Test Quest

Improving the Onboarding Experience for Novice Dungeons and Dragons Players Through Personalised AI-Generated Content

Author

Luca Andrei

Supervisors

Marcus Gerhold

Thérèse Bergsma

Abstract

This thesis explores the development of an AI-based tool designed to lower the entry barriers for new players of Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), a tabletop role-playing game that has experienced consistent growth over more than three decades. This project leverages a Large Language Model to simplify the onboarding process for new players, enabling a more seamless introduction to the game. The tool developed through this thesis assists in narrative and content creation tailored to the specific characteristics and preferences of player groups, facilitating engagement in scenarios that align with their learning objectives. To evaluate the system, we conducted a mixed-methods evaluation involving both qualitative feedback from focus groups and quantitative data analysis to assess the effectiveness of the system. Results indicate that the automated materials might help reduce preparation time and support the initial gaming experience by providing coherent, engaging, and highly customizable content. The system was particularly effective in helping new players create customised characters with ease and in boosting confidence levels among players with low experience. The findings may also have implications for the design of other complex games and educational frameworks, where AI can play a role in reducing entry barriers and enhancing learning processes.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Context

Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) is a tabletop roleplaying game (TTRPG) that has been released over 30 years ago and has gone through several editions with revisions to lore, mechanics and other game elements. The game has experienced a significant growth in popularity in recent years, especially notable during times of pandemic lockdown when game sales soared compared to previous years [1]. This rise in popularity underlined the game's potential as a means of social interaction, providing not only an engaging experience but also opportunities for personal improvement.

D&D has the ability to facilitate transformative experiences, contributing to the development of self-reflection skills [2] and promoting self-acceptance [3]. It can foster the growth of soft skills such as collaboration and creativity [4], potentially contributing to the greater society by acting as a moral training ground [5]. Encouraging a broader participation in D&D would be desirable, allowing more people to benefit from its potential as a tool for personal growth and relationship building.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite its numerous benefits, D&D also presents considerable entry barriers for novices. The game demands a high level of dedication and commitment, featuring a complex character creation process and extensive rulebook that requires several game sessions to comprehend and master. The absence of dedicated personalised onboarding resources and the limitation of mentoring opportunities exclusively to game sessions further complicates the introduction process for new players.

The exploration of generative models as learning aids has been receiving increased attention within the educational technology sector. Generative models are a type of artificial intelligence that can create content by learning from vast datasets, being trained to generate text, images, audio, and other types of media that can mimic human-like outputs. Research has indicated their ability to enhance student confidence when direct teacher presence is limited [6] and capacity of providing personalised advice to students [7], which could be used to aid the onboarding process. In the context of D&D, where novices benefit from explicit in-game training [8], the aptitudes of generative models could be harnessed to provide a personalised learning experience based on player desires and capabilities, resulting in a smoother learning curve.

The goal of this thesis is to develop a tool which eases the onboarding process, designed specifically for new D&D player groups. The tool's aim is to aid narrative and content creation based on the group's characteristics and preferences, providing suggestions and allowing the players to engage in tailored scenarios that match their learning objectives.

Such a tool could reduce the necessity of reading manuals and game materials before and during play, allowing for a more seamless introductory experience where learning is interwoven with gameplay and the pre-game preparation phase is shorter and more streamlined.

1.3 Research Questions

Based on the problem statement of simplifying the onboarding process for novice D&D players, the following research question and sub-questions have been formulated:

- ❖ **RQ:** "How might content created through generative artificial intelligence enhance the onboarding experience for novice Dungeons & Dragons players?"
- ❖ **SQ1:** "What are the most difficult game elements for novice D&D players?"
- ❖ **SQ2:** "What are good methods for generating consistent and accurate D&D content?"

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 presents the background research, including a literature review on the use of generative models as learning aids, content generation methods in the context of D&D, and an analysis of the state-of-the-art. Chapter 3 details the methods and techniques applied in the project; this chapter outlines the four development phases, alongside other methods used for the development of this project.

Chapter 4 covers the first stage of the design process: the Ideation phase. Stakeholders and their needs are identified, and a list of preliminary concepts that address the research question are presented. Chapter 5 describes the second stage of the design process: the Specification phase. The chosen concept is further developed, outlining the final system requirements and presenting the general system architecture.

Chapter 6 covers the third stage of the design process: the Realisation phase. It provides an overview of the functional prototype and explains each system module in detail. Chapter 7 presents the final stage of the design process: the Evaluation phase. The testing method and procedure are described, followed by an evaluation of the functional prototype based on multiple user studies.

Lastly, chapter 8 discusses the results of the user study, evaluates the system requirements, and addresses the implications and limitations of the work. It concludes with suggestions for future research and a final statement on the project.

Chapter 2 – Background Research

This chapter presents the background theory and relevant information available on the topics adjacent to the project. This is done in the form of a literature review on the use of generative models as learning aids, which was performed as part of an assignment related to this project [64], followed by an overview of the state-of-the-art D&D onboarding tools and content generation methods. The chapter concludes with a discussion and conclusion based on the findings, which serves to inform the design choices of the project.

2.1 Literature Review - Generative Models in Educational Settings

With research showing that generative models are capable of enhancing student confidence [6] and able to provide personalised advice [7], it is important to identify what technical and design factors contribute to such positive results. Consequently, a literature review was conducted into the prior use of generative model use in educational settings.

2.1.1 Type of generative models used

Large Language Models (LLMs) stand out as the only generative model type used for educational purposes. Kumar et al. [6] use GPT-4 to enhance problem-solving skills, while Chen et al. [9] employ it for gathering and organising educational content for courses. Other studies have applied less advanced models like GPT-3 and GPT-3.5 across a range of educational domains. Balse et al. [12] and Sheese et al. [10], with approaches ranging from stock model use to detailed fine-tuning, have managed to make use of LLMs in courses like biology, mathematics or programming.

Beyond OpenAI, Sonkar et al. [14] and Afzal et al. [17] have used open-source or custom LLM-based systems for developing interactive learning aids. The choice of model can be attributed to factors such as date of study, research budgets, hardware availability, ethical concerns, learning domain and the role of the educational content. In general, LLM or LLM-based systems are used in all recent developments of interactive tutoring systems, with OpenAI's GPT series standing out in terms of popularity and accessibility.

2.1.2 Pre-prompting techniques

Despite their proficiency in a wide range of tasks, LLMs need to be given a set of instructions to maintain coherence across a conversation. Five different types of instructional strategies, also called pre-prompts, have been identified across studies. The first pre-prompting technique involves providing information about the system's role; Kumar et al. [6, 7] instruct the LLM to behave as a tutor designed to aid in problem-solving, while Sheese et al. [10] only specify the general role of the system. Sonkar et al. [14] describe the role of the system in achieving specific learning objectives, and Nye et al. [15] task the LLM to correct output from a hypothetical student. The different levels of specificity in the instructions can be linked to the different aims of the studies: Kumar et al. [6, 7] test the system with actual

students and focus on very strict model outputs, while Nye et al. [15] only implement the system on a hypothetical scenario, where there is more output leeway.

