

Question Set 1

What is the difference between a game designer and a game developer?

The designer is the creator/inventor of the game's concept, metaphor, and overall mechanics, while the developer's role is to refine the game and prepare it for market. The reading explains that, "the developer is charged with taking the prototype, looking at it from a different perspective than the designer, and readying it for production. Some games may need a complete overhaul while others may not need much work at all" (79).

What commonly occurs during the game development process?

Developers repeatedly playtest and make changes to balance out the game. This involves simplifying the rules and testing out extreme strategies to discover any faults. Blind playtests inform developers on how intuitive the rules are for new players. Development continues until the final game is fun and easy to learn.

What are the challenges of balancing a game?

Balancing a game can be challenging because new elements create new potential interactions. When trying to blend multiple elements in a game, "the risk is that there may be strategies or situations that did not come up in the designer's playtesting, which can be exposed when someone is intentionally trying to break the game..." (76). Designers must navigate the game's hidden costs (concept of granular costing), complexity, and controlled imbalances to keep the game exciting. The reading also explains that imperfect balance is not always bad for the success of a game.

What should every player of your game believe? Why?

Every player should believe that they have a real chance to win until the game ends. This emotional investment is what keeps the game fun and engaging. Even if the odds are slim, players must have some sense of hope, otherwise players might feel frustration.

How can you avoid stealing players' fun?

You can encourage the players' fun by avoiding early player eliminations or unfair advantages in a game's design. This can lead to a shorter, or less fulfilling gameplay experience. Moreover, incorporating mechanics that allow players to catch up, balancing player interactions, and avoiding excessive punishment keeps everyone invested, especially in the beginning of the game. Progress should get harder near victory.

What 10 maxims should you follow when writing rules?

- 1- Use no intermediary terminology. Keep language simple, clear, and consistent.
 - 2- Use real words.
 - 3- Make no more work than necessary. Avoid overcomplicating it.
 - 4- Add flavor (but not too much). Keep thematic elements visually separate from the mechanics.
 - 5- Make the text no smarter than your reader. Avoid academic or overly technical language.
 - 6- Discard rules that can't be written. Complexity that can't be taught should be redesigned.
 - 7- Take a breath. Use short sentences and subheadings.
 - 8- Go easy on the eyes. Avoid using ALL CAPS and bolding text to excess.
 - 9- Get your final version playtested blind. New players must be able to understand how to play the game using only the rules.
 - 10- Fix it in the FAQ. Take ownership of mistakes and clarify the rules when it comes up. Fix the errors and reprint.
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Question Set 2

How has play testing changed your game?

The playtests have been really insightful to the functionality of my first game. I noticed that some players chose to shuffle their hand strategically before having to give a card up to another player. It was also interesting to see which cards players decided to hold onto. Questions helped me to clarify the rules and adjust the scoring to be more intuitive.

Who from class would you like to playtest your next game or version 2 of your first game?

I'd want the other half of the class that did not playtest my first version to be involved in the second round of testing because I would be able to see if my changes to the rules were successful. I would also like for you (Professor Ames) to playtest my game because of your experience with various game mechanics.

Who is the audience for your game?

The audience would be younger than that of traditional Gin Rummy, of which my game takes its inspiration. The theme relates to student aged players, as well as young adults. I would also expect their level of experience specific to these mechanics to be low, as many of the young people I have asked have never played Rummy.

Who should playtest your game outside of class?

People in my target demographic that don't know me. I could maybe ask a random group of people if they would like to play. This is because they would give unbiased feedback, and it would tell me if it is truly easy to learn from the created rules alone.