

## **Proposal for Counter-Strike Modifications: Parental Engagement**

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## **1. Project Plan:**

The game we plan on modding is *Counter-Strike*. Our different target audience are middle-aged parents with teenage children. We want to add some modifications to have more of an “entry” game to help parents engage more with their kids who don’t understand the games their kids are playing. It would also feature an interactive tutorial with simplified controls.

The new gameplay elements we plan on adding are a simplified, yet enhanced UI to clarify or highlight different parts of the game. For example, we want to add a way to differentiate between the two teams, Terrorists and Counter-Terrorists, and by highlighting the two teams in different colors can allow new gamers to understand who is on their team and who is on the opposing team. Additionally, we want to add in a built-in hands-on tutorial that allows parents who are new to technology and gaming to help them completely understand how the game works. We also want to add motion controls to make the game feel more interactive, with intuitive controls that feel accessible to a wider age range. Another modification we will make, which is not necessarily a new game element but will be helpful for our target audience, is making *Counter-Strike* playable on television. Thematically we plan to rewrap the *Counter-Strike* experience so it is more removed from depictions of real-world conflict to appeal to the entire family.

## **2. Content strategy:**

These gameplay elements will benefit our target audience because of the accessibility features that help introduce those unfamiliar with games with easy-to-understand controls and UI. Specifically, a quick hands-on tutorial that forces new players to go through the controls and rules of the game would make it easy for our target audience to grasp how to play the game. Our target audience likely has no experience in gaming, and it would be hard for them to pick up the game without a detailed tutorial. Also, highlighting the two teams in different colors can give our target audience an easy way to get used to the game space and players. Finally, by making the game playable on television, our target audience would benefit because they likely do not have their own gaming device. If they do have their own PC to play on, it may be difficult to set it up to run the game and learn how to play on that device. However, by making the game playable on the television along with the motion controls, parents can easily play with their kids without learning how to set up their PC, mouse, and keyboard controls that come with the aspect of PC gaming.

Our first reference to our target demographic was Maria Juarez (45), a mother of three. She responded strongly about the hands-on tutorial modification we plan to do. As she puts it in her own words – “a lot of these games just expect me to know and remember every button. Especially when it’s a video game console” This is exactly what we are trying to fix by making the game feel more interactive, with intuitive and “tutorialized” controls. Consequently, she also

responded well to our UI simplification goals (such as adding bright colors for opposing teams). As for the TV display modification, Maria liked that it would force everyone to hang out in the living room. However, an aspect she didn't seem too interested in was the military aspect of the game itself. She also expressed concern that her children likely already have experience playing this game, while she would have much more to learn; turning the tutorials into a crutch only she would need and which her children would be bored by. With this information, we believe that if we modify the game to have a tutorial feel, it can't be too intensive/long. It should work with our motion control modification to make the tutorial entertaining, and non-obstructive to inexperienced and seasoned players alike. We will also continue to evaluate areas to help further relate to our target audience.

Our second reference is a 50-year-old mother of three living in the LA area. Her greatest concerns regarding shooting games generally were with militaristic themes and gore. She felt strongly that realistic depictions of conflict and any form of gore would not be enjoyable as part of a family gaming experience. Standard handheld controller controls felt overwhelming at a glance and she specifically stated that having to control two things simultaneously (ex. movement and aiming) would pose significant difficulty. Although she felt that arcade-style games requiring little strategy would be easier to pick up, she was not opposed to a more strategy-focused experience that would value mental competence over mechanical expertise. The standard concept of point and shoot was understood along with first-person movement in a 3D space, however nothing much was understood beyond that. Given these notes, the motion control modification will be useful as an alternative to the console handheld controller. Extensive tutorials will also be helpful to explain these controls and especially to teach the general game loop apart from point and shoot. The themes of Counter-Strike should be redefined entirely so at least aesthetically they do not reflect real world conflict.

After asking a couple of individuals from our target audience if our content strategy makes sense to them, we discovered we are on the right track and that we have a good outline to follow in order to create a mod for our new experience. We will also continue to evaluate areas to help further relate to our target audience.

### **3. Persona(s):**

#### **Target audience:**

Middle-aged parents (35-50) with teenage children. Parents who want to connect with their children, who are not necessarily into video games or do not play them often.



