

Week 1

Calvin Ball

Was it fun?

Yes! I enjoyed how simple it was to learn and participate in.

What were the player interactions?

The players interacted with the ball by passing it off to other players. The player with the ball had to then implement a rule that would create a new gameplay experience for the others.

How long did it take to learn?

We understood the game immediately as we just followed players instructions for play as they were announced.

What was the most frustrating moment or aspect of what you just played?

The most frustrating part of the game was having to remember too many rules at once, or being stuck with rules that made the game stressful or less fun overall.

What was your favorite moment or aspect of what you just played?

My favorite part was seeing how our game developed. I liked that it started collaboratively and became more competitive.

Was there anything you wanted to do that you couldn't?

No, we had no real limitations.

If you had a magic wand to wave, and you could change, add, or remove anything from the experience, what would it be?

Nothing that couldn't be changed during gameplay.

Is this a game you would play again? Yes X No Why?

Yes, because it forces players to think outside the box and has high replayability.

Analyze the game using the 3 act structure.

Act I (Setup): Players start with a ball and only one rule - that players cannot play the game the same way twice.

Act II (Gameplay): players establish new rules for passing the ball off to other players and new objectives for “winning”.

Act III (Resolution): The game will go on until someone makes a rule that defines what it means to win Calvin Ball, or simply names themself the winner.

What are the collaborative and or competitive aspects of the game?

Some rules require collaboration, such as keeping the ball up off of the ground. Players may also remove existing rules to benefit the collective group. Some players will engage with the game more competitively, creating rules in which they themselves have an advantage, or by naming themselves the winner.

What is the game’s metaphor and which of the game’s mechanics standout?

The game’s metaphor revolves around adaptability and our ability to change the outcome by changing the game. The mechanic is that the rules constantly change.

Describe the game in 3 sentences or in the form of a haiku.

Calvin ball is a game that is constantly changing. It encourages players to keep track of rules and add new ones to the experience. The game can be played infinitely, and an infinite amount of times, and still produce a new experience.

Getting Over it

Was it fun?

I only watched when Mason was playing, but I don't think that I would have enjoyed playing this one as much myself.

What were the player interactions?

This was a solo player game. The player interacted with the mechanics of the game.

How long did it take to learn?

It takes new players a while to get used to the controls.

What was the most frustrating moment or aspect of what you just played?

The most frustrating part was falling and losing progress in the game, and having to start over each time.

What was your favorite moment or aspect of what you just played?

It was fun to watch the player overcome the game's challenges.

Was there anything you wanted to do that you couldn't?

I would have liked the opportunity to work to save my progress. I wish it wasn't so easy to fall all the way back to the bottom, thus having to restart entirely. If there were a couple longer platforms that could allow the player to save themselves from a complete fall, I think it would be less frustrating for the player to progress in the game.

If you had a magic wand to wave, and you could change, add, or remove anything from the experience, what would it be?

I would adjust the controls or add power sliders or gauges to help players better understand the impact of their movements within the game.

Is this a game you would play again? Yes ____ No ____ X ____ Why?

I would attempt to play the game myself, but feel like I would quickly lose interest just because of how complicated it seemed to learn the controls. I did not have enough interest in the game to approach it with patience.

Analyze the game using the 3 act structure.

Act I (Setup): Learning the controls of the game.

Act II (Gameplay): The player attempts to climb the mountain and is forced to restart when they fall. The game gets progressively more difficult.

Act III (Resolution): The game comes to an end when the player reaches the top of the mountain or ultimately gives up after various failed attempts.

What are the collaborative and or competitive aspects of the game?

Players interact with the game competitively trying to climb the mountain. They may also compete to complete the game faster than other players.

What is the game's metaphor and which of the game's mechanics standout?

The game's metaphor is the situations in life that set us back unexpectedly, and our own perseverance despite setbacks and failure. The standout mechanic is the rotation of the hammer as a means of moving up the mountain.

