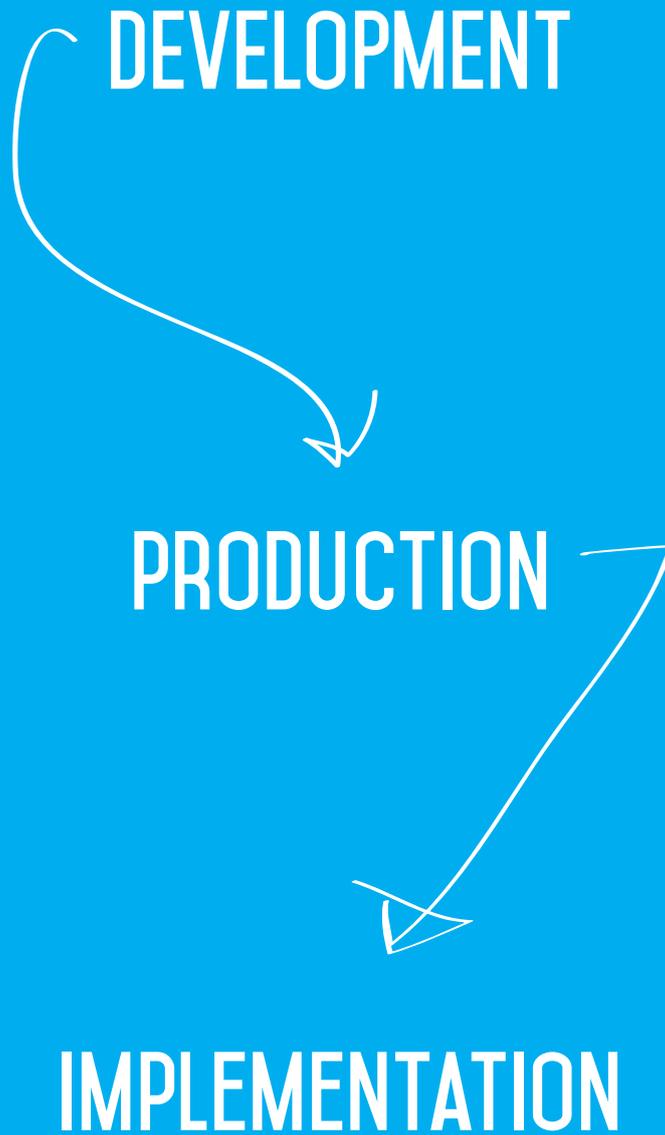




PROCESS



DEVELOPMENT

FIRST FEW MOCKS

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As an initial prototype build a simple mock out of paper, draw out characters if required (stick figures will also do), use objects lying around your table. This is very important because it assonantly welcomes the other person into your imaginative world, as opposed to carrying around an idea in your head.

The idea is to keep building more mocks as you go while refining the finer elements. Create quick sets and test it out with your friends as it generates useful, actionable feedback. Do not to get stuck with one idea. Always remember that the player knows best. So draw inferences from each trial test and keep those in mind when you move on to the next.

GOAL OF THE GAME

Goals give your players something to strive for. They define what players are trying to accomplish within the rules of the game. In the best-case scenario, these objectives seem challenging—but achievable—to the players. In addition to providing challenge, the goal of a game can set its tone.

For instance the goal of our game is to become the best manager by earning the most number of production points. This automatically gives one the basic idea of what the game is all about. Now, “How to achieve this?” is governed by the rules of the game.

We were lucky enough to have met Arnab, a game designer at Disney Studios.

First build a story. Create a fictional world into which they'll dive into for the next hour. Establish the rules of the world, familiarizing them with the working of the world. This has to be quick and easy to grasp. Provide a cheat sheet to do so. They'll have to be instantly submerged into the game for the next hour. Create situations with which they are familiar with the real world. Players should immediately connect with it. Have them do stuff that make them engage with other inhabitants of this world. The deeper they are into the game. The higher the level they reach they should have higher risks but higher incentives as well. This will ensure their immersion into the game. It doesn't have to be "a win to be king" game. Rather make it an experience with would have a deeper impact in the long run. Build in a lot of chances such that it can be replayed.

RESEARCH ON EXISTING GAMES AND DIFFERENT GAME MECHANICS

RULES OF THE GAME

Rules define game objects and allowable actions by the players. It makes up the imaginative world you draw your players into and gives it structure. If it is an educational game like ours, you can we make players understand certain concepts with the help of these rules. Keep the rules clear, to the point and simple. Too many rules might make it difficult for the players to manage their understanding of the game. Leaving rules unstated or poorly communicating them might confuse or alienate players.

