

The Game Design Toolbox Methodology

Micah Hrehovcsik



INTRODUCTION

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GAME DESIGN TOOLS

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GAME DESIGN

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DESIGN PROCESSES

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CONCEPTS



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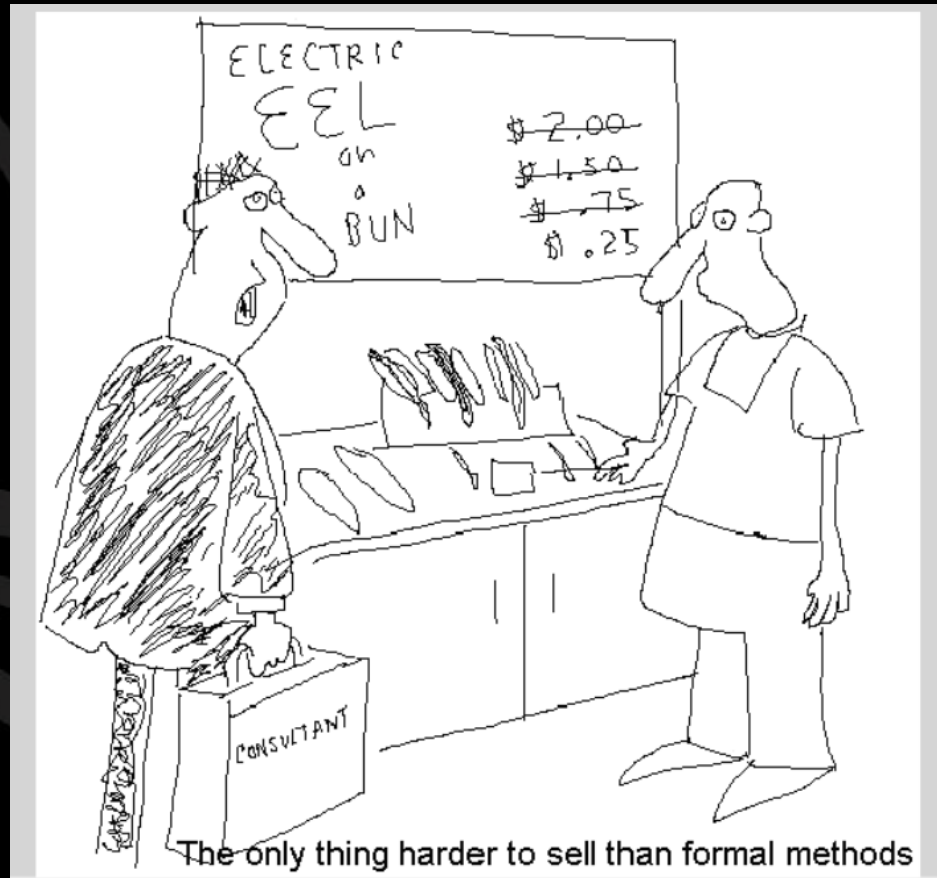
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- Student Project Coach
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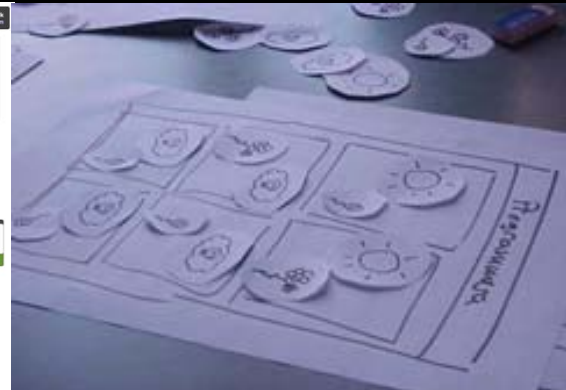
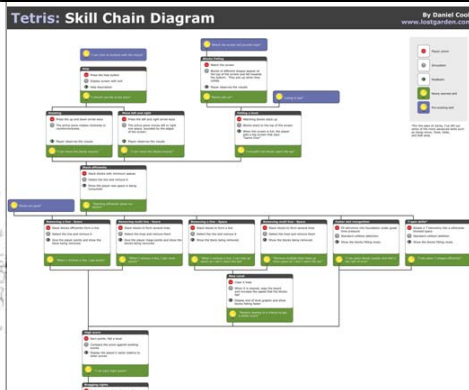


