front of her, and piano legs and the bottom half of the keys at the top right corner of the room. The player will turn towards grandma before they can see the full piano.

Player Task: Walk to Grandma and see the piano from the corner of their eyes

Music:

Ambience of birds chirping and SFX of me walking

How does the player complete the Task?

After the player 'awakens', they can tap a button to trigger a walking animation past the dining table and towards where Grandma is sitting on the couch (you can see the bottom half of her face smiling and her arms are overlapping each other on her lap). There will be another trigger to move focus to fully face grandma, with no vision of the piano

Indication of Completion:

When Grandma smiles and asks "How was your day?" and it will switch to the next scene with a black fade in and out (like a blink animation)

2. ## Living Room (Talking with Grandma)

Set up:

The player sits down to face grandma and talks to her about their day. The player will rapidly discuss their subjects with her; her maths test, dancing, lunch situations, couldn't pronounce her name. These stem from my own experiences and the common things I would hear as a kid. For example, maths was always my worst subject, although I usually got picked on for maths groups as I was usually the only

or one of the few East Asians in the class. The Grandma scenes will have enthusiasm, in contrast Mom's scenes, as she never really asked how my day was.

The dialogue will consist of:

"The maths test today was terrible! It was so much harder than I thought and I'm sure mom will be angry at me, but I think it'll be okay cause she teaches me well. But today's dancing was fun! Oh and there's another Chinese student and I think she wants to be my friend too! So happy I'm getting more friends now! It was weird though, cause everyone said my food smelt funny, but I like it, they're the weird ones! Oh! Speaking of food, what's for dinner! Can I help today?"

Player Task: Talk to Grandma about player's day

Music:

Ambience birds will still play, with more uplifting violin background music. SFX of the sparks and punctuation marks that appear in the character's head

How does the player complete the Task?

With full independence, the player can use the finger trail mechanic to create a design on the screen while the character is talking.

OR

There will punctuation marks or an emoji face that appear on the screen with each event that happens – the player can tap on the marks to make it disappear. It represents each sentence's emotions since I'm very emotive and use a lot of gestures and facials in real life.

Indication of Completion:

Grandma laughs and asks if I want to practice piano first before Mom comes home

3.   Piano with Grandma

Set up:

There will be a fade in and out to a slightly zoomed out angle of the piano – you are able to slightly see the metronome and Grandma's legs next to you. You can drag left and right to see the legs slightly more on the left, and then a trigger will appear for the next part. The camera will then come closer to the middle section of the piano. An indication will appear to begin playing. This piano playing has complete freedom and the player can press whatever keys they want until Mom comes in.

Player Task: To play happily for Grandma

Music:

Slight bird chirping ambience – less birds.

Piano playing

How does the player complete the Task?

There will be a trigger for the camera to go from the zoomed-out perspective to a perspective closer that you only see the keys and book stand are in frame. This transition will just be a zoom inward on the picture.

For the actual playing, there will be a darker outline on the keys for the player to press – this outline will only show 3 times and the rest is up to the player to press. The piano will only show the middle section of the piano, so 10 white major keys and 7 black minor keys.

Indication of Completion:

There will be a sound of the door sliding opening and a click SFX from Mom coming home

4.   <u>**Piano with Mom 1**</u>

Set up:

As soon the click SFX comes, the camera will zoom out back to the original piano outlook, except the metronome is playing this time and mom's legs are crossed next to me.

The camera will zoom in again to the keys (same number as before with 10 white major keys and 7 black minor keys), but this time there is no option to press the keys randomly. There is now a book open in front of you, which is where the rhythm game will be played. There is only 1 song to play. Rhythm game will have some notes are slightly off at 3 points with mother say, "Stop slouching". "Wrong, try again" and "Do it again", in that order. The scene will end with me scoffing and then as soon as Mom is about to comment on it – Grandma calls for helping with dinner.

Player Task: To obey Mom and play the piece she gives us

Music: No ambience, only piano playing with a loud metronome ticking as well

How does the player complete the Task?

There will be a trigger to press which zooms the camera in to see the white music book, there will be nothing on the page until the player presses the page again – which will trigger the rhythm game to appear and almost immediately start. Rhythm game will have some notes slightly off near the end of the song – which will trigger Mom's dialogue after each mistake.

Indication of Completion:

Grandma yelling that I can come over to help for dinner

5.   Kitchen (Cooking with Grandma 1)

Set up:

story, dialogue, place.

