PRACTICUM 2.4 PLAYTEST RESEARCH PLAN

Team 10 – Mojo Jojo Studios

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How is the intended experience (as described in P2.1) realized in the player?

INTENDED EXPERIENCE SUMMARY

Vilom Chronicles is a *world altering action-packed skill-testing perception-based combat-platformer*. Vilom Chonicles is a challenging game, that wants to create a great amount of satisfaction/pleasure for the player by challenging the player to use his/her own skills to overcome obstacles in the game. This challenge mainly comes from the combat and platforming aspects, in which the player's capabilities to analyze, anticipate and react are being tested. Since the gameplay tests these skills in the smallest of situations, it will quickly trigger a sense of achievement. The analyzing aspect of the challenge consists of the need for the player to examine his enemies. The anticipation aspect of the challenge is formed by combining the learned behavior of the enemy in the analyzing aspect and give a clear view of the current situation. The reaction aspect of the challenge will test the player's capability to react on time in the anticipated situation. Thus the player must understand the enemies capabilities and abilities, and react accordingly.

The changing of characters and the corruption mechanic will create an extra level of depth to the challenge of the game, while the game is staying the same at its core, it will keep providing new challenges to the player.

SUB RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is the player able to analyze and gain knowledge about the enemies in the game?
   In Vilom Chronicles the combat is designed in such a way that tests multiple skills of the player, one of which is the ability to analyze and gain knowledge about the situation. A player should be able to do this to a certain degree depending on his/her analytical skill. The player's ability to analyze should not be hindered by the game design.
2. Does the player feel like he has influence on the game world?
   In our vision statement we made clear that it is important that the player has to be able to alter the game world and that should thus be experienced by the player in the game.
3. Does the player experience the character controls as responsive during gameplay?
   In the game the player needs to be able to respond to the enemies movement, this requires a responsive control system as otherwise the game would feel unfair for the player.

4. Does the player feels like he/she needs to actively use his abilities(human abilities like reaction, observation etc.) to defeat the enemies in the game?
   The main experience from Vilom Chronicles originates from the player using it's skills, creating satisfaction by challenging the player. Even though the game might be fun, the player should feel like he/she is challenged during gameplay.
5. Does the player experience satisfaction when completing objectives in the game?
   The main experience from Vilom Chronicles originates from the player using it's skills, which should create satisfaction for the player. Even though the game might be challenging, the player should experience satisfaction from this challenge.

Write down 3-5 research questions. For each question, shortly describe how it is related to the intended experience.

METHOD

Note that you should use at least one qualitative and one quantitative method.

RESEARCH METHOD FOR QUESTION 1

For question 1 we will use observation, questionnaire and interview. With observation we see if the player learns/adapts during gameplay. With a questionnaire we can test the knowledge the player has learned throughout gameplay. With an interview we can learn how the player experienced the learning.

RESEARCH METHOD FOR QUESTION 2

For question 2 we will use questionnaire and interview. With questionnaire we can measure if the question is true in a quantitative way. With an interview we can learn in a qualitative way if the question is true and get more information why it is true or false.

RESEARCH METHOD FOR QUESTION 3

For question 3 we will use a questionnaire and an interview. With a questionnaire the player can give the controls a score. With an interview we can get a score and an explanation why with the ability to get more detailed information.

RESEARCH METHOD FOR QUESTION 4

For question 4 we will use a questionnaire and an interview. With a questionnaire the player can rate the challenge of the game. With an interview we can get a more detailed explanation why the player feels like why certain aspects feel (not) challenging.

RESEARCH METHOD FOR QUESTION 5

For question 5 we will use a questionnaire, an interview and an observation. With a questionnaire the player can give the satisfaction experienced a score. With an interview we can get an explanation from the player why he

thinks the game gives satisfaction. With an observation we can see the player's emotional response to certain events in the game.

METHOD DETAILS

For each method you will use, describe in detail how the method will be executed. Also describe what data the method will yield and how it will be processed.

QUESTIONNAIRE

While one group will be observed and interviewed, the other group will just fill in the questionnaire. The questionnaire and the interview both cover the same topics to a certain degree. The questionnaire will provide us with quantitative data, which can be analyzed using version statistical methods. For example, we can see the average, frequency, standard deviation etc. for each question. We can even select a part of the sample based on characteristics such as age or gaming experience. The questionnaire can give us an information insight on how our game is experienced but not why. For example, we can average the scores of the question about responsiveness of our game to get a general idea if the game is responsive enough or not. However, also looking at the standard deviation might reveal that hardcore gamers (our target group) experience the game as unresponsive while casual gamers do not. To find out why this is the case, further research can be done. (Or the interviews might reveal why.)