Micah Hrehovcsik

- Game Designer

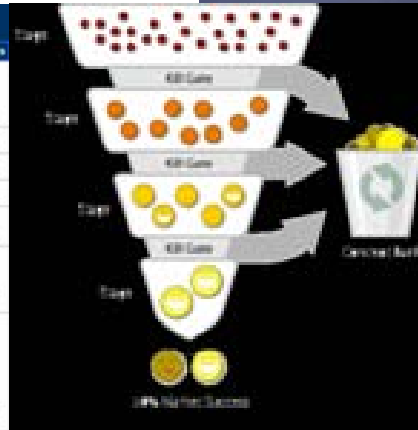






THE 400 PROJECT RULE LIST

ID	Imperative Statement	Explanation in 200 words or less	Domain	Contributors
1	Fight Player Fatigue	Games are a challenge and playing takes effort -- activity work to keep the players engaged, and make sure the appeal of your game always exceeds its difficulty. (The Flow chart also, where the design really positions the player between boredom & frustration, is a subset of this rule.)	Basic, Variety, Flow	Hal Barwood
2	Maximize Expressive Potential	Get the most out of your (always limited) material -- either find ways to exploit an element of your game, or cut it out.	Simplicity	Hal Barwood
3	Maximize Level of Abstraction	Summarize in words themselves -- don't make the player re-calculate his "compositional debt" and lose track with your game.	Perch	Hal Barwood
4	Concise Your Ideas	All your game ideas must find a concise expression in playable elements.	Basic	Hal Barwood
5	Make Indignities	Players want to participate in the course they take through your game -- so give them plenty of opportunities to voluntarily take up auxiliary challenges.	Basic	Hal Barwood
6	Provide Clear Short-Term Goals	Always make it clear to the player what their short-term objectives are. This can be done explicitly by telling them directly, or implicitly by leading them towards these goals through environmental cues. This avoids the frustration of uncertainty and gives players confidence that they are making forward progress.	Basic	Noah Fabens, others
7	Let the Player Taste the Game Off	A player should be able to save and exit the game at any point, losing at most a few seconds of progress as a result. Our objective as designers is to entertain, not punish -- and many games force players to play for extra minutes, even hours, until they can reach a "save game point", forcing them to recapitulate those minutes if they quit prematurely, as frustrating repetition of more familiar events. It's a counter-intuitive important rule, akin to the old adage, "the customer is always right". Players have been known to give up on games that did not follow this rule, and even return them.	Single Player Games (?)	Noah Fabens, Dale Gier



Ability Losses

The loss of ability to perform an action in the game.

Example: Game masters in roleplaying games can sometimes be faced to invent events that are unavoidable to the players in spite of the equipment that gives the abilities that disrupt the game balance.

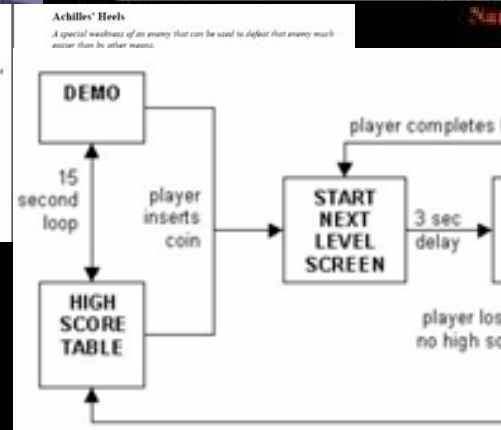
Instances: Gain Competence, Continuous Goals, Character Development, Penalties, Discretion, Player Elimination, Limited Set of Actions, Varied Gameplay, Gain Ownership.

Modules: Damage, Player Balance, New Abilities, Narrative Structures, Right Level of Difficulty, Right Level of Complexity, Spawning, Player Killing.

Instances: Movement Limitations, Ultra-Powerful Events, Rule Reversal.

Modules: Time Limits, Units, Balancing Effects, Indirect Control, Game Masters, Vegetation, New Abilities.

Potentially conflicting with: Competence Areas, Illusion of Influence, Save-Load Cycles, Freedom of Choice, Consistent Reality Logic, Perceived Chance to Succeed, Narrative Structures.





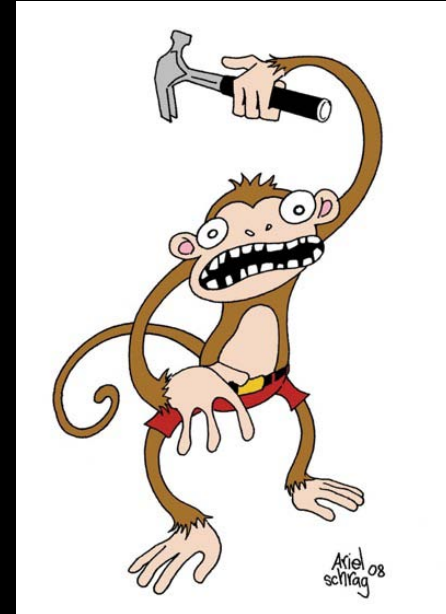
A game design tool describes a generic means in which the game designer accomplishes design activities.

- **Brainstorming**
- **Generative Research**
- **Associative Generation**
- **Approach**
- **Formal Method**
- **Heuristics**
- **Models**
- **Taxonomy**
- **Post Mortem**
- **Visualization**
- **Concept Documentation**
- **Flowchart**
- **Design Documentation**
- **Prototyping**
- **Play-testing**
- **Paradigms**
- **Psychographics**
- **Concept Selection**



A game design method is a procedure, technique, or way using a game design tool, where a single game design tool can have a several possible methods.

