

Blog post #2 **Game Design Document & Milestones**

The idea for our game started with a simple but honest goal: to pass this course and graduate. That's where the original concept was born. We began planning a game called *Escape VIA*, a retro 2D platformer designed specifically for the VIA Arcade Machine. It was meant to be both fun and a bit meta—about escaping VIA University by completing your degree.

The core premise was that the player is trapped inside the university and must battle through different departments, enemies, and challenges to reach the final boss in the auditorium. Only by defeating the boss could you “graduate” and win the game. The arcade machine has six buttons, and we assigned each one a purpose: jump, shoot, roll/dodge, first power-up, second power-up, and shield. This button layout inspired a lot of creative thinking around movement, combat, and level design.

We met up and discussed how to structure the game, what mechanics to prioritize, and how to deliver something that felt retro but engaging. The ideas kept coming fast: themed levels (library, canteen, labs), unique bosses (like a rogue professor or malfunctioning robot), and a pixel-art style inspired by classic platformers.

We created a basic design document outlining the concept, controls, game flow, visual style, and enemy types. We also set the following **three development milestones**:

1. **Prototype Phase** – Basic character movement and animations
2. **Core Gameplay Phase** – Level design and enemy behavior, with working health and combat systems.
3. **Polish & Boss Phase** – Final level (the auditorium), boss fight implementation, sound, UI, and testing.

However, due to time constraints and technical challenges, we weren't able to follow through with this original plan. We ended up creating a different game altogether, which we'll talk about in the next blog posts. Still, planning *Escape VIA* taught us a lot about scoping, teamwork, and designing for specific platforms like the arcade machine.

Authors: Antonio and Nicklas

