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ACE'S GUIDE TO HITTING THE GAME DESIGN GYM TO GET THAT PERFECT MOD!



Tracking our gains

I had the students download a few mods that let them use new characters and play together and test them out. My goal was to A.) get the play together and get used to Torchlight B.) Get them to look critically at games as they play C.) give them inspiration for their maps and what they can do in GUTS. D.) get them to start thinking about what they want in their dungeons and logging it in the packet so they have a game plan before they start in guts. It is a really fun Monday Activity AND an IceBreaker.

What class did you play originally?

What class did you play when we downloaded the mod?

Which one did you prefer at why?

What did you like about each class?

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What did you not like about each class?

How could you improve the classes?

Which dungeon(s) did you explore?

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Did you enjoy the dungeon(s) why or why not? (feel free to use the next page)

How would you improve the dungeon?

If you could pick ANY theme for you dungeon what would it be?

What kind of boss?

How would this boss fit the theme of your dungeon? (does it have to?)

What kind of enemies and why?

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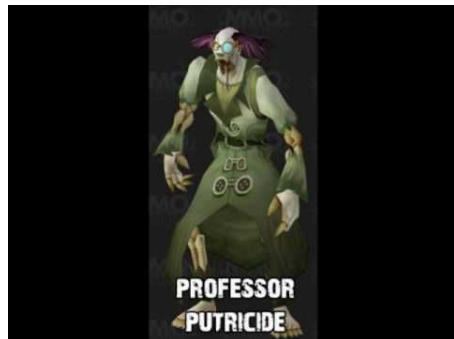
Do the enemies fit the theme of the boss and the dungeon?

//I am a huge Wow Nerd So I Used a Dungeon I knew.

CASE STUDY ICECROWN

HERE is a great example of the famous ICECROWN CITADEL raid from Wrath of the Lich King. This is a great template for your map. Notice the boss labels and the overall flow of the dungeon. Each quarter has a clear name tied to it. The bosses of each quarter are also themed and all minions of the great LICH KING.

Match the boss with the wing!



A.



B.

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C.



D.



E.

//My goal here is to look at the subtle hints game developers give to the players to deliver the theme. The boss should either fit the theme or DRAMATICALLY go against it. We need the intention to be obvious. I wanted them to discuss who went where and why. Feel free to use one of your favorite dungeons. This is just a template based on what I used.

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How do you know each boss goes where? What hints? Did you just guess?

Word BANK for the boss matching.

The Lower Spire

The Plagueworks

The Crimson Hall

Frostwing Halls

The Frozen Throne

Map to look at the layout on next page, but you can always use this extra space for notes and stuff!!!!!!!

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// here is an example of a great introduction to the dungeon. I used this as an inspiration piece so the students can try to really understand the language they want in their quest giving. We do not want kids writing "This is my zombie dungeon" We want "ahead is the lair of the necromancer crawling with undead ready to torment our valiant hero!". I also had the kids do game pitches to try to pitch the theme and idea of the dungeon so this paragraph below is an awesome snippet to help guide them towards EPIC pitches.

Icecrown Citadel dominates Northrend - visible from farther away than nearly any other structure and home to the greatest army of undead in the known world. Inside dwells the Lich King - a tyrant with nearly godlike power over his tireless, seemingly infinite subjects - and the will to bring Azeroth to its knees.

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An assault on the mighty citadel is among the most dangerous undertakings in the history of Azeroth - and the most pivotal. The legendary heroes Highlord Tirion Fordring of the Argent Crusade and Highlord Darion Mograine have joined forces to lead the charge through Icecrown's fortified gates, and both the Horde and Alliance have sacrificed lives - indeed, whole battalions - to get this far. They dare not fail. The Lich King's reign must end.

// I showed the students a boss fight and had them review it. I had the volume off on youtube. I wanted them to see that every class had a role in the fight, and that the boss had thematic abilities that really hammered home the idea that he was a big bad guy, and was an evil undead king. He used frozen themed abilities and kept the player on their toes. Again this was supposed to get the students to look at a game critically and find some inspiration for their boss fights in their dungeon. There is also a ton of lore and roleplaying in this boss fight so it was fun to have the students try to unravel the story and see how a story can change the feel of a fight. This also helps them balance a dungeon around multiple classes. We want EVERYONE to have a roll in a dungeon. I discuss this more in my "pier review" sheet.(I meant to spell it Pier..it is a pun..go check it out.)

Let's talk about the boss fight.

What abilities does the lich king use?

What mechanics did the players have to worry about?

What did the healers do?

What did the tanks do?

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What about the dps? (Damage Per Second)

How did the fight begin?

How did the fight end?

What did you like about the fight?

What seemed too hard or “anti fun”? *//My point here is that anti fun mechanics can be fun if the players overcome them. The frustration has to be limited and the ability to beat it has to seem possible. Pwning the player is fun for both the developer and the player, but we need to make sure they know not to go too far or the player won't keep playing. Big games like dota 2 and many shooters have anti fun mechanics, but they are fun when you get to use them. In this fight i'd argue being 1 shot by a flying valkyrie throwing you off the edge is seemingly unfair and not fun, but the players can react to it quickly to prevent that epic death.*

Should we include anti fun mechanics to make fun?

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Good dungeons have a clear start and finish, but leave the gamer to truly explore and create a unique relationship with an area. What details would you add to your dungeon to tell a story or set up a reason to enter. Do we have a quest for loot or a quest for power? Are we saving a princess? Will we have frozen goblins or coffins for the undead? Think of anything and EVERYTHING you can include in the dungeon. HOW will the boss fight work and what is THE BOSSES GOAL OF BEING IN THE DUNGEON! I want you to brainstorm hardcore so you do not waste your time drooling at your computer. Use as much as the next page as possible to write and draw me a rough draft of your dungeon.

//I had the students write and draw their dungeon layout and assets. This was a blueprint for them to use the rest of the week and continue to add to. I also had them open up guts and just look at the different tiles and themes at their computer. This way they started to look at guts and place tiles and see what they could do, but did not stress about making a giant map right off the bat. Sometimes just getting them to lay some tiles and look around in guts helps inspire them. I like to ease them into their projects so they build up confidence. I had them look at the lay out of Icecrown Citadel above to get an idea of how to plan out their dungeon and what they should label.

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