The second technique represents the use of instructions based on difficulty level. Chen et al. [9] implement a tiered instruction system, where the complexity of the language and structure of the instructions increases with the topic's difficulty level. Additionally, step-by-step instructions are provided to the models for improving their reasoning process. Kumar et al. [7] guide the LLM through a 3-point checklist to make the LLM verify internally the validity of each output, while Balse et al. [12] use a similar 3-point approach to ensure the model response follows the desired output structure.

A fourth method used by both Nye et al. [15] and Sonkar et al. [14] requires the LLM to respond within a strictly given JSON format, guiding the model to produce highly structured responses and prune irrelevant information to the answer. The last identified method involves providing examples of correct expected responses before use, such that the LLM can formulate a better output. Kumar et al. [7] and Nye et al. [15] use this technique by giving detailed examples related to the educational topic, either mentioning how a formula is applied in a specific case or what the correct answer is to a given question, and for what reasons.

All in all, the use of the various pre-prompting methods appears to be dependent on the use case and desired results. It must be noted that these methods may not work concurrently, as each LLM has a certain limit of instructions it can accurately follow, so a choice on pre-prompts must be made within the context of the project. Some methods, such as providing information about the system's role, might allow the model to better understand the context and its tasks, which could help improve the model's performance in a specific area. Other techniques, such as the checklist method, could improve the model's ability to follow instructions, which would be desirable in situations where the LLM must not deviate from a specific subject. Strategies like restricting the output content to the minimum necessary can be used in situations where the conversation should be conducted as concisely as possible, and some details or solutions should be kept hidden by the LLM.

2.1.3 Methodologies for applying generative models in the learning process

After initial model setup and tuning, the methodological application is split into two overarching approaches. The first one represents the LLM-first approach, where students begin problem solving by consulting with the LLM before starting to work on a task. This method, as adopted by Kumar et al. [6, 7], Chen et al. [9], Sonkar et al. [14], Afzal et al. [17] and Mohapatra et al. [16], has the purpose of assisting students who need a starting direction for a specific topic. Kumar et al. [6, 7] specifically use this approach to assist students in solving mathematics problems by outlining possible solving strategies and providing step-by-step solutions of similar tasks, while Chen et al. [9], Sonkar et al. [14] and Afzal et al. [17] implement a dialogue-based system where the student can freely ask for explanations and

guidance on all parts of the educational content, establishing a collaborative multi step refinement process.

The second approach represents the self-first approach, where students try to solve the problem alone and consult the LLM for feedback and improvement. This method, implemented by the likes of Sheese et al. [10], Ma et al. [11], Tack and Piech [13], and others to a lesser degree, helps students reinforce methodologies or improve on existing work. Sheese et al. [10] implement this by making students provide the system with problems encountered and other information such as code snippets, error messages and a description of the issue encountered. Alternatively, Ma et al. [11] create a virtual environment where students act as teachers for hypothetical students mimicked by the LLM system, having to help with debugging, hypothesis construction, test case selection and explanation of the problem. While these solutions can help reinforce programming knowledge, similar strategies might not apply across other subjects. For example, in creative tasks such as prose or literature, one could argue that following such a rigid structure to acquire feedback could limit students to a very strict template instead of being allowed to experiment with different styles of writing.

Across all studies, there is a varying degree of the explicitness of LLM responses to student queries. In some cases, hints are provided if the student mastery is low on a certain topic, as described by Afzal et al. [17], and in other situations the system is adjusted to better match the pace of the learner, as done by Chen et al. [9]. Mohapatra et al. [16] sort learning information based on a 'must know, need to know, good to know' framework, and Kumar et al. [7] propose an approach involving student reflection on LLM use before prompting, which could be adapted across both the LLM-first and self-first approaches for more meaningful and conscious interaction.

The two methodologies used in integrating LLMs into educational settings ultimately serve different pedagogical purposes. The LLM first-approach provides guidance, being useful for students who lack initial direction and struggle to begin. It can provide suggestions and examples, but this approach also poses the risk of student overreliance. Alternatively, the self-first approach encourages independent problem-solving skills, allowing for LLM consultation as a secondary measure. This method is useful for refinement and feedback, and may be the preferred one for teachers when students must be held responsible for their work. By varying other factors like the explicitness of responses or encouraging pre-prompt reflection, the student-system interaction can be further tuned to fit the teacher's learning plan and objectives.

2.1.4 Limitations and risks

While LLMs can help teachers and students across multiple educational domains, they also present certain risks and limitations. Seven studies, those of Kumar et al. [6], Chen et al. [9], Balse et al. [12], Sonkar et al. [14], Nye et al. [15], Mohapatra et al. [16], and Tack and Piech

[13] have identified a recurring challenge. Occasionally, the LLMs will *hallucinate* and output incorrect information, which poses the risk of misinformation and perpetuating biases. Additionally, Kumar et al. [6, 7] and Sheese et al. [10] describe the potential risk of students becoming over reliant on LLMs for problem-solving tasks. Sheese et al. [10] especially identified that in some cases, students focused on receiving immediate help rather than trying to improve their understanding.

The studies conducted by Sheese et al. [10], Sonkar et al. [14], and Balse et al. [12] identify the risk of reinforcing the wrong ideas and behaviours, both in students and teachers. Balse et al. [12] note that due to the confident tone of the LLM, even instructors can be misled regarding the correctness of their own solutions, while Sheese et al. [10] recognize that LLM's versatility allows students to get away with poorly articulated queries. Ma et al. [11] findings suggest that LLMs, while beneficial, can inadvertently lead students off-topic, detracting from the learning objectives. Sonkar et al. [14] and Mohapatra et al. [16] raise privacy concerns for corporate-owned models, especially regarding the use of student-tutor conversations as model training material. Sonkar et al. [14] even go as far as using an open-source model to address the privacy breaches posed by OpenAI's GPT series.

Lastly, Mohapatra et al. [16] and Nye et al. [15] highlight the potential environmental challenges that might arise due to LLM use, specifically pointing out the substantial carbon emissions from training and deploying these energy-intensive systems. The risks and limitations of LLMs can be associated with several causes. Firstly, the model training data is inherently biassed, which then propagates throughout the system. Furthermore, students might exert less effort in critical thinking when they can easily prompt LLMs for answers, as this requires less cognitive effort. The convincing tone of LLMs, reinforced by their design to be confident helpful assistants, can lead to misinformation among both students and teachers. The potential for distraction is partly caused by the lack of guardrail implementation, allowing the users to lead the model away from their given task.

