

Steven Tran  
[stevenmt1@uci.edu](mailto:stevenmt1@uci.edu)  
83611188

The Game: **Jellyfish** - A game where the player treks in the dark and plays as a jellyfish trying to save its babies. The game takes place in a dark cave and is dark so the player must take caution and use their light power wisely to help them guide the way. Enemies spawn throughout the cave and the player must dodge them.

Goals - My goal as the designer of this game is to create an experience that gives the player a rush. By having a dark environment and enemies around everywhere on the map, the player is put into a state of unknowing and must wisely use light to guide them out of danger. To have a fun, exciting exploring game that allows users to be scared and frustrated is my main goal.

#### 1. Valerie

- 20, female, Gamer for majority of life, tons experience with a lot of genres of gaming, multiple console; CGS Major

I chose Valerie to playtest my game because she has a good eye for game design and has always been critical in analyzing games. Her sense of fun and challenge allows her to play all kinds of games patiently and not lose focus. Valerie also has played hundreds of different games.

#### 2. Caroline

- 15, female, Casual game player and has played a variety of console, PC, and mobile games

I chose Caroline to playtest this game because she is younger and lacks patience and experience.

#### 3. Sandra

- 21, female, Casual gamer who has years of experience playing games on PC and an assortment of consoles; has been recently been pulled back into video games

Recently Sandra has been playing all sorts of current mobile and PC games so her intuition at the moment about what makes video games fun in general is very nice to have when critiquing a game.

#### 4. Tam

- 29, male, Casual gamer

#### 5. David

- 20, male, Casual gamer, CGS major

I chose Robert and David to playtest because they both value good gameplay and because they are a part of my target audience, which are on the more casual side. Also, because they are a part of the CGS major, it is very valuable to get their insight for my game.

#### What to Test:

One thing I want to learn from this playtest is how engaging my game is and what emotions can I elicit from the player through my mechanics and reevaluating them if necessary. I wanted to test

the gameplay as well because I was not sure if I was gauging the difficulties correctly or not. Because my intention was to make a more frustrating and difficult game, I think I needed to see the reaction of the players to grasp how difficult my game is and if I needed to adjust it in anyway. Another variable I wanted to look at was the art of the game. Through the basic and minimal style of my pixel art and the lack of background attributes that might distract the player, I figured that this art style would fit the game and allow more of a focus in the gameplay. By focusing on the player animations and the enemies, I think I enhanced how the player would react to the game more positively.

#### Playtesting Hypotheses:

1. The game will be difficult for all the players, but create and allow them to feel excited.
2. Some players will feel the game is too big and that the world is bare.
3. Players will like the light mechanic, but also hate the light mechanic because it is so valuable, yet is used up fast if not used wisely.

#### Playtest 1:

Throughout Valerie's playthrough of the game, she noticed multiple bubble objects I added for aesthetic purposes and played around with them thinking they were something to interact with. Valerie face some difficulty finding the jellyfish babies scattered throughout the map and voiced her pain a couple times, saying the game was hard and that she was scared. When I asked about why she was scared, she pointed out that the game's darkness mechanic was good in that it simulated an underwater cave experience and created a scary atmosphere because of how vision was lowered so much. There were some parts of the gameplay where Valerie did not have anymore of the light items to light up her path, and she was visibly scared throughout the gameplay. She found it very difficult finding the jellyfish babies, but at the end when she found them, she reacts very genuinely happy and satisfied with what she had done because it was difficult. Furthermore, when enemies popped up around her she vigorously tried avoiding them and screamed. Later when asking her how she felt about these enemies, she stated that they surprised her very much and that she was in constant discomfort because she did not know when any enemies would appear again, especially the large Octopus boss that appears very early on in her playthrough.

- "The art was very simple and I really liked it. I thought that the animations were intentionally exaggerated to make players like me react to them, and I thought the jellyfish babies were very cute."
- "The game is kind of difficult and frustrating, but I liked the surprising enemies because of how they just popped up on the screen."
- "I think there needs to be more light items spawning because I felt like for half the game I was blindly going through the map seeing nothing, which was probably why the game was so hard."
- "The map is too big and there was nothing to interact with other than enemies and items."

#### Playtest 2:

After playing the game once out of the three times (the video for the first two did not record for some reason), Caroline easily figured out the mechanics of the game. Her first response to the game was that it was too dark and that the game lacked any surprises. She understood that the

whole challenge of the game was roaming in the dark and figuring out how to navigate the map. The game was too empty and suggested that there should have been more obstacles or like more fish that had some kind of light sources. Her response was different than all the other play testers because her response to the enemies were that she thought they were rather elegant creatures and wasn't scared of them or even surprised by them. She commented and asked about other playtesters after playing, and when told others had won that she would totally play again because she wanted to beat the other.

- "The game is too empty and needs other objects in the game to make it more interesting."
- "The octopus is majestic! How did the others think that this was scary?"
- "I like the light mechanic, but it was too dark. Maybe having other light sources would change the game and make it more appealing."

#### Playtest 3:

Cutting the video down to the more basic parts of the gameplay portions, Tam reacted very similarly to Valerie and Caroline where the enemies elicited a surprised reaction. After playing a couples times (not recorded because very similar reactions, and didn't want to clutter video), Tam gave up every single time. The main mechanic of the game, the darkness, really created a frustrating feel for the game, as seen at the end of video where Tam gives up.

- "The lighting was dark and it was hard to navigate."
- "Enemies were surprising and didn't expect them to pop up like that."
- "The map seemed too big and could get players lost easily or going around in circles, but that might be the point of the game."
- "Art is nostalgic to old school pixel games."

#### Playtest 4:

After Tam's playthrough, he stated that the game was extremely difficult and was hard to navigate. He did not grasp the idea of the darkness being the main point of the game. The playthrough was short and to the point, having him point out some flaws, and what changes could be made.

#### Playtest 5:

David, as a CGS major as well, stated that the game was fun, but the only problem was the lighting. He thought that the player should be able to see more of the map because he felt like he was missing most of the game. He also pointed out the large need for some kind of landmarks or some kind of positioning that would allow players not to get too lost and still allow them to progress because the game is difficult.

% players played more than once.

5/5 players stated that the game was difficult; % were surprised/scared at some point in-game.

5/5 players thought some of the aesthetics were intractable.

Notable times: 1:00, 4:25, 4:39, 9:12, 9:53, 13:06, 18:18, 21:10, 23:06, 24:11, 27:26