## **Gina Joe**

### *Demographics:*

Bay Area, CA, USA

40 years old

Married - Michael Joe (41)

### *About*

Gina Joe is a 40 year old parent of a teenager and lives in California. Gina has long days at work as she works in HR for a big company. She tends to get home around 6pm after making it through rush hour traffic and goes straight to getting dinner ready and tidying up the house with the help of her husband.

Meanwhile, her son Allen spends all his free time playing video games. One of their favorites is Counter-Strike. She would love to spend more time with her son, but he rarely wants to do anything other than play video games. However, Gina is not tech savvy and is overwhelmed by excessive UI in technology, so she cannot easily pick up the games her son plays.

### *Goals*

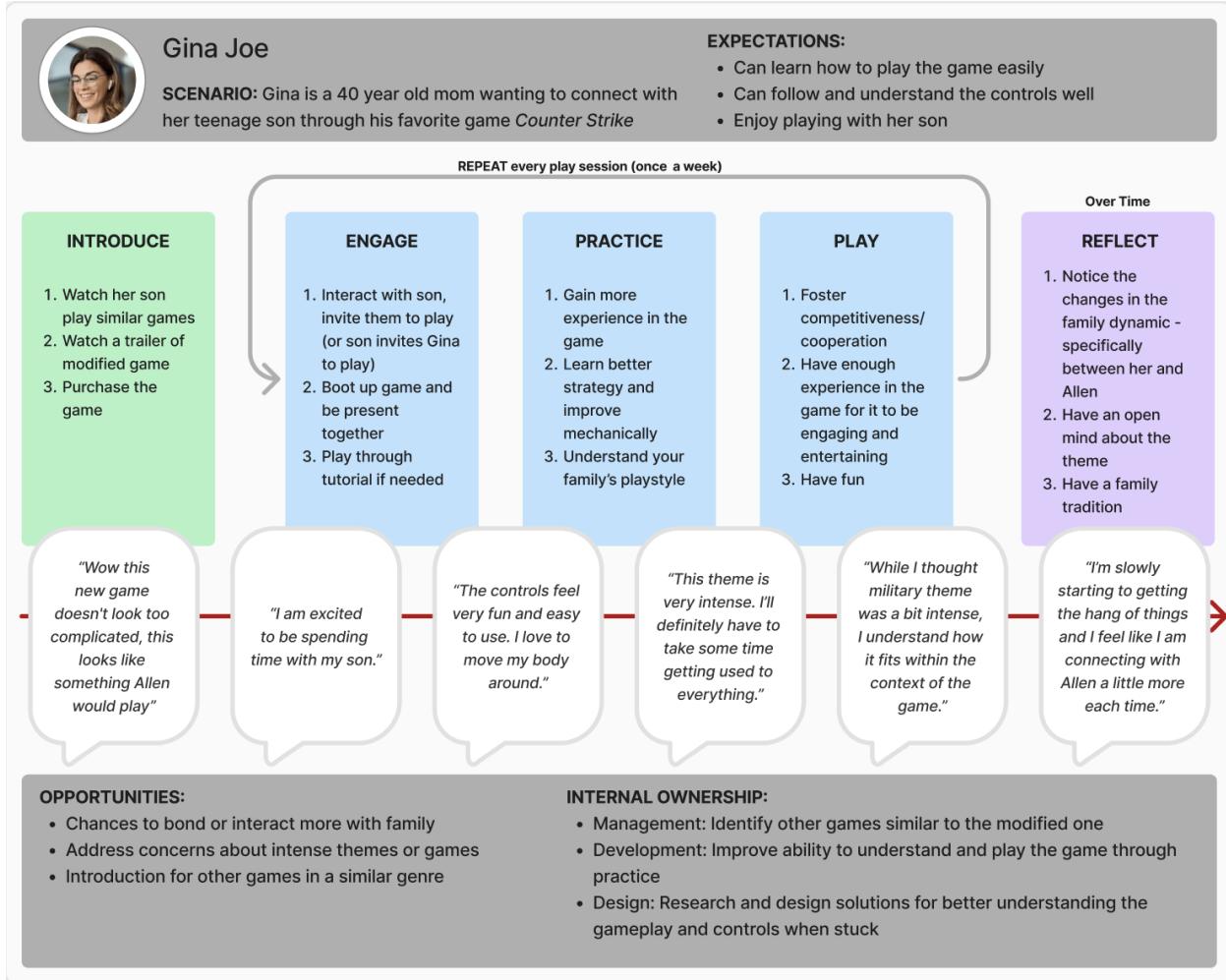
- “I would like to spend more time with my son”
- Find new hobbies and interests
- Financial security

