Group Brainstorming Activity Guide

Phase 1: Pick a Starting Point (5 minutes)

If you just finished the GameStorming game, the winner should pick one of the ideas generated during that game as the starting point the group will use to plan a game. From that, you should have:

- A setting
- A game genre (platformer, shooter, puzzle, etc…)
- A rough idea of the character or thing a player controls
- Actions the player performs

If you are starting fresh, players need to agree on a game genre and setting. (Or deal a random setting from the deck and then pick a game genre.)

Phase 2: Think Up Objects (5 minutes)

One your basic game idea is selected, work as a group and try to come up with at 10 objects that make sense in the proposed game. Don't worry about what they do yet, just come up with ideas for possible things. Spend just a few minutes making this list on a piece of scratch paper.

Example: The basic game is a resource management game focused on trying to grow a western town. The player controls workers who collect resources to build improvements on the town. Possible objects are: Train, Stagecoach, Indian Traders, Bandits, Tornado, Buffalo, Animal Skins, Wildfire, Mines, Spring (water), Deputies, Wood

Phase 3: Brainstorm More Actions (10-15 minutes)

Reshuffle the action cards and deal out 4 new ones to each team member. Each team member should again pick one or two of their actions and invent something the player does with one of the objects. (it's also ok to invent a new object). Team members should spend ~5 minutes coming up with an idea on their own. Make a quick sketch or description of your idea.

Then share out ideas – each team member should take a turn presenting what they came up with. Other team members can ask questions, but should not make statements or suggestions about the idea.

After everyone has presented, discuss ideas. Are there any that can be combined? Are there any that do not make sense together? Look for actions that do or could affect the same objects – having two things you can do to one object is often more interesting than two objects you can each do one thing to.

Phase 4: Flesh It Out (10-15 minutes)

As a team, spend some time fleshing out the following and filling out your Planning Worksheet.

Goal: What is the goal of the game? What is the main thing the player is trying to do?

Characters: Describe or draw the character(s)/thing(s) the player controls.

Actions: Pick at least 3 of your actions from your list to feature on your Prototyping Worksheet. Describe them and the objects they are done with/to.

Elevator Pitch: Write down a few sentence descriptions of your game based on the actions, goals and objects you've designed. Try to describe to a person what they would do in a game.

Example: "Oregon Trail 2: The Exit" is a resource management survival game. You are guiding a group of survivors out of Oregon after the great Cascadia earthquake. Your main task is to search for an escape route out of the state on a randomly generated network of roads. Each day you have to choose to (search) for resources or travel. On your journeys you meet other groups of survivors, some which can be persuaded to join your caravan (combine) while others are hostile and must be fought off (repel). The interactions with other groups are played out with mini-games.