Chapter Title:

Games Studies: Gameplay Applications – GAME50172. Teaching Boardgames.

Author Names: Esther MacCallum-Stewart, Nia Wearn

Course University: Staffordshire University
Course College/School: Digital Technologies and Arts
Course Department/Program: Games and Visual Effects
Course Level: Undergraduate – 2nd Year (Level 5)
Course Credits: 30
Course Length: 2 semesters (24 weeks)
Course Medium: *Face-to-face, Online, Blended/Hybrid*
Course Keywords: boardgames, gameplay, games studies, game design, emergent play, games industry, prototyping

Catalog Description

Gameplay Applications investigates how gameplay affects gaming design and development, and why it is such an essential element of making games. You will produce a complete, ready to play boardgame by the end of the year, and will take part in a games 'expo' to showcase this*. The two semester course (24 weeks) takes students through the process of iteration, development, design and marketing a boardgame, as well as producing a physical copy of a boardgame that has gone through rigorous playtesting and development. You will learn how to produce a complete game, as well as pitching, how to demonstrate games and explain rules, create market sheets, balance rules and produce a physical boardgame from start to finish.

*Either online or virtually, depending on current guidelines about social gatherings.

Course Purpose and Objectives

The formal objectives (presented below) have allowed us a playful flexibility that takes the idea of gameplay beyond the videogame. As we discuss elsewhere, this is vital for our students, as it provides them with a solid vocational pathway and gives them insight into a rapidly expanding area of the games industry. It also means that they can finish the course with a physical product, which has been taken through multiple design iterations and which has had to be designed according to industry activities associated with games production such as pitching, producing appropriate box art, and working with marketing sheets. The objectives therefore take us beyond the physical product, and enable a more robust approach to the boardgames industry. We have provided a short rationale of these objectives below.

Course Objectives

1. Analyse researched information in order to plan a project that fulfils the identified needs of a modern game. [Analysis, Enquiry]

2. Evaluate the appropriateness of choices and varied approaches to solving problems that occur during the preparation and presentation of gameplay mechanics. [Problem Solving]

3. Determine game characteristics and mechanics in order to select appropriate tools and methods required to support the design and development of a rapid prototype game. [Reflection; Enquiry; Problem Solving]

4. Plan and create an analogue game that utilises the correct documentation. [Application]

5. Review the product creation process, evaluating the effectiveness of your role during the project. [Reflection]

Breakdown of objectives

Overall the objectives combine the joint criteria of producing a game that is predicated on the joint aspects of effective gameplay, and its application within a functioning artefact.

Objective 1 lays the groundwork for the project. Students on this course follow a pathway that studies Games Design and Production, as well as the theoretical precepts of games and gameplay. This means they have already produced videogames and worked together on project management teams, as well as studying 'Fundamentals of Gameplay' in an earlier module. In producing a boardgame, the students get experience of working on their own on a solo project, which does not replicate work done elsewhere on their courses. The course builds on their previous work in understanding that gameplay moves beyond traditional games design into other aspects of the industry and played activities.

Objectives 2 and 3 develop aspects of the Games and Visual Effects department's undergraduate journey as a whole, by emphasising the importance of gameplay and mechanics. Students score poorly if their game is unoriginal or uses mechanics that are not well thought out and tested; likewise if their game is entirely luck-based without good reason, they are not considered to have succeeded in developing effective mechanics for enjoyable play. These two objectives underscore this criteria, as well as helping the students to understand why work done elsewhere (rapid prototyping of videogames) is reflected across the games industry in similar but different ways. These objectives have perhaps been the most tweaked over time as a result of feedback from students and external examiners, in order to provide clarity and purpose within the course.

Objective 4 identifies the type of output required and emphasises that it is not the sole final product – documentation is also an assessed / expected part of the work submitted.

Objective 5 enables the student to reflect on their overall development throughout the two semesters. In the past this has taken the form of continuous monitoring throughout the year –

for example the student produces a SWOT analysis of their game, and also works closely with industry standard feedback forms.

