

Designing Board Games:

What makes a good game?

Crystal Wrenn, Jenelle Walker, Marlena Frank, Jose Zagal

gtg682f,gtg030r,gtg027a}@mail.gatech.edu(jp)@cc.gatech.edu

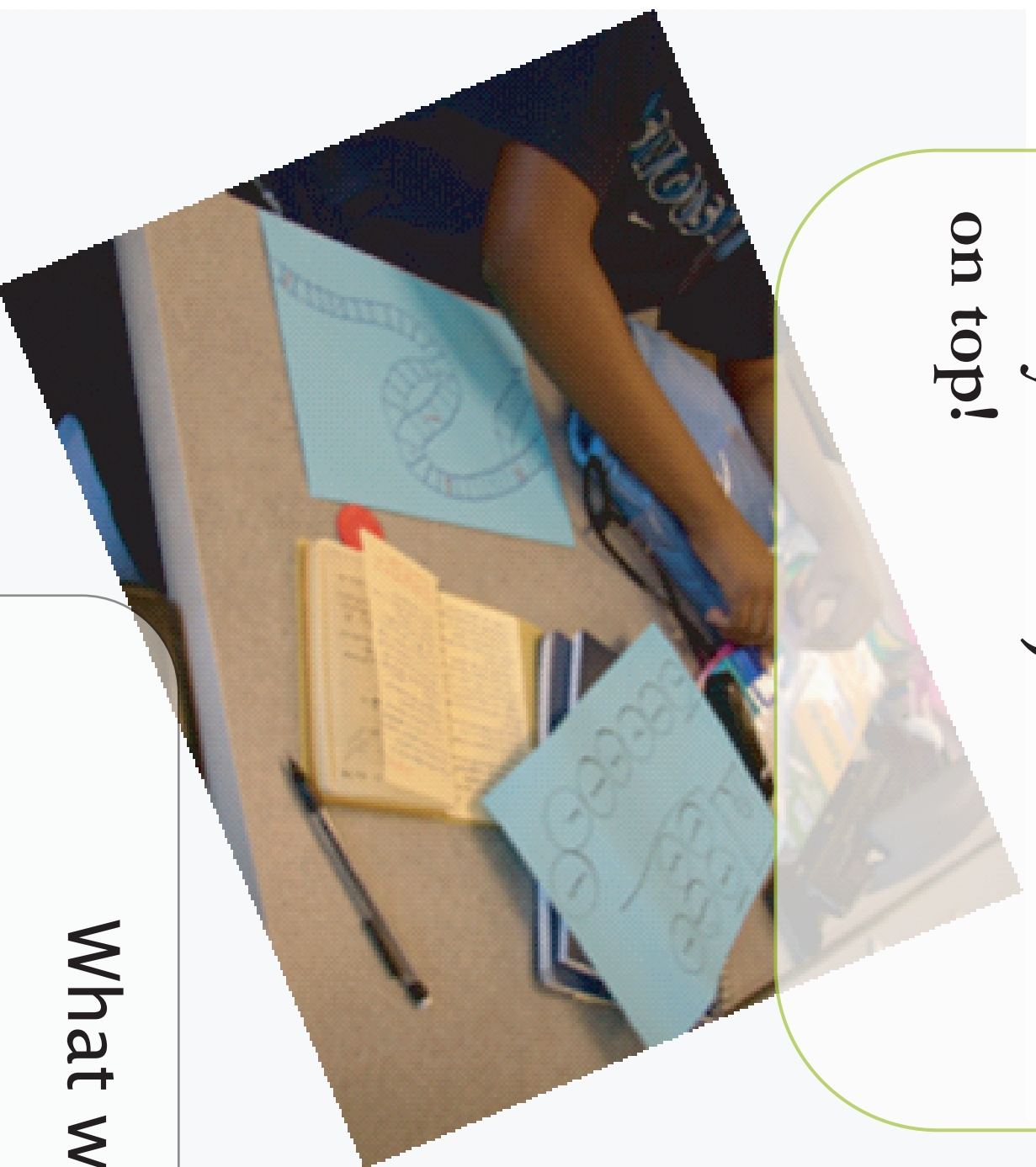


Introduction

Boardgames are about *interaction*. There is interaction between players and between players and the game rules. While games are in many ways formalized, the way a game progresses as it is played is highly variable. From our perspective, game design is part of interaction design. While this field has generally dealt with issues of interactions between humans and machines, usability and CSCW, we are taking a less technologically centered approach. Our work helps us better understand how people interact in environments that are mediated by complex rules and systems.

FreshTech

You are a new freshman at AnyState Institute of Technology. You are thrown into a world of math jokes, physics stress, and frequent all-nighter computer science homework. You must pick what is most important to you, take the best steps possible to achieve it (even when your friends may try to hold you back) and come out on top!



North Av. Trade Co.

North Avenue Trading Co. is a game where you compete against one opponent to deliver a requested good to a specified place. Players draw cards indicating goods and a place and must navigate their ship token on the board (map) in order to obtain the goods and to deliver them.



Battle of the Castles

For centuries the two Great Wizards of the Black and White Castles have been sworn enemies. Call forth their warriors to the castle in order to win the battle. But the three paths to the Great Castles are quite dangerous. Use strategy and wit to maneuver your troops, place deadly catapults, and vanquish your enemy.



What we've learned: Playability over usability

- Consider your audience
- Balance luck and skill
- Accept criticism
- Mechanics are more important than style

Future Work

- Playtest, refine and finish prototypes
- Commence digital implementation

Selected Bibliography

- Costikyan, G. (1994). I have no words & I must design. Interactive Fantasy.
- Fullerton, T., C. Swain, et al. (2004). Game Design Workshop: Designing, Prototyping, and Playtesting Games. San Francisco, CMP Books.
- Rouse III, R. (2001). Game Design: Theory & Practice. Plano, TX, Wordware Publishing Inc.