

Game-In-5-Weeks Evaluation

Version A: Done by a Programmer or Game Designer

For the evaluator – How to do the evaluation: On your own paper, write this heading:

Name of person evaluating game: _____ Date: _____ Period _____
Game Evaluated: _____ . java Game Programmer _____

Then please provide at least one clear, detailed answer for every number in each of the four sections below. If there is nothing yet to evaluate (write “N/A” for “not applicable”). The evaluator should realize that only relevant and detailed, constructive criticism is useful for bettering the game. There should be no vague comments like “nice”, but instead specific comments like “your use of color is nice because it helps to draw attention to the buttons.” Please turn in your evaluation to your teacher so (s)he can record the quality of the evaluator’s comments.

For the programmer -- How to use the evaluation feedback: After recording the quality of the evaluation, the teacher will give the evaluation to the game programmer. The game programmer should put the evaluation in his/her project binder in line with the journals. The programmer should respond to the evaluation’s comments in the subsequent journal, determining which are areas for improving (and when and how) and which will not be improved/changed.

Process and Goals of Play:

1. How do you play? What is unclear (which you may have had to experiment with, to figure out)? Does order of pressing buttons / selecting menus, etc. matter?
2. Is there a form of gratification in the game? How do you know when you’ve won? How do you know when you’ve lost?
3. What age group does this game seem suited for, in subject matter? What age does it seem suited for, in difficulty (remember that you may only be able to play at the simplest level right now)?
4. What is taught during or prior to game play (something should be included in the game, itself)? Is there a challenge in playing? Is there a way to relearn a concept if the player loses? Does there seem to be no education merit to the game?

Layout, Graphics, Movement:

1. Does the layout seem balanced? Is there not too much white / empty space on the screen? Do all objects (buttons and such) draw the attention / use of the player evenly or appropriately (e.g. most predominant button is meant to be used first or more often)?
2. Do graphics enhance the game, rather than detract from it? “Graphics” includes colors, shapes, images, and text. Consider clarity of message, readability, aesthetics.
3. Do graphics change predictably, in response to the user playing the game? Comment on lack of graphical change when you think there should be, as well as slowness/flickering.

Bugs:

1. Did you notice any unusual events when you played the game a different way or continued to play the game (e.g. a score increase when you get a problem wrong after getting one right, navigation not working, etc.)?

Efficient Data Use:

1. Does this game seem easily changeable, if a teacher wanted to use new text, questions, or images or use a new context?
2. If the programmer has time, what other feature / aspect should (s)he add to make the game better, and why would this improve the game? You might comment on originality, difficulty, ability to impress or motivate the player.

Version B: Done by a Targeted Audience Member without Bias

The goal of this evaluation is to learn how a targeted audience member (or members) responds to the game. Be sure to:

- a) Not introduce bias into your study. Tell the audience member(s) that their response will be valuable, no matter what it is. There are no right or wrong answers. Provide very little feedback during the evaluation – keep a “poker face.” Do not use the same audience member in a formal Version B evaluation more than once.
- b) Come prepared to take notes about emotional responses, physical behavior, and progress of the game.
- c) Have the game or a paper model of the game ready to use, once the audience member starts interacting with you or it.
- d) Be sure to thank the audience member when you are done.

Use this process:

1. Photograph yourself with the evaluator(s) and the game (paper model or digital version) before or after your study. Write the game name, date, and name of the audience member(s) below the photograph (in a caption).
2. Collect notes during the evaluation. These should be about emotional responses, physical behavior, and progress of the game (if they started it, earned points, won, lost, etc.).
3. Thank and excuse your audience member, then answer these questions below your notes.
 - a) How did game play go? Did the user know what to do, and were they content or excited to play? If no, explain in detail what changes you would make, if you had time.
 - b) Did the user appear to learn something or show understanding of what was being simulated? If no, explain in detail what changes you would make, if you had time.

Place the completed photo, notes, and answered questions in the project binder in the Mentor/Eval section. The programmer should respond to the evaluation’s feedback in the subsequent journal, determining which are areas for improving (and when and how) and which will not be improved/changed.