The questionnaire will be given to the playtester after he/she is finished playing the game. The questionnaire used is as follows:

Name (Optional):

Age:

Gender:

Gaming experience (Likert scale, 7 points)
   None ~ A lot

On which device do you usually play?
   Laptop / Desktop / Tablet / Mobile / Console

Device used:
   Laptop, Gaming Laptop, Desktop, Gaming Desktop

Q1
Did the world change in any way during gameplay?
   Yes/No

Q2 (If Q1 ==yes)
When did the world change?
   A. When killing an enemy B. when attacking C. When moving D. Interacting with checkpoints

Q3 (If Q1 == yes)
I felt like I was influencing the world during gameplay (Likert scale, 7 points)
   Not at all ~ A lot

Q4
How responsive was controlling the player-character during gameplay? (Likert scale 7 points)

unresponsive (slow/clunky) ~ responsive (fast/fluid)

Q5

The jumping and travel-distance of the player-characters were …. to learn and use during gameplay. (likert scale 7 points)

hard/inconsistent ~ easy/consistent

Q6

To what degree did the responsiveness of the player-character hinder your performance during gameplay? (likert scale, 7 points)

Not at all ~ A lot

Q7

Playing Vilom Chronicles was ….(Likert)

not intense ~ very intense

Q8

Which of the following abilities did you feel like you had to use to complete the level?
(you can select as many as you want)
My ability to:

A. react B. Observe C. Anticipate D. gain knowledge E. Think strategic F. None of these

Q9

During gameplay I learned …... about the abilities of the enemies in game. (Likert scale, 7 points)

Nothing ~ A lot

Q10

During gameplay I was able to use the knowledge about enemies to defeat them (more easily) (Likert scale, 7 points)

Totally disagree ~ Totally Agree

Q11

To what degree was the game satisfying to play? (likert scale, 7 points)

Not satisfying at all ~ Very satisfying

Q12

The challenge in the game made completing objectives, for example defeating an enemy, satisfying to achieve. (Likert scale, 7 points)

Totally disagree ~ Totally agree

Q13

To what degree did I experience the gameplay as unfair? (Likert scale, 7 points)

Unfair ~ Very fair

Q14

Would you play more of the game?

Yes/Maybe/No

Q15
which of these would you include in a description of the game?
(you can select as many as you want)
a) world altering b) action-packed c) skill-testing   d) perception-based
e) combat-platformer

Q16
Is there anything you'd like to tell us about your experience/Vilom Chronicles?
Open box:

Google Forms link to the questionnaire:

http://goo.gl/forms/nNM1AHlnvq

OBSERVATION

The group that will be observed is the same group as the playtesters that will be interviewed. The sessions start with the observation, using the following protocol:

The following guidelines will be strictly followed to ensure research validity throughout the playtest-sessions.

Start by telling the playtester the following: "Welkom. Leuk dat je onze game wilt testen. Je mag nu als eerste beginnen met het spelen van ons spel. Ik ga zometeen naast jou zitten. Het is de bedoeling dat jij gewoon het spelletje speelt maar daarbij wel hard-op na denkt. Bijvoorbeeld, "hé, deze knop doet blijkbaar dit" of "volgens mij kan ik daar naar toe springen". Doe maar alsof ik er eigenlijk niet ben. Ik zal ook regelmatig iets opschrijven, trek daar maar niks van aan en het is niet is negatiefs! Eigenlijk ben ik er gewoon niet, ik mag jou dus ook niet helpen of vragen beantwoorden. Focus vooral op het spel, veel plezier!"

After the introduction, the observer will take a seat next to the player but outside of the playtesters direct line of sight. The monitor and the players face should be clearly visible for the observer.

During the play-time, the observer writes every interesting thing down. The main focus of the observation is on seeing if the player adapts to the enemy's attacks (learning how to counter the attacks after multiple encounters). In other words we will look at the player and judge to what degree a player learns the moves of the enemies and possible reasons for this. For example, when the player counters a move for the first time, does he/she keeps using that method? Or does the player experiment with how to counter or react to a certain attack? The second focus will be the emotional reactions of the player after completing small objectives in the game, such as defeating an enemy and reaching checkpoints, we do this to determine the

(dis)satisfaction the player receives from the game.For example, the player might express frustration when losing or a sigh of tension when finally winning a battle.

