Training Designers to Collaborate with Researchers

Reframing, Scaffolding, and Roles

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GAME LAB

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE® | FEB 27–MAR 3, 2017 | EXPO: MAR 1–3, 2017 #GDC17

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Impact?

40% employed
outside of traditional
game companies

(HEVGA in 2015; alumni undergraduate + graduate)

barriers

Maximizing
Impact
(That's our project)
=Barriers
=Solutions
IMPACT
WITH GAMES

1. Politicized terms
2. Rigid methods
3. Domain blindness

#GameImpact *G4C, Aubrey Hill, Michael Cohen Group*

1/3 of our alumni have taken a

game research course

(HEVGA in 2015; alumni undergraduate + graduate)

Problem:

On the shoulders of giants?

Health behavior change:

Packy and Marlon

- 77% decrease in hospitalization rates
  (Brown et al., 1997)

Teach research as a strategy

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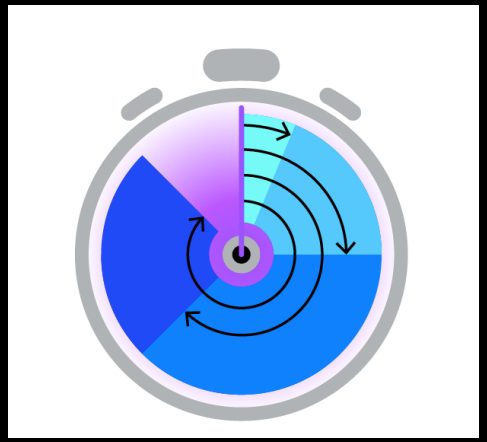
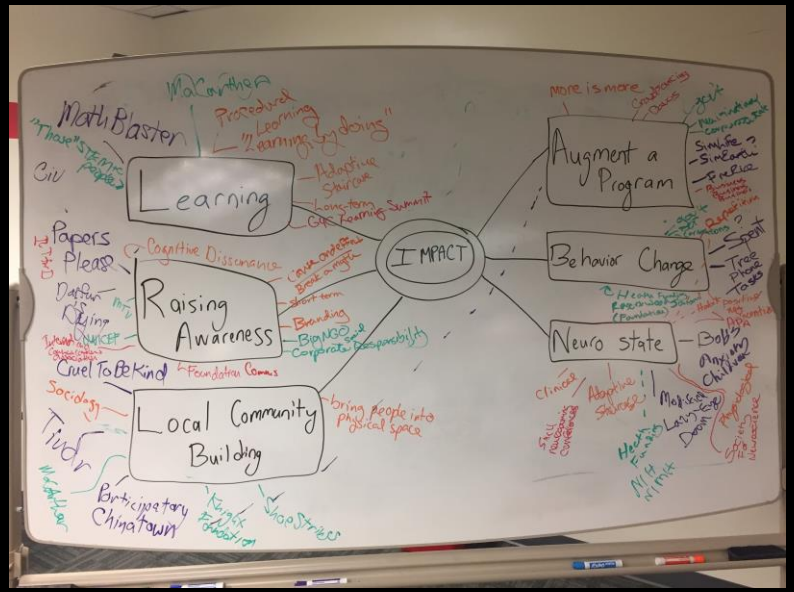
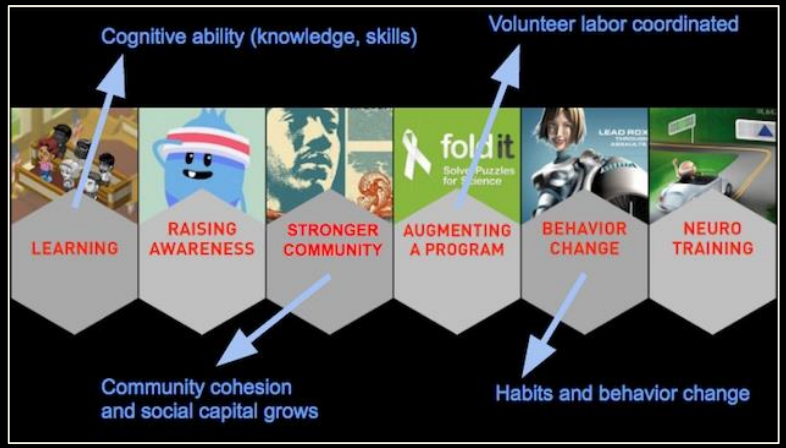


