Game Design Activity #1

Game Ideation

Young people work together in teams to generate as many game ideas as possible. The game activity encourages everyone to participate and opens new ideas possibilities.

Youth work outcomes

Outcome 7 Young people develop their perspectives through new experiences and learning. (Outcomes 3,4 and 6 of the National Outcomes and Skills Framework are also relevant to this activity.)

Youth work skills

team work, communication

Set-up

To run this session in a physical space you will need:

- Post-it notes
- Pens
- Dice per small group
- Slide/print outs showing the Morphological matrix, or create one of your own

If online, you could deliver using Miro, or equivalent.

Length of session

30 minutes, flexible

About Games Ideation

Ideation focuses on the practice of coming up with ideas for games: some can find this very straightforward (particularly where they are influenced by games that they play) while others can find this challenging (starting with a "blank slate" can be a daunting task). We recommend that this activity is done in small groups (between 2-4 people) to accommodate peer-support and learning.

Using a Morphological Matrix

To support game ideation, you can use a "Morphological Matrix" - initially used in engineering contexts, this tool has become widely used in fields such as media, education, and product design to support rapid idea generation.

A Morphological Matrix has...

- **Components:** these are the things that we expect to design for - in games, this can include Players (who we make games for), Platforms (what technology we need to play the game), Play (the type of experience that players can expect to have), and Purpose (what players will get out of playing the game);

- **Characteristics:** a list of possible ways in which a Component can be represented.

Below is a Morphological Matrix with these four Components, and asix Characteristics that could represent each of these
(you can create your own table if you wish):

Player	Platform	Play	Purpose
Teenagers	Escape Room	Competition	Training / Skill Development
First-time Gamers	Tabletop (card, board)	Simulation	Health / Wellness
Couples	Mobile / Handheld Devices	Collaboration	Public Information / Awareness
"Boomer" Generation (60+)	Virtual Reality (VR)	Expression / Creativity	Education / Learning
Impaired Players (cognitive, physical, etc.)	PC/Console	Challenge	Entertainment
Young Families (3-12)	Arcade Cabinet	Luck-based	Brand Advertisement

The next step is to establish your Criteria for design: this is where you select one Characteristic from each of your Components to inform your ideation. It is recommended that this process is randomised (using dice rolls, random number generators, or blind-selection).

Throw the dice four times - once for the Player, once for the Platform, once for the Play and once for the Purpose.

This will give you the Criteria for your ideation session.
For example, your Criteria may include:

- Impaired Players

- Virtual Reality

- Simulation

- Health and Wellness

From here, you should spend a short period of time (max. ten minutes) encouraging ideas to be written out in a shared location: in a physical setting, this could be a collection of post-it notes; in a digital context, you may consider using a collaboration board (e.g. Miro). Ideas should be relatively short-form (e.g. bullet-points, 1-2 sentences, illustrations) and consider the full Criteria (i.e. not missing out one Characteristic).

Example ideas might include:

An adaptive virtual gym that tailors personalised game-based workouts (seated or standing) for players with physical impairments (can also be used for rehabilitation).	A virtual world filled with puzzles, memory challenges, and problem-solving tasks to provide light cognitive challenge for those with issues surrounding memory and recall.	A virtual garden designed to gently stimulate senses through vibrant visuals, soothing sounds, and tactile feedback.

At this stage, there is no such thing as a "bad" idea: all ideas should be written down on a separate note for consideration.

Once time is up, young people are invited to share their ideas (if time is limited, encourage sharing their "best" idea) and discuss the game concepts with each other.

This process can be repeated by establishing new Criteria and ideating different game ideas in a short space of time.