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Intro to Game Design

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Become a *Magic: The Gathering* Designer

JoJo's Bizarre Adventures Icon Pack

Analysis:

After reading, researching, and pulling information from articles written by Mark Rosewater, I've come to understand a lot more about card creation than I did for the original *Magic The Gathering* Assignment. For instance, at first, it was pick cards of two colors in a way that you see working together. Along that project, I figured out it was more than matching colors. It was mainly about becoming a game designer of your own, creating your gameplay through the use of the mechanics within the cards. The deck building of *Magic The Gathering* relies on experimenting, especially through the use of trial and error. Fixing minor errors and replacing them with something more fitting. This constant evolution of deck build is one of the many aspects of card creation.

Instead of starting with the end, let's start at the beginning with brainstorming. Brainstorming revolves around generating multiple ideas specifically when deciding on the theme of a set. It's not just about listing as many themes as you possibly can, it's more cycle-like. You start with naming themes, going back and naming mechanics, going back and naming synergies, and repeating until there is only one idea left standing. This way of brainstorming separates the weaker themes from the ones with a lot more to offer. When qualifying as an idea with a lot of potential, what's looked at is how much material we're going to get out of this one theme.

Next is creating set goals of what the selected theme is aiming to reach. Without goals, there wouldn't be anything to look forward to. For instance, when creating mechanics and new aspects of the set, a proper end goal gives the designer a visual of the purpose of this theme. What are the theme's underlying themes? What type of decks are going to be made from this? How big will this set be? Thinking broader of what the main purpose relates all future cards to this one topic. After establishing this goal, we can start to think about the decks and synergies that are going to be created from it. Certain decks require certain components to work. By understanding what is needed for these certain builds, rough cards can be created from the needs.

When creating cards for a set, you can't let yourself become tunnel visioned onto one idea. It is crucial to look outward toward to endless possibilities that can be generated from just one card. Think big but stay focused on one rough outline, don't become stuck on a singular card because then none of the other cards will ever be created. Constantly move back and forth, follow certain abilities, and see where you end up. It's okay to become sidetracked or even veer off slightly from the overall theme of the set because making more is ultimately better. After all, it's only the first draft of the cards, some may not even make it past the first cut so don't get too attached to your current favorite because everything is subject to change.

Speaking of changes, now arriving at the development process's most important phase, Testing. Now that basic ideas of cards are created, it's time to go back and reiterate each card's purpose. With a purpose in mind, we now imagine as many scenarios where the card may be used and record what went well and what needs to be changed. This is repeated until moving onto the next card, but it can always loop back around to a previous card which you'll have to change again for it to work as intended. The constant test, conclude, alter, and repeat is similar to what goes on when building a deck as the player instead of the designer. Altering cards consists of recording the previous iterations, charting down the progress the card has gone through as well as iterations that may be restored. What makes this the most important phase of card creation is that you're actively trying to perfect the cards in the set. This also makes this step endless because alteration can go on forever, a good designer knows exactly when to set the pencil down and step back.

After making the cards, we go back to the purpose and theming of the card. Making sure the story aligns with the card and assigning a role to it as well. If the aspects of the card don't match the story then the card could become unappealing and out of place. This is also when we take into account the audience or the players who will be using the card. It allows us to further understand the usability of the card at hand and how balanced it may or may not be. Understanding the audience also helps us tell the story in which we aim to tell, assigning certain cards each a different element towards this overarching story of the themed set. The story and characters are another important design element for the cards because it's the main way of immersing the player into the fantasy world of *Magic The Gathering*. From the small text at the bottom of the card to the colored mana and the card's abilities, everything must be accounted for. Everything tells a story especially when you're limited to the small canvas of a playing card.

Annotated Bibliography:

[The Challenges of Making Universes Beyond](#)

How to balance continuity, fan service, but also adaptation of an already-known product

[Crafting the Ring P1](#)

How to approach a world with so much lore, and condensing it so that everyone understands. From part-time fans to super-geeks.

[Crafting the Ring P2](#)

Creating archetypes for the new synergies, abilities, and creatures. How would they work together?

[Stepping into the Ring P1](#)

Themeing interactions, and creating what-if scenarios to keep consistency

[Stepping into the Ring P2](#)

Balancing character and purpose. Evolution, trial, and error until the final perfected card is made

[Stepping into the Ring P3](#)

Perfecting Gandalf. Tweaking the card slightly but enough for it the change. Keeping parts that are a must

[D&D-esign P1](#)

Copying from the source, searching and finding new or hidden aspects to branch off of

[D&D-esign P2](#)

Creating dungeons, dice rolls, and experience points. Implementing the core parts of what makes D&D

[What Is a Game?](#)

Defining a game. A goal, restrictions, agency, separate from the real world

[Lessons Learned P1](#)

Think big but focused. Create things that are enjoyable to play. Unavoidable fun

[Lessons Learned P2](#)

Sticking to an idea or vision. Understanding your audience. Think about the positives and negatives, look at both sides

[Lessons Learned P3](#)

Matching cards to their correct stories. Don't be limited to the theme, explore options and find creativity. It's ok to let go

[Lessons Learned P4](#)

Start with promise, don't pick a theme that has nothing in it. Tell your story, don't hold back.

