

Multiplayer Mode in Super Mario Brothers 3

Super Mario Brothers 3 is supposed to be a single player game. The design of the system is based on having a dynamic single-player experience. Like most of the single player games today, it tells a story of the protagonists trying to rescue someone important to them. However, unlike most of the single player games today, Mario Brothers 3 also has a two-player mode. The design of the two-player system works exactly like the one-player system except that the two players share their individual unlocking of the game before they run out of lives. It was never meant to resemble multiplayer mode in a lot of FPS deathmatch today, however, it manages to actively involve all the players sitting in front of the game. The game successfully does it by having short rounds, little level up, and relay.

During the recitation, four of us sit in front of Mario Brothers 3 and played the two-player mode. In the end, we never felt bored and all of us are actively watching as one was playing the game. Since the player is prone to die, everybody is having short rounds. And because of the short rounds, we alternate players quickly. We are all focusing on the screen since the next death could happen at any time. Thus, all players are actively involved in the game.

Another reason why players felt involved is that there is almost no level up from level to level. Unlike RPG where players would feel unfamiliar with the control setting if they were playing on another player's console. In Mario Brothers 3 there is no level up with the main character, for example, no new powers are added from time to time, thus each time one starts playing, one always starts fresh, with the same abilities and control settings. If Mario had the power to gain more abilities, then each time we alternate players, we would feel alienated and would die quicker than usual because of the unfamiliarity.

Last but not least, the relay function in the game is what holds the multiplayer mode together. Two characters share their unlocking of the world so if one character beat the level, the next character could start with the next level, making the two-player mode cooperative. And no difficulty would present to the next character because of the no level up characteristic of the game. This way players are quickly going through the game. If the game does not have the relay and both characters just unlock their own regions, it would become a competitive game where the two characters race to the end. However, in a game that has high difficulty, competitive mode is not going to work among casual or new gamers.

Most of the multiplayer mode in a single player game has characteristics like shared screen if cooperative, or split controls if competitive. Mario Brothers 3 has neither of those. However, the clever design of having short rounds, little power up, and relay still make a good multiplayer mode where players are playing alternatively in a cooperative setting.