### *Frustrations*

- Overcomplicated UI
- Commute
- No time to relax

- Inadequate income
- Arguments with children

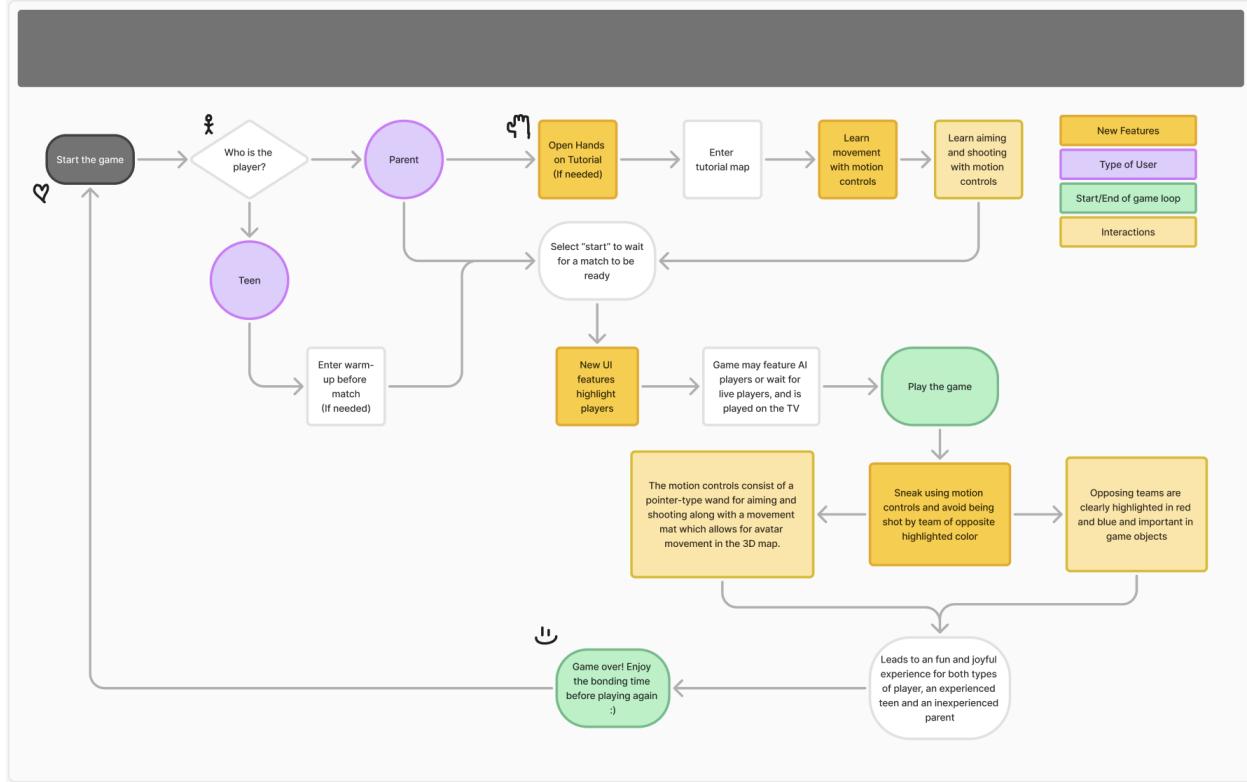
## 4. User journey



Given our timeline, we believe that this will visualize a cohesive diagram for our target audience. Our timeline follows our persona, which is a middle-aged parent of a teenager looking to find more ways to engage with them. Initially, we would like to introduce our selected game to our target audience; in this stage, the persona would simply observe the product, a game that is commonly played among teenagers. Moving from this stage, we believe that having a consistent loop of playing through the game and allowing the parent and teenager to have multiple play sessions will not only help ease the new target audience into playing the game, but also create a bonding experience for the family. By engaging with the product and their child, practicing the controls of the game, and generally playing the game, this would allow the parent to become familiar with the game overtime and understand the product better as a whole as well as their

teenager. This then leads into our final stage, where the parent would be able to reflect on their experience from playing and understanding the game, while also having a shared experience and bonding tradition with their child.

