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Faction: Trolls

GAT 210A—Spring 2014

Instructor: Jeremy Holcomb

Game Analysis

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Version 1 – Draw or Dare

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the GAT210 Section A participated as first-time players for the rules that are written in the Concept & Design document. There were only two students who playtested my game twice for this lab.

**Name: Email:**

* Josh [email](mailto:g.huxtable@digipen.edu) not available
* Howard Wang [howard.w@digipen.edu](mailto:howard.w@digipen.edu)

**Playtesting Results**

For the first playtest of “Draw or Dare” Josh and Howard were the playtesters for the game. I had brought two copies of my game’s rules and let both players know that I did not intend for the game to be a blind playtest, so they could ask me questions if anything was unclear. My intention in creating “Draw or Dare” was for the game to be easy to pick up and play with a minimal amount of rules, but I expected questions or clarification of the rules because this is the most complicated game I have created for the lab thus far. Both players had questions concerning the “Dare” section of the rules because the way I had written the rules did not clarify that the players were to swap cards. After this correction, the players felt that they understood the rules enough to start playing after about 3 minutes of time.

Once the game had started, the game moved along slowly at first as the players took their time getting used to the turn sequence of the game. Thankfully, as the game progressed the sequence of events in a turn went by more quickly as the players got used to the game. Throughout the course of the first game the players would only swap cards or keep their drawn cards, never drawing new cards at all. Perhaps because the game was new to both players, this rule was simply forgotten.

Another interesting aspect of the first game was how much attention each player focused on their own collection of cards versus the cards of their opponents. Players did take more time making decisions towards the end of the game in whether a card was good or bad for them, but it appeared to be mostly about their own collection and not their opponent’s collection. My intention for the game was to give the players perfect knowledge of what each other had currently collected so that they could make decisions later into the game to forgo collecting points for a suit that they think they have already won so that they could try and win another suit. The only time a player was concerned about the points another player was collecting is when a face card was drawn, in which case it was immediately transferred to the opponent.

The first game took about 7 minutes to play, and ended with a tie. This resulted in both players rolling a die to see who won, with Howard winning the die role. While both players enjoyed playing through the game, they both strongly disliked the tiebreaker, which they felt made the game they just played not mean anything. Players also did not like having to add up points at the end of the game. During the second playtest, the value of all number cards was assigned 5 points each to make adding points at the end of the game easier. This game played about 5 minutes and both players took advantage of drawing, keeping, and swapping cards throughout the game. Howard ended up winning again, 3 suits to 1 suit. However, if the old point system were in place, then Josh would have won. This leads me to believe that while players do not like to count, having the old point system might be better for the game.

After both the playtests were completed, I think that the penalty for face cards are perhaps too steep, because most of the times the scores for each suit were barely positive, and mostly negative. Changing the penalty to -5 points might be better. Also, to give the players more “choice” it might be a good idea to make collecting face-cards a viable, yet risky way to earn points, much like in hearts.

Version 2 – Draw or Dare

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the GAT210 Section A participated as first-time players for the rules that are written in the Concept & Design document. There were only two students who playtested my game twice for this lab.

**Name: Email:**

* Christopher Christensen [c.christensen@digipen.edu](mailto:c.christensen@digipen.edu)
* Jason Clark nobody@clark.jason.none

**Playtesting Results**

For the revised version of “Draw or Dare” my playtesters were Christopher and Jason. Both of the playtesters have not played my game yet and so I thought I’d try to do a blind playtest to see if my rules were written well. Unfortunately only a few minutes into reading the rules both players were having a hard time understanding the way things were worded in the game. The biggest issues were how draw and dare are used as turn sequences in the game along with the other turn sequence names, but only draw and dare are emphasized in the title. Unable to proceed further, I broke my silence and helped the playtesters understand the turn sequence of the game.

