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 CS 1010 – Intro to Interactive Entertainment
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Module 2 - TIO: Design Discussion - Designing and Developing Games

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of player-centric game design? In what ways might player-centric game design conflict with other requirements imposed on the game or with the desires of the game designer? – The book provides the following definition for player-centric game design ‘*a philosophy of design in which the designer envisions a representative player of a game the designer wants to create*’. One of the strengths of this type of design is that it continuously asks the question “is this game fun for my intended audience”. I think this should be one of the most important questions when designing a game. If the game is not fun, it won’t be engaging. The book does mention the misconception of the developer being the typical player. I can see this being an issue when trying to create a game for younger players or for a demographic outside of a developer’s peer group. This can be a weakness because you won’t necessarily find enjoyment in the same things. As such, this would have to be navigated by having test players in your target demographic. Another weakness of a player-centric game design is that you may find what you are working on not as engaging for you as a developer. I suppose this would only be an issue though on a larger development scale where the game is being created for a company/profit, as opposed to a passion project.
2. Do you feel that the list of qualities in an ideal game designer is complete? What other qualities might you add? Are there any that you would remove? – The list is pretty comprehensive as to the qualities that would make a good game designer. While technical awareness, imagination, and analytical competence are all great on paper, I feel that the book left out the quality of having fun and enjoying the game. Perhaps this could be defined as passion for the project, but without this quality, having non-passionate developers on your team will bring down the enthusiasm of everyone involved. I would also echo the book that drawing skills are valuable, but not necessary for the designer, assuming there are other artists on board. Not all skill sets need to be checked off for a designer to be competent.
3. The list of members of a design team does not include a lead programmer. Should it? Suggest some arguments for and against. – I’m a bit confused by this question, as the text does include a section for a lead programmer in the design team. This seems to be a necessary role as any team should have a spearhead on the programming section of design to help organize and direct the team. The only times that a lead designer may not be needed is if there is enough communication between the designers where they are able to collectively make the decisions in a democratic fashion for how programming development should move forward.