- **Brainstorming**
 - **Six Thinking Hats**
 - **Idea Boxing**
 - **Email Alias**
 - **Tri-Factoring**
 - **Piece Box**
 - **Game-storming**
 - **15 Tips**



Problem Statement:

1. Game design process is often confused as the game development process
2. Not all game designers are aware that they have options concerning their tools and methods
3. The game design process is not a visible or traceable process for other disciplines



[illegible]

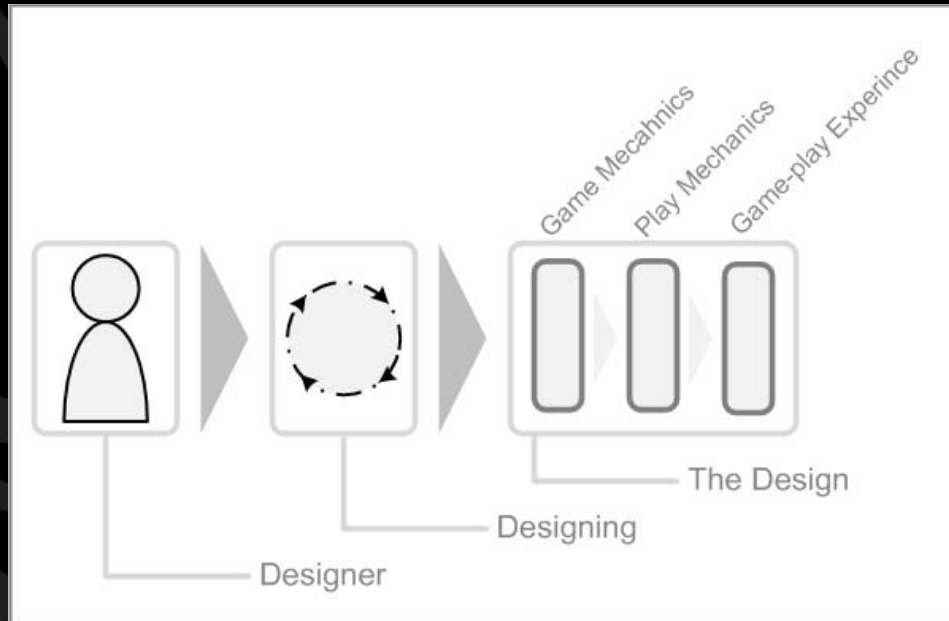


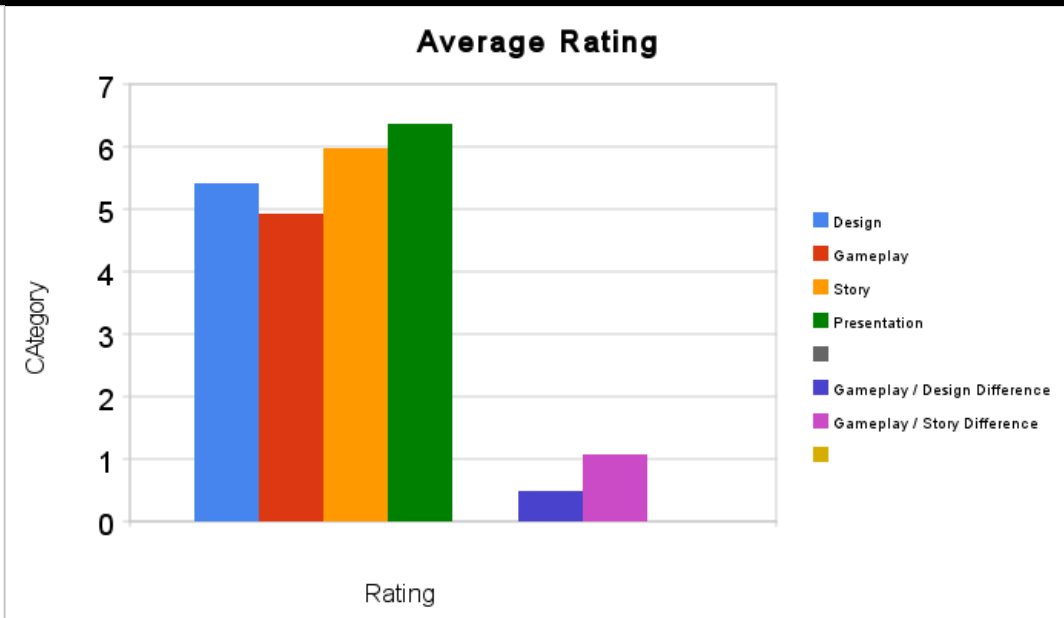
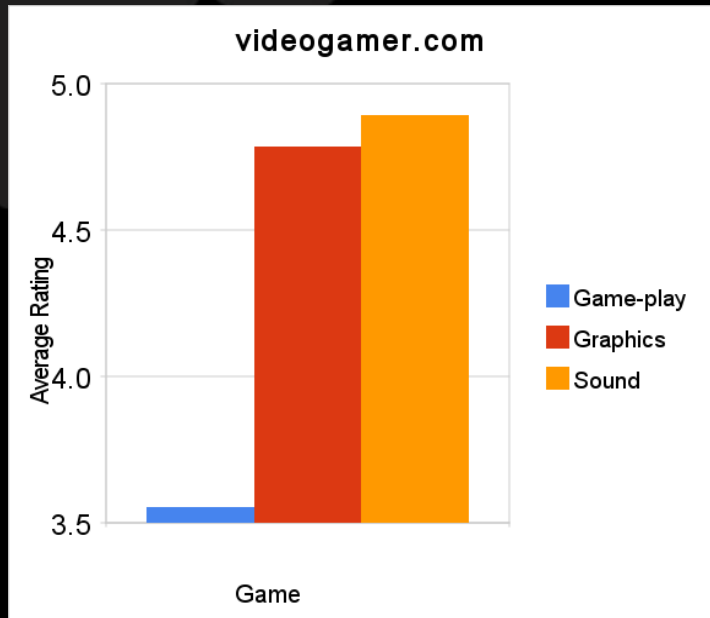
If the game is fun then everyone takes the credit, but if the game isn't... it's the Game Designer's fault.
- T'jien Twijstra