2.2 State of the Art - Onboarding Materials

As of writing this report, there are 2 main dedicated D&D player onboarding options. These represent physical player kits [18], which contain materials for game sessions, and virtual table tops (VTTs) [19], which shift the game experience into the digital domain. These 2 main options are further complemented by community-made materials, which come in the form of online tutorials, guides or recorded gameplay sessions. Such materials do not provide any game materials but rather the information needed to start a campaign.

2.2.1 D&D Kits

Player kits are tangible sets designed to introduce new players to the game. These kits are priced between €20 - 100 and typically include items such as rulebooks, pre-made character sheets, dice, maps, and sometimes figurines. They provide a complete hands-on experience, allowing players to directly engage with the materials, which can help in understanding game mechanics and increasing the sense of immersion in the game world. However, these kits offer a limited amount of player customization, providing pre-made characters and limiting the game theme to a predefined one with some related quests. The costs associated with these kits could deter potential new players, who may be hesitant to allocate substantial resources to a game they are unsure about picking up. Additionally, the constrained customization options could negatively impact the engagement and connection between the players and the campaign. Some popular options include the D&D Starter Kit, D&D Essentials Kit and D&D Campaign Case, as shown below.

Figure 2.2.1.1: D&D Starter Kit [20]

Figure 2.2.1.1 showcases the most basic starter kit, which contains one set of dice, a 180-page rulebook, pregenerated character sheets and an accompanying adventure book. For a new player group looking to try an initial game session, these materials may already be overwhelming. The contents of this kit are meant to be experienced over several multiple-hour long game sessions, which might not entice a new player group looking to test the game over the course of a single play session.

2.2.2 Fully Virtual Tabletops

Conversely, VTTs are freemium or subscription-based software applications that simulate an online tabletop gaming environment. These types of platforms can be split into 2 categories: full VTTs and semi VTTs. Full VTTs provide digital tools and resources necessary for playing tabletop games online, including digital character sheets, maps that can be interacted with in real-time, and chat functions for communication among players. They enable players to play together regardless of location, offering flexibility and accessibility, automating some aspects of gameplay like rule enforcement and calculations. Roll20 [21], Fantasy Grounds [22], and Foundry VTT [23] are prominent examples of full VTTs. A major downside of such tools is that the whole game interaction is shifted to a digital environment, which can diminish the social interaction, with players missing out on tactile feedback, visual cues regarding game actions or subtle details like body language. Additionally, with rule-enforcement being offloaded to the system, players could become reliant on it and miss important learning moments. This might discourage online players from trying the physical game when presented with the opportunity, given a lack of understanding of how the game rules work.
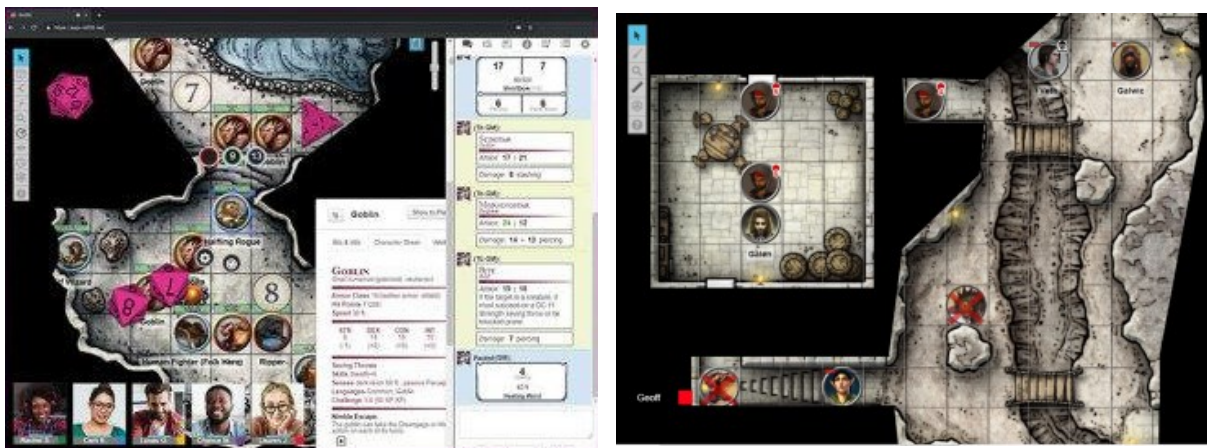
Figure 2.2.2.1: Roll20 VTT Interface