Zoomed out scene, the player can drag left and right to look around the scene a little more. There are 3 small objects the player can tap on for sound effects. These are the tap, rice and cutting board. If the player moves more towards the right, which is where the cutting board is located – the player can tap on the rice cooker. The camera pulls into a closer view of the rice cooker.

Player Task: To put the rice on to cook for dinner.

Music: Slight twinkling music of triangle and soft violin

How does the player complete the Task?

The player needs to put rice water in the bowl, wash the rice. Put the lid on and turn the machine on. Put the rice in the bowl – Player drags an empty cup to the rice bowl, we hear a SFX of the dry rice, cup asset will be full of rice. Player then needs to drag it to the container; we hear rice being emptied into the container. Same interaction for water (container dragged toward the tap, interaction to tap the tap, container comes back filled with water) We mix the rice by swiping our finger over the bowl. Then we pull the lid down with a swipe and press the on button with a tap.

Indication of Completion:

We hear the rice start boiling and there will be a fade out of scene into the dinner scene.

6.   Dinner 1 (Dad/Mom/Grandma)

Set up:

The scene will fade from a black screen, to sitting in front of the dinner table with Mom on my right side, Grandma directly in front, and Dad next to Grandma. There is an empty plate and a bowl of rice in front of the player. Mom will indicate for me food to get from the table, the player will listen and place the food on their plate. However, after the 4th time the mum calls, it'll be an item the character does not like – capsicum. The player can then put this item on grandmother's plate. This will cause Mom to yell "hey!" Grandma shakes her head and puts it back onto my plate. The player can decide

whether they want to eat it or not; both interactions will end with speech marks being filled by Mom, until the screen is filled, and a white fade into a white book will appear.

Player Task: To eat and to try and listen to Mom on the table

Music: Soft rustling wind ambience

How does the player complete the Task?

Each item will be highlight with a bright outline around it, and the player can tap it and drag it to their highlighted plate. The player will listen and grab 3 food items, until the 4th time Mom calls you to grab it. The cursor will be a pair of chopsticks and when grabbed, each time will have a grasping SFX. The 4th item will be a capsicum and still have a bright outline around it, but this time Grandma's plate will be highlighted instead of time. As soon as you put it there, Mom's dialogue will trigger and a short-timed circle of 8 seconds will appear in front of my plate.

If the timer ends and the player hasn't ate, mom will yell again, which then triggers another quick-timed event of 7 seconds. If the player picks it up, there will be a "finally" and sigh from Mom, if the player does not, Mom will keep yelling (with her speech marks filling the screen until it is filled)

Indication of Completion:

The speech marks will fill the screen until screen fades into white for next scene.

7.   **Desk Homework**

Set up:

The scene will open from a fade into the exercise book in front of me, on the desk with Mom sitting on the right of me. The player will tap the book for the equation matching game to begin. Mom will encourage you with a "good" at the beginning, but the player will lose focus slowly and the question itself will become blurred (the watercolour bleeding through). Mom then will yell "we don't have much time! Do you want to fail again?". The camera will then sway left to right a bit. Mom will then sigh and tells me to finish one more question and then sleep. The screen fades into black with the last question.

Player Task: For the player to listen what Mom is saying while doing last minute homework

Music: Wind rustling in the background with SFX of pencil on paper

How does the player complete the Task?

There will be an equation at the top of the screen of simple mathematics, there will then be circles for the player to drag into a box – the box will already have a set number each time as it would be the correct answer. For example, if the question was 6+4 =?, the box will only allow 10 circles. There will be 3 rounds of this, with the 4th round being blurry and Mom's voice becoming more muffled. Mom will yell her dialogue which triggers everything to be clear again – a new asset will replace the blurry one. Mom sighs and says her dialogue. The player will have 2 more questions, but multiplication instead of addition.

Indication of Completion:
The last set of equations will show up and the screen will fade into black

8.   Piano with Mom 2 (Tension build)

Set up:
The player opens her eyes to in front of the piano and it would be morning again – this is determined whether there's birds chirping in the background. Because of the lack of sleep, the timing will be slower today will slightly off timing. After getting some of the keys wrong, Mom will use her 'chopstick' to point at the music score. The player can then tap on the music score to show a slightly wider view, as you'll able to see the legs. The player will play again, with every mistake invoking a poke to the thigh. The third mistake will trigger Mom about to yell "do it again" but will be interrupted by Grandma calling me at the same time. So it'll be like "Do-"and "Mei mei" almost as the same time. The scene will close with the camera zooming out and quickly panning to the right while panning to a fully black screen once turned.