## 5. Flow diagram



Our flow diagram depicts the experiences of a teen and parent player in our newly modified game. We highlight the differences between these two experiences, such as the tutorial modifications made for the parent. The teen can choose to bypass the hands-on tutorial, seeing that they likely have substantial gaming experience and would not need to go through an in-depth tutorial highlighting how to move, aim, and shoot. From then onwards, they would queue up and wait for a match together, before playing. The gameplay features an updated UI with highlighted players as well as motion controls, differing from the typical game console or keyboard and mouse PC controls employed in the FPS genre. Both types of users, the child and parent, interact with these new features positively, allowing them to have a collective enjoyable experience. We believe that these features and interactions will lead to a positive experience because having a hands-on tutorial, UI to highlight the two teams, and motion controls eliminates much of the hardship and confusion that comes with being an inexperienced player, specifically one who is inexperienced in gaming in general.

**Link to figma:** [Flow Diagram Figma](#)

## 6. Group Feedback 1:

### User Journey:

- The team that reviewed our user journey felt that our motivations were clear, including why the parent persona wanted to play and what they wanted to achieve by playing our modified game. They also felt the persona seemed accurate to people from our target demographic they were familiar with. Finally, they deemed the persona's concerns of the graphic theme realistic.

### Flowchart:

- The team that reviewed our flowchart first asked if parents should have a choice to go through the tutorial or skip it on a given run. Specifically, they asked if the tutorial “is forced or can it be skipped?” This is when we realized that we should give the parents an option in our flowchart to skip through the tutorial if they are already familiar with the controls after multiple gameplay sessions. This modification can be seen in the wireframe below. The team also really liked the addition of UI features that highlighted around both teams and felt it could be helpful for accessibility purposes such as color blindness.

Overall, the team reviewed our user journey and flowchart as both good and clear. This provides us with a good understanding of our project plan to move forward.