1. When & where
2. Research ≠ research *design*





SOLUTON: **bottom-up typologies**

Pinch-point: “I’m not a researcher”

(Research is separate from design)

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MS Game Studios

Pinch-point: “I’m not a researcher”

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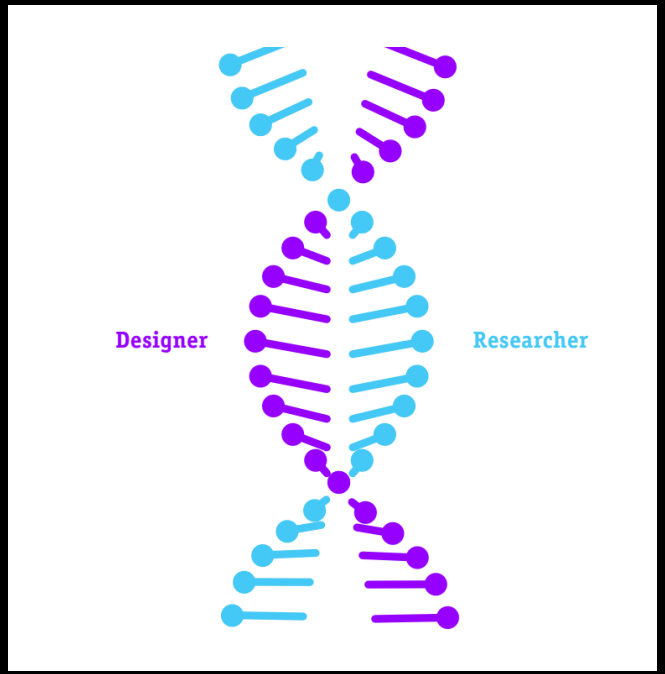


Reframe:

1. **No game** would launch **without research**
2. Designers **ARE researchers**
3. **Collaboration** is a competency
   (not a funding arrangement)

What are universities doing?

Pinch point: **lack of demand** (quality suffers)

"in the fishbowl"

USC Games

User Behavioristics

Heather Desurvire

SOLUTION1: **Paired classes** = space for analysis

SOLUTION2: **Language & focus via heuristics**
PLAY and GAP principles (2009)

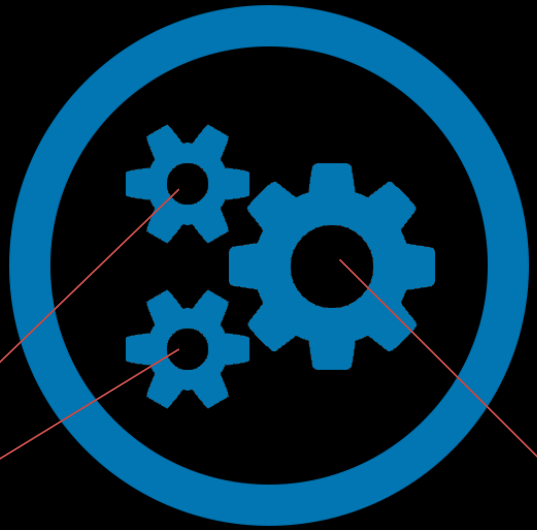
SOLUTION3: **Findings as video**
"the gray areas are essential to…player experience"