So, how do players learn the rules? The rulebook is the most important part of your game. It could make or break the game. During playtest provide the players with a rulebook rather than you sitting with them and giving instructions. Observe whether they are able to grasp the rules with ease or not. Jot down what is missing and/or is incoherent. Also consider if your audience comfortable with the language. Use terms the players are familiar with. In our case we had to create a bilingual one.

PLAYTEST

According to Tracy Fullerton, “A game is like a party in some ways, where you are the host of the party. As a host you have to get everything ready—food, drinks, decorations, music to set the mood—and then you open the doors to your guests and see what happens. The results are not always predictable or what you envisioned.”

What kind of party is your game like? Will your player sit in one corner or laugh and chat with other guests? Will they like the food? Will they have trouble finding the paper cups? Observe carefully by listening to them, gauging reactions, interpreting silent moments, studying feedback, and matching those with specific game elements are the keys to understanding how your game is working.

Remember not to control the flow of the game by intervening again and again. Let them play as though the game is fresh out of a box.

THINGS TO REMEMBER :

- . Make a recording of the time of play. Don't intervene in the middle of a playtest unless required
- . Make sure you have everything ready for the game, before your players arrive
- . Takes notes of instances that you hadn't foreseen and on players' suggestions

DESIGN, TEST, AND EVALUATE THE RESULTS OVER AND OVER AGAIN THROUGHOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR GAME, EACH TIME IMPROVING UPON THE GAMEPLAY OR FEATURES, UNTIL THE PLAYER EXPERIENCE MEETS YOUR CRITERIA.

DIFFERENT GAME VERSIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Do a comparative study of different versions once you've got enough iterations. Here is an example of our game.

DIFFERENT GAME VERSIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

GAME 1:

Goal: Reaching highest level

Pros:

Scenario based [choice = consequence]

Seeing how one can up-skill [particular set of tasks give you a particular skill]

Game-play very structured [although quite time consuming]

Cons:

What's the right choice? Who are we to decide?

What would be the right combination of competencies that you'd acquire by doing a certain task

Complicated game mechanics [difficult to create]

Competencies take away focus from tasks

GAME 2:

Goal:

Outer circle - Finishing project

Inner circle - Acquiring as much points to get the highest designation possible in three rounds

[4 Versions]

v.1 - Circle of Life: Concept of Life Skills/ Work Skills.

v.2 - Twin Circle: Acquiring skills in one and applying it in the other

v.3 - Outer Circle: Cluedo

v.4 - Projects: Understanding of different roles [real work scenarios] + factory map

Pros:

Included projects: to give a more practical understanding of the World of Work [WOW]

The inner circle was designed to bridge the connection between their soft skills curriculum and their application in a real life scenario

Game-play: quick, simple and absorbing

Life scenarios was the fun element of the game which proved to be quite entertaining

Team-play

Cons:

Message wasn't being communicated properly as we had thought it would. Gamers was more concerned with reaching the particular square.

Idea behind upskilling was vague

Incentive for being at a higher position wasn't there

The entire game was chance based

Levelling up decision?

Had to wait for other players to jump to the outer circle

The outer circle was very time consuming

GAME 3:

Goal: Identify the most number of tasks relevant to your designation

Basic objective: Understanding roles and responsibilities of each designation

[2 Versions]

v.1 : That's me!

v.2 : That's me (Board Game version)

Pros:

Good understanding of roles

It was very quick and engaging

Information was digested in smaller chunks

Some amount of thinking, deduction and decision making skills required

Lots of P2P interaction

Game Mechanic – Choice & Consequence

Fatality

Cons:

Education and up-skilling piece was missing

Dependency on the content to be well-written

GAME 4:

Goal: Reaching the highest level

[1 Version]

Maize and Beans

Pros:

Good understanding of skills

Importance of soft skills as you move up levels

Importance of education and internships

The content was much more refined [all ten tasks cards for each level captured the role]

Cons:

Silent

Not enough interaction

Too much reading

Low retention [read and forget once you cross over to next level]

Timeline was vague again

BUILDING YOUR FINAL PROTOTYPE

Once you have your core game mechanics intact and an iteration of the game that fulfills the objective of the game and also delivers a rich gaming experience, you are ready to build your final prototype.