2.2.3 Semi Virtual Tabletops

On the other hand, Semi-VTTs offer digital tools and resources that support physical tabletop gameplay without fully simulating it. They provide digital character sheets, rulebooks, spell databases, and character creation tools but do not typically include features for map interaction or movement. These platforms are often used in conjunction with physical play, providing easy access to game resources, rule referencing, and character management. They focus more on individual player management rather than on providing a digital space for the entire game to unfold. A notable example of such a product is the D&D Beyond mobile application [24]. Similarly to full VTTs, a disadvantage of this type of system is that important game components such as dice rolling, spell or inventory management are offloaded to the app, which might make new players miss out on important learning concepts.
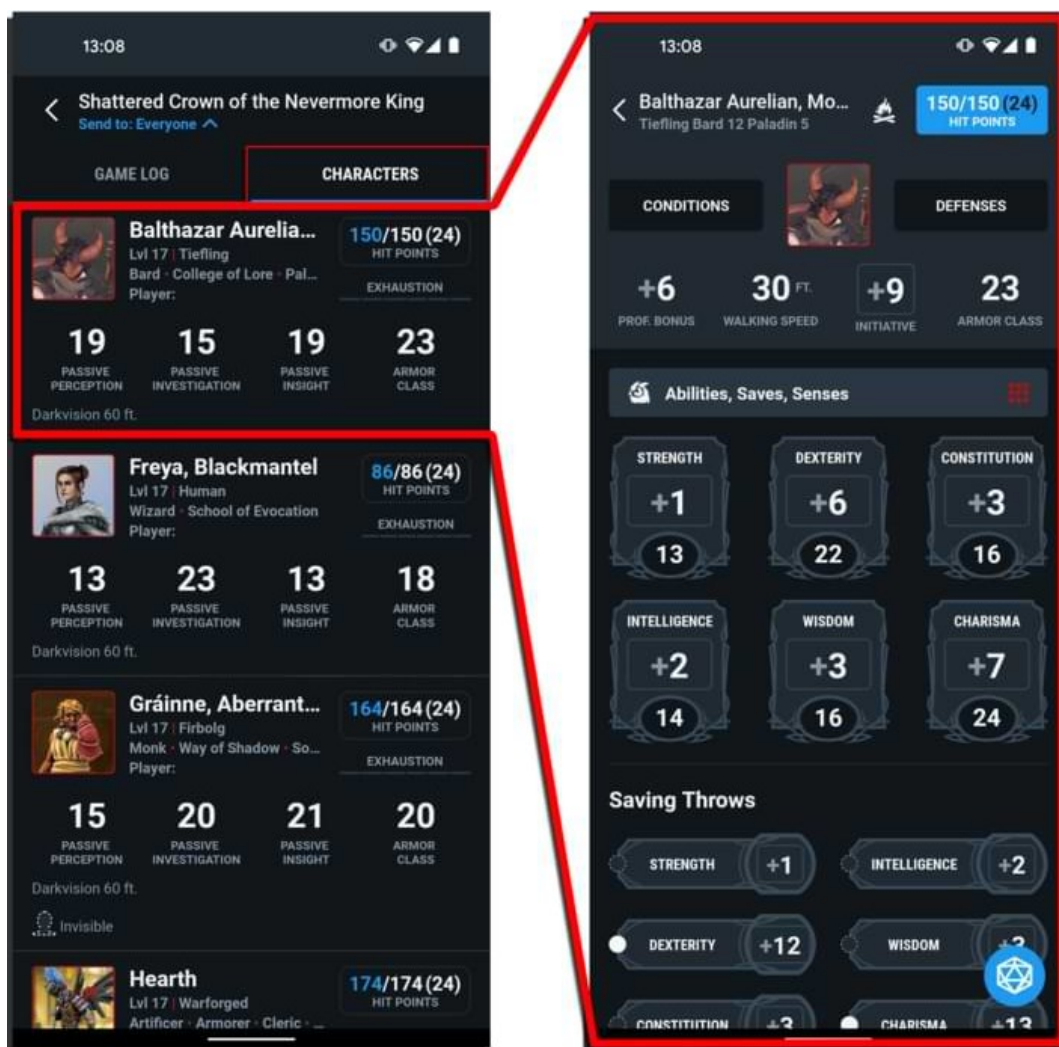
Figure 2.2.3.1: Character View in D&D Beyond Mobile App

2.2.4 Community-Made Materials

Lastly, community-made materials can further ease the onboarding experience through a variety of formats. Tutorial videos, such as the introductory series created by WASD20 [25], break down D&D rules, character creation and the basics of gameplay into a visual and auditory learning experience. For those who prefer reading, several online beginner guides can be found [26, 27, 28], which provide detailed, step-by-step instructions on game aspects, from selecting a class to mastering combat mechanics. Recorded play sessions, as the ones provided by the popular channel Critical Role [29], display experienced players navigating a campaign, offering insights into practical gameplay and narrative development. Additionally, the D&D community also contributes by creating novel "Homebrew" content, featuring new races, classes, spells, and game settings, encouraging player exploration beyond official materials.

Overall, community materials can be an easy and engaging way to gain new D&D information, but may not always be representative of average game sessions or aligned with new D&D player needs. As seen in Figure 2.2.4.1, the experienced group of Critical Role players have a wide range of game materials and equipment readily available, which might not be realistic to obtain for even seasoned D&D players. This might lead newcomers to overestimate the resources needed for a satisfactory starting experience, creating a higher perceived barrier of entry to the game. Additionally, the information provided by the various community sources is comprehensive across several categories, some of which may not always be relevant for an introductory session. Instead, these might be more useful for players that are familiar with the basics, and can build on previous knowledge and game experience.

Figure 2.2.4.1: Pre-recorded game sessions by Critical Role

2.3 State of the Art - D&D AI Content Generation

The D&D community has started to integrate AI into various aspects of the game and associated processes, with the main purposes of saving preparation time, increasing immersion and aiding the creative process for both players and dungeon masters (DM). The recognized use of generative models could be split into 2 main cases: text generation and image generation. Text generation is mostly used for creating the game environment, while image generation is used for creating immersive game materials. However, there are no AI-based generators specifically made for improving the onboarding process.

2.3.1 Text Generation

Text generation has been widely used by the D&D community for some time now, most commonly for tasks such as encounter generation, plot hook generation or loot generation. Similarly to their emerging use in educational settings, LLMs stand out as the most recent solution for custom text generation, being able to serve several purposes in the context of D&D content creation. Recently, LLMs have become most commonly been applied for narrative generation: creating coherent storylines, quests, plot hooks and other elements that DMs can integrate into their campaigns; this solution helps in keeping the game engaging for players with less effort required on the part of the DM. An example of such a product is AI Dungeon [30], a platform that generates an interactive and adaptive text-based adventure based on the user's input. Additionally, LLM-based tools can also generate detailed character profiles and non-player characters (NPCs), complete with backstories, motivations, and personality traits. This helps in populating the game world with interesting characters while reducing preparation time. LitRPG Adventures [31] offers such tools, making use of OpenAI's GPT series to provide various D&D content generators.

Figure 2.3.1.1: LitRPG Adventures content generator

2.3.2 Image Generation

As with text generation, dungeon generation emerged with the rise of personal computers, in the form of ASCII dungeons. Over the years, graphical improvements have made it possible to scale up the fidelity, resulting in more complex D&D content. Regarding AI image generation, a different generative model architecture stands out: the diffusion model. These models are particularly notable for their ability to generate highly detailed and realistic images, making them a popular choice among the D&D community. Diffusion-based systems like Dall-e 3 [32] and Stable Diffusion [33] are currently being used in D&D to create artwork and game maps, available online on platforms like Perchance [34]. These generated materials can be used to increase narrative cohesion and promote exploration within the game, while saving preparation time and reducing the costs of acquiring or creating such props in conventional ways.

