

Team: Holding Off

Course: Player Experience

Project: Escampus Study 2 Report

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## **Goal/Motivation**

Like the last report, our main goal is to see if our game can properly provide the game experience we want to our players. Therefore, we created events in the game to let players make choices during the game, after which we see if they decide to leave the class or not, and we are willing to make our players recall their school memories and think about “What would I do if I was him/her?” just as what we did in study 1. Also, depending on the comments and results from study 1, we find even though our game achieved some of the goals, but as a game, it is not interesting enough. Thus, after some redesign and changes, we hope to receive feedback about new changes and if it can make the game more interesting. At the same time, we will also help players to immerse more in the game. Thus, we will iterate our game based on their feedback to make the game better just as study 1.

## **Redesign**

Compared to the first version, we did some changes in our game.

First, we added a mini-game as an event in the middle. This mini-game is a short barrage game, it will be triggered when the avatar reaches the spot of chalk box. There would be a hint on the screen, and after a short instruction to tell them how to play, there will also be new controllers for players, jumping, to use in this part. We hope that other than merely ask players to make choices, this little game can make it more interesting. It was designed based on Chinese student experience that when you are not following the teacher in class, or when you are doing something that is not related to the class, the irritable teacher would possibly throw a chalk to you, but we are not sure if people who grow up in other regions could get it because of the culture difference. This scene was designed to represent the inner struggle of the character about skipping the class. We would love to give it a shot to see if the part can work well. Also, it could hopefully be a variable that we can compare between participants who have different cultures.

Second, we added music and sound effects into our game to make it more complete and lively and so players might feel more engaged. A game without background music is not whole.

Third, we changed some of the fonts to make them more readable. In the beginning, we thought the same style would make it more uniformed and consistent, however, some of the participants gave us feedback that it was hard to read, so we sacrificed the style to enhance the player experience.

Forth, we changed the introduction scene to a shorter one. According to one of our participants in study 1, compared to the playing part, the introduction was too long.

Last but not least, we added operation tips at the beginning of the game and removed the pop hint for the first event. We tried to, therefore, let players explore the game themselves, instead of giving a hint for the first event and then no more. Besides, according to the consistency of the game, they are likely to believe there is no more event and ignore the second one.

## Methods

We reached 14 participants online and college students from Northeastern University. We posted our game on WebGL and let participants play through the link (Appendix 1).

Instead of using PANAS-X as we said in the proposal, we finally decided to design our own questionnaire (Appendix 2) to make it more fit for our project. Once they completed experiencing the game, they would be required to fill out our questionnaire which allowed us to generate more data with a larger sample size. In our questionnaire, we asked our participants about their choices, behaviors, and results in the game.

For Study 2, we also look forward to understanding that, in player's experience, if the elements are significant to the player's final decision of escaping or not. So, to evaluate it, we analyze the data with Pearson Correlation Test (Figure 1), where the value  $x$  means the choices regarding different events, and the value  $y$  means the choices of endings,  $m$  means the mean. When  $r = 1$ , it is a positive correlation, and  $-1$  is negative correlation. So when participants chose "I solved the math problem" and "I read the notebook", each one of them contributes adding 1 to the value  $x$ . "I miss the scene" is 0. "I didn't solve" and "I didn't read" contribute  $-1$  to the value  $x$ .

$$r = \frac{\sum (x - m_x)(y - m_y)}{\sqrt{\sum (x - m_x)^2 \sum (y - m_y)^2}}$$

Figure 1. The formula of Pearson Correlation Test

We also designed other questions to see if our changes make our game better. One was to see if our participants understood our new events, which was dodging chalks, and another one was to see if the multiple endings attracted them to play the game again. Other points were "which event is the most successful one", "which achieves our goal to recall our participants' school memories", we had multiple-choice questions about that. To get more comments to iterate our game, we gave two open-ended questions at the end of the questionnaire, "if our players enjoy our game" to see if our changes to make fun success, another one was "if they have any suggestions and comments on our game". We will iterate and improve our game to the final version depend on the information from the two open-ended questions.

## Results

By calculating our results via the Pearson Correlation Test, we got  $r$  as  $-0.450$ . We found out that the overall correlation between choices of events and choices of results was negative, so it meant that it was no relation between participants chose to solve the problem, read the notebook and escape the school, they might choose the events/endings by random.

