

Group Activity: Generating Game Designs

Get together in a group of **3 or 4**. You'll need a laptop handy to create a document that you will turn in for credit.

Part I, Conceptualization

As a group, for each of the following lists, go around the "table" (in order, no passing!) suggesting additions. Quick answers! The more variety the better. Write down all your ideas in the shared document. Get at least 10 ideas in each list.

Premises (e.g. an alien wants to go home, there's a worldwide shortage of coffee, a set of towns are fighting over an oil well)

Characters (e.g. angry bob needs coffee to stay calm, mayor sarah the mind controller, lost puppy turned savage)

Actions and Consequences (e.g. you need to collect fuel to keep going, townspeople can sabotage other rigs, roaches swarm over you and slow you down)

Part II, Merged Concepts

Don't get caught up in trying to make it "right". This is an iterative process.

Whoever has the laptop and the lists, randomly select one idea from each of the three lists and say them out loud. The person next to them gives a spontaneous 2-3 sentence game description that merges those ideas together. Keep it simple and brief. Don't stop to write them down, just everyone pay attention to your favorites.

Repeat for the next person and go around the table, including the person with the laptop reading off the random selection. Do this at least three times around the table (9-12 concepts).

Each group member share which merged concept that was most interesting to you (no duplicates). Write those selected ones down in the document (2-3 sentences, as best you recall).

Part III, First Design

As a group, select one of those merged concepts you all generated to work on together here in class. Flesh out the concept into a simple game design by answer the following questions in the shared doc.

High level: Objectives & conflicts

- 1) What is the player's goal, and what do they need to do to achieve it?
- 2) What are the most significant obstacles/conflicts to the player succeeding?

More specific: The central system dynamics

- 3) What is the most important player action? The most common?
- 4) List the possible ways that the environment can respond to those actions (outcomes).

Commit to a specific idea

- 5) List 2-3 player experiences that will make the game fun and interesting. Be specific and player-focused!
- 6) Draw out a sequence of screenshot sketches showing what a player would see during those critical gameplay experiences from question 5. Pay attention to what information is on screen (environment and UI elements). You have to commit to a certain visual perspective here (2d/3d, fixed or rotating camera).
Use your phone or a webcam to scan those sketches and add them to the doc.
- 7) Write a 1-2 paragraph description that "sells" this concept to potential players. Try to capture what makes it uniquely interesting. Describe at least the premise, aesthetic, core gameplay and how you win or lose.

Turn in the doc via email, and make sure everyone's name is on it!

Part IV, Homework

Take one of the other concepts from Part II, or come up with a different concept of your own, and repeat Part III for that idea. Since you have more time, be more detailed with your answers than you were in class.

Turn in that document via email by next class time.