Course Context

This is a mandatory course for students studying the 'BA (Hons) Games Studies' and 'BSc (Hons) Computer Gameplay Design and Production undergraduate courses at Staffordshire University. Students are second year undergraduates. The course comprises about 60 students, taught together in one class. Students in the UK do not pick their courses from a pool – instead, their undergraduate journey is highly thematic, and they must follow a set pattern of study which remains within their chosen subject area. The Games and Visual Effects department at Staffordshire University is the largest of its kind in the UK, comprising about 1500 students. This means that the undergraduate pathways within it are highly stratified, enabling students to specialize in a given area of Games and/or Visual Effects.

Students on this course (module) have previously completed a 24 semester in their first year on Fundamentals of Gameplay, which introduces them to the philosophy and underlying precepts of effective play mechanics and structure in games. This previous class is also intended to show them how gameplay manifests beyond videogames in daily life and activities, as well as making them case study a free to play mobile game of their choosing. The students are therefore used to studying 'beyond AAA'.

The students are well versed in videogames and digital design, however they often have little or no experience of playing modern boardgames (with a few exceptions who play boardgames very regularly). This has proven a major challenge as a significant percentage of the course in its early stages had to be tailored towards giving students the breadth of knowledge that they needed in order to appreciate what they were studying. A secondary issue arising is demonstrating the *value* of learning to design boardgames, as it takes students beyond the digital environments they are used to. This value is both financial (the boardgames industry is a multibillion, international juggernaut, grossing $17.2 billion in 2016, and continuing to grow exponentially, including throughout the COVID pandemic), and vocational - as a key skill in games design.

Course Pedagogy

Gameplay is a fundamental aspect of games design and development, but is rarely taught beyond videogaming. This belies the vast amount of gaming that happens beyond the keyboard or controller – in person, in public spaces, as part of emergent behaviours in daily life, and in other mediums like boardgaming. Boardgaming is a multibillion dollar industry, and thriving in the UK. It has also seen even greater popularity during COVID, proving that the industry is hugely resilient.

Using boardgames as a fundamental tool to examine gameplay not only provides insight into this industry, but also exposes students to a more visceral, hands on type of gaming. The

emphasis on aspects such as teaching and explaining rules, giving useful critical feedback and understanding how strategy, luck and game balancing can work together provide vital learning about how games can be effectively developed.

Gameplay Applications provides a robust introduction to the full process of developing a boardgame, with an emphasis on industry practice and iteration. It is underscored by the philosophy of gaming and gameplay – identifying the ways in which these inform our understanding of Games Studies as a theoretical and vocational study.

The course also intends to take students throughout the process of developing a successful product in the wider context of industry requirements – marketing, pitching, demoing and iterating through playtesting. Relying heavily on the type of holistic play practices described by Miguel Sicart in *Play Matters* (2014), it refigures philosophies of play and gameplay in order to give students a broader understanding of the Games Industry and its working practices.

The course uses a predominantly practiced based approach, which encourages active learning, agile development and emergent play.

Course Texts, Games, Software, and Hardware

Students are allocated a game from the current Top 100 on BoardGameGeek.com, the largest boardgaming review / discussion / forum website on the internet and a central hub for all boardgaming knowledge. Because of the cost of these games, they are not expected to purchase their allocated game. Instead, we encourage them through a series of tasks to investigate resources such as playthroughs, boardgamegeek.com discussions, sales figures, market reports and reviews. Students are encouraged to play the game if they are able, although we appreciate this is not always possible. A wide range of virtual resources are used in the first semester, a physical boardgames library is available for use, and there are written and audio resources available in the library.

Play sessions will be held when possible, allowing students to learn how to play modern boardgames, and also understand aspects such as their physical make up, how rules work, and how communities interact when playing. For the virtual version of this course, we encourage students to set up play groups and use the various simulation programmes available through platforms such as Steam (*Tabletop Simulator*, *Tabletopia* etc. Students are dissuaded from using these as part of their final submission, as we require a physical copy of their work to be produced.