Player Task: To play the piano without making any mistakes

Music:
Slight bird chirping ambience – less birds.
More wind as when the chopsticks appear
Metronome

How does the player complete the Task?
The scene will open to a zoomed-in perspective of only the keys. The player taps the music score to start the rhythm game. The notes are coming down slower and still slightly off time. The first time the player gets incorrect will trigger Mom pointing at the music score. There will then be a trigger for the player to tap on the music score. This will zoom out the camera slightly so you are able to see the player's legs. The song will play normally at first, but if the player plays incorrectly, there will be a

poke to the thigh with chopstick (camera moves to the right a bit for every poke).This happens 3 times. The third time will get interrupted by Grandma. The player then has a trigger to tap on their right side which will trigger to the next scene

Indication of Completion:
After the zoom out, the camera will pan to a fade out into black

9.   Kitchen (Cooking with Grandma 2)

Set up:

The scene opens from a black fade in, with the player in front of the kitchen sink again. The player can again slightly move left and right of the scene. They can then tap on the rice cooker to begin cooking rice again. While doing it, Grandma will say "you're getting better". After the rice interaction, there will be another trigger on the cutting board. This will trigger Grandma saying "can you chop the Bok-choy, ginger and potatoes for me?". The player will use a small knife and the food items would already be cut in half – so they only need to cut each item again once. The screen will then fade into black will rice steaming in the background again.

Player Task: To learn more about cooking rice and how to chop Bok-choy, ginger and potato

Music:

Slight twinkling music of triangle and soft violin

How does the player complete the Task?

Put the rice in the bowl – Player drags an empty cup to the rice bowl, we hear a SFX of the dry rice, cup asset will be full of rice. Player then needs to drag it to the container; we hear rice being emptied into the container. Same interaction for water (container dragged toward the tap, interaction to tap the tap, container comes back filled with water) We mix the rice by swiping our finger over the bowl. Then we pull the lid down with a swipe and press the on button with a tap.

There will then be a trigger on the cutting board, which will trigger Grandma's dialogue and the 3 items to appear on the board. As it will be already cut in half, each item will be highlighted for the player to cut individually and be cut twice. The cutting will just be a tap and it will be cut twice for each tap.

Indication of Completion:

After the last food item, the screen will fade into a black screen

10. **Dinner 2 (Dad/Mom/Grandma)**

Set up:

The screen will fade in from black with the dining table with more food (eggs and meat/bokchoy/rice next to the player/eggs and tomato). Grandma and Dad will already be on the table this time. The player will hold their chopsticks this time. Grandma gently laughs at the player's chopsticks and the player can rotate the chopsticks. - but mom comes over and says "you cant even hold your chopsticks properly too sigh" and tries to help me too but I just yank away. Mom tsks but doesn't do anything about it. The player can then pick up some food, until Mom tells them to pick up a certain food, then there will be nothing to tap. Mom will sigh and shortly after both Mom and dad finish their meal and say "thank you for the meal, we're going to work now". Grandma will then say "your mom works very hard everyday, you should be nicer to her". The camera nods up and down slowly and then looks down at my hands. Blinking transitions to black screen into a new scene.

Player Task: To eat and to try and listen to everyone on the table

Music: Violin based ambience, with the music getting quieter near the end with more wind

How does the player complete the Task?

The screen will include the chopsticks this time. After Grandma's laugh, the player can tap on the chopsticks so they can rotate them. This is just an infinite rotation, until Mom's dialogue stops the interaction. When Mom's hands start reaching over, the camera will jolt quickly to the left side to avoid her. The interaction of picking up the highlighted food will appear, but when Mom's dialogue comes up, there is no interaction to pick it up. Mom's sigh will trigger, then Dad and Mom's dialogue. The player can tap on Grandma's plate to hear her dialogue.

Indication of Completion:

After Grandma's dialogue, the scene will blink into the new scene

11. **Ballet (Grandma)**

Set up:

The screen will blink from a black screen into the garage. The camera will face towards the garage, towards the open space. The player can dance freely and do any music routine.

Player Task: To dance freely

Music:

Slight twinkle music in the background with triangles

Ballet music

How does the player complete the Task?