## 7. Wireframes:

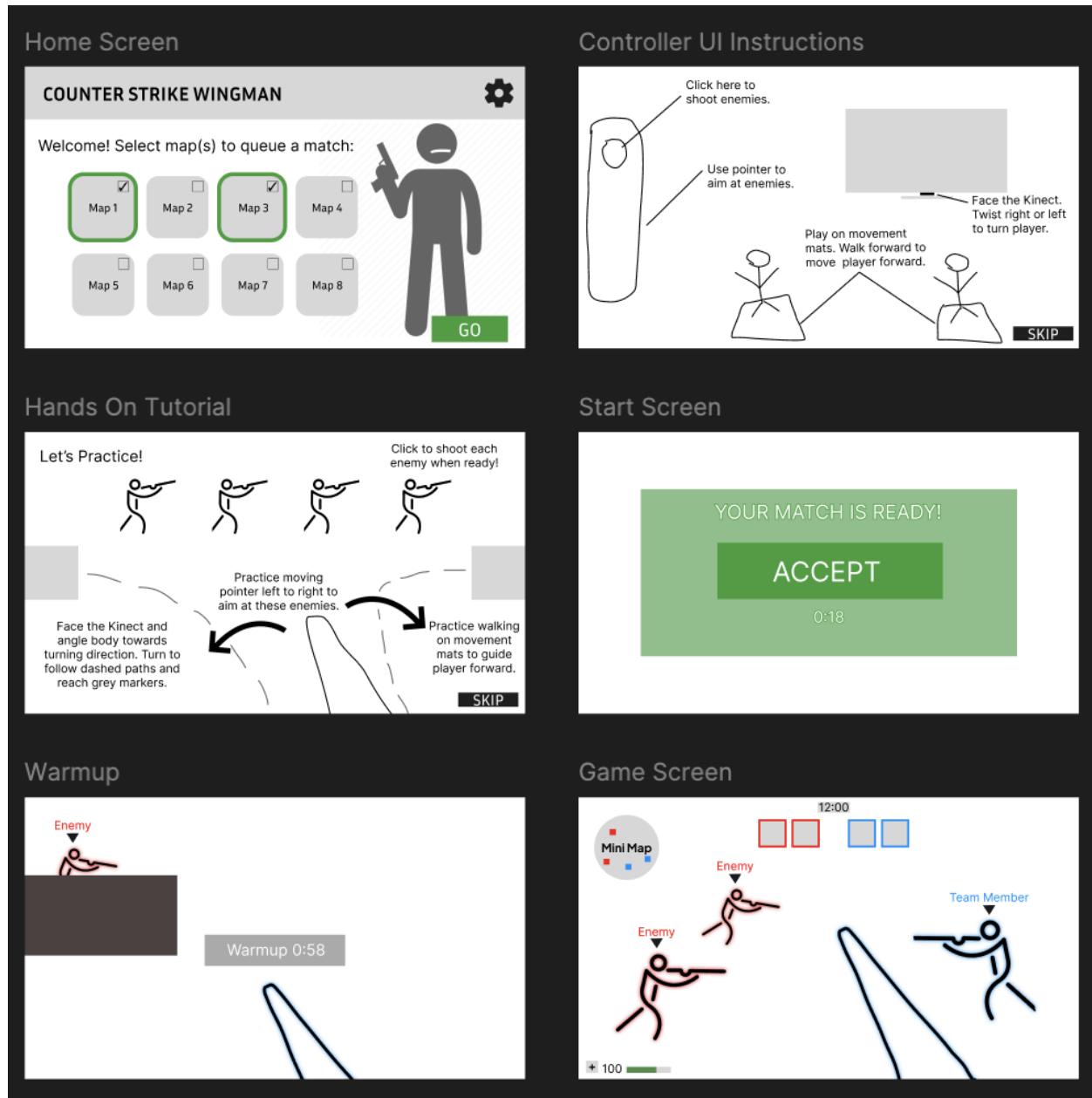
Below is our wireframe for our modified game of *Counter-Strike*, specifically the wingman mode. The wireframe takes the user through the process of opening up the game all the way to actually playing the game, with all of our modifications included.

The home screen depicts what the players first see when they enter the game. They can choose which of the eight maps they want to queue up for. After pressing “go” and waiting for a match to be ready with the first available map of any of the ones they chose to queue up for, players are taken to the hands-on tutorial we added as a modification.

The first screen goes over everything the player needs to know about the game controls. This includes an illustration of the pointer they will be using and how it functions to aim and shoot, the movement mats the players stand on and how to use them to move the player forward and around the game space, and finally the Kinect that informs players to twist to the right to turn their player right and twist to the left to turn their player right. With this screen, players can take their time exploring the controls and visualize how they will apply these controls to the gameplay. Players also have the option to skip if they already know the controls.

The next screen then makes the players practice each of the different components of the controls. Players have two grey markers on each side to practice turning to the left and the right and four targets to practice aiming and shooting. Once again, players can also skip this tutorial if they are already familiar and don't want or need more practice.

Finally, when their match is ready, a big green popup announcement will prompt players to accept their match and get started. The players are then taken into a warmup where they have the option to practice hiding and shooting the actual opponent, rather than the AI targets from the tutorial. When the timer runs out for the warmup, players are taken to the game, which features a highlighted UI to clearly differentiate which players are on which team.



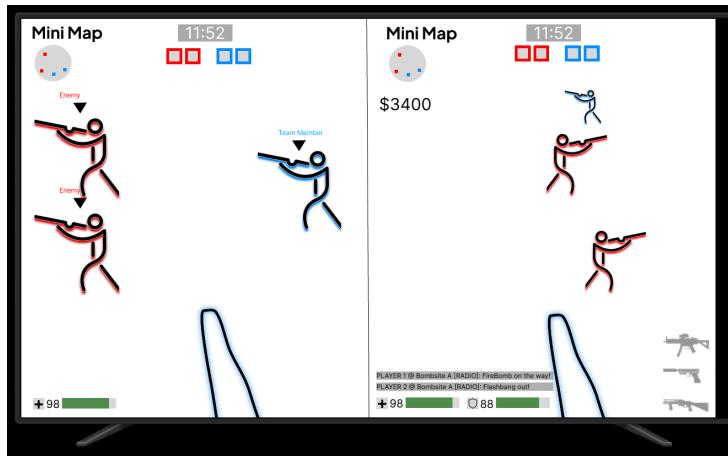
## 8. Group Feedback 2:

### Wireframe:

- We were told by an audience group that our wireframe design was thorough. The whole process is clear and concise. They informed us it's good to keep weapon selection simple to keep the experience less overwhelming, but we could still introduce some variation. Warmup helps parents practice and feel less overwhelmed. We still have to clarify how the character's body rotates in the game. On-screen text shown during tutorial should be turned into pop-ups instead that display one instruction at a time to help parents understand controls. There should be an additional screen that explains the game objective to the parents before they enter a match.

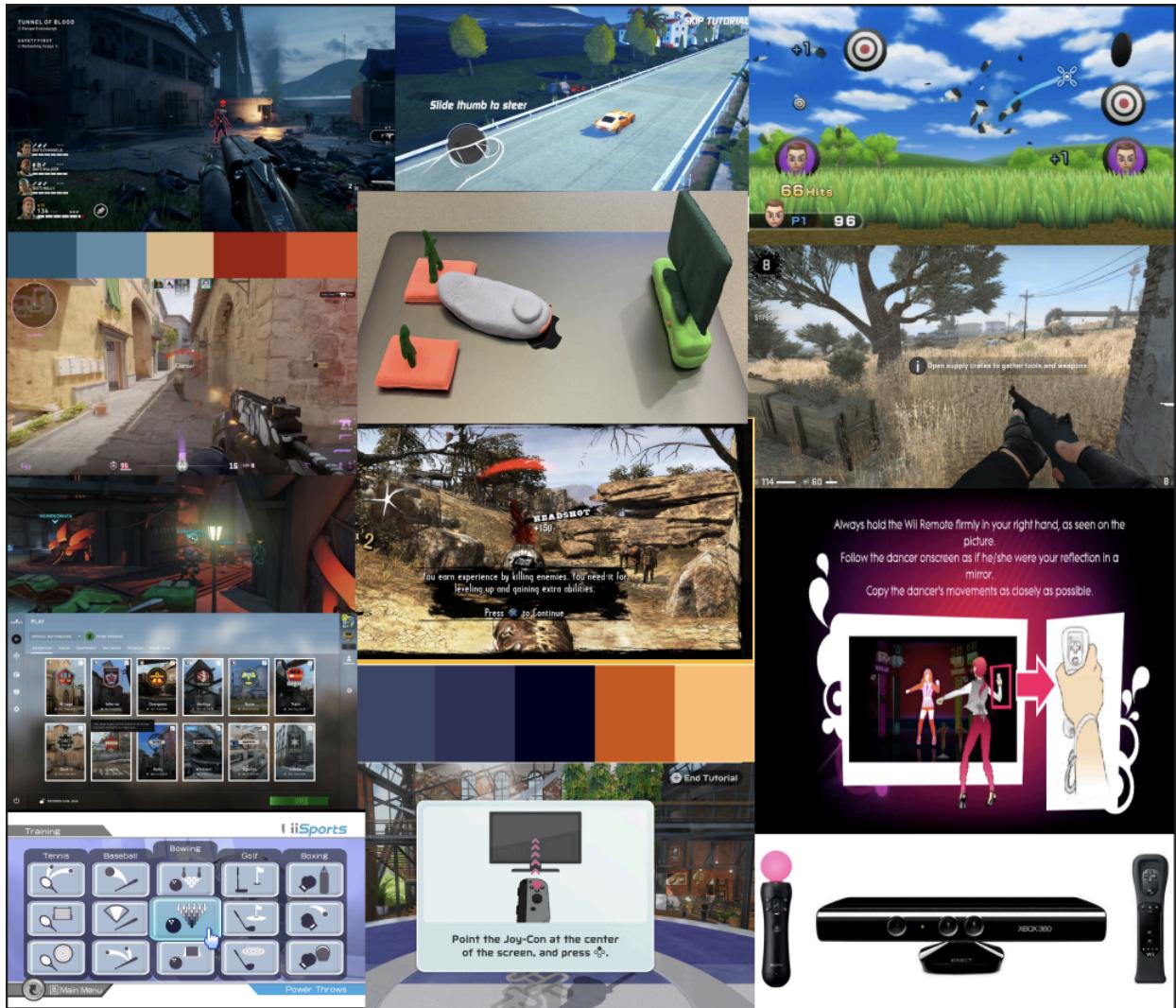
## 9. Low-Fi UX Prototype:

Below is a link to our working low-fi UX prototype! This prototype features a portion of our wireframe that is modified for our parent persona. The prototype goes through the starting screen, the four steps of the hands-on tutorial, the match-ready screen, a quick warmup where the parent can choose to enable full capabilities, and then the actual gameplay. The gameplay screen varies depending on if the parent enables full capabilities or not. The prototype also includes an additional feature to showcase splitscreen. The gameplay screen exemplifies our modified UI which allows the parent to easily distinguish who is an enemy and who is a team member. We also added different animations, such as the characters moving back and forth, representing the motion controls of the gun, timer counting down, and blocks zooming in to convey walking within the game. Lastly, we made several buttons that we had in our wireframe interactable so that the user can play through the prototype to view each of the screens.



Link to Figma: [Low-Fi Prototype](#)

## Moodboard of Example UI Elements:



## Writeup:

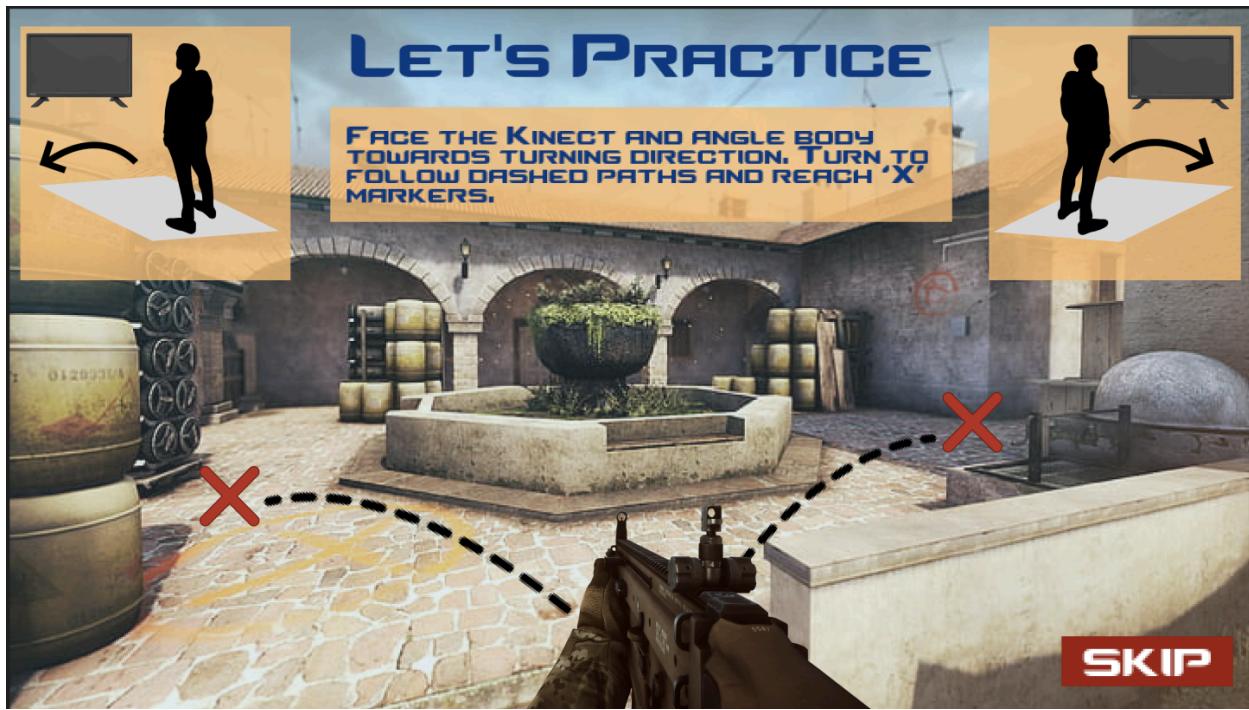
Starting with the left most column, we chose the first picture for our moodboard because we like how the enemy is outlined in red and can clearly be differentiated, making it easy to follow along as a player. Next we have a color palette; you will find that our moodboard actually has two color palettes, both of which we took heavy inspiration from *Counter-Strike*, the game we chose to modify. Going back down the left column, we have a picture from *Counter-Strike* which we added to our moodboard for inspiration on the layout of the gameplay screen and all the components such as the mini map at the top left, the players at the top center, the health at the bottom left, and the gun selection and the bottom right. Next, we added another picture for inspiration on the colorful outlines and “headers” for the enemy players -this time featured in