## 2. What choice did you make in Event Notebook?

14 responses

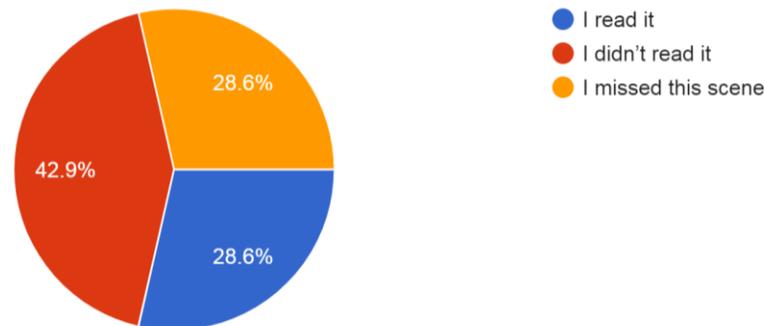


Figure 2. The result of the notebook event

There was an event in the middle of the game without any hint that was interactable, thus, almost 80% of the participants missed that scene. But our questionnaire might be misleading since many players chose the answer “I didn’t read it” regardless of whether they actually missed this scene. The 28.6% was the actual percent of players who found that this feature in the scene was interactable. After we told the participants who missed the scene that there was another event in the middle of the game scene, they were surprised because they believed it was a part of the background.

This was a very meaningful reflection for us that we need to add some hint or effects, for example, shine around the object, to let players know there is an interactable feature.

## 3. Did you survive in Event Dodging chalks?

14 responses

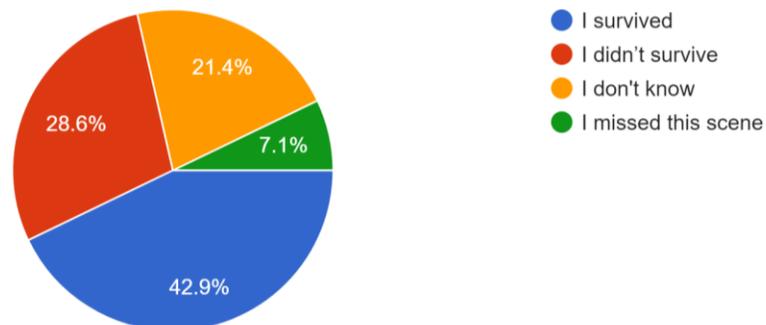


Figure 3. The result of the participants' new event response

For the results of question 3, we could see that 71.5% of participants understood what they did with our new event and knew their situations when jumping back from this mini-game. However, based on our observations, half of the players who chose “I survived” actually didn’t survive in that scene, but they tended to choose that they survived out of no results display when ending it. There was even a comment that the health system was not clear that it looked like a part of the background, instead of a UI. And most of the participants claimed that there should be a

connection between the mini-game scene and the main scene since they were confused when first got into the mini-game scene.

### 5. What was your final decision regarding escaping school?

14 responses

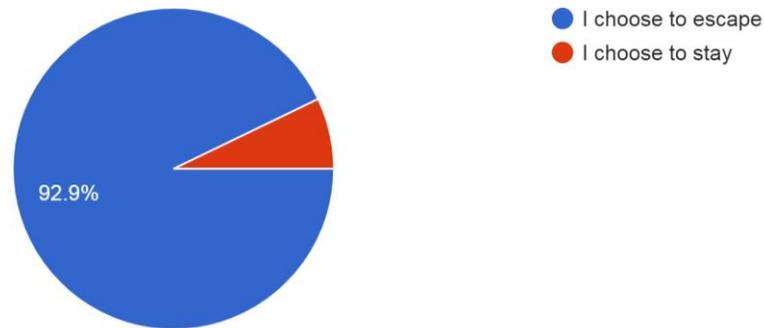


Figure 4. The result of the participants' final decision

From this question, we could find that people love the theme “escaping from campus”, they thought it was fun that almost everyone would like to choose to escape.

### 6. Which event make you think of your school memories the most?

14 responses

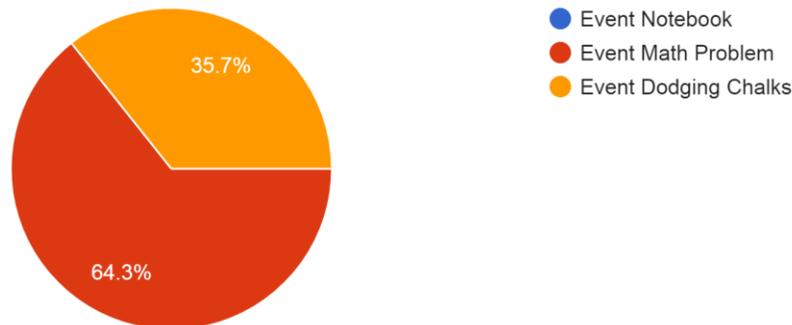


Figure 5. The result of the event that recalls the participant's memory the most

The result of question 6 showed that 64.3% of participants chose the math problem and all remaining participants chose the dodging chalks. None of the participants chose the notebook event. It was probably the math problem event was the first event, and most of the participants (12 out of 14) interacted with it so it was impressive. But for the notebook event, only some (4 out of 14) participants players found it. With further analyze, 8 out of 11 experienced more than one event and chose the event Math Problem, 3 out of 11 chose the event Dodging Chalks. Regardless of the number of whom played the event Notebook, none of the participants who had experienced multiple events chose it, we might need to redesign it.

