Purpose and duration

The purpose of the Game Analysis activity is to give participants a better understanding of what makes a great game. Students do this by analyzing an existing game and producing a design document for it. This document should have all of the information a game development team would need to recreate the game. This whole activity should take 30 to 60 minutes.

Outline

- **5 minutes:** Have the participants choose a game to analyze. The ideal game is both simple and fun. One great candidate is the game "Thomas Was Alone", which has very simple graphics and a free, downloadable demo version. A racing game that's totally web based is HexGL. Another web based game is Perfect Piano.
- **15 minutes:** Participants play the game to analyze it. A suggested list of points of analysis is included below. Be careful that participants don't get caught up in gameplay and delay the start of the design document too much.
- **30 minutes:** Participants create a design document. In the process, they may want or need to review the game.
- **10 minutes:** Participants present the design document to a third party and get feedback.

Game Design Template

Describe the Game
Role play? Platformer? Puzzle? Competition (race, battle, negotiation)? What makes it fun?
What needs to be improved?

Gameplay
How do you start/finish the game? How do you learn the rules? What's the goal?
Progression/upgrade paths? Were there decisions? Was luck/randomization involved (dice,
random outcomes)?

Tools of play
Mouse, keyboard, display, cards, dice, VR?

What was the story?
Environment, heroes, allies, enemies, non-player characters,

Describe the game mechanics
These are the actions that cause a change. Movement, attacks, health, taking turns, control of territory, timer/game clock, acquisition of resources, …

Creating a similar game
- What would the simplest possible version of this game look like?
- What would you start with if you were trying to build this game?
- What features are most important to get the minimal version working?
- What features would you save until later for if you had time?
- What would you add/change that might improve the game?