blue. This is something we have included in our modifications and so it was important to include examples of this concept. We then have another picture from *Counter-Strike*, but this time the screen where you select maps to queue matches. This is a screen we created a mockup for for both our wireframe and low-fi prototype so it was important to add this image to our moodboard as we took heavy inspiration from this screen and used it to implement a rather simpler version for our modified game's start screen. Finally, the last picture in the left column showcases the Wii remote's pointer feature. We added this picture because we added a modified pointer controller for our game where you would point to aim at enemies. A Wii remote control does a very similar thing but to point and select options on the screen rather than aim at enemies. But, this picture showcases that technology in use, something similar to what we would probably use for our pointer controller.

Moving onto the middle column, we have three pictures revolving around tutorial UI and one picture showcasing our handmade clay model of our out of game UI such as the movement mats, pointer controller, and the “kinect” to sense body movement. We chose the first picture because it provides a good demonstration of how to use a control with a diagram of the actual finger pressing the button. This would be useful to add to our tutorial screen targeted for super beginner players, so they can easily understand and visualize how to press and use their controller. We chose the next tutorial picture on the middle column because *Counter-Strike* uses a realistic artstyle; while this example is from a different game, it gives an idea for what our modifications may look like and how they can easily fit into the design. We then chose the last tutorial picture because it nicely showcases how players should point their controller at the screen to play, and since we have something similar for our pointer controller, we can take heavy inspiration from this image and make our tutorial in a similar sense so that it is more visually apparent what the player should be doing.

Finally, we chose the pictures on the rightmost column of the mood board. Starting with the top right, the Wii remote controls once again demonstrate our style of gameplay with this example clearly showing how the player will move around and point to shoot at different objects. The next image shows another image from *Counter-Strike* highlighting helpful information to the player that helps clarify parts of the game. The following image is another example of a tutorial focusing around the use of motion controls, which continues to express our modifications. The last image showcases different types of motion control products such as the Xbox Kinect or Wii Remote, which help track the movement of the player to reflect the gameplay on screen.

Mockups:



## **Writeup:**

### Mockup 1:

For our first mockup, we focused on the tutorial screen which introduces the motion controls we designed for the player. We consciously decided to follow the limited color palette from our mood board. We increased the saturation on important UI areas such as the skip button and the targets the player will move towards to draw more attention towards them. As for the font, we opted to use the *Counter-Strike* font to keep the militaristic feel to our game. The popups containing the mat controls take up a bigger portion of the screen so the player can prioritize them before taking in all the other visual elements in the game. We presented them in yellow to emphasize their separation from the 3D scene. These elements will help our target persona of parents as they can easily be drawn to the various components on the tutorial screen, and even see an “outside” perspective of what they need to be doing on their movement mats.

### Mockup 2:

For our second mockup, we focused on the in-game split screen that features a simple mode for players like parents (our target persona) and a full feature mode for more advanced players. When creating these screens we focused on simplified UI for older players with labeled components that serve as a gateway or support for a smoother learning curve. The side-by-side gameplay also furthers this; parents can focus on their screen and, once comfortable, start noticing what additions the more experienced mode has. Both sides have clearly outlined players with a virtual fuzzy glow and we chose the most saturated color (red and blue) on the screen to draw attention to other players. On the parents' side, there are labels for the enemy versus the team member, to provide another distinguishing feature between the players, aside from just the colored outlines. We once again chose our colors based on our *Counter-Strike*-inspired color palette from our mood board and for the font, we once again used the *Counter-Strike* font to stay faithful to the military theme and a font called *Jura* for smaller text legibility that adds a game-like feel.

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