## 7. Would you like to restart the game to see multiple endings or did you restart?

14 responses

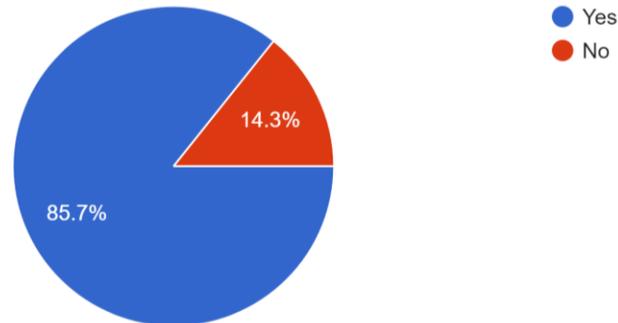


Figure 6. The result about if players restart the game to see different endings

From the result of the questionnaire, we could also see that most participants would like to restart our game to see our multiple endings, which was 85.7% in total.

From the two open-ended questions, we found that most of our participants enjoyed our game, and even asked for more events and interactions with the game. There were only two participants who said they did not enjoy the game, but one of them still wrote “*Interesting but needs improvement*”. In the Suggestion and Comments part, we could see that most problems came from the bugs and unclear guides of the game. Many participants asked for hints for interactable objects. Lots of participants claimed that the guide was unclear so they did not really know what to do at the beginning of entering the chalk scene. Some participants also did not like the math problem because they do not want to think when they play a small game like this.

### Conclusion & Discussion

From the results, we found out that the elements in the game didn’t make a difference for players to choose different endings, or, we could not predict what players would choose their endings regarding what they decided previously in the events. We have the point that this may be the consequence of the game makes players misunderstand the goal of the game. The game is called Escampus and at the beginning, the information says they need to consider whether to skip the class or not. Therefore, players’ first thought may be “the game should be an escaping game” and think the final goal, or the way to win, is to escape from the class. The dodging chalk event makes the game more interesting but it also in another way makes players think it is an escaping game so they need to leave the classroom to win. One participant we found online even sent a message to us said she *successfully* escaped. We thought that was also why our participants wanted to see the choices influence the final endings. However, in fact, this game did not have the definition of win or lose. The game was not a surviving game but a game with narrative and exploratory. It should be a game about finding what players really want to do, to realize if they make a decision by themselves or because of other people’s words.

While for other questions, we can see that our new event, dodging chinks, succeeded in its original goal, which is to make the game more interesting. Most of the participants understand the goal of the event and lots of them think the event recalled their school memories. And after we added this event, we also find lots of participants think they enjoy the game and it is

interesting. Even one participant said he did not enjoy the game, he still thought it was interesting. The results here showed that we made the right decision to add a mini-game to make it fun for players. Compared with the other two events, the notebook event was a kind of failure, since nobody thought that recalled their school memories. Also, we found lots of participants liked to see multiple endings and that also becomes one reason for them to restart the game.

From the Suggestion and Comment section, we also knew that our players wanted to see a game with multiple endings which were influenced by players' choices previously. We found that our guide was not clear enough. There were comments and suggestions to ask us to make clearer guide instructions and event hints. We added operation tips at the beginning of the game and removed the pop hint for the first event because we thought that will increase game experience, which allowed players to explore the game themselves. However, the fact was the players who liked to explore found not only events but also lots of bugs, the players who did not like to explore missed the events and chose not to read so much.

### **Limitation**

The correlation test results may occur from the failed-designed test procedure, for instance, the way we quantified the answers was not scientific, participants might choose the wrong options due to the vague description in the questionnaire, or we chose the wrong test. And to avoid error, we need more participants.

### **Reflection**

For the next step, we would improve our UI elements even better, including adding more hints, and instructions. We would also resolve some of the existing bugs. To make it more intractable, we would probably add more sound effects.

The result from the Pearson Correlation Test is disappointing and we think that is because our game does not give our participants enough information to let them relate the game content with the action they made in-game and to think about escaping campus or not. However, because of the limited time, we cannot make a long game with a complete storyline, which includes more than three events scenes and cinematic as embedded narratives in between as we thought at the beginning. Therefore, we will not change a lot on this. We will try to add some elements to increase the player experience that made players think the game is interesting and remember their own school experience because of the game. If it is possible, we may make the results of the events before influence the final endings.

### **Appendix**

1. *Escampus Game Online*  
<https://yangyunb.itch.io/escampus>
2. *Game Experience Questionnaire*  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeCPEtDDG9AK5swBhNe86rAu6\\_6K9027BrZKkeHoIFDPXsMgA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeCPEtDDG9AK5swBhNe86rAu6_6K9027BrZKkeHoIFDPXsMgA/viewform?usp=sf_link)