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GAME 601 Game Prototyping

Game 1: "Keep It Together"

Analysis

This is a 2 player cooperative card game focused on managing to remain in the game for 9 rounds. The gameplay consists of each player placing down cards that are within a given range of each other, and this range depends on what round it is. The range decreases every couple of rounds, making it harder to stay in the game and gather points. Points are cards from the main deck pile, and will allow the game to continue once this pile runs out.

This game layer is meant to emulate the thematic layer of maintaining connections or relationships through distance, over time, and through hard situations. It tries to take a simple concept, placing down cards that work with each other, and inserts an increasingly difficult dilemma into this pattern. It also presents different ways to make more points depending on certain combinations of cards such as duplicates and Jokers. In addition, placing Jokers allows either receiving the corresponding points or purchasing tokens, a resource that facilitates the desired "connection" between players. A full detailed rule set can be found below.

Rules

Materials:

- Playing cards: 5 sets of cards numbered 1-12, plus 4 Jokers.
- 4 tokens.
- Optional: help sheet to keep track of round and score reminders.

Overview:

2 player cooperative game. The players must place cards that are within a certain range of each other in order to successfully gain points which are cards that will allow them to continue the game round after round. Every two rounds the range within which they must place cards will reduce by 1, starting at 5 in the first round, thus making it harder as the game progresses.

Goal: Reach Round 10 with at least 1 point.

Rules:

- Shuffle deck.
- 1 - 12 are standard value, Jokers can be used in any situation successfully (in other words, it can be considered any other number when played).
- Deal 4 cards to each player.
- Each player chooses one card in their hand to place face down on the side. At the end of the round these will be revealed.

- Someone goes first, and then the order alternates every round.
- When the player places his card face up, the other player must place one that is within the range of the given round (5, 4, 3, 2, or 1).
- After placing all 3 of each player's cards, reveal the initial "blind" cards. The idea is to try to make these also fall within the range of the given round.
- Every successful placement merits 1 point unless:
    o Both cards placed are the same: 2 points.
    o The blind cards turn out to be the same: 3 points.
    o Both cards placed are Jokers: 4 points.
    o The blind cards both turn out to be Jokers: 5 points.
- Jokers can either award the appropriate amount of points, or they can be used to buy Tokens. These tokens can be used by a player at any point to allow both players to reveal their hands, thus permitting the best course of action to be taken in that round. Tokens can only be used once each, and there are 4 total, one for each Joker.
- The player who placed the Joker decides whether to receive points or a Token. In the case of double Jokers, both players must reach an agreement.
- Points are cards taken from the main pile of cards. Once the main pile runs out, the game continues by playing the points. This is why players try to get as many points as possible, to remain in the game until Round 10.
- Points are taken out of shuffled discarded cards once the main pile runs out, and placed at the bottom of the points pile.

Variant Rules:

- A variant of this game focuses less on the card play and more on communication between the players. The range remains at 3 the whole time, but players can communicate to try and strategize what cards to play. Rather than the range representing the increasing difficulty, the communication allowed is what changes in this charades-style variant of the game.
- Rounds 1-3 players can talk about their cards to strategize, without revealing the values.
- Rounds 4-6 players can only use 2 words to describe each card.
- Rounds 7-9 no talking is allowed, only gestures.

Iconography

The game "Keep It Together" is inspired by the way personal relationships (be it friendly, familiar or romantic) fade into a shadow or echo of what it once was when separated by distance, time, or having gone through a problematic ordeal. This doesn't necessarily mean those relationships are gone forever, but the things that strengthened it in the first place, along with all the communication that goes along with them, start to grow faint slowly but surely. This is why some of the actions in the game try to create a functional metaphor for this social phenomenon and attempt to emulate the source inspiration.

