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.

CS Student: 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.

As the game progress, the proctor periodically asked the players about how the game was going and if they had any feedback. A few issues arose during the game. The players were asked to describe the issue in detail, and then asked to provide feedback on how the issue could be solved. The feedback was noted so the team would be able to review it and make adjustments to the game accordingly. The most frequent issue was improper balance of the characters and the player’s stats.

After the playtest, the group gathered all the feedback from the testers. After reviewing it, we found there were several adjustments we’re going to have to make to the game. One point of unanimous feedback was that the “Dr. Phil” character seemed to be too powerful during gameplay. It was found that the character’s special power increased their Sleep stats too high, and negatively impacted the other player’s Sleep stat’s too negatively. In turn, we are going to reduce “Dr. Phil’s” Sleep buff from +25 down to +15. We will also change the impact on the players stats from -10 Sleep to +10 Social. The other issue the testers encountered in the game was about cards that affected the Social stat. During gameplay, the testers found that there were too few cards to negatively affect the player’s Social stat, and too many that added to it. By the end of the game, all the testers had the maximum amount of Social points, but varying levels of all other stats. To alleviate the issue, we removed one Social buff card from the game, and replaced it with “Voluntold Class Meeting”. The effect of this card subtracts 25 Social points. We decided to add another card called “Early Morning Cram Session” which will subtract 15 Social points but adds 10 points to the player’s Grade. Moving forward with other iterations of the game, we are going to brainstorm even more cards for the deck to add variety and a better balance of points among players.

At the end of the playtest, we came back with good feedback for the game. The playtest revealed some issues with our game, but luckily, there wasn’t anything game-breaking. As a team, we were able to review and make the appropriate changes to our game. In all, the playtest was an effective way to get feedback and help us to make our game more enjoyable.