



PROCESS



DEFINING THE GAP

SETTING OBJECTIVES

1 Before you begin with your project it very important to define the gap you are trying to address. Why are you doing this project? What is the problem statement?

Remember to pin point one key factor/ problem area and not everything that you can think of.

In our case it was:

THE GAP/AIM

Students don't have a clear picture of the world of work they are getting into. Because of which many end up quitting or switching jobs frequently. The employers feel that they lack the skills necessary to climb up the ladder.

REASONING

It is equally important to understand why such a gap exists in the first place. It helps you put yourself in the shoes of your audience.

The next step can be lot more flexible.

OBJECTIVES

The first step towards building a any sort of game is to set the objectives straight; what are you trying to address? The objectives define what players are trying to achieve within the rules of the game.

One there is the direct objective which is a perceivable outcome. Then there is a the underlying objective which is more indirect like a provoking thought which is addressing a larger issue at source.

Priorities your objectives according to its importance and impact.

Your objectives is very likely to evolve over time unlike your "aim". You may delete irrelevant ones or add newer insights as you go through the process of creating your game. Jot down as much points which you think could help address the issue at hand. Don't omit objectives just because you think it's irrelevant. Building a game is a team effort and it involves a lot of discussions before taking any step.

1. Bring the industry, I.T.I students and community together.

2. Provide relevant information to students about the world of work such that they can make an informed career decision.

3. Importance of education and upskilling.

4. Identify different pathways one could take in his/her career.

5. Examples of success stories.

THINGS TO REMEMBER :

- . Get your objectives straight. Don't have too many of them that you can't meet all of them.
- . You kind of tend to forget who your target group is at times, so remember to pin it up where you can see them somewhere.

CHOICE OF MEDIUM

2

I know it comes across as a stupid question to ask, especially now that we have already started talking about a game, but it very important to take into consideration the medium of choice. What medium best illustrates your message? What would you think that it would work better than the others? Before deciding on using game-based learning, you must first determine what you would like your audience to learn. If you fail to focus the content around a central idea you run the risk of using a game that fails to connect with the learners. To prevent this, tailor the material to the demographic (age group, familiarity, educational pre-text) so that the material is neither too difficult for, nor too familiar to the learner. It also at times depend upon time and cost, but most importantly it depends on the level of engagement; to what extent do you want your audience to engage with your content.

For instance this project of ours was very time bound in the beginning. Right then we had many ideas such as a kiosk or an interactive book/table. We even wanted to make some physical apps. But overtime we thought it would be best to do this project without any time constraints. So we dived into the realm of games as it allowed the flexibility we were looking for. Again so, there is the question of what kind of games is it going to be a video game or a board game or and app or a sport activity?

WHY GAMES?

Games often have a fantasy element that engages players in a learning activity through narrative or storylines. Educational video games can motivate children and allow them to develop an awareness of consequentiality. Children are allowed to express themselves as individuals while learning and engaging in social issues.

Games can offer deeper, more meaningful insights in all academic areas. The success of game-based learning strategies owes to active participation and interaction being at the center of the experience.

The use of collaborative game-based role-play for learning provides an opportunity for learners to apply acquired knowledge and to experiment and get feedback in the form of consequences or rewards, thus getting the experiences in the "safe virtual world".

The built-in learning process of games is what makes a game enjoyable. The progress a player makes in a game is through learning. It is the process of the human mind grasping and coming to understand a new system. The progress of understanding a new concept through gaming makes an individual feel a sense of reward whether the game is considered entertainment (Call of Duty) or serious (FAA-approved flight simulator).