Describe the game in 3 sentences or in the form of a haiku.

Sometimes we don't have the right tool to overcome a situation, but we work to the best of our ability with what we have. Tools come to us in the form of experience and the game simulates this process of multiple attempts and failures. Ultimately, effort does not always equate to success and perseverance is one's only chance at "getting over it".

TownScrapers

Was it fun?

I only watched it being played on the projector, but it looked very satisfying. I would probably have fun playing because there's different creative choices one can make, but there is no added pressure.

What were the player interactions?

This is a solo game and players interact only with the game's controls. They can select a color to build with as well as different structures from which to add or subtract from.

How long did it take to learn?

Pretty quickly. It took a little longer to figure out how to undo a build.

What was the most frustrating moment or aspect of what you just played?

Nothing was frustrating about this game, it was very relaxing.

What was your favorite moment or aspect of what you just played?

I really liked how things were animated. The look and feel of the game was great and very simple.

Was there anything you wanted to do that you couldn't?

I would have liked to have more options for customization. I believe that the simplicity of the game limits the player from taking things further. Overall the game could benefit from more modes of player interaction.

If you had a magic wand to wave, and you could change, add, or remove anything from the experience, what would it be?

If I could change anything about the experience, I would add more customization. Different landscapes, building structures, or items to interact with.

Is this a game you would play again? Yes X No _____ Why?

Act I (Setup/Discovery): The player learns the game's mechanic by clicking on different tiles and selecting different colors from the panel on the left.

Act II (Gameplay): The player is able to experiment and customize their town by building vertically onto existing structures, selecting different colors, and creating bridges to connect them in unique ways.

Act III (Resolution): The game can be played infinitely or restarted to create a new town. The resolution being the players satisfaction with their creation and the building process.

What are the collaborative and or competitive aspects of the game?

The game could be collaborative if playing alongside a friend, however it is designed to be a solo gameplay experience. The player is collaborating with the design of the system and how to manipulate the structures. The game is not competitive.

What is the game's metaphor and which of the game's mechanics standout?

The game's metaphor is to freely create without pressure or fear of failure. Unlike *Getting Over It*, it allows players to let go of seeking perfection and external validation. The mechanic that stands out is the various ways to build and manipulate the town by clicking in different areas on the grid.

Describe the game in 3 sentences or in the form of a haiku.

Townscraper is like a playground, and encourages players to create in a low stress environment. There is no set objective or restrictions when it comes to undoing a build. This allows the player to experiment more than in other games, but some might prefer the challenge and direction that other games provide.

Homework Questions

What are the issues Ian Bogost raises about social games with Cow Clicker?

Ian Bogost spoke at the 2010 GDC and shared his intention behind creating *Cow Clicker*. He explains that it started as a satirical approach to Facebook games like *FarmVille*, and how it was expanded to further test out his social theories. The game exposed the exploitation of player behavior when there is a social reward system in place, and was successful on the basis of its social critique. Bogost reduced gameplay to a meaningless but simple click every six hours, demonstrating how these games are capable of training its players through repetition and reinforcement.

How do social games like FarmVille enframe friends?

Social games like *FarmVille* enframe friends by turning human interaction into resources for one to progress. Once addicted, players are encouraged to invite their friends to play so that they can access special rewards. Designers for social games take what they know about human behavior and turn connection into a mechanic. The result is higher potential for monetization. Players invest real time and money into the game, which sparks this discussion about voluntary participation.

How do social games destroy time outside of the game?

Social games destroy time outside of the normal gameplay experience by forcing players to adjust their schedule to accommodate for continued play. In *FarmVille*, time away from the game is made to feel valuable. Crops go to waste if not harvested in time, creating pressure to return to the game and creating a superficial feeling of loss if not maintained. This mechanic turns time into a resource outside of active play. Social games use notifications to keep players engaged and thinking of the time they have spent away from the game.