Our group conducted a playtest of the game “CS Student: The Game” created by Team Voltron. This is the only iteration of the game available. All art assets, gameplay, and the rules were created and written by Team Voltron. The objective of this game is to achieve the highest grade out of all the other players. In doing so, the players are also trying to diminish the other’s grades by means of attacking their Social Status, Grades, and Sleep counters.

The game requires a minimum of 2 players, and has a maximum of 4 players. Each of the game characters has a special ability that only applies to that character. After the player chooses their character card, they then draw cards from a deck, and may have a deck of up to five cards themselves. The players need to develop a strategy on how to play their cards. All of the drawable cards have some effect on the player’s stats, by either helping themselves, hurting other players and even hurting their own stats.

Our group conducted the playtest using 4 testers, all of which were CS majors in their 3rd year. When asked about their experience with games, 2 testers classified themselves as “hardcore gamers”, one classified as a “casual gamer”, one classified as a “new gamer”. This created a scale with “hardcore” having the most experience and “new” having the least experience playing games. 3 out of the 4 testers were involved with the design and creation of the game. The 4th tester was not involved in the design process, and had the least experience playing games. So they were playing the game as a truly brand new player.

To begin the test, we gave an introduction to the testers. We welcomed the players and thanked them for their participation. The testers were then asked a few questions to gauge their gaming experience and classify their experience as stated in the previous paragraph. After this, one of the game’s creators presented and explained the rules to the testers, and the game began.

During the gameplay questions were asked along the way to see if players were enjoying themselves and to see if they had any questions or concerns. We know that some players prefer to hold their questions until the end as to not interrupt gameplay, however it was stressed that feedback during gameplay would be better. Whenever issues arose, we asked players what the issue was and if they had any feedback or suggestions on how they would want to make the situation better. This way we note down the suggestions players had so we could revisit them later on to improve our game. Players had also brought up questions about having max social status throughout the game, and concerns about character cards.

After our playtesting, we learned that there were some things that were more powerful than others, and that our game was not quite as clear as we thought it was. That being said, we thankfully were able to get really good feedback from our players so we could improve our game. One piece of feedback received was that our “Dr. Phil” player card was too powerful, and therefore we decided that in order to balance out our game we would change the character’s statistics. Our changes included reducing “Dr. Phil’s” buff from +25 sleep to +15 sleep, and changing everyone else’s stats from -10 sleep to +10 social.

Another issue that arose was that there were too many social cards that buffed players but not enough that debuffed players, and therefore at the end of the game all players had maxed out social statues. To fix this issue we decided to pull one of our social cards out of the game and replace with a “Voluntold Class Meeting”, which reduced social status by -25. We also implemented a multi card called “Early morning cram session”, which reduces social by -15 but increases grades by +10.

In conclusion, we learned that while our players enjoyed our game, we left one of character players too powerful, causing problems within our game play. Along with that, we had little to no debuffs for our social status which left our social cards with no impact on our players and leaving the game to be a bit too difficult. We still believe that the feedback received helped us improve our game, and we were happy that overall our playtest went fairly well. Players were vocal about their concerns and feedback during the game, yet still seemed to enjoy the game!