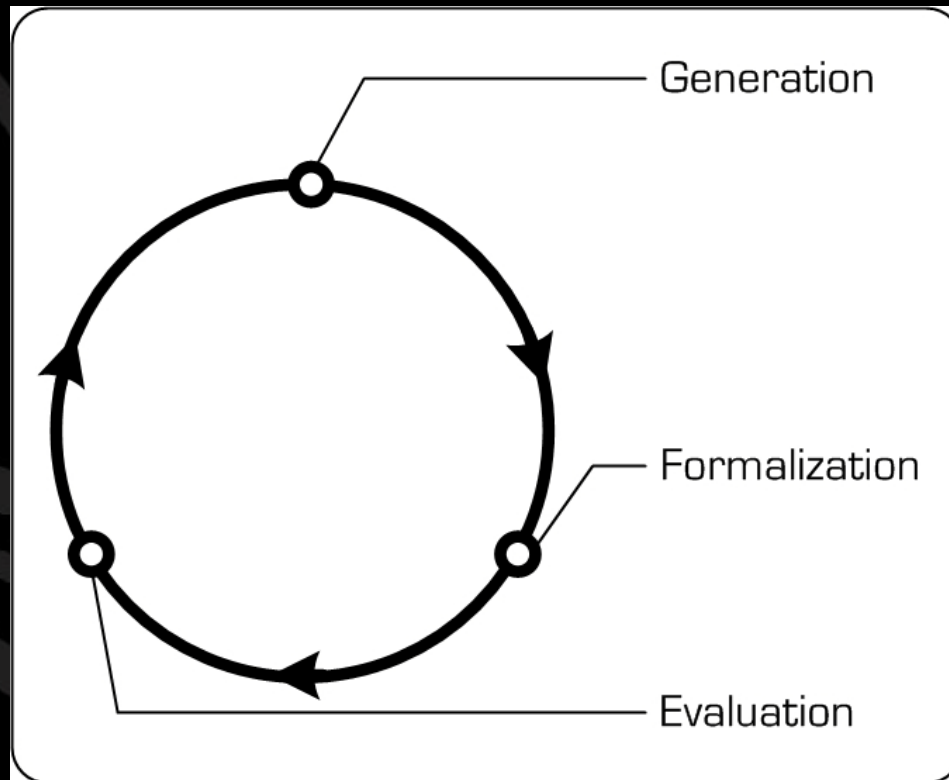
	Concept	Pre-Production	Production	QA	
Producer					
Game Designer					
Programmer					
Artists					
Specialized Media					
QA					

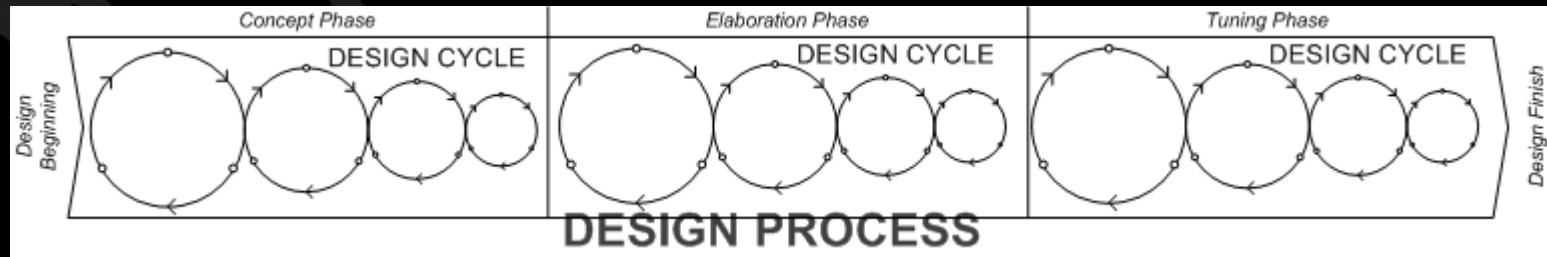
(Fullerton et al. 2004, 2008)