What we are trying to do as players of this game is successfully place a compatible/synchronized pair of cards. In the fictional layer we refer to these as "connections". Connections award points, which allow us to stay in the game longer. This represents successful moments or things in common with each other that strengthen our relationship and allow us to continue striving to have more of them. The rounds are meant to represent either a growing distance or the passage of time, connections becoming harder and harder as

these increase. The constantly shrinking range in which we must create connections represents the area of possibility to create meaningful and lasting moments with your counterpart, decreasing as communication falters and time passes. The Tokens, purchased when played an Ace, represent moments so strong and bonding that they can be used in the future to set all differences aside and "lay it all out in the open" (reveal all cards on the table).
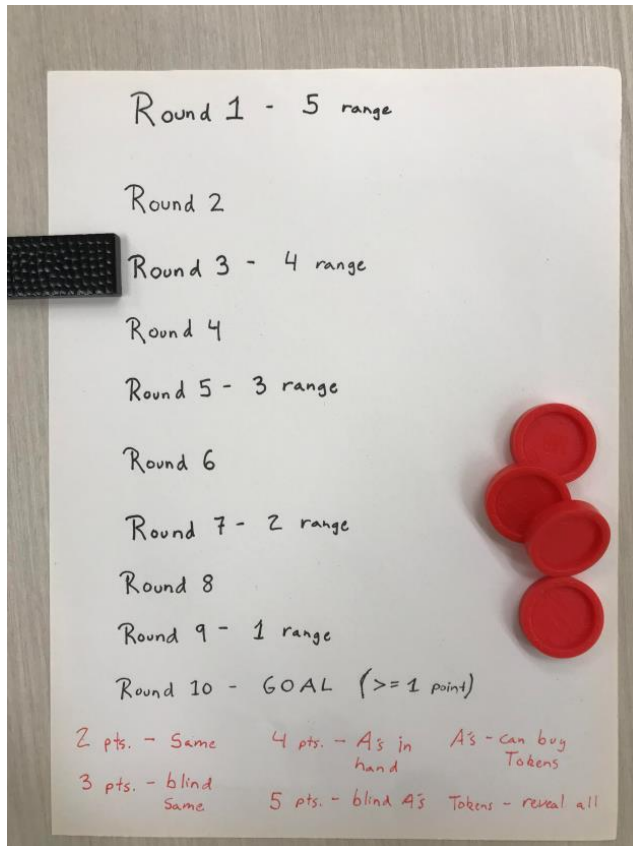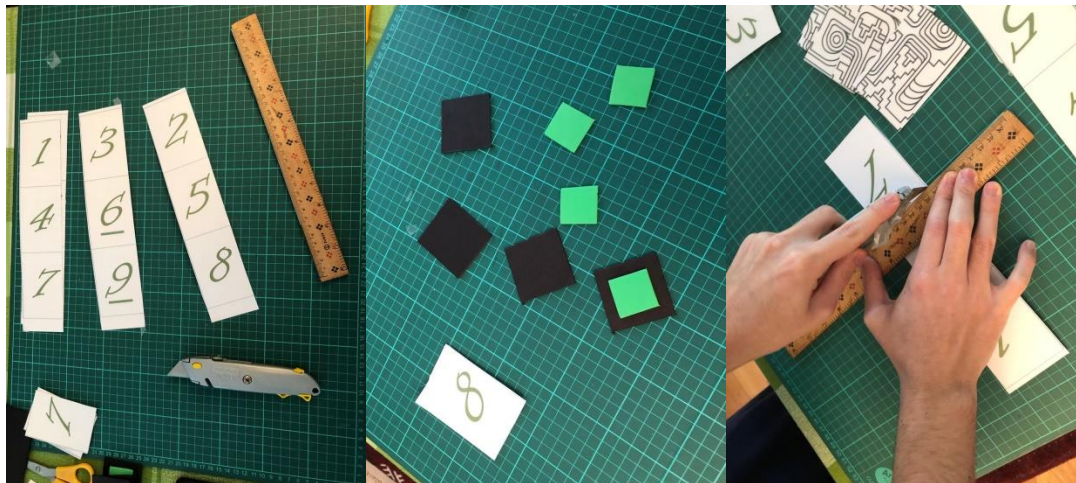
Images

Image 1: Prototype Help Sheet.

Images 2-4: Process of creating the playing cards and Tokens.