Figure 2.3.2.1: AI-generated battle map [35]

Figure 2.3.2.2: AI-generated continent map [34]

However, it has been noticed that these models sometimes lack coherence, so getting a satisfactory output requires additional fine-tuning on the part of the user. An interesting opportunity is presented by the option of style transfer, which is a technique that involves applying the style of one image to the content of another with the use of diffusion models. This method could be used to increase the coherence of generated game maps by first creating the structure using traditional dungeon creation methods, and then applying generative models to make the map more aesthetically pleasing while retaining the same underlying structure. In theory, such a technique could even be applied over hand-drawn maps to create hyper-realistic materials, which could increase narrative cohesion with minimal added effort.
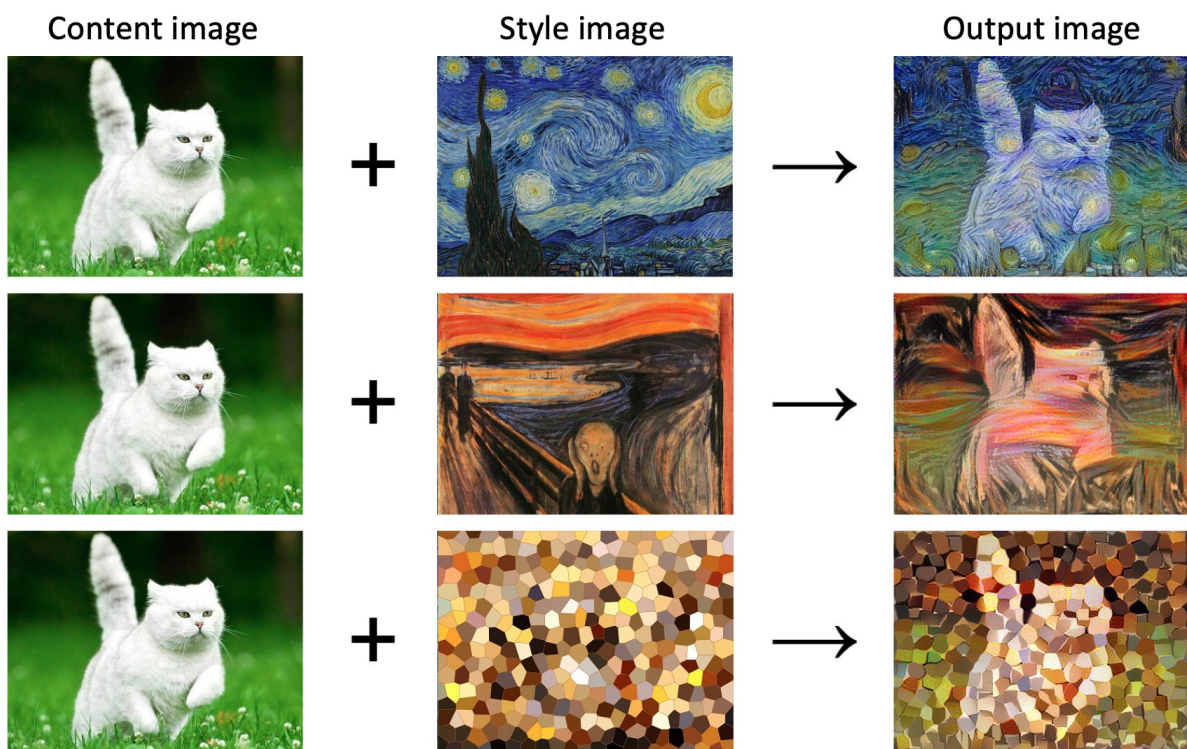
Figure 2.3.2.3: Style transfer example [36]

Additionally, diffusion-based models are also being used for character artwork creation. Players often have a detailed mental image of their characters, but lack the skills of translating this into a visual representation. With the help of image generation models, characters can be visually represented, based on textual descriptions from the player like physical attributes and attire. This can help players create a stronger connection with their own characters, which could in turn increase their dedication and commitment to the game. An example of a specialised D&D art generator is Hotpot [37], which makes use of a standard diffusion model with additional finetuning to achieve D&D specific styling.

Figure 2.3.2.4: AI-generated character artwork [38]

2.4 Discussion

For this project, the findings from the literature review help inform several design choices and provide a solid foundation for the system architecture. The apparent versatility of OpenAI's GPT models makes them a likely choice for the project, considering that the underlying model must be able to handle a wide range of requirements. Drawing from the identified pre-prompting techniques, we plan to devise a prompting strategy that combines the n-point checklist, strict (JSON) structure, and instructions about the system's general role to ensure the generation of creative, accurate and concise information. Given D&D's creative nature, the LLM-first approach seems most fitting, particularly for D&D novices in need of directional guidance due to their unfamiliarity with the game. This approach, where students begin problem solving by consulting with the LLM, could help reduce the perceived entry barriers to the game. Lastly, understanding the limitations and risks associated with generative AI technologies enables us to pre-emptively address them in the design process. For example, a content generation pipeline might be implemented to prevent the model from deviating from any given task, and an internal checklist may be used to verify the validity and appropriateness of generated answers before the final output.

Concerning the state of the art, it is clear that each existing onboarding method has its advantages and drawbacks. While D&D kits provide comprehensive material and a solid starting foundation, they might discourage potential players due to their cost, limited customizability or overabundance of materials potentially being too overwhelming. Virtual tabletops are less expensive alternatives that can help with remote play and automate aspects of the game, but might not be optimal for new players because offloading rule-enforcement to the system might detract from important learning moments. Lastly, community-made materials are a free and easy way to engage with new D&D concepts, but the theoretical information might not always be realistic or applicable in personal situations. With this in mind, our project will aim to combine advantages of the existing onboarding alternatives: providing supporting game materials and keeping players in a shared physical space while also offering some of the cost-effectiveness and customizability offered by VTTs.

Regarding D&D AI content generation, none of the existing solutions are specifically catered to new players. Considering the complexity of D&D, it is important that any generated game materials are explainable, and that the project considers the novice's perspective on the game.

Chapter 3 – Methods and Techniques

This chapter presents the methods and techniques applied in the development of this project. The main design principle used is the Creative Technology Design Process, a four-step process proposed by Mader and Eggink [39] to support the development of products or services that address a specific problem statement. In this chapter, the four development phases are described, which are then followed by an overview of the stakeholder identification process, requirement elicitation methods, ideation techniques and system architecture design.