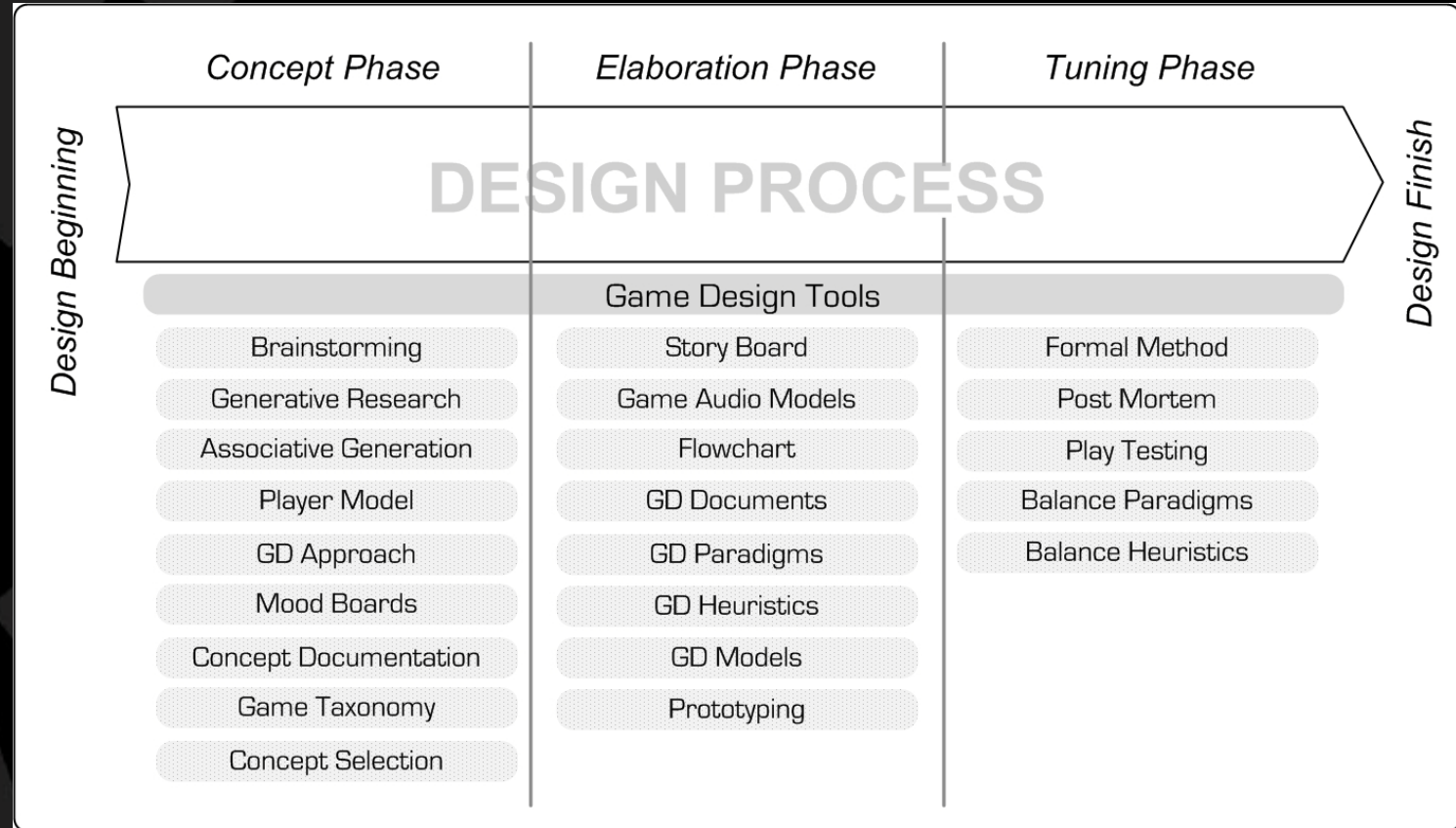


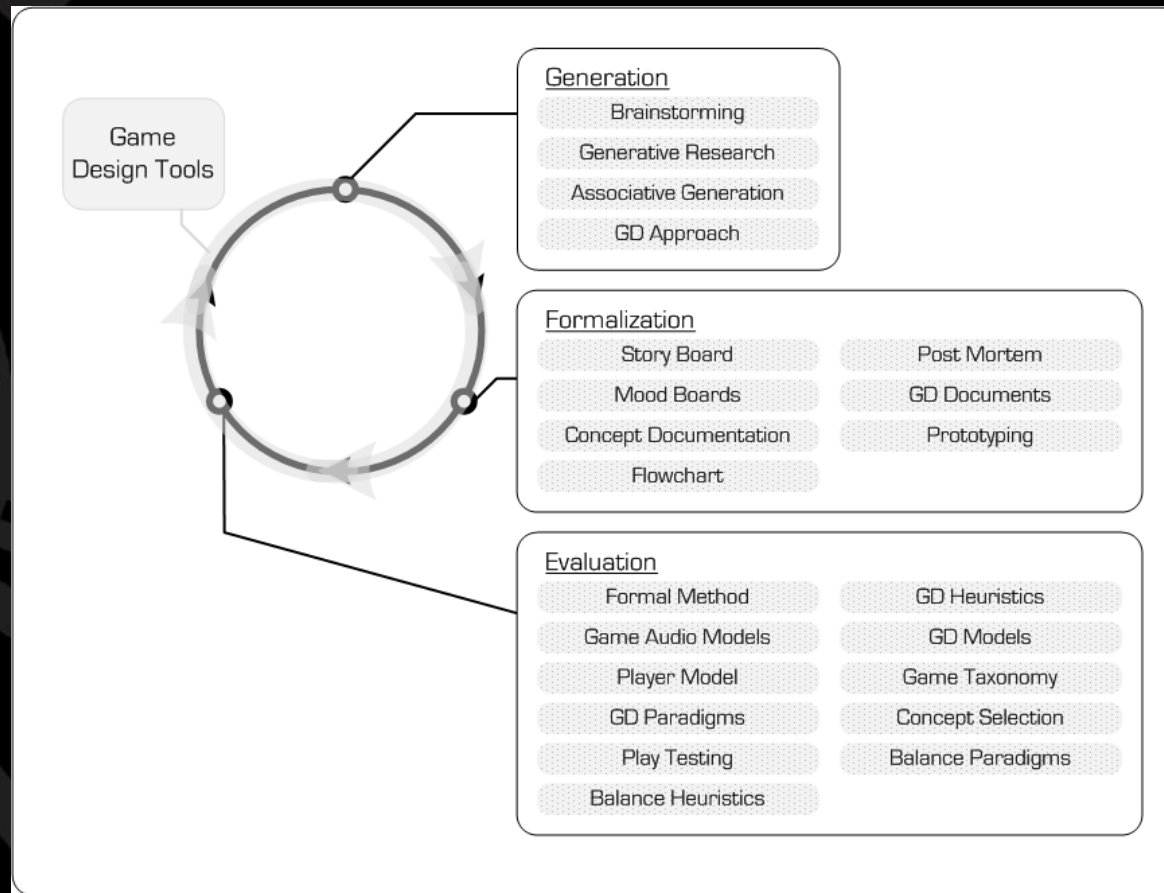




GAME DESIGN TOOLS

- **Brainstorming**
- **Generative Research**
- **Associative Generation**
- **Approach**
- **Formal Method**
- **Heuristics**
- **Models**
- **Taxonomy**
- **Post Mortem**
- **Visualization**
- **Concept Documentation**
- **Flowchart**
- **Design Documentation**
- **Prototyping**
- **Play-testing**
- **Paradigms**
- **Psycographics**
- **Concept Selection**







Tools for...

- generation help the designer develop ideas for concepts, design choices and problem solving.
- formalization provide a way for the design to become tangible and communicable.
- evaluation help the designer to determine design problems, inspire new ideas, or inform design choices.