The player can tap on the ground to trigger the circles around the floor. Follow the circles on the floor to create notes from each one – piano chords, with some having singular notes. There is no order or anything, the player can just tap on each one, or 2 at once.

Indication of Completion:

You hear Mom saying, "this isn't the right dance" And Grandma replying, "oh we were just having fun, I'm off to dinner now! See you soon Mei mei" with the camera fading into black

12.   Ballet (Mom)

Set up:

The camera will fade in from the black screen, but now the camera will face away from the garage, towards the door with Mom sitting on the chair in the middle. The camera will then fade from black to the floor, where the circles will light up on the floor. When one lights up, only then can the player step on it. This will keep repeating (5 maximum rounds of different circle patterns). Each time the player steps on an incorrect one, Mom will say "aiya, wrong" or "that's not right" or "you're not listening to me". This will not affect the rounds and still end at the same time.

Player Task: To follow the correct order of steps – Simon's Says

Music: Only the ballet music when a circle is stepped on

How does the player complete the Task?

When the scene opens up facing Mom, there will be a trigger on the floor which will then cut to the perspective of the game. The player will step on the correct order of circles - like a Simon's Says pattern. This continues until the player completes a full 5 rounds without getting it incorrect. If they were to make a mistake, Mom will say her dialogue, but nothing will change towards the actual 'rounds' and it will still finish with 5.

Indication of Completion:

Mom will say, "You're getting better. Good" and there will be a tap to press after 3 seconds which will trigger the player to say "thank you mom". The screen will then fade into black and move to the next scene.

13.   Piano with Mom 3 (Stress from Ballet carried on)

Set up:

The camera will fade from a black screen to the opening of this scene. This scene starts straight into the zoomed-viewpoint with my legs in the view. A trigger will appear again on the music book to start playing. Everytime the player plays with Mom, it has been the same song everytime. The rhythm game is the same at the beginning, but there will be notes completely missing from the beat, each time a beat gets missed; Mom will say "are you even trying" and "can you please listen to me" and "why do I bother". Mom gets fed up and walks away, the camera will then pan towards the player's hands.

Player Task: To reluctantly keep playing, but deliberately missing notes

Music:

Will start with the slight bird chirping sounds and then change to slight rain with the piano music the player is playing

Metronome

How does the player complete the Task?

Rhythm game will be normal in the beginning - normal tempo- but will have notes taken off, unable for the player to press them. Every miss will trigger Mom's dialogue. She will have 3 pieces of dialogue and after the third, her legs will disappear from the scene with walking SFX going further away. There will be a tap to make the camera look at the player's hands to transition to the next scene.

Indication of Completion:

Mom walks away and I look down to my hands – fades into me in front of the kitchen sink by myself

14.   Kitchen (alone)

Set up:

The camera is in the same position as the previous kitchen scenes, but this time there is no one next to me and no ambient music. The player will do the same tasks as before, but completely by themselves with no praises.

Player Task: For the player to cook the rice and cut the vegetables with no one else there

Music: No music, only the SFX

How does the player complete the Task?

Put the rice in the bowl – Player drags an empty cup to the rice bowl, we hear a SFX of the dry rice, cup asset will be full of rice. Player then needs to drag it to the container, we hear rice being emptied into the container. Same interaction for water (container dragged toward the tap, interaction to tap the tap, container comes back filled with water) We mix the rice by swiping our finger over the bowl. Then we pull the lid down with a swipe and press the on button with a tap.

3 food items will appear (onion/carrot/chives) on separate plates after the rice cooker is turned on. The player will then drag and drop the items to the highlighted (outline of the) cutting board.

Each item will also have taps to represent a cut - and the items will be animated with frame by frame of 1 whole food time and 3 cuts in between them. The food items will all be cut 3 times, before the scene fades to black.

Indication of Completion:

There will be a rice cooking steaming sound, with all the 3 food items cut, and the screen will fade into black for the next scene.

15.   Dinner 3 (Dad/Mom)

Set up:

The scene opens up with just my Dad sitting on the right front side, and Mom sitting beside me. There's less food, but the player still presses the trigger to pick up the food. There is still a bowl of rice on the left side, now the player can press it to eat it. As soon as this happens, Mom will say "put both your hands up for dinner", I mumble and continue eating. The player can either grab more food or rice. Mom will say again "put your left hand on your bowl when you're eating". This time the player can quickly lift their hand up, and will be given the opportunity twice. If the player chooses not to pick their hand up the second time (which is not timed), the player will yell back "am I doing everything wrong now??" which will still lead to Mom yelling again - with the same dialogue as before.