3.1 Design Method

The Creative Technology Design Process (CreaTe) is based on two design frameworks: the Divergence and Convergence Model [40] and the Spiral Model [41]. The Divergence phase has the aim of defining the design space by exploration of possible solutions, while the Convergence phase narrows down the design space to focus on a single option based on certain design choices. The Spiral Model proposes an iterative design process, where previous phases of the design are returned to upon gathering new relevant information, for further refinement. The Creative Technology Design Process follows four steps: Ideation, Specification, Realisation and Evaluation. The goal of this process is to provide a structured way of designing a product or service, with well-defined feedback and reflection moments throughout development.
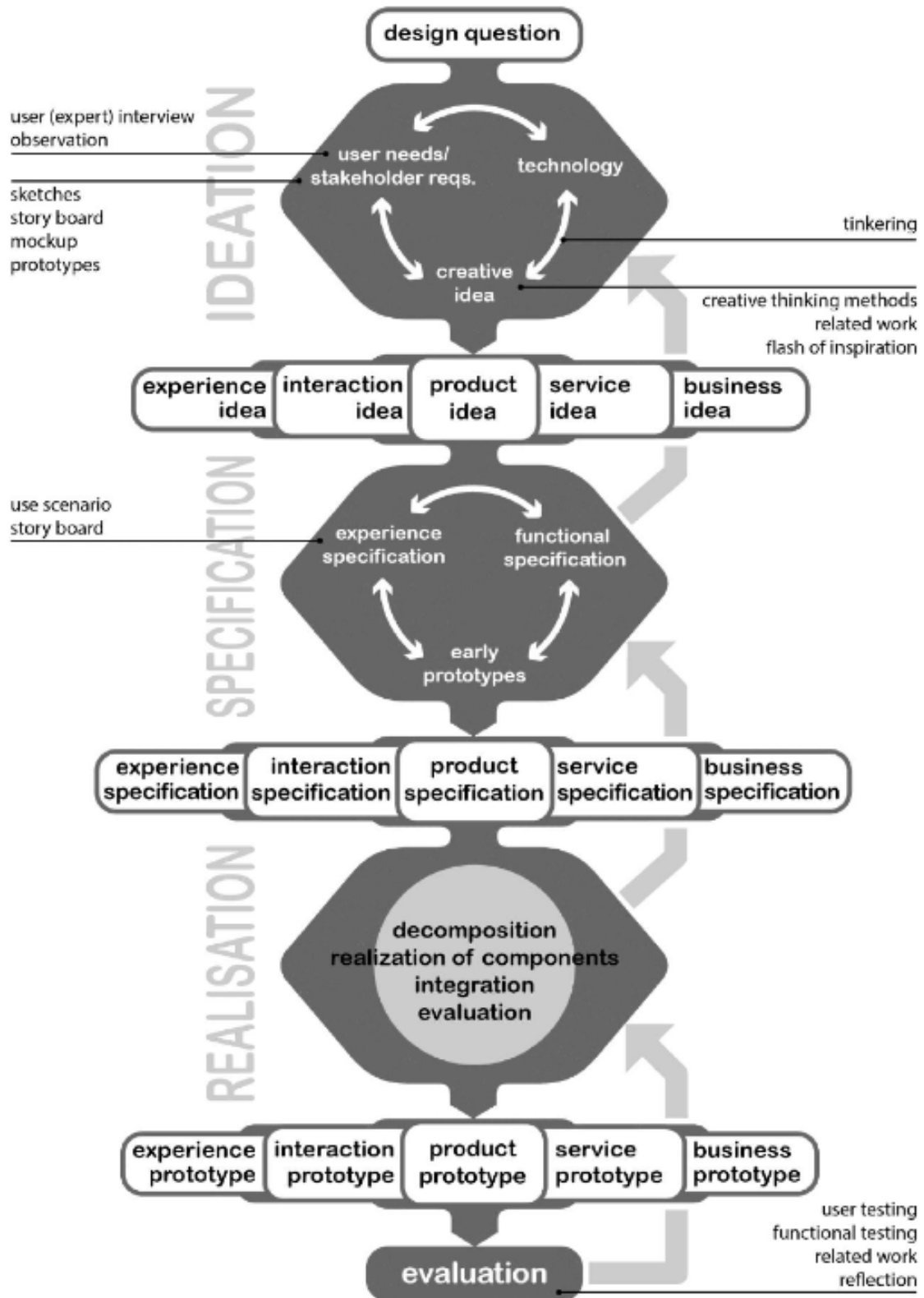
Figure 3.1.1: A Creative Technology Design Process [39]

3.1.1 Ideation Phase

This is the starting phase of the design process, and follows the statement of the design question. This phase has the goal of defining the problem, gathering relevant information and generating possible solutions. The research question is revisited and refined based on background research, brainstorming or other activities that can provide new insights. By researching and communicating with potential stakeholders, an initial set of functional and non-functional requirements are created. The completion of the ideation phase results in a list of explicit stakeholder needs and possible ways of addressing them.

3.1.2 Specification Phase

Following the Ideation phase, the Specification phase has the goal of defining the functionality of the product or service. Using the previously defined stakeholder needs and possible solutions, a clearly defined set of functional and non-functional requirements is created. The system is broken down into subsystems, with clear descriptions of individual functions. This facilitates evaluation of the functional requirements.

3.1.3 Realisation Phase

The third step in the design process is concerned with the implementation of the design. The subsystems are developed according to the requirements, and then implemented together to form a functional prototype. Based on new information, revisions can be made to the requirements, which may be reflected in different design choices compared to the initial concept.

3.1.4 Evaluation Phase

Lastly, the design process concludes with an evaluation of the designed product or service, tested with relevant stakeholders. The functionality of the prototype is evaluated, and the design question is answered. If the results are unsatisfactory, the prototype can be adjusted and re-evaluated, such that the formulated requirements are met.

3.2 Stakeholder Analysis

In order to address the needs and expectations of stakeholders involved in the project, a stakeholder analysis must be performed. This involves a systematic assessment of stakeholders' interests, their potential impact on the project, and establishing a hierarchy of priorities among them [42]. The analysis should consider key interests of each stakeholder, the level of impact they may have on the project, and their relative priority compared to other stakeholders.

Following the identification of major interests, assessing how the project would be impacted by meeting or not meeting these interests is an important consideration. This can be done with simple indicators for both the nature of the impact (positive, negative, or unknown) and the level of impact (high, medium, low, or uncertain). Given that not all interests can be addressed simultaneously or with equal resources, a prioritisation schema helps in allocating attention and resources where they are most needed. This involves weighing the significance of each stakeholder's impact on the project against the feasibility and importance of satisfying their interests.
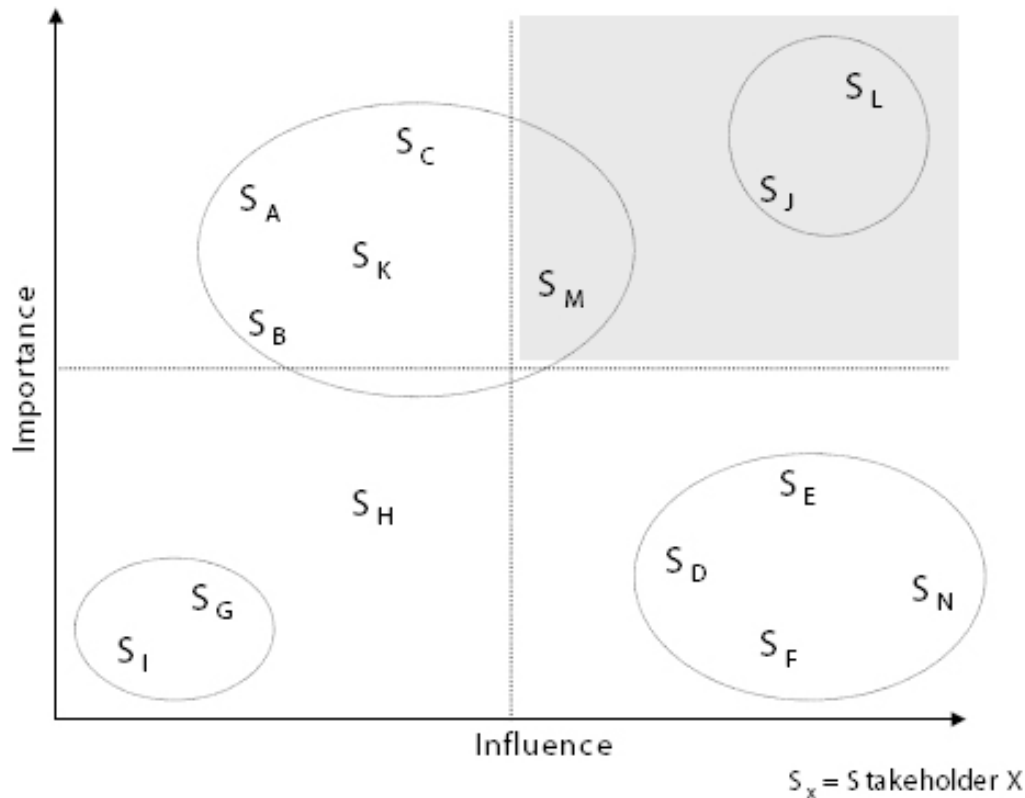
Figure 3.2: Example of Interest-Influence Classification [42]