Generation

Brainstorming

Associative Generation

Generative Research

GD Approach

Formalization

Visualizations

GD Documents

Concept Documentation

Prototyping

Flowchart

Evaluation

Formal Method

GD Heuristics

Psychographics

GD Models

GD Paradigms

Game Taxonomy

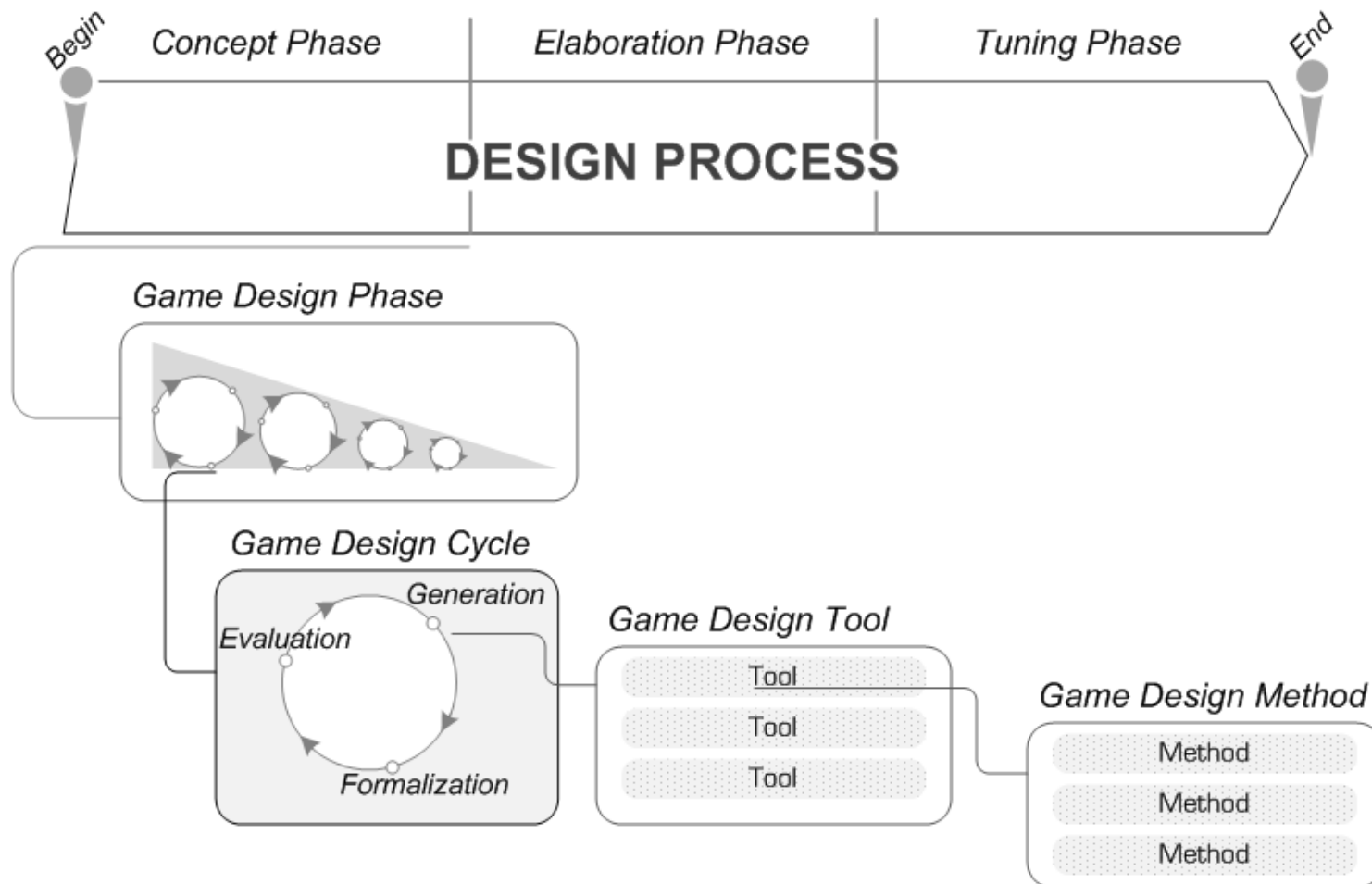
Play Testing

Concept Selection

Post Mortem

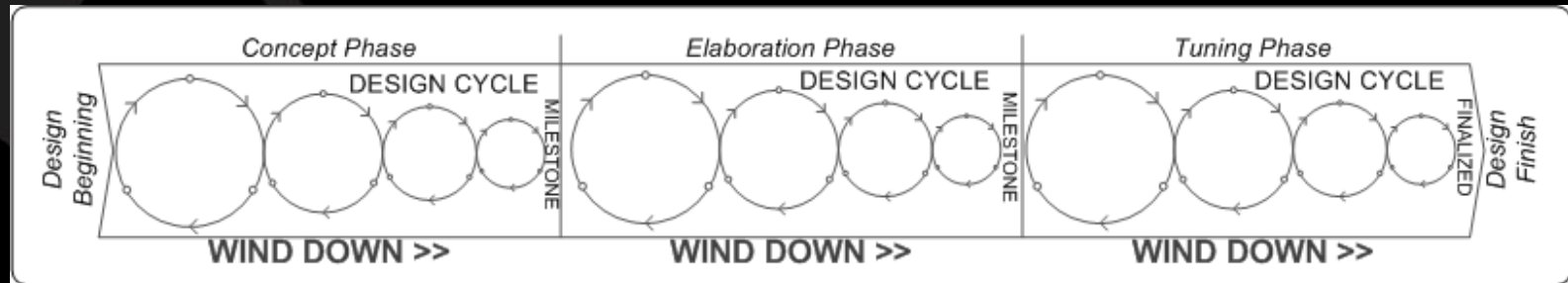


Generic Game Design Methodology



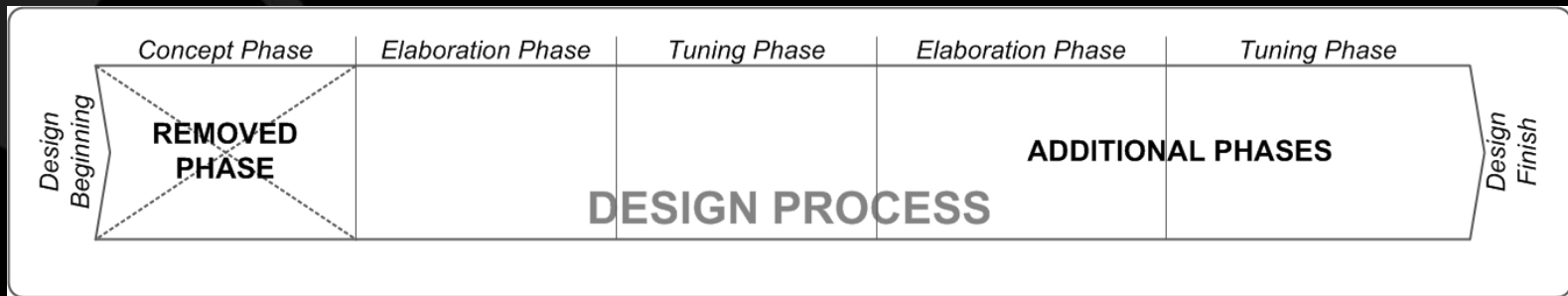