Start by doing some visual research. Draw references from other games. See how they have made use of iconography and other visual elements. Start building the characters for your game, if there are any. A good practice would be to go down to the field and make sketches. This would help you create the props for your game. Don't worry about the physical elements of the game like the dice, meeples, etc. just yet.

REMEMBER :

. This is not the final visuals for the game. This is just to give the players an idea of how the game is going to be. For example, if it's a game on factories it should just be a spatial representation of one and not look like one. So, don't concentrate on the visuals so much.

// VISUAL RESEARCH

MEETING OBJECTIVES

Sometimes it might not be possible to meet all the objectives of your project up front. Like, in our case, since the game was being played as a part of the curriculum only a certain amount of time was allotted for gameplay. Hence, we had to do away with the not so pressing objectives (remember we talked about prioritizing objectives earlier).

Our main objectives were:

- 1. understanding world of work*
- 2. roles and responsibilities*
- 3. importance of education and thereby upskilling,*

which we managed to do by:

Making players visualize work process through experiences built inside the game. Instilling ideas of upskilling in an indirect fashion. We introduced something known as “event cards” to make them understand the application of soft skills in day to day factory scenarios. The decision making aspect of the game helped them make choices necessary for problem solving. The gameplay itself fostered P2P learning amongst the students.

But then imagine our other objectives like making them understand the entire career journey or sharing success stories. It would have been difficult almost bizarre to have included that in a game, considering we had an hour of gameplay. We sure had data, but doesn't mean we had to use it all. So, what did we do? We made these posters that would go up in the classroom walls. What I'm trying to convey here is that look for workarounds and work within the constraints of your project. It needn't always be a poster. Think of creative ways to deliver that content. Maybe make another game out of it! Totally your call.

PRODUCTION

7 After conducting your final playtest make any changes if required. It's time you begin your production now. You can now sit down on your drawing board and start developing your final visuals for the game for production. Also start sourcing your materials for the game if any. In our case took quite some time to source specific dice and meeples. I suggest you start your hunt in parallel to your graphic design work. In addition we had very specific kind of laser-cut stars created for the game. These things take time, especially the part of getting the right vendor, who can finish your work at a relatively lower cost but high efficiency.

Packaging comes next. Calculate production time and send out stuff that would take the most amount of time first.

Well, getting things crafted in a certain way does increase your production cost. So, if you're running on a tight budget give preference to things that are really important to the experience of the game. Try and source the rest from ready-made stores.

Divide the tasks equally amongst your team members to make the production a smooth process.

**PRINTING
PACKAGING
SOURCING MATERIALS
COSTS**

IMPLEMENTATION

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First up, think about how you are going to introduce the game to the students. Make a session plan for the same before you head to the classrooms. Don't go there with an assumption that all students are well versed with the idea of a board game or video game, and especially to the idea of game based learning. Ask yourself - How is the game going to be played? Are you going to sit with each set of students and play with them or are the trainers going to train them? Are the trainers in the schools comfortable with this medium or are they completely new to the idea? Where is it going to be played? Is our game simple enough to be understood fully in the short time as one class?

Our major hurdle was that the game was a part of the classroom curriculum. The fact that it had to be learnt and played in a short period of time; within 90 minutes per class to be exact. We had this big question lurking around, "How do we do this? It's not like we hadn't considered time per game before. We had done so while designing the game itself. Will the students get it? Or is the fun going out of the window?" Believe me, you are going to have such doubts as the day of play approaches - the day.

During such times it's good to experiment with different methods. Work along with your team, trainers and training officers to find the best possible solution. Look for techniques the students are most familiar with.

We first thought of training the trainers in each schools who would in turn conduct the classes. It didn't so well. The trainers, who were in fact used to the old school classroom teaching methods had a tough time conducting the classes mainly because they too were new to playing such games themselves.

Then in one of playtest at a Government I.T.I we realized that the student's on the other hand pick up the crux of the game relatively quicker. Hence we decided upon training a bunch of students first and they then would help their friends learn the game. Members of our team and some training officers were dispatched to different schools to conduct this initial training.

The students loved the game and it was a big success.

Your work isn't just over yet. Create a reflection sheet and/or a game experience index sheet to gather further feedback from the students. You're are bound to get a variety of responses from students based on different schools, social backgrounds and locations. Take a visit to the schools yourself to see the game being played. Write down your observations. All of these will help you either to tweak your game further for the next session or making many more games like this!

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