The observations will be written down in the following format:

Type of observation   -   Description   -   In-game section

For example:

Learning enemies - The player tried jumping over Zato's drill and found out that it is a good way to avoid it. He keeps jumping over the drill every time Zato uses it. - Battle with Zato

The data collected during the observation have to be processed analytically rather than statically. Due to this nature, it is important to write down many of the interesting findings but also labeling them depending on their certainty. Some findings might be noted down clear and often while others are not directly mentioned or rare but are still interesting. These findings can then be compared to the interview/questionnaire results or be further investigated in a later playtest-session.

INTERVIEW

The interview will happen after the observation and also has a very strict guideline that has to be followed. The guideline:

Interview protocol
(In dutch) "Nu dat jij klaar bent met het spelen van onze game, zouden wij graag een aantal vragen aan jou willen stellen. Wij zijn nieuwsgierig naar hoe jij onze game ervaarde. Je kan de vragen gewoon eerlijk beantwoorden, geen enkel antwoord is fout. Als iets niet duidelijk is, kan je het gerust laten weten."

Indien de interviewee een slecht/onduidelijk antwoord geeft moet de interviewer daarop inspelen. Als het onduidelijk is of mogelijk meer informatie uit te halen valt, kan er bijvoorbeeld gevraagd worden "Zou jij daar een voorbeeld van kunnen noemen in het spel?" Of "Zou je dat wat uitgebreider kunnen beschrijven?". Wanneer je tevreden bent met een antwoord, geef de interviewee een compliment, bijvoorbeeld "Dat klopt! Goed gezien!" Of "Heee, zo hadden wij het nog nooit bekeken, interessant!". Zo motiveert de interviewee de interviewer goede antwoorden te geven. Daarnaast zal de interviewer niet de interviewee onderbreken of vaak proberen te verbeteren. De interviewer speelt een neutrale rol, die alleen maar naar informatie vraagt en niet zelf stuurt. Indien de interviewee een vraag niet (goed) kan beantwoorden, dan kan de interviewer hints geven over het spel.

Interview questions
Q1 Had je door dat de wereld veranderde tijdens het spelen van het spel?
   ● Wat? Waardoor? Effect? Rode tint.
Q2 Voelde de player character responsive aan voor jou?
   ● Knoppen, Jump distance, belemmering, reactie-tijd

Q3 Werden, voor jouw gevoel, jouw menselijke vaardigheden uitgedaagd tijdens het spelen van het spel? Bijvoorbeeld bij het verslaan van vijanden (Als de interviewee vraagt wat daaronder valt, noem bijvoorbeeld reageren, observeren, anticiperen etc.)

- Welke vaardigheden? Vraag voorbeelden? Noem situaties uit observatie en vraagt wat er toen gebeurde.
- Vond je dat je tactisch moest zijn?

Q4 Heb jij, tijdens het spelen, kennis gekregen over enemies en hun aanvallen? (Antwoord) Kon jij dan ook die kennis toepassen?

- Welke kennis? Vraag voorbeelden. Voorbeelden toepassen.

Q5 Was het spel voldoenend om te spelen? (antwoord) Wat maakte het voldoenend volgens jou? (antwoord)

- (Stel dat de interviewee niet de uitdaging noemt) En maakte de uitdaging het dan voldoenend voor jou? Hoezo wel/niet
- Voorbeelden, enemies, bosses

Q6 Had je het gevoel dat het een eerlijk spel was om te spelen?

- Wat maakte het eerlijk/oneerlijk? Voorbeelden

Q7 Heb je zelf nog opmerkingen over onze game die niet zijn behandeld?

- Iets onlogisch? Iets miste? Andere suggesties?

The data collected during the interviews have to be processed analytically rather than statically, as was the case with the observation-data as well. Due to this nature, it is important to write down many of the interesting findings but also labeling them depending on their certainty. Some findings might be noted down clear and often while others are not directly mentioned or rare but are still interesting. Asking extra questions during the interview might add extra information/proof about certain findings. These findings can then be compared to the observation/questionnaire results or be further investigated in a later playtest-session.

SERENDIPITOUS FINDINGS

For the questionnaire an open question as final question asking for any special findings the playtester wants to give us. With the interview we can ask in more detail about things we want to know more about and playtesters might mention things on their own and in the end we ask for anything special to note. With an observation we can see the playtester's reaction to certain unexpected events.