Wind Down



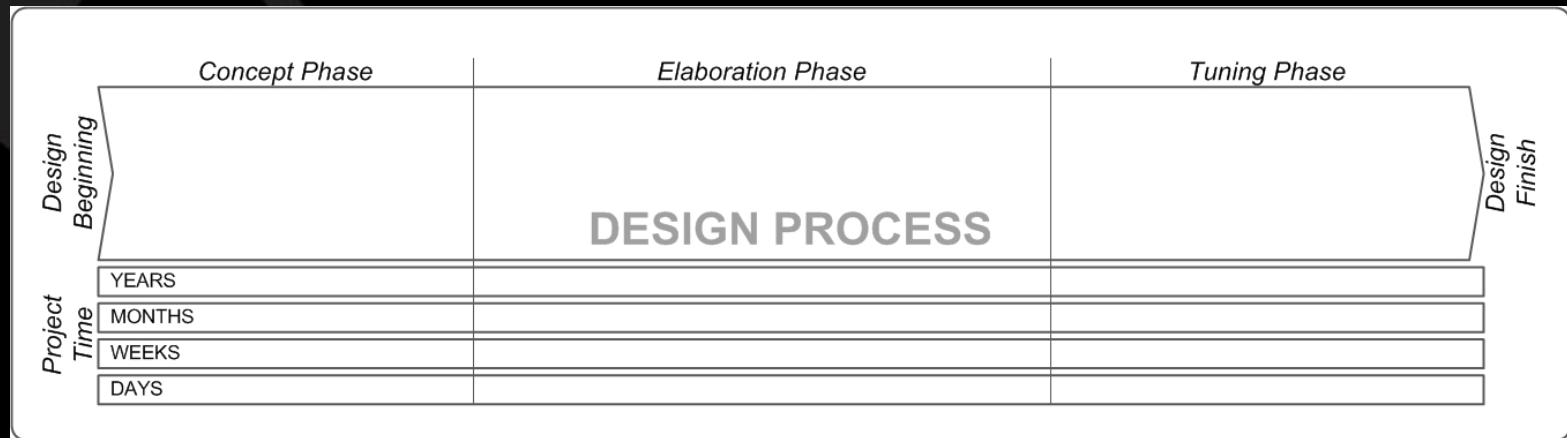


Phases



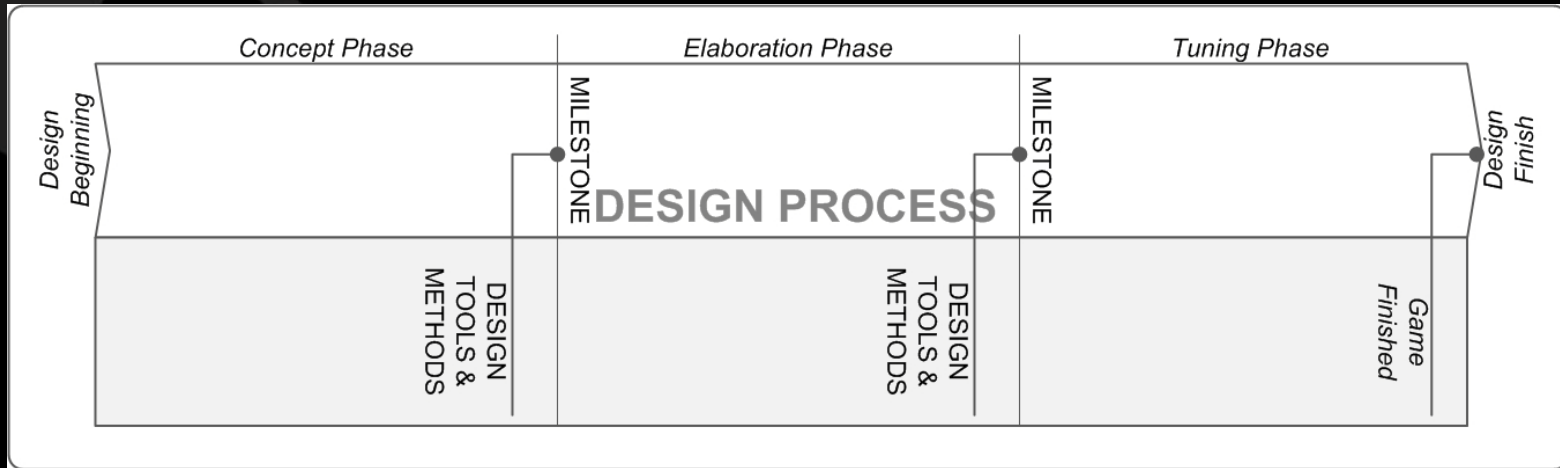


Scalable



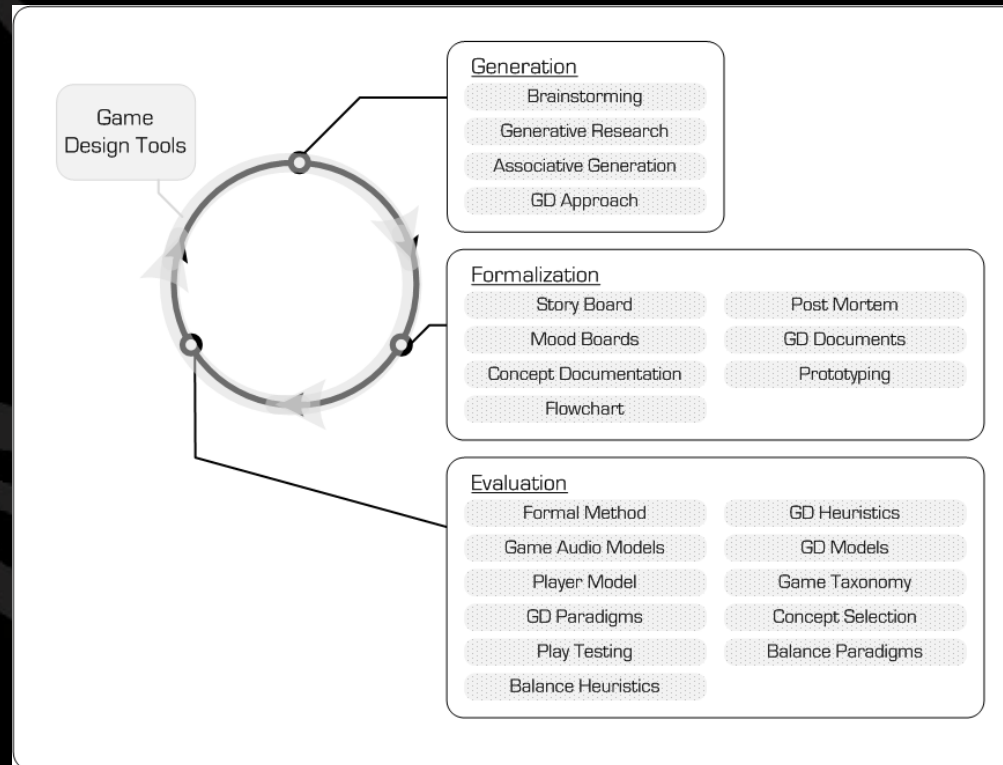


Design Milestones





Tool Context





END

QUESTIONS