GameStorming : Basic Game Play

The GameStorming game is designed to be played by small groups of students. Its goal is to encourage creativity and flexibility in brainstorming the mechanics of games - in particular, the actions a player will have available to them as they play.

Setup

Gather students into groups of 3-5. Each group needs a table, a pack of cards (or access to a computer to access the online version of the card deck) and 5 tokens per player (or a piece of paper to keep track of points). If more players need to be accommodated, pairs of people can each work together to be a single "player" in the game.

The Game

Separate the pack of cards into two piles, one for each card type: **Actions** and **Settings**. Shuffle the piles and place them face down. Each player starts with 5 tokens and draws 4 Action cards as their starting hand.

The game will consist of 5 rounds. Each round, flip over the top card of the Settings deck so everyone can see it. All the players will share this setting for the game ideas they generated. If the setting allows for a choice, like *"Modern Earth (pick region)"*, each player can make their own choice about the exact setting.

Then, each player gets ~3-4 minutes to silently select two Action cards from their hand and invent something a player in a game might do based on those actions. The player should make sure they can describe:

- What kind of game it is (what genre it is or what game it is like – "platformer" or "puzzle" or "like flappy bird").
- What the player controls (like "a spaceship" or "queen ants" or "triangular puzzle pieces"). You do NOT need a detailed story about the character.
- What the player does with the action and what other object they are doing it to/against. The "jump" card should not be played as just *"the player can jump"* but as *"jump over spikes"*, *"jump to avoid fireballs"*, or *"jump into hyperspace"*.

Try to fill in this template:

This game is a/like _____ and takes place in <Setting>. You control a _____ and you must <Action1> _____ in order to <Action2> _____. This would be fun or interesting because...

You can replace "in order to" with some other connection between the words.

Continues...
Example: Lisa is holding the action cards build, escape, attract/repel, remember. The setting for this round is "ocean or sky". She decides to focus on remember and escape. She comes up with:

*"My game is a paper airplane game that is part simulator/part puzzle. Each level is a different room the player has to pilot a paper airplane through. In some rooms, the lights go out as soon as they launch their plane, so they have to (**remember**) the layout of the room as they fly the plane in order to (**escape**) the room. Their plane is glow in the dark, so they can still see where they are, but they have to remember where all the obstacles are as they try to fly the plane."*

After the few minutes to brainstorm, each player takes a turn where they show their used actions and explains their game idea to the group.

Once each player has presented, every player must give one of their tokens to the player (other than themselves) whose idea was their favorite – the one they think sounds like it might be the most interesting as a player.

Then, put all the used Action cards in the discard pile.

Each player passes their two unused actions to the left. Then each player draws two Action cards so they have a hand of four again, the next Setting card is flipped over, and the next round begins. If the Action deck runs out, shuffle the discard to make a new one.

After 5 rounds, the player with the most tokens wins. If there's a tie, then all players with the most tokens win.