

Play Testing

Playtesters – Designer

- Most frequent playtester
 - Every time you press the Play button in Unity
- Your job
 - Game is heading toward the kind of experience you want to create?
- Most useful in the very early stages of prototyping
- However, you eventually need to show your game to others

Playtesters – Others

- Testing is frightening
 - It's asking people to point out everything bad about your game
- **But** every person who plays your game and gives you feedback will make your game better
- However, you need to get honest feedback
 - Some people will try to not hurt your feelings
 - Schell suggests saying: "I need your help. This game has some real problems, but we're not sure what they are. Please, if there is anything at all you don't like about this game, it will be a great help to me if you let me know."

Most Difficult Part – Ignore Your Ego

- Listen without responding to every point
- Fight overpowering urge to become defensive.
 - Criticizing your baby will make it better

Conducting a Session

- Welcome the playtesters
- Remind the playtesters that you are testing the game, not their skill. Any difficulties in playing the game will help you to improve the game.
- Ask them to talk out loud.
- Write down or record what they are saying
- If possible make a video of them playing (handy is enough)
 - Helps to fix were exactle the problem was
- When they are finished playing, interview them.
- Thank them

Methods of Playtesting

- One-on-One Testing
 - You sit down with each tester and look over their shoulder.
- Group Testing
 - Have a group play your game and you ask them questions.
- Feedback Forms
 - Give each tester a standard list of questions.
- Interviews
 - You sit down with each tester and give them an in-depth oral interview.
- Open Discussion
 - You conduct a discussion group after testers have played the game.

Being a Great Playtester

- Think out loud
 - Tell the investigators what you're thinking as you play
 - This is especially important on the first play through a game
- Reveal your biases
 - Difficult for investigators to know where their playtesters are coming from
 - As you're playing talk about other games, films, books, experiences, etc. that the game reminds you of

Being a Great Playtester

- Self-analyze
 - Help the investigators understand your reactions to the game
 - Don't just say "I feel happy."
 - It's better to say "I feel happy because the jumping mechanic makes me feel powerful and joyful."

Being a Great Playtester

- Separate elements
 - Give overall feedback first
 - Then try to analyze art, game mechanics, game feel, sound, music, etc. as individual elements
 - This is akin to saying "The cellos sound out of tune," rather than "I didn't like that symphony."

Being a Great Playtester

- Don't worry if they don't like your ideas
 - As a fellow game designer, you should tell the investigators any ideas you have to make their game better
 - But you also shouldn't be offended if they don't use them
 - Both game design and playtesting are about checking your ego at the door