Twist Design Document

Overview

Twist is an abstract, shape-based two-player competitive strategy game. Scoring system is the core of this game. To getting points player need to put cards carefully on the board to form specific combinations. However after doing that player still need to get domination of that combination to get point. The resources on each player's hand is limited, so player need to think carefully before they make decision. In another word, this game is a minimalist competitive strategy game by using shapes and colors.

Elevator Pitch

Like shapes, colors, logic and strategy? Come to play Twist! It must be a good abstract two-player competitive strategy game that you don't want to miss!

Rules

Items:

- A deck of red cards and a deck of blue cards
    - 28 cards of each deck
        - Basic cards: 5 droplet cards, 3 heart cards, 5 circle cards, 5 hexagon cards.
            - Basic cards can be placed on any empty grid of the board
        - Functional cards: 2 heart functional cards, 8 other functional cards
            - Some functional cards can only be played on specific grids on board, some are purely used as item. Read the instruction on card and play properly.
            - For those cards with covering function, place the card color side up to cover the grid.
            - For those cards with switching function, play it and switch the cards on proper grids of the board.
- A 4*4 board that evenly colored as red and blue
    - The player with red cards owns the red grids, and the player with blue cards owns the blue grids.
- Scoring papers, pencils (if needed)

Goal:

- Get the highest accumulated points in 3 games

Gameplay:

- Each player get his/her color deck, shuffle it, and draw 6 cards from the top of the deck.
- The very first game starts from the oldest player. Otherwise starts from the loser of last game.
- In each turn, player can do the following things in consequence:

    - If the current player get **7** points or above on the board, they can call out to end the game immediately. But call out need to cost **1** point. After the current player call out, each player need to calculate his/her points on the board and add it to his/her total points. Notice that the call out can open happens in the **beginning** of the player's round.
    - If the player choose not to call out (or can't call out), he/she can play one card
        - If the current player can't play any card on hand, the game end immediately. Each player then need to calculate his/her points on the board and add it to his/her total points.
    - If the player played one card, he/she can draw one card from top of his/her own deck and end the round.
- After three games, the player who get higher points will win

Scoring:

- Player need to calculate points from 10 lines:
    - 4 columns, 4 rows and 2 diagonals.
    - If the line is a pure color line, say red color, then the points on that line purely belongs to the player with red cards.
    - If the line is a mix color line, then the points goes to the player who occupied the line. Say if red card player has three or four red cards on that line, the points of that line belongs to the red card player. If both player has 2 cards on that line, they both get points from that line.
- The points on each line depends on the shape
    - Four shapes on the same line = 3 points
    - Pair + pair shapes on the same line = 2 points (the pair shapes don't need to be aside to each other)
    - Four different shapes on the same line = 1 points

Design Process

Research Phase:

I got the very basic idea of this game by playing another well designed two-player competitive strategy card game called *Leopard*. I really like the abstract and elegant design that player only use traditional poker cards to form combinations on the board to get score. The most interesting part of *Leopard* is that player can choose to play aggressively by putting cards on other player's board to interrupt his/her opponent's line combination. At the meanwhile since the resources on one's hand is limited, if one choose to play aggressively, he/she may lack of cards to form his/her own combination. I really want to copy the struggling feeling in the game when you choose to make decision.

Prototype Phase:

By studied *Leopard's* rules deeply, I want to keep the item design and board elements in the game. However I want to make players to interact with each other more, so in my first prototype I combined the two 3*3 separate board together into a 4*4 one. I also want to make player has his/her own gird on the board, so that they can use some special item cards that related to the grid ownership. I had several iteration on the board design, and

finalised it as a evenly separated two-color board. By doing so each player have 2 lines that purely dominated by him/her and other 8 lines that they need to share and fight with each other.

For the card design, I also did several iterations. In the very first version, I designed 4 types of shape cards with 4 colors. However in my very first playtest I find 4 colors are too much to players, so I eliminate that into two. Since the scoring rule is heavily based on the cards, I also change the scoring system several times. In the very beginning version, player need to get points by the combination that not only about shapes but also about colors. However from the feedback of the playtesters, I think it's too much for any players to try to build such combination. So my final version of the scoring rule is only about shape combination, but the color works for the line domination stuff, which can help or prevent player to get points from that line.

Other than improving the board and card design, I also did something to help to improve the player experience. From most of the feedbacks, I realised that the scoring system is very hard to remember and also hard to understand for some players, so I made cheat sheet to help them. I also enlarge the shapes on card so that player can clearly see what they get.

Future Development:
After the final in-class play test, I feel the scoring system is still too complicated for most of the players, so I plan to make this game into a digital version so that the computer can help player to calculate the points they get. By doing so I believe player can focus on the strategy part more and get less torture from the calculating part.

Playtest photos





