Some Game Design Thoughts

↗ Need to think like a Game Designer, not a technologist

↗ Focus on the players, not the technology!

  ↗ Create something fun to play, not just a tech demo

↗ What's a game designer? What's a game designer do?

  ↗ From Game Design Workshop:
  *The game designer envisions how a game will **work during play**; he or she creates the objectives, rules, and procedures, thinks up the dramatic premise and gives it life, and is responsible for planning everything necessary to create a **compelling player experience**.*

What are the Components of a Game?

➚ Games are given structure by their formal elements

    ➚ Players, Objectives, Rules, Resources, Boundaries, Outcome

➚ Games are dynamic systems

➚ Game boundaries create a closed system

    ➚ The "magic circle"

➚ Games have dramatic elements that make them emotionally engaging experiences

    ➚ But *game design* is largely about balancing the formal elements

Games are about Playing Toward a Goal

↗ "A great game is a series of interesting and meaningful choices made by the player in pursuit of a clear and compelling goal" (from Sid Meier)

  ↗ Games need goals (the "toys vs. games" debate)

↗ *Interesting* and *Meaningful* Choices

  ↗ Meaningful choices are perceived by the player as having *significant consequences* on the game

↗ Salen and Zimmerman (Rules of Play) define *meaningful play*

  ↗ Actions to outcomes are "descriptive and integrated"

↗ Games are about what the player **does** in pursuit of goals

  ↗ Story should support the action, not the other way around

  ↗ Bring out story and character through action

↗ Players will find the most efficient path to success (not your desired path)

Designing games is an iterative process

↗ How do you create something *fun*?

   ↗ Brainstorm, try ideas, throw many out, (refine)*

   ↗ Need to *play the game* early and often

↗ Focus on the *core mechanics* and refine the formal system

   ↗ Gameplay trumps story!

   ↗ Again, concentrate on what the player *does*

↗ Interface is not designed to be easy

   ↗ Designed to be fun, support skilled play, require effort?

↗ Dramatic elements have a place, but in a support role

   ↗ E.g., RPS