Player Task: To try and keep up the everyone's directions

Music: Only SFX of chopsticks clinking, dialogue and the smash on the table

How does the player complete the Task?

The player's first interaction is to put the outlined food onto the highlighted plate. Then an interaction to tap the rice bowl to eat from it. This will trigger Mom's dialogue, and then the character's dialogue. There will be another trigger to continue eating from the bowl or grab more food. This will again trigger Moms' dialogue. There will now be a timed interaction of 6 seconds for the player to put their left hand on the table. If missed, they would have another opportunity, but not timed. There

Indication of Completion:

The speech bubbles of Mom will overbear Dad's and will fill the screen until it turns white. The white fade in will then fade out to the white book on the piano stand.

16.   Piano stress (Climax)

Set up:

The camera fades from a black screen to show the white book stand, Mom uses the chopstick to point at the book to start playing. The player again plays the song, with the metronome significantly getting louder than usual.

The beat plays slightly off still and will have spontaneous moment of it going faster so the player cannot keep up. Everytime a mistake occurs, the player gets a jab from the chopstick, jolting the camera towards the right side a bit. Each jab Mom will also keep saying "wrong!". This happens 3 times until the player grabs the chopstick and breaks it (with huffing SFX from the character). Player looks down at chopsticks broken in half (mom yelling SFX) (very light red chopsticks). Scene fades into black with only the sound of the rain.

Player Task: To explode in frustration, which then brings instant guilt

Music: Pouring rain in background, loud metronome and piano keys

How does the player complete the Task?

Rhythm game timing will be slightly off but will have random bursts of fast speeds 3 times within the piece. Each time there is a mistake, this triggers Mom to do the poking leg animation 3 times. There will be continuous speed changes throughout the song in case the player lands the speed changes.

However, by the third time, the screen will black out for a second with the SFX of wood cracking and the player huffing. The screen will then fade in and out to the player's hands and broken chopsticks.

Indication of Completion:
The camera will show the hands with the broken chopsticks in black screen fade out.

17.   Dad's talk

Set up:
The camera fades back in from black screen to my room, from the perspective of sitting on my bed. There would be a knocking and Dad saying, "can I come in?". The player mumbles, "yeah". Dad comes in frame by frame with a plate of apples and places them on the table and sits down on the chair. The player can eat the fruit.

Dad sits next to you on the bed and only says "Your mom may be crazy sometimes, but at the end of the day, she'll always love her daughter" The player can then tap on the dad to say "I'm sorry dad" and he'll respond with "you shouldn't be saying sorry to me".

Player Task: To acknowledge what Dad is saying with the 'gift' of apples as consultation

Music: Goes from pouring rain, to small spitting of rain

How does the player complete the Task?
The player can tap the door to response to Dad in the beginning. Then the fruit and sitting down will be frame by frame animation. After he sits down, the player can tap the fruit to eat it. As dad's conversation is very short, you can interact with him after his sentence to respond with "I'm sorry dad" and it'll trigger his response of "you shouldn't be saying sorry to me". The screen will then fade into a black screen

Indication of Completion:
The dialogue will end with my Dad's response, into a faded black screen.

18.   Piano with Grandma

Set up:
The scene opens from the faded black screen to the zoomed out perspective of the piano – where you can see Grandma's legs on the side. Grandma sits with her legs neutral and hands on her lap, whereas Mom sits crossed legged with arms crossed too. You can tap on the book which will trigger Grandma

to say, "just play something for me" and the camera will zoom in to only the keys. There is complete freedom to playing, as Grandma doesn't supervise my piano classes so doesn't know what I'm learning.

During this, Grandma will have dialogue of "I know your mom sometimes has bad temper, but you're also like that. And you're like that cause you're stressed right? Then, imagine how stressed your mom is. Working everyday for us. Taking care of your studies. And trying to be a good parent. She's trying her best to be a good parent. You can try your best to be a good daughter. I know you're good meimei"

Player Task: To listen to Grandma while playing around with keys

Music: Mainly piano music, with slight rain in the background

How does the player complete the Task?
The mechanics will be the same as the first time I played with only Grandma.
There will be a trigger for the camera to go from the zoomed-out perspective to a perspective closer that you only see the keys and book stand are in frame. This transition will just be a zoom inward on the picture.
For the actual playing, there will be a darker outline on the keys for the player to press – this outline will only show 3 times and the rest is up to the player to press. The piano will only show the middle section of the piano, so 10 white major keys and 7 black minor keys.

