Thinking “Out-of-the-Box” with Board Games

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What is OOB?

One method that explores the initial impressions made during a user’s first interaction with a product has been termed the “out-of-box experience”, or OOB (Gilbert, Sangwan, & Ian, 2005).

The OOB technique typically measures first impressions of the following processes:

Importance of OOB

Method

Participants

4 males, 2 females; Ages: 19 – 22
3 casual, 3 experienced players
(based on frequency of board game play, types of games played, and self-reported experience level)

Measures

- Net Promoter Score (NPS)
- Points of Delight
- Points of Frustration
- Confidence
- Difficulty
- Adjectives (MPRC)

Materials

▲ Published by Blue Orange Games, *Photosynthesis* is a strategy board game that allows 2-4 players to play as different species of trees that plant seeds and grow trees to compete for the sun’s energy.

Procedure

The above measures were taken during the following stages:

Results cont.

OOBE Stage	Points of Delight/Frustration
Unboxing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attractive art style• Confusion about storage wells• Confusion about initial French instructions
Setup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tedious, time-consuming assembly• Confusing piece-placement instructions
Initial Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helpful diagram in instruction booklet• Lack of clarity for game rules• External sources used to supplement rules
Disassembly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assumed easier setup for future use• Confusion about how to organize pieces

Conclusions

- The OOB technique can be used with board games to explore a game’s quality, clarity of rules and instructions, perceived complexity, ease of use, and overall impressions
- Experienced board game players find unboxing and playing games for the first time easier than casual players
- Casual players are less confident in their ability to grasp the mechanics of a new game during initial play

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