Matej Popovski

Journal 2

Sunday March 2nd, 3:00pm – 10:00pm

Playtime: 7 hours

Journal About League of Legends – Second Session

Once again, on a Sunday—my designated gaming day—I decided to log my second League of Legends journal. Feeling relaxed and without many obligations, I was ready to play. This time, before diving into a game, I took a more structured approach by watching a few videos from professional players like Faker and Bausffs. Observing their gameplay helped me realize that learning from experts is far more efficient than attempting to figure everything out independently. Watching allows me to absorb knowledge quickly, but applying those techniques in real-time remains a challenge. Determined to put what I learned into practice, I started a game.

Game Overview:

For this session, I decided to play a different role—Toplane, which is distinct from my previous Support role. Toplane is intriguing because it involves a more isolated 1v1 battle against the opposing toplaner, with occasional influence from the jungler. I selected Cho'Gath, a champion known for his immense health scaling. His mechanics are relatively simple, so my primary focus was on efficient farming—killing minions for gold and experience—while maintaining vision on the map to anticipate enemy movements.

Vision is crucial, especially in toplane, as the enemy jungler can ambush at any moment. Additionally, toplaners often take the Teleport spell, which enables them to quickly join fights across the map. For example, if my team engaged in a skirmish in the botlane, I could teleport to assist them and turn the tide in our favor. However, I also had to be mindful of my own lane, ensuring I didn't leave an opening for my opponent to push towers uncontested.

Game 1 – Learning to Adapt:

I started my first game with Cho'Gath, focusing on farming and ensuring I stacked my abilities properly. I also applied some new insights from the professional players, such as lane freezing—manipulating minion waves to keep the enemy in a vulnerable position. I paid closer attention to objectives and team fights, strategically using Teleport when necessary. Thanks to solid teamwork, we secured a victory, which left me feeling confident and motivated.

Game 2 – Facing Challenges:

For my second game, I picked Tryndamere, a more aggressive champion with high mobility. Early on, I gained an advantage, but my opponent frequently received assistance from their jungler, making it difficult to maintain my lead. Although I died multiple times in 2v1 situations, this had a trade-off—while I was struggling, my team was capitalizing on the enemy's focus on me, securing objectives elsewhere on the map. Despite my personal struggles, we won the game as a team, demonstrating that individual setbacks can still contribute to an overall victory.

Key Takeaways & Strategic Insights:

Throughout the session, I kept playing Cho'Gath and Tryndamere because I became more comfortable with their mechanics. This aligns with a concept used by professional players—having a "main" champion to master. However, I recognized the need to expand my champion pool, as some picks can be banned at the start of a match.

One area I identified for improvement was trading damage effectively in toplane. Professional players often engage briefly to deal damage and then retreat to farm safely, rather than committing fully to an all-in fight. My tendency to fight until the enemy was eliminated sometimes backfired, causing me to lose gold and experience when I died unnecessarily. Adopting a more calculated approach, balancing aggression with patience, would improve my gameplay significantly.

Reflection & Application to Learning:

This gaming session reinforced the importance of learning from experts. Watching professionals play made a noticeable difference in my performance, just as students benefit from observing skilled teachers. However, there is a key distinction—while learning in school often feels obligatory, studying professional gameplay in League of Legends is engaging and voluntary. If students could view their professors as role models in the same way gamers admire pro players, learning in academic settings could become more enjoyable and effective.

In summary, structured learning—whether in gaming or academics—enhances skill development and strategic thinking. To improve, one must actively observe, practice, and analyze their own performance. My 60% win rate today, compared to my previous session, reflects measurable progress. Advancing from Bronze to Silver was a rewarding milestone, and my next goal is to reach high Silver or even Gold in my upcoming sessions.

Connection to Gee’s Principles:

This session directly aligns with Gee’s principles of learning. One of his key concepts is situated learning—learning through immersive experiences and real-world application. By watching professionals, I learned new strategies and then applied them in actual games, which mirrors how effective learning happens in practical environments. Additionally, the concept of risk-taking and exploration in gaming is crucial. My experimentation with different champions and strategies allowed me to refine my decision-making and adapt to challenges, similar to how students refine their understanding by applying knowledge in different contexts (for example, a student can use their mathematical knowledge in physics or chemistry, etc.).

Furthermore, this session demonstrated Gee’s principle of Cycles of Expertise, which describes how mastery develops through repeated practice, challenges, and adaptation. By consistently playing the same champions and learning from both victories and defeats, I experienced the process of refining skills, adjusting strategies, and incorporating new knowledge—much like an expert honing their craft. Each game acted as a cycle where I tested my learning, identified areas for improvement, and reapplied my knowledge under new circumstances. This iterative learning process mirrors how people build expertise in any field, reinforcing the deep learning potential embedded in video games.