Indication of Completion:
Grandma's dialogue completion and you'll hear Mom say "meimei" with a fade into a complete white screen (like a flashbang) to the next scene.

19.   **Piano with Mom**
Set up:
The camera is set outwards again, being able to see the legs of Mom on the side, instead of Grandma. The player taps the book and Mom says "you can start whenever you're ready ok." The player then starts playing. But, all the keys will be in the correct place and the tempo will be correct. The player can play the rhythm game peacefully and complete the piece. If the player makes a mistake, this will trigger mom to say "You- (in an angry tone). It's okay". Or "You- (in an angry tone). Keep going". After the piece is completed, the player looks up and says "I'm sorry mom". The player willl see her smile and a 2 frame animation of Mom coming in for a hug will appear, with black screen fade in and

out to the player's perspective of the Mom's back and her hands in fists - screen turns bright. With this perspective transition Mom says "I'm sorry too honey. I love you." Tears swells up from the bottom of the screen with an interaction to let go of closed fists and hug mom back. Fade from bright to black screen

Player Task: To play the piano and listen to Mom

Music: At first, only the piano and a quiet metronome. Then the twinkling music ambience (that's usually used for cooking)

How does the player complete the Task?
There will be a trigger on the white book again for the player to tap. Mom's dialogue plays. Then the player can tap the book again to being the rhythm game, the metronome also starts playing but much quieter. The rhythm game will be completely in tune/in time/right tempo, the player should be able to complete this. Once completed, there will be an arrow for the player to press to zoom back out to the perspective where you can see Mom's legs. They'll be another trigger in front of Mom for the player to say "I'm sorry mom". Animation will play. Once the animation is completed of the Mom hugging. In the new perspective (seeing the fists) Mom will say her dialogue and the player will have the interaction to open her fists to open palms to hug the mom back. Scene fades to the next scene.

Indication of Completion:
The closed fists will open when hugging mom, and the screen will go from bright to a fade into a black screen.

20.   Dinner 4 (Grandma/Dad/Mom) - Resolution

Set up:
The screen fades from a black screen into a brighter dining table with everyone sitting down already. The camera can be moved slightly left and right, so you can see Mom on your right side a little better. The room is very bright, and the player has a bowl on their left and able to pick up the food items. Mom does not tell her to pick anything specific, until the player has picked up 3 items. Mom will then tell her to pick up the capsicum; "meimei, don't forget the healthy capsicum". The player picks up the capsicum and will have a 2 second timer to be able to put it on Grandma's plate. The player will then place it in their own plate. Mom's dialogue of "whew thought you were going to put it on Grandma's plate" and laughter will trigger. There will be a trigger on top of the rice bowl to lift their left hand up

and hold the bowl. Mom will say "good kid" (guai hai zhi). The player picks up the capsicum and eats it with a disgusted SFX. This is followed by laughter from Mom, Dad and Grandma and the scene fades into black.

Player Task: To have a good, relaxed dinner with everyone

Music: Twinkling music along with piano that I played with Mom

How does the player complete the Task?

Each item will be highlight with a bright outline around it, and the player can tap it and drag it to their highlighted plate. The player can grab any of the items in any order, once grabbed and dragged to the plate, the highlight over the food will disappear. The cursor will be a pair of chopsticks and when grabbed, each time will have a grasping SFX.

After the 3rd food item has been grabbed, Mom's dialogue of picking the capsicum will trigger.

Once the food is picked up, there will be a 2 second timer on Grandma's plate – the player shouldn't be able to click this (I can make it 1.5 seconds or shorter if someone actually can). Mom's dialogue will trigger.

There will be a trigger on top of the rice bowl to lift their left hand up and hold the bowl. Mom's dialogue will trigger.

There will be a trigger for the player to tap on top of the capsicum and there will be SFX of "eugh" and loud munching sounds, with the capsicum asset disappearing from it.

Once capsicum asset disappears, this triggers the whole family to laugh and for the screen to fade.

Indication of Completion:

The screen with fade into black with the laughter of the family

Ending

The scene opens from a black screen to a photograph of the family on the dinner table

Appendix 3

Draft animatic for the third rendition of the narrative