Much like in the first version, the game started out slowly but gradually picked up its pace when the players got used to the turn sequence of the game. Tie die rolls were common for both players and sometimes slowed down the game more than it should. As long as I am using dice for this game I should think of a better way to use tie die rolls for the game, because in its current state they just get in the way of playing the game.

This time around the players actually did focus a bit on the cards they were collecting, but usually before it is too late into the game with not many cards left. While my intention is for the game to have perfect knowledge so that players can make strategic choices, the ability to make strategic choices is too limited to the luck of what you draw from the deck. Perhaps it would be better to just scrap the current point system altogether.

The first game did not end in a tie, and instead Jason won against Chris 3 victory points to 1 victory point. The second playtest almost ended in a tie, but Jason won again with the same 3 victory points to 1 victory point. The new joker as a tiebreaker never came into play, but players said afterwards that it would not have been interesting to win in this way. Both games Jason won and had the joker as a bonus point to his suits, so at least the joker is being used in some way. Neither player managed to get all the penalty points to win points, as well. This mechanic may not be suited to this game as well as I first thought.

Version 3 – Draw and Dare

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the GAT210 Section A participated as players for the rules that are written in the Concept & Design document. There were only two students who playtested my game twice for this lab.

**Name: Email:**

* Christopher Christensen [c.christensen@digipen.edu](mailto:c.christensen@digipen.edu)
* Garrett Huxtable [g.huxtable@digipen.edu](mailto:g.huxtable@digipen.edu)

**Playtesting Results**

For this week’s lab I decided to make changes to my previous lab game “Draw or Dare” to hopefully improve upon it with my new incarnation: “Draw and Dare”. The idea behind the newest version of the game was to add another stage to the game, simplify the way the cards added up at the end of the game, and try to make choices more meaningful in the game. Christopher Christensen and Garrett Huxtable played both of the playtests.

While I hoped that my first playtest could be played without answering any questions from the players, it became obvious early into the reading of the rules that my latest version of the game had problems with conveying the rules. Both players were confused about the terminology used in the rules, specifically with there being a “Dare” sequence in a turn and also a “Dare” stage. After clearing up my intentions with the rules, it is clear to me now that I am trying too hard to make “Draw” and “Dare” work both in the name of the game and also the way the game is played. In the rewritten rules I have decided to use unique stage names and avoid using words like “Draw” because it also applies to an action of drawing cards in the game.

Other problems with the rules had to do with the turn sequence of the game. Right as both of the players started to play they were not sure who should draw cards first. For both the playtests I decided that the “Roll” sequence of a turn should take place first so that both players know who goes first. The first tiebreaker of the game also proved to be problematic, once again because the rules were unclear. Players were unsure if all the cards in the tiebreakers were to be swapped or not. This is a good example of how explicit the rules need to be, because I had assumed that it was implied that all cards would be swapped.

After clearing up the misunderstandings with the rules, the first stage of the game proceeded quickly. Both Chris and Garrett appeared to enjoy winning the die roll in order to make a “Swap or Not” decision, and I even caught moments where they would lament losing a good card or happy to win a better card than they had previously had. The first stage took about 5 minutes to complete and had four tiebreakers, with a crucial tiebreaker at the end where not enough cards were available to follow the rules as they were. We decided that no one wins the “Swap or Not” in this case and I made a note to update the rules in case of this situation happening again.

The second stage of the game was also fraught with problems, primarily in how the “Swap or Not” worked. The decision did not have a lot of weight to it, because of the perfect knowledge a player had when making a decision. After discussing it with Chris and Garrett, we decided the rest of the playtest would involve whether or not you could make a blind swap, trading the facedown card without knowing what it was, or not making a swap at all. Both players liked this option much better and the playtest resumed with the stage lasting about 6 minutes in total. One interesting thing of note is that Chris took the time to make a decision after thinking about what cards Garrett could possibly have left after having some knowledge of what he won in the first stage of the game. This is the kind of strategy I hoped the game would promote. Both playtests ended with Garrett barely edging out Chris and winning the game.

