This chapter talks about the importance of experience in any game. It is not the physical components of the game (which is called an ‘artifact’ in the book) that matter, but the experience those physical components provide the user. The designer does not/ should not care about the ‘right’ music track, game world design and sound effects, but rather that the experience of the user should be a good one.

This ultra-focus on experience is due to the fact that games provide entertainment in an order selected by user, instead of in linear order such as in the books and movies. This increased control and freedom means that the effect of a good experience is magnified, and so is the necessity for it.

To provide a better experience, game designers may borrow concepts from psychology, anthropology and design. Psychology can provide insight into how users individually process the game and ‘feel’ its experience, while anthropology supplements psychology by placing users in their appropriate environment, putting designer in their shoes and analyzing their actions in respect to that. Different areas of design may have commonalities in their separate ‘rules of thumb,’ which will prove useful to understanding how user experience works.

One tool used by the all the aforementioned disciplines is introspection, which is examining one’s own thoughts and feelings. However, the game designer may face the issues of false conclusions and of experiences not being same for everyone. The first is resolvable since it is not the content of the game that matters but the feelings it evokes in users, something that designers can get right by careful introspection. Due to the second issue, the game designer may make a game that is attractive to him but not so for majority of users who have different tastes. The game cannot be entirely left to playtesting either since there are too many decisions to be made on a daily basis; someone has to provide personal opinion on what comprises a good game. The ideal solution for this is for the designer to observe his experiences, listen to his audience, put himself in their shoes and make predictions about what will be liked by them.

To observe, he may apply the ‘two passes’ method, ‘sneak glances’ method or silent observation. This will allow the ‘essence’ of any experience to be discovered, which many then be delivered in the game.

We can apply this in our game by not wasting time debating the choice of best-looking bike, music track or sound track, but rather considering how it fits in with the other elements of game. In the end, the user experience is not calculated by inputting the best fit variables into an equation. It is unexplainable since it is not science, but rather a personal feeling. The 5 members of my team should all observe their experiences using ‘two passes’ method, sneak glances or silent observation.

Introspection should definitely be used more often by us. At every stage, we should be listening to ourselves, understanding our circumstances and perspective in context and then evaluating our experiences. This will help us to make our decisions more wisely.

However, for deciding on new major features of the game, the potential audience should be surveyed too. We have already done that for our initial features such as bike, endless runner etc., by comparing the popular games in the market. When adding further new features, we will take the opinions of gamers to see how attractive the idea will be. Even then, it can be misleading since some users need the feature to be actually experienced to be fully aware of its pros and cons – just an oral description won’t suffice for them. These features planned for the future are obstacles with AI, multiplayer and other modes of gameplay.

We could also get in contact with psychologists, anthropologists and other design artists of other fields to see the principles on which users experience any product, though in our case it would be more productive to meet with other design artists since a few of our members already have a fair understanding of psychology and anthropology.