3.3 Requirements Elicitation

For creating the functional and non-functional requirements, the perspectives of various stakeholders must be considered and taken into account. It is expected that each stakeholder will have different preferences and expectations, so they will need to be weighed based on their importance and relevance to the project. This subchapter describes the methods employed for generating project requirements.

3.3.1 Online Survey [Appendix 1]

This project is aimed at addressing an issue in the greater D&D community, and as such its members stand out as one of the primary stakeholders. In order to gain insights into their diverse perspectives, an online survey stands out as the most time and cost-effective method. The survey was posted on frequently-visited websites of D&D communities, and was available for completion for a period of 2 weeks. Following the data collection phase, the survey results were processed and interpreted, which served to further refine and redefine the project's aims based on community feedback. These results are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.3.2 MoSCoW Method

In product development, trade-offs between requirements must be made, as not all of them could be realistically met with the given resources. To achieve a functional product that satisfies the stakeholders and addresses the problem statement, requirements must be assessed and addressed based on their relevance to the final outcome. The MoSCoW method [43] is a categorisation technique that helps manage priorities of the requirements, and was chosen to rank requirements based on their priority level. MoSCoW consists of four types of requirement categories:

1. Must Have - the highest priority, these are the requirements which are guaranteed to be met by the developer.

2. Should Have - the second highest priority, these are the requirements that are important, but not vital to the project. If omitted, the final outcome would still be viable, but the intended experience would suffer.

3. Could Have - these are requirements that would be delivered in the best-case scenario. Time and focus would be spent on them after the first 2 categories have been fully met.

4. Won't Have - this is a set of requirements that will not be delivered as a part of the project. These requirements could be reserved for future developments, but do not fit the scope of the current project.

3.4 Concept Ideation

Employing a variety of concept generation methods is essential for generating a suite of relevant design concepts. While the design process will be partly influenced by the background research and insights from the community survey, ideation techniques must be applied to create novel and creative solutions to the problem statement. This subchapter describes the ideation techniques used in the design process of this project [44].

3.4.1 Rapid Ideation

This is a dynamic brainstorming method that leverages the constraints of time to enhance creativity and productivity. Rooted in the principle of Parkinson's Law [45], which states that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion," rapid ideation sets a deliberate time limit for generating ideas. By focusing on the rapid generation of ideas, they are less likely to divert off-topic, and the process helps maintain momentum throughout the brainstorming session. We implemented a 10-minute time period per category, which resulted in the ideation notes seen in Figures 3.4.1.1 and 3.4.1.2. The chosen brainstorming categories were based on the results of the online survey described in subchapter 3.3.1, which revealed the four main challenging areas for new D&D players: understanding the rules, character creation, role-playing in character and combat mechanics.
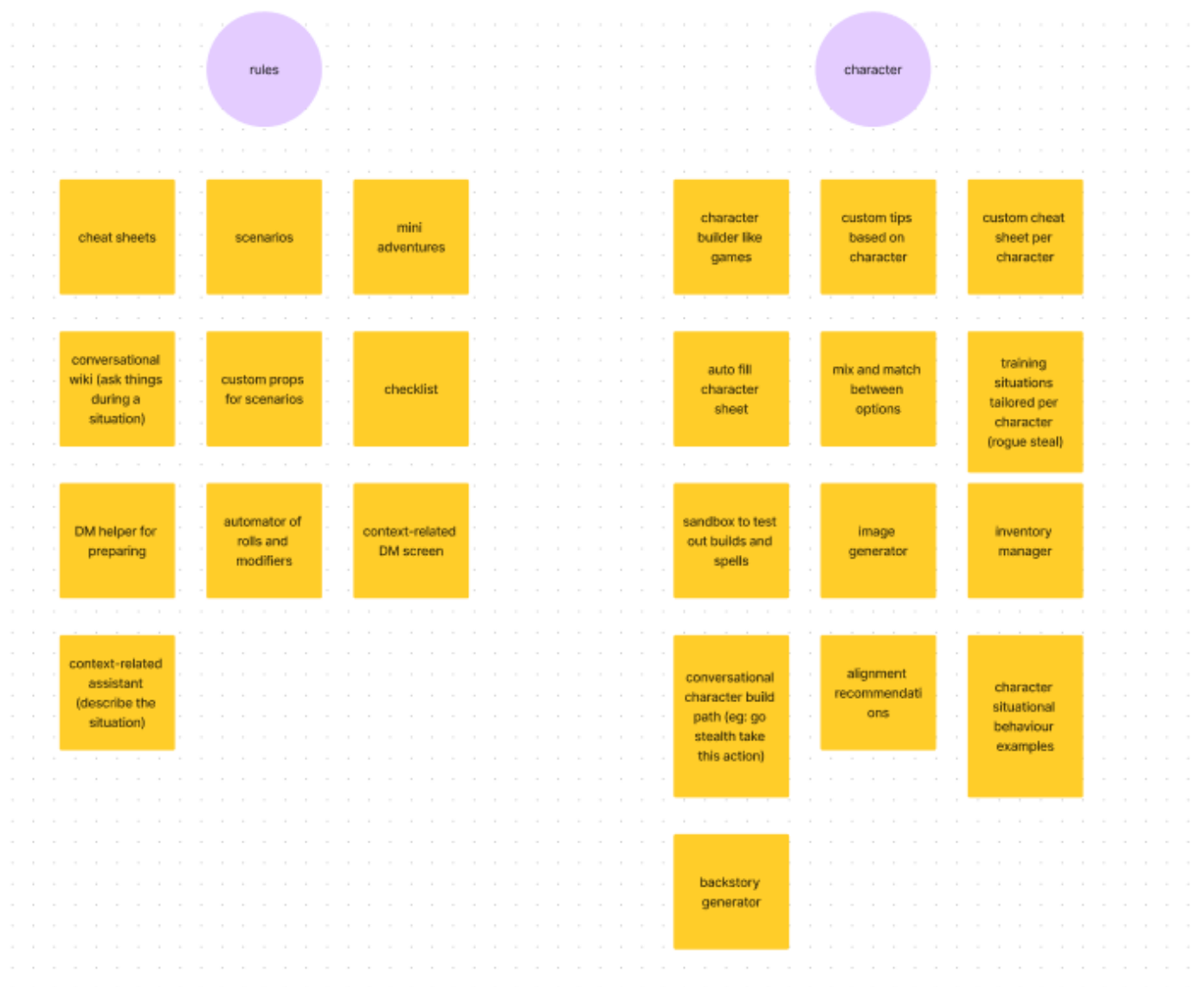
Figure 3.4.1.1: Rapid ideation notes regarding understanding the rules and character creation

