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.

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 stat’s from -10 Sleep to +10 Social. The other issue the testers encountered in the game

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!