In the second semester, students are expected to manufacture a box design in order to create a finished boardgame, however again we are aware that cost and availability of technology is a barrier to entry for some students. The university provides access to 3D printers and colour printers, however if it is not possible to use these, then the assessment is tailored so that they can submit a ready to print version.

In the past we have also experienced students ordering expensive components such as meeples, with the mistaken assumption that style will triumph over design and content in their final mark. Subsequent issues have included these components not arriving, since they often have lengthy shipping times, students overspending their own funds, or students designing their games around fixed content which later proves unviable during playtesting (so, they are beholden to an early design and resist changing it when it fails). The current iteration of the course advises strongly against this, and instead we promote the use of in-house 3D printing, as well as a limit on processed parts in the final submission. During COVID, a requirement that the finished game fits through a letterbox (approx. 24cm x 6cm) has also been added. Key elements of the assessment brief for the physical aspect have been competitions run by board game publishers in recent years. This adds to the live brief nature of the assessment and helps validate many of the themes around validity and employability the module sets out to encourage.

Playtesting

We used the attached playtesting documents (appendix 1 and 2) in every session where this took place. With thanks to Playtest.UK for their commitment to this project. These are frequently updated and are available from:

http://www.playtest.co.uk/

Suggested Reading

The course is predominantly practice based, but we recommend the following texts and resources.

BoardGamesGeek.com. [website].

Booth, Paul. Game Play: *Paratextuality in Contemporary Boardgames*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Booth, Paul. 2021. *Board Games As Media*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Brown, Douglas, and MacCallum-Stewart, Esther, eds. 2020. *Rerolling Boardgames*. Macfarland Press.

Peterson, Jon. 2012. *Playing the World*. New York: Unreason Press.

Shut up and Sit Down. 2011-present. https://www.shutupandsitdown.com/
[Review Series – Webisodes, Podcast, Written Reviews].

Smith, Quintin 'Boardgaming's Golden Age' at
https://www.shutupandsitdown.com/videos/board-game-golden-age-talk/

Course Assignments

The assignments are split over two semesters – 1 and 2, with all assignments marked 1-x being in the first semester, and all those in the second semester marked 2-x. We have left these in this section as progression and development is important here – as the students move from initial pitch - which may not bear much resemblance to the finished game, but will allow them to iterate on a theme - to formulating their rules, through the playtesting, development and final presentation stages. A sell sheet is an essential element of final presentation as a marketing tool, but is also intended to allow students to showcase multiple vocational aspects of the project in their portfolios and at the annual end of year Graduate Fair, whilst the self-reflection is a way to reconsider their work and amass needed marks if, for example, a game performs poorly.

1. *Blended Learning - Pre COVID Assessment Criteria for Gameplay Applications*

This is a solo, analog game project, on a given theme, that should be finished and presented at our annual Board game Expo to the university.

Assignment 1-1 [10%]

Thematic 10 slide PowerPoint pitch deck with slides. The slides should cover the following:

- Working title
- High Concept
- Genre
- Game Play
- Features
- Setting
- Target Audience
- Market
- Competitive Analysis
- Game Summary

Assignment 1-2 [20%]

Draft Rules in English. There is no minimum or maximum word limit on this, not is there a right way to present the rules, however bear in mind that aspects like set up, descriptions of specific pieces or board layouts, or player order may be needed to support these.

Assignment 1-3 [10%]

'Let's Play' Video which explains how the game works and shows it in action. There is no time limit, but you will be judged on how well the game is explained. To be uploaded to YouTube, and a link added to the assessment folder.

Assignment 2-1 [40%]

Produce a complete and playable physical prototype, including English rules and all necessary components. Professional Art is not required but the game should have all necessary graphic elements for play. The game will be presented and assessed at the Board Game Expo in Henrion Gallery.

