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Lens Essay

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In Jesse Schell's, *The Art of Game Design*, we were given various "lenses" or perspectives in which we can view our game from. Taking into account these lenses, the one's I've chosen to cover for my group's game are The Lens of Essential Experience (pg.22), The Lens of the Venue (pg.32), The Lens of Fun (pg.37), The Lens of Curiosity (pg.40), The Lens of Risk Mitigation (pg.102), and the Lens of Pleasure (pg.131). Starting with the Lens of Essential Experience, I am required to stop thinking about my game and start thinking about the experience of the player. For our game, we want our players to experience the thrill and accomplishment of flicking cubes onto a board to knock out and capture their opponent's positions. For this to happen, we need to focus our attention on the actual flicking of the cube and the different classes/attributes associated with it. As this is essential to the overall experience we're trying to create for the player, we must make sure we get this part of the game correct and fully functional otherwise our game cannot work the way we intend it to. In order for our game to capture that essence, we need to have players be able to choose what classes of cubes they want before they flick them onto the board and determine which ones are suitable to knock off and capture the positions of the opponent's cubes.

Next we have The Lens of the Venue, which explains how venues, or the places we play have an influence on the design of our games. To this extent, the type of venue that best suits the game we're trying to create is pretty much anywhere. Our game can be considered an example of a "play anywhere" game, which like the wording implies can be played anywhere. Whether its played on the computer or on a mobile device, our game can be played wherever and on the go, allowing for a flexible experience with players that have a couple spare minutes in their day to play or just need something to pass the time while on the way to work or whatever the case may be. Because of this, an anywhere type of venue works best with our game since it can be played whenever and wherever and the gameplay and story elements are simple enough that any player can dive into it and play however long they like.

The Lens of Fun describes how fun is essential in every game design and is desirable in nearly every game. To maximize our game's fun, we first have to take a look at the parts of our game that are actually fun. As it currently stands, the action of flicking the cube onto the board and knocking away opponent's cubes is one part of our game that is fun. If we look back at The Lens of Essential Experience, I mentioned previously that we want our players to experience the thrill and excitement that comes with flicking a cube and being able to overtake an opponent's cube. Since we're incorporating physics that will assist us in being able to flick the cube, whether the player is using a mouse or the touch screen, we believe that this aspect of our game provides the pleasure and accomplishment that comes with flicking cubes and capturing opponent's positions on a map. Looking at our game however, there are still parts that need to be fun. For instance, the actual different classes for each of the cubes and the attributes that are associated with it that still need to be implemented and tweaked. This allows our players the ability to choose which cubes they want to use and decide for themselves which ones are best suited to take over the opponent's cubes on the map. The freedom to choose between the different classes of cubes and the ability to test out these different cube's attributes and use them against your opponent's cubes would allow this aspect of our game to be more fun.

With the Lens of Curiosity, we are required to think about the player's true motivations and the reason the player wants to achieve the goals set for your game. With this in mind, some questions that our game puts into the player's mind are "What are some of the ways I can capture my opponent's cubes using the available classes?" and "What are some of the best combinations of classes I can use to ensure the best chance at success?". To make them care more about these questions would be to implement mechanics and attributes associated with each class that allow for flexibility of choice and allow the player to strategize their placements and how they capture the opponents cube's using this given information. In the same manner, to make them invent even more questions, we could either add to the current number of classes for each cube (3) to allow for more customization and choices in gameplay or add features not currently present in our game that adds interesting elements to our core gameplay (weather effects, different terrain, etc.)

The Lens of Risk Mitigation centers around risk management and requires us to stop thinking about our game positively and consider the things that could possibly go wrong with our game. Looking at our game, some things that could go wrong is the implementation of different classes/attributes and finding that some classes like the pawns/grunts are completely overpowered while other classes such as the knight are underpowered and not used as often, despite the high cost required for them. Because of the low expense of grunts, you could essentially stack tons of them on the field and little to no risk and swarm the opponents field entirely while trying to knock off their cubes. To keep this from becoming an issue, we need to find a way to balance out the current classes in our game and ensure that all classes can be utilized in some way and aren't just dead weights. In the case of the knights, we can decrease the cost it requires to use them and assign more attributes such as heavier weight so they can be used more often and in certain situations which makes them excel over other classes like the grunt.

Finally, the Lens of Pleasure allows us to think about the kinds of pleasure our game does and does not provide. At its current state, our game provides the following pleasures: Possibility, Surprise, Thrill, Triumph over adversity and Delight in another's misfortune. Out of these pleasures, all of them can be improved in some way that'll give a bigger experience to the player and allow for more pleasure when played. More pleasures can also be added in this case, to add to the over all playability of our game and grant bigger pleasure to our players when they experience this. Discovery, Challenge, and Wonder are just some of the pleasures that can be added in our game, as they can add a dynamic level of experience to our game in regards to flicking cubes, different classes of cubes, the strategy that comes with class choice and cube placement on the map, and the satisfaction that comes with capturing enemy cubes and eventually reaching the win condition of knocking the King piece out atop each player's tower.