[Lessons Learned P5](#)

Don't rush for the finish, sometimes take it slow and steady. One card at a time. What does a synergy need, and how you can provide it?

[Lessons Learned P6](#)

Visualizing a set, turning thoughts and ideas into words. Making of mechanics that aren't too difficult to alter. Save room for variation

[Lessons Learned P7](#)

Accepting less when you know there is more. Cause and Effect in the design process. Hidden solutions.

Brainstorming:

Not much brainstorming was done for this project, but here's what I have

- Icons pack
 - Anime - JoJo Bizarre Adventures
 - All transformation cards
 - One side character, other side stand
 - Only Stands
 - Only season two tarot card
 - Good for theming

- Not good for variety
 - Requiems?
 - Evolution cards
 - Must be played with the base card
 - Signature Moves
 - Abilities
- Fighting games
 - MK
 - Street fighter
 - Combos
 - Signature Moves
 - Punch-Out

Final Cards:

[Slideshow](#)

I used a slideshow to present the cards, enlarging them so that the text is readable.

Reflection:

For my *Magic The Gathering* card set, I created an Icon pack based on the anime *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* (JJBA). A little bit of background, ever since season two, JJBA characters have gained "Stand," these are physical manifestations of the character's power. Before settling on the idea of adapting an anime into *Magic The Gathering* formatting, I thought instead about fighting games such as *Mortal Kombat*, *Street Fighter*, or *Punch-Out*. These were interesting ideas but I think just because of recency I have a lot more knowledge about JJBA than I do about any of these fighting games.

At first, I was thinking about making each card into a double-sided transform card but then I realized how much time that would take and I would also be creating at least forty cards for the set. Not just because of the workload, but I also found that the characters were powerless if it weren't for their Stands. So, instead, I created each card to represent the Stand of the main characters from seasons two to four. This icon set relies on the individual combats between cards, the unique Stand abilities, and the Stand Evolution cards available. Every Stand ability can be treated as an instant as long as the card is untapped, and using an ability doesn't cost the card to be tapped unless it's said to. Another mechanic for the set that I created was the Stand Evolution cards. These cards can only be played if the pre-evolution form is summoned and once the evolution is summoned, that pre-evolution card is discarded. Along with the in-combat abilities, there are also long-range targeted abilities. If damage is done to any card with these abilities, their damaged toughness carries over if they were to block but they do retain their healing after the turn ends.

My experience creating this Icon set for *Magic The Gathering* was enjoyable. At first, I didn't know where to begin when creating this set but then I went chronologically through the assignment instead. My process seemed to improve after reading the articles about the other icon sets like the *Lord of the Rings*, *Doctor Who*, and *Dungeon and Dragons*-themed cards. They provided very useful information about the process of adapting already existing content into the form of *Magic The Gathering* cards. From character design reflecting on the abilities as well as references hidden within the card's overall purpose. Other than designing the cards, it was noticeably different from when we built our *Magic The Gathering* decks for the previous

assignment. Before we were viewing the cards, mechanics, and purposes to create the best deck, but now I was designing all the elements that, as a player, I was searching for. To me, it felt like building a deck and creating the cards were mirror images of each other. The only noticeable similarity was the constant need for change whether it be swapping out a card or reconfiguring a card's use. Overall, my experience as a card creator was freeing because instead of being limited to the cards in front of me wishing I could find a certain card, here I could create the card at any time for any purpose I needed it for.

Class Reflection:

As for the class, I thought that I already knew the basic information about game design but I was mistaken. I believe the weekly readings were great topic introductions for the week because we always started the Tuesday with a discussion about them. These discussions gave great insight into what makes a game, what is a game, and especially the gaming industry as a whole. A lot of information that I thought I knew was proven wrong and from that I've learned so much more than I ever thought I would from one of my first Game Design Development classes. Not only is this class about playing, talking, and making games it's about the process in which we take to reach the goal of creating a game. However, I believe the thing that needs a bit of improvement is the encouragement of students to collaborate. I felt as though outside collaboration was optional, which it is, but I feel as though in this major there should be more interconnectivity between everyone. Overall, this class was a great introduction to the much larger industry of game design, and I would recommend the professor to anyone in the future.