Assignment 2-2 [10%]

One Page Sell Sheet, on A4 and printed in colour.

Assignment 2-3 [10%]

Self- Reflection – a short document reflecting on your progression throughout the course and thoughts on your final work. What worked, what went to plan and what did not? Are you happy with the final game? What would you change, given the chance?

2. *Virtual Learning Version - Post COVID Assessment Criteria for Gameplay Applications*

These assignments reflect the pivot to 100% online learning for this course in 2020. We hope here to demonstrate that teaching this course and retaining its core elements online is not only still possible, remained relevant to the current gaming climate. In addition, we hope to demonstrate that avoiding virtual substitutes for boardgames themselves is still possible.

This is a solo, analog game project, on a given theme. The final version that should be finished and posted to us at the university. We will also hold an online showcase event, which will be recorded.

Assignment 1-1 [20%]

Analyse the analogue game play market as it stands in the final quarter of 2020. The focus, scope and range of this report is up to you but relevant reference (both industry and academic) should be included. Max 1000 words (excluding bibliography)

Assignment 1-2 [30%]

You will be allocated a game at random from the BoardGameGeek Top 100, and will have already completed a number of supplemental tasks for this.

a. Analyse the mechanics of your allocated game. Use flowcharts and diagrams where appropriate.

b. From this analysis (and your own knowledge) pick 3 or 4 mechanics that you wish to explore in your own game, explain why these are the mechanics that you are interested in exploring in your game.
c. Showcase the feedback you've received on the planned mechanics for your game from your peers.

Assignment 2-1 [40%]

Badger in a Box is looking for new games!

'We're developing a series of small box games that celebrate the breadth and creativity of the tabletop game design medium and are looking for more submissions for this collection. We're specifically looking for games that take an innovative approach to the use of classic and modern mechanics and styles, and carefully apply those ideas to a well-crafted game design. Each of the games in this series will be housed in a standardised but individually illustrated box, provided at a low price point for maximum accessibility. We want to celebrate as many types of games as we can!

Games will have to cleverly use a small number of components to ensure low cost production, so that we can focus on making the parts of the game as high quality as possible. Games that rely on very specific high cost components such as plastic miniatures are fine but these should be limited to one or two pieces. We're not looking for reimplementation of existing games - innovation wins!'

Design a game that is playable with one or two people (at a maximum) – Use the theme given to you by the Theme Generator. The final copy of the game must fit into a box or package that fits into a standard letterbox – 25cm wide x 6cm deep, or be available in a format that can be easily printed on a cheap colour printer. The rest of the plans for the games are up to you. You should explore print and play games or games that have very few components that would post easily.

The following types of games are not recommended for this assignment:

- o Trivia Games
- o Party Games

Hand in Requirements
- Single page Sell Sheet that provides an overview of game concept & marketing info
- Details of Game Components sufficient for a full play through [including art]
- Full Rules to play the game
- Information for how the game will be contained / packaged

Assignment 2-2 [10%]

Self- Reflection – a short document reflecting on your progression throughout the course and thoughts on your final work. What worked, what went to plan and what did not? Are you happy with the final game? What would you change, given the chance?

Course Assessment (potential bulleted list): *Now that you have described the major course assignment types, describe the assignment and project assessment, grades, and weights with a final total. Again, do not include a grading scale here (e.g., 90-100=A); rather, focus on the weights of grading components and the final total.*

Short Version of the Assessments:

1. Blended Learning - Pre COVID Assignments for Gameplay Applications

Assignment 1-1 [20%] Thematic 10 slide PowerPoint pitch deck with slides.

Assignment 1-2 [10%] Draft Rules

Assignment 1-3 [10%] 'Let's Play' video explaining gameplay

Assignment 2-1 [30%] Complete prototype, including rules and components, to be showcased at the Staffordshire University Game Expo [Year] and assessed by the course team.

Assignment 2-2 [10%] 1 page sell sheet on A4. Printed in colour.