Version 4 – Draw and Dare

**Playtesters**

Classmates from the Digipen participated as players for the rules that are written in the Concept & Design document. There were only two students who playtested my game.

**Name: Email:**

* Michael Van Zant [michaelvanzant@digipen.edu](mailto:c.christensen@digipen.edu)
* Garrett Huxtable [g.huxtable@digipen.edu](mailto:g.huxtable@digipen.edu)

**Playtesting Results**

For the fourth version of my game I met with students at Digipen to go over the latest versions of our games. Michael and Garrett both participated as playtesters for my game. While Garrett has played this game before, Michael has not played it yet, so I hoped that my latest rules were easy for him to understand.

Both players took their time reading the rules, with Garrett finishing quickly due to having played the core of the game before. I had asked him not to explain things to Michael so that hopefully my rules will speak for themselves. After about 5 minutes of reading the rules both players were ready to start playing.

The first stage of the game proceeded rather well, although Michael later questioned why the first stage needed to happen at all. After a few minutes into the game it was clear that both players understood the turn sequence and the options available to them when they won the die roll. The choices in this stage of the game are pretty straightforward, both players said that they felt that swapping cards or not was pretty much an automatic decision based on the value of the card. There were a few moments where players would forget to roll first, but it did not affect the game that much. This section of the game took about 5 minutes to complete.

The second stage of the game went much better compared to the previous versions of the game. The rules had to be read over again at this stage because there is a lot of information, especially when the first tie happened. Both players seemed to enjoy this stage the best, with moments spent between players trying to stare down the other to see if their cards were worth swapping or not. Both players commented that this part of the game felt a lot like poker. Because of the decision making the game took longer in this stage, about 8 minutes, for a roughly 13 minute long game. Michael won the game 34 cards to 18 cards.

**The “Why”**

The final version of my game is the fourth version of my game and for the most part I am pretty happy with it. The game has come a long way since the first version and has grown through its original mistakes. While initially the game only had one main way to play it, it has since grown into a two-stage game and is better for it.

The second stage of the game is necessary because the first stage of the game does not stand well on its own. The first stage of the game plays well, but could not stand on its own as a way to end the game. Because of all the even numbers, even number of suits, and even number of cards, the first stage kept ending in a tie. If the tie was not bad enough, the solutions to break the ties were not working out, even with the joker as a potential tiebreaker.

Adding a second stage of the game did not solve this problem right away, but it did elevate the first stage of the game. With the addition of a battle-like stage, the first stage became a sort of primer, where players vie over cards to be used for the second half of the game. The second stage of the game had problems, but playtesting different ways of making choice matter really helped in finding a proper solution. The poker-like solution for the second stage fit the “Dare” style of the stage and also made choices less automatic than they were before, a problem the game faced quite often.

The last big decision I made for this game involved ties. Because I was using dice as a “decision making” mechanic I kept running into ties. This proved to be a problem to the game, which I tried to eliminate and then embraced. By making ties an interesting part of the game it took away the stall of how ties felt before and added a new multi card wager to the game, which did not exist before.

**Mathematical Analysis**

“Draw and Dare” requires players to roll 1d6 dice against one another, each d6 has an average die roll of 3.5 and a 1/6 or 16.7% chance of rolling either a 1 – 6 on the die. The die probabilities are useful for when the players each roll a die against one another to see who will get to “Swap or Not”. Each die roll is a new roll and a new chance for a player to win.

“Draw and Dare” also uses a standard 52 card deck of playing cards. The probability of pulling any one particular type of card (suit does not matter) from a shuffled deck with all cards remaining in the deck is 4/52 or 7.7%. For the first stage of the game this probability changes with every card that is drawn from the deck.

In the second stage of the game the probability of drawing a card depends on the cards a player has received from the first stage of the game. The probability of drawing any card from your deck depends on the cards received so it is possible to have no chance of drawing any one particular card.