Carnegie Mellon University
Entertainment Technology Center

Carnegie Mellon
Human-Computer Interaction Institute

Pinch point: **jagged collaborations**

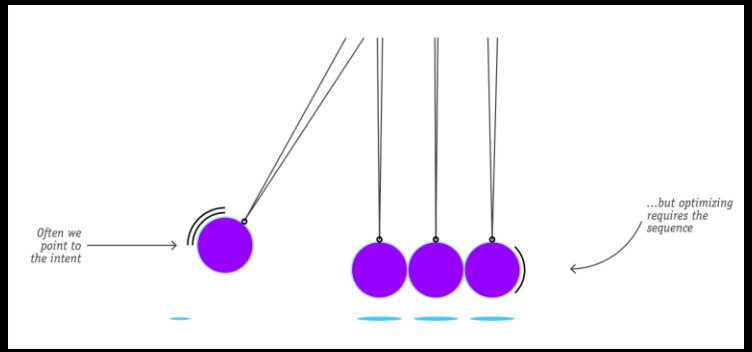
(lack of structure)



Jessica Hammer

SOLUTION1: **Tandem design model**

SOLUTION2: **APIs for collaboration**



...greater creativity??

Dartmouth

tiltfactor

WWW.TILTFACTOR.ORG :: GAME DESIGN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

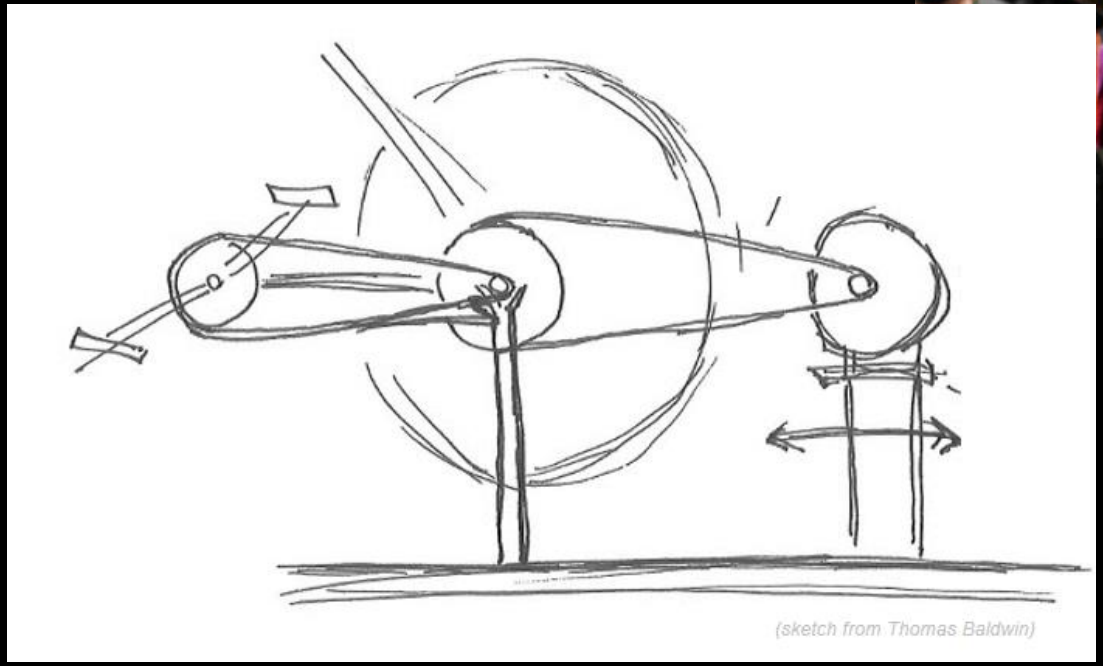
Mary Flanagan

Pinch point: **single path**

SOLUTION1: **Dialog on values**

SOLUTION2: **In media res**

SOLUTION3: **Competing solutions**



(sketch from Thomas Baldwin)

Spread what works.

Do you have ***solutions that work****? Let's share them!*

#GameImpact

http://GameImpact.net

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