Assignment 2-2 [20%] Self reflection document

= 100%

2. Virtual Learning Version - Post COVID Assessment Criteria for Gameplay Applications

Assignment 1-1 [20%] Analyse the boardgames market in the final quarter of [year the course is being taught]

Assignment 1-2 [30%] Analyse a top 100 Boardgamegeek.com title in terms of its game mechanics. [The boardgame is automatically assigned by the tutors in week 2]

Assignment 2-1 [40%] Create a small 'out of the box' game for 1-2 players, that can fit through a standard letterbox (24cm x 5cm).

Assignment 2-2 [10%] Critique and evaluate your work on your game.

= 100%

Expanded Course Outline

The following is the information provided to students in their Course Handbook:

How will I learn on this module?

Semester 1

Students will attend two weekly seminars. During these sessions students are expected to participate in lectures, workshops and group exercises. Some of these exercises will be set in advance, others will take place entirely within the framework of the session. The first session in the week will contain a taught element, whilst the second, which will occur later in the same week, will provide feedback and discussion. We will often set tasks in the first session that need to be completed by the second.

Depending on social guidelines and university policies, these sessions will be in person, or hosted on Microsoft Teams.

Semester 2

Students will attend two weekly seminars. In this semester students will develop a boardgame through a series of workshops and playtesting sessions, resulting in a completed boardgame with rules, a sell sheet and fully realised art. We encourage you to create a physical version and post it to us, but if this is not possible, or if you produce a print and play game, it should be submitted as a final version that can be printed from a colour printer and played by the examiners. Finally, you will reflect on the work you have done throughout the year. This semester you will be assessed through two written pieces – an assessment of the boardgaming market, and a discussion of which mechanics you plan to use in your game next semester.

Depending on social guidelines and university policies, these sessions will be in person, or hosted on Microsoft Teams.

Both Semesters

Students are expected to prepare for each seminar by doing the stated reading or viewing / gamesplaying. Learning outside the class will consist of research, both written and otherwise, use of the virtual systems available, short written and other exercises, and independent activities to enhance understanding of the topics covered. Students will need to specifically engage with writing such as that found in weblogs, podcasts, on industry specific sites and other critical texts. Students will need to, where possible, play games with other members of the group. We will provide a number of online resources to enable this.

Week	Class 1 (Monday) (Lecture)	Student Centred Learning task. Add this to your blog and we will discuss in the Thursday class.	Class 2 (Thursday) (Student Discussion)	Formative Assessment Schedule
1	**Module Introduction & Expectations**	Write up on your Blog what exposure to boardgames you've had.	Discussion of your experiences – what do you know about games and why?	
2	**Boardgames Today.** What is the current state of the boardgames industry, and why is this so important to you	You will be given a boardgame to analyse	Discuss your analysis of the game you were assigned	
3	**Boardgame Origins** A short, selective history of boardgames.	Add three different images of the same boardgame to your blog, with a short written analysis of the differences.	Discuss similarities and differences in the ways that games are marketed.	
4	**Industry Reports 101** We'll talk about the industry aspects of baordgaming today. Who is making	Collect on your blog 3 different sources relevant to your report	We'll discuss the different sources you're planning to use.	

	games and where / why?			
5	**Boardgames Cultures** Who plays boardgames, where and why? What sort of paratexts affect the players of these games?	Watch a playthrough of longer than 20 minutes	Drawing everything together for assessment 1-1	
6	**1-1 Assignment Workshop**	This week we will be available to give feedback, answer questions and help you with any roadblocks.	1-1 Assignment Workshop	1-1 Market Analysis - 6/11/2020 - 3:30pm - Blackboard
7	**Types of Boardgame** A guide to boardgaming terminology and slang. Why is this so important to designing boardgames?	List five recent games and what genre they fall into. Find a different genre for each example	Drawing it together for your assessment 1-2	
8	**Mechanics Analysis Overview** Mechanics, balancing and games rules. How do we get boardgames working?	Draft the mechanics analysis of your assigned game	Drawing it together for your assessment 1-2	
9	**Understanding Mechanics 1 -** *Pandemic* Esther talks with guest speaker Fergal Mac Carthiagh about why *Pandemic* is so an important game,	Gather feedback on your planned mechanics	Drawing it together for your assessment 1-2	