1. *games are fun*
2. *engaging*
3. *experiential*
4. *p2p learning*
5. *application of skills in a risk free environment*
6. *a two way exchange of information*
7. *immediate feedback on one's decision*
8. *a lot of permutation and combination in creating one's pathways (replayability)*
9. *information in chunks*
10. *career ladder visible*
11. *way more retention*
12. *real life simulation*
13. *comparative analysis*
14. *problem solving*
15. *accessible*
16. *affordable*
17. *easily re-invented : flexible*
18. *an assessment tool*
19. *narrative/story*
20. *awareness of consequentiality*
21. *collaborative*
22. *participatory*
23. *perfect for the age group we are working with*
24. *contextual learning*
25. *a self-directed exploration*

RESEARCH

3

PLANNING THE WORKSHOP WORKSHOP OVERVIEW WORKSHOP OUTCOME PROCESSING THE OUTPUT

Once we had our objectives straight we decided to hold a workshop in order to open the subject of discussion to a wider group of people so as to get their perspectives onto the table.

Alternatively you could even design culture probes or post on online forums or create digital surveys just to name a few.

Prepare a fun mix of questionnaires and activities - individual and in groups. Structure them in such a way that you get a panoramic view of the topic of discussion. Use different methods. If you are having trouble there is a motherload of information and ideas on the internet on how to conduct such workshops.

Keep in mind the aim of the workshop while preparing for it. This is your one shot view into crazy new insights, so make the best use of this time.

WHO ARE THE PARTICIPANTS

Choose individuals who are well versed with the space of inquiry, has a good idea of that space and are constantly engaged in it; are a part of that ecosystem.

AIM

What is the aim of our workshop?

- 1. Finding out the factors that affect decision making into choosing a certain career path.*
- 2. Crowd sourcing ways in which one could present the career information to the students.*

Obviously people goes Berserk in such workshops. And berserk it good until they stick within the aim of your workshop. But sometimes you need to intervene where necessary. You always end up with very interesting and bizarre ideas, which in turn adds new dimensions to your project. So, just have fun!

Once you're done, synthesizing the outcome can be quite a task. Try different ways to categories ideas. Create a variety of buckets. Detect, decipher and deduce. Take your time.

OTHER AREAS OF ENQUIRY

Be very observant and try find inspiration in the world around you. Crowd sourcing ideas through workshops maybe one thing, but there can be a whole lot of ideas floating around you in everyday objects and scenarios.

LOOK AT OTHER EXISTING PRODUCTS

It is also advisable to look at other similar products lying around you for inspiration. In fact our project began with the idea of giving an already existing product a fresh life. Before I joined Quest they had created this set of career cards. Since it had some limitations and drawbacks we wanted to rectify it and over time this project took shape.

FIELD CHRONICLES

Get the views of your target group too. It is something we failed to do in the beginning of this project. Not that we faced major problems. Still, you should re-evaluated your assumptions early on. Sometimes it might just so be that what you thought or observed might not be the problem at all. Also it gives you a better understanding of the context setting.

DATA COLLECTION

4

Next up! Gathering the meat for your game; what kind of data are you looking for to build the content for the game? This has to be sought out for in the context of your game's objective. For instance since we were making our game targeting students currently enrolled in professional development programs, we had to collect data from the industry they were likely to enter - understand industry standards and expectations.

Start by creating a data flow or matrix, to get an idea of the kind of data you want. Unless you go do the research on the field it not possible to know what kind of data could be mined out there. Sometimes the most obvious ones are the ones that are missing. Other times you have issues accessing the data because of confidentiality protocols. However go ahead and decide on what the relevant data might be and the hierarchy in which it should be presented. Create a flow chart if necessary to visualize the usage of the data. This in turn helps you build a questionnaire for data collection.

If you are new to this take a help from a friend who has a clearer picture of the real world and experience in this area. We too had a friend named Daniel, who is an HR, helps us out in this process. Basically he helped us put things into perspective.

**DECIDING ON CONTENT
DATA MATRIX
CREATING A DATA FLOW
DEVELOPING QUESTIONNAIRE
WHAT KIND OF DATA
DATA USAGE**

After having a few rounds of conversation with him we realized that the kind of information we were expecting to get was quite an idealistic scenario. This elaborate data flow we had created had been crunched like an car in a crusher. In actuality there wasn't much "information" literally.

INSIGHTS SUCH AS THESE

WORK EXPERIENCE + PROMOTION DIFFER FROM COMPANY TO COMPANY. SO DOES THE EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION REQUIRED.

WHAT REMAINS CONSTANT IS THE SKILL FACTOR.

UPSKILLING + CROSS SKILLING

IN ADDITION, THE PATHWAYS FOR A STUDENT IN THIS FIELD IS VERY LIMITED.

At such times it's okay to have a panic attack. But don't go back to your scope of project and start adding more things to the list just to accommodate for the absence of information. I made this mistake and wasted many weeks working with an added set of objectives that were beyond and above the problem at hand. Rather keep your cool and make best use of what you have. Focus on gathering quality data for the same.

Build a questionnaire, get feedback from your team and move on to doing the actual research and data collection. Since we were dealing with a huge amount of data we had a consultant hired to do the same. If you choose to do so, before sharing the questionnaire it important to sit with them and have them on the same page as your team on the subject(context of the project) before the go mining.

WORKING WITH CONSULTANTS

If you are working with consultants, there'll be a lot of back and forth with them during the data collection phase. Be very clear about the objective yourself. Sometimes you have a tough time making them understand the context of your project. But, just don't settle on anything, rather be patient and rework with them on the questionnaire you've just created as it is the crux of your project. There is never a possibility of getting all your questions answered so try and get as much data as possible as it may come into use later. Be open to them and clarify any doubts that they may have.

This is also a chance of to learn how they work. How the whole data collection happens. Conduct weekly in person meetings with them. Try and get notes and any insights that the consultants might have in addition to the data. This way you start understanding your area of research better (the industrial space in our case here).

Do not wait for the entire data to pour in. Rather start working on it immediately as there might be things you might have missed out and would like to have more information on them; add more queries into your questionnaire.

**FINE TUNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
GIVING FEEDBACK ON THE DATA.
UNDERSTANDING THE INDUSTRY
SPACE BETTER THROUGH THE
INCOMING DATA AND HAVING
TALKS ABOUT THE RESEARCH
WITH THE CONSULTANTS IN
PERSON.**

DATA ASSIMILATION : FINDING PATTERNS

Once you have a workable number of data points with you, start working on it immediately. Find patterns in them and connects the dots such that it fits your requirement. Start giving shape as to how your final usable data would look like before you dive into giving it some sort of a form. Also start brainstorming on possible usage looking at the data pattern.

DATA SYNTHESIS : VISUALIZING DATA

Assimilate the data into one sheet of excel or however you may choose to do it. Start creating data visualizations as it provides you with a more clear and digestible image of the data. According to Friedman (2008) the "main goal of data visualization is to communicate information clearly and effectively through graphical means. It doesn't mean that data visualization needs to look boring to be functional or extremely sophisticated to look beautiful." You can make use of various tools and programs or go the old school way. Whatever the case maybe, in the end it should help you achieve a better understanding of the data.

TAKE A TOUR FIELD VISIT

If possible take a tour of the field yourself to validate your data. We visited a factory nearby for our project. By doing it also helped us establish a larger understanding of the space in our heads which until now was just through the data from the consultants.

REALIZATION

5 INITIAL CONCEPTS GIVING LIFE TO YOUR DATA

Now it's time to build a story for your game. First, make a wall with notes from the workshop, your data visualizations and other sources of inspiration. Share it with your team and have a little storytelling session with them.

Build fictional narratives and scenarios based on the information you have. Make use of props and toys on your table if necessary to give life to your story.

Any good story has a start, a middle and a finish. Imagine how you want to start your story, who are the characters in your story, where is it happening, what happens in the story and how does it end.

Make sketches and start giving shape to your fictional world.

These are just initial sketches of your story so it does not need to be prim and proper. Remember - "Rome was not built in a day!"