Figure 3.4.1.2: Rapid ideation notes regarding role-playing in character and combat mechanics

3.4.2 Mind-mapping

Mind mapping is a visually-based brainstorming tool designed to capture the complexity and interconnectedness of ideas. The essence of mind mapping lies in its ability to organise thoughts in a non-linear fashion, making it a useful method for ensuring as many ideas are acknowledged and recorded. The process begins with a central topic, placed at the centre of the mind map. This central node serves as the anchor for all subsequent ideas, which are then added around it in a branching manner. This technique was used after the rapid ideation session, and served to combine generated ideas from all categories into concrete concepts.

Figure 3.4.2.1: Mind-mapping overview of preliminary concepts

Chapter 4 – Ideation

This chapter presents the first stage of the CreaTe Design Process: the Ideation phase. During this chapter, stakeholders affected by this project are identified and their needs or preferences are analysed. The chapter ends by eliciting an initial set of functional and non-functional requirements, followed by describing three preliminary project concepts that address the research question and consider the aforementioned requirements.

4.1 Stakeholder Analysis

Table 4.1 presents the identified stakeholders, along with relevant attributes concerning their involvement in the project.

Stakeholder	Description	Expectations	Power	Interest
Novice D&D players	Primary stakeholder, end-user of the product.	Less complicated way to start playing D&D	High	High
D&D game masters	Primary stakeholder, end-user of the product.	Reduced costs and preparation time	Medium	Medium-High
University of Twente	Tertiary stakeholder, client, advisor	Functional proof-of-concept	Low	Low

Table 4.1: Stakeholder Attribute Table

The stakeholders of this project are composed of the general D&D player base and the University of Twente. The general D&D player base represents the primary stakeholder of this project, as it comprises the group of end-users that experience the problem that the project intends to address. This group is split into two distinct categories: novice players and game masters; these 2 groups, although both considered as primary stakeholders, have different levels of power and interest in the product. Novice players are expected to require more guidance and specific knowledge, while game masters occupy a role which allows for a more open interpretation of game materials and places an emphasis on improvisation. As such, the novice players have a higher power and interest in regards to the project, with game masters having more creative freedom, and as such less power and interest in the project.

The University of Twente can be considered as a tertiary stakeholder, with their interest being solely of receiving a functional proof-of-concept and associated documentation as an outcome of this project.

Figure 4.1.1: Stakeholder Interest-Influence Chart

4.2 Stakeholder Needs

To define the primary and secondary stakeholder needs and expectations, different methods were used depending on the context and participant availability.

4.2.1 D&D Player Base

For getting insights into the wants and needs of the end-users of the system, an online community survey was conducted in prominent D&D forums, with n = 252 participants. This method was chosen instead of exploratory interviews because a larger sample size would be more representative of the general player experience, which would be more useful in creating a realistic list of requirements and involving end-users in the design process of the project. Additionally, this method allowed users to complete the survey asynchronously over a period of 2 weeks, which removed any time pressure for the participants and allowed responses from all over the world independently of time zone. The survey contained several multiple choice and open-ended questions regarding various aspects of the game, such as the most challenging areas, advantages and disadvantages of existing learning materials and the viability of a generative AI-based learning tool in the context of D&D.
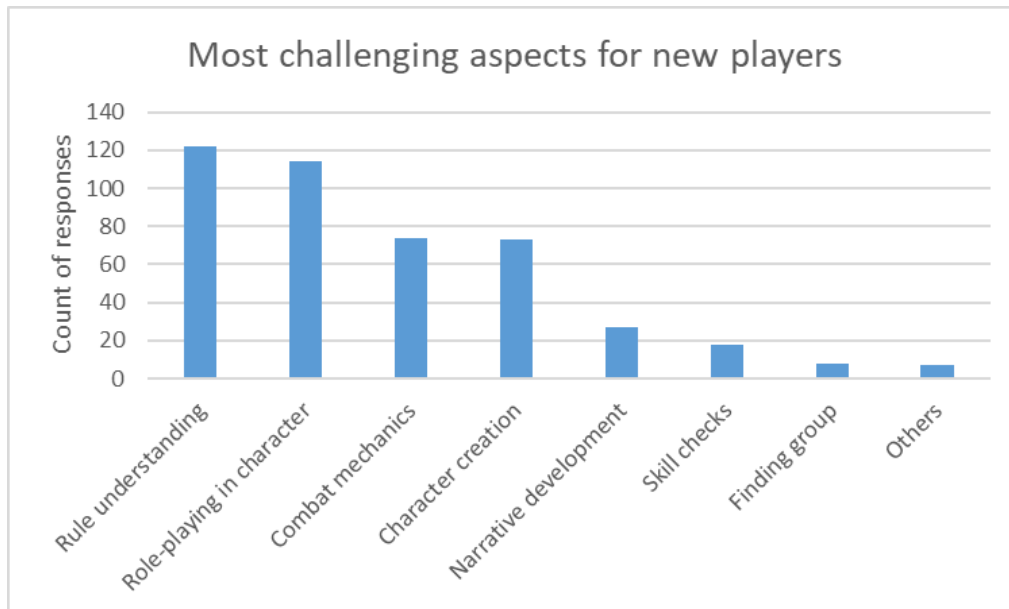
Figure 4.2.1.1: Survey results, most challenging game aspects for new D&D players

Regarding the most challenging game aspects