	and why it means so much to boardgamers.			
10	**Understanding Mechanics 2 -** *Go Nuts for Donuts* Nia talks with a surprise guest about Go Nuts for Donuts.	Gather feedback on your planned mechanics	Drawing it together for your assessment 1-2	
11	**1-2 Assignment Workshop drop-in**		1-2 Assignment Workshop drop-in	
12	**1-2 Assignment Workshop drop-in**		1-2 Assignment Workshop drop-in	1- 2 Mechanics Analysis 18/12/2020-3:30pm - Blackboard
	🎅🤶🎄 Christmas Break 🎅🤶🎄			
1	**Introduction to Semester 2**	Reflect on the theme the theme generator has chosen for you.	Discuss how to make the mechanics you planned to use in semester 1 fit with the theme you've received.	
2	**Rules 1** Guidance on writing a decent set of rules	Start to write your game rules	Rules feedback and guidance	
3	**Rules 2** Analysis of existing games - what works, what doesn't?	Bring your rules to this session	Group exercise - rules rules rules	
4	**Assets** What pieces and elements will your game need, where will you get them / how will you create them?	What assets are you going to need? Where are you going to get them	Practicality feedback	
5	**Marketing Sheets**	Create your marketing sheet	Analysis and feedback	

	What makes a good marketing sheet, who is it aimed and and why do you need one?			
6	**Game Box Art** What works, what doesn't, and how do you make your game stand out?		Analysis and feedback	
7	**How do I Playtest?** How do you become an active listener? What makes a good playtester? How do you use feedback to change your game?	Make a list of what your game needs to do next. Sign up for playtest sessions	Self directed game creation how to.	
8	Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation		Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation	
9	Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation		Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation	
10	Check in – Preparing for your second playtest, how to learn and develop.		Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation	
11	Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation		Playtesting / Feedback on Self Directed Game Creation	
🐥🐣🥚 Easter Break 🥚🐣🐥				
12	Assignment Workshop drop-in		Assignment Workshop drop-in	16th April 2021 - 3:30pm - Blackboard 2.1 'Your Game' 2.2 'Self Critique'

Course Best Practices

General Tips

- The demographic for boardgames players is slightly older than the average student (25-40). Therefore, assuming that students know about modern boardgames is a mistake. Many classes are specifically designed to address this – both by teaching students to play games and understand how to read and explain rules, and giving them a basic 101 in how boardgames are produced, their recent history, an introduction to genre and key terms etc.

- Style over content is a frequent issue. A gorgeous looking game may have virtually no gameplay. In addition, students submitting beautiful games had often made them early on and thus the contents had become fixed, meaning they couldn't be playtested effectively.

- Our criteria for marking the games themselves was developed with the students, who determined where the spread of marks should lie.

- A game should be fun, but this is an ineffable quality. Despite classes on the philosophy of play, our biggest area of negative feedback was from students who had not understood the role that fun played in their design.

- Race to the End games are the bane of every boardgames class. An entirely luckbased game where players take turns rolling dice and sometimes 'events'(e.g. 'miss a turn' or 'go back a space') happen to them is boring. However, this is the type of game that most students are familiar with and will default to as designers. Breaking this deadlock with play sessions, and introducing them to new types of gameplay is essential.

- Teaching students to give effective feedback, and to be active listeners, is a vast part of the second semester. The students initially hated the session where they had to give each other their rules, but later saw the value of it. Encouraging them to use the Playtest UK forms, and to say 'why' a game rule, aspect or system didn't work was a huge barrier to overcome. Even when students were assessing a game sight unseen, they would often say games were 'good' 'didn't work', were 'complicated' or had 'good aspects', without saying what these were.

In person classes –

- This is a course where more than one tutor is essential, so that the students have a range of experiences. Emphasize different play habits or preferences. Esther loves legacy games, whereas Nia played many games with her young son.

- When students are learning to play games, Leave Them Alone. Allow them to discover things like 'one person needs to read the rules whilst the others wait', or that setting out a game may be a complex process. Encourage students to learn from the game rather than helicoptering.
- If possible, timetable class before boardgames society or for end of day, so that students can use the room and continue play.

- Encourage students to make full use of the teaching space Different games need different spaces to play. This might involve different types of table (round and square), sitting on the floor, moving furniture et.

- Make students play games when the designer is not present. This is an effective way to troubleshoot bad writing and rules.

- We found that inviting games designers or other professionals confused students, as the speakers often either assumed a level of understanding that was not present, or went over ground we had already discussed (despite sharing the course with them in advance). These speakers often discouraged students accidentally, by suggesting that the bar was very high, and discussing complexity with too high a level of games literacy.

Future Course Plans

We have detailed some of the changes due to switching to blended learning, where classes were delivered predominantly online. This is an evolving process. We were extremely surprised how engagement for some aspects of the course improved (such as the supplemental tasks, which we used as the basis of the second seminar in each week), and how some aspects that we had struggled with during in-person sessions (breaking the 'race to the end' deadlock on games design) was elided by changing the content of lectures and practice based tasks.

The course has changed every year since we started to teach it in 2017. Collectively, most of these changes are encoded into the writing so far. As a result, it is agile in content, and we expect it to continue to be so. A key element here has been working with students on aspects that they felt were confusing or difficult. We removed a core element about 'game aesthetic', for example, as it was too abstract a term for students to effectively deploy. Similarly, we had to remove a previous mark on whether the game was 'fun' to play, and elucidate on this more clearly.

Appendix 1. Designers Playtest Form (www.playtest.co.uk)

www.PLAYTEST.co.uk

Game Name: _____
Version: _____
Location: _____
Type of Test: _____
Date: _____

Pre-Game			Early Game			Mid-Game			Late Game			End Game	
Rules Start:	Play Start:	Elapsed: mins	Rounds	Time	Elapsed mins	Rounds	Time	Elapsed mins	Rounds	Time	Elapsed mins	Rounds	Time
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Player:		☐ New ☐ Start	Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:			Engagement 1 — 10 Score:				
Test Goals & Considerations			Observations			Observations			Observations			Total Time mins Total Rounds	

Conclusions, Changes to Make

Changes Since Last Test

Appendix 2. Playtesters Playtest Form (www.playtest.co.uk)

www.PLAYTEST.co.uk

Player Name:

Game Name:

Date:

Player

Age: M / F

Which game genres do you like?

Strategy Games:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

Role-playing Games:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

Wargames:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

Card Games:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

Party Games:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

Dexterity Games:
Dislike [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Like

About Yourself:

Categories / Rating / Notes

Categories	Rating	Notes
Rules: How clear are the rules? Do they cover all eventualities?	Not Clear [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Very Clear	
Game-flow: How streamlined is the gameplay? Is there any unnecessary fiddliness?	Poor Flow [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Flows Well	
Balance: Is the game fair for all players? Is the game too luck-orientated?	Poorly Balanced [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Well Balanced	
Length: Is the game too long? Were you still engaged at the end?	Wrong Length [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Good Length	
Integration: Do the mechanics work well together? Does the theme match the mechanics?	Poor Match [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Works Well	
Theme: Were you engaged by the theme? Did you enjoy the graphics?	Poor Theme [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Good Theme	
Fun: Was the game fun to play? Is this a game you would play again?	No Fun [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Very Fun	
Clarity: How clear is the gameplay? How clear are the graphics / board design?	Not Clear [1] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [10] Very Clear	
Further Notes:		How much would you pay for this game in a shop? _____

(Continue Overleaf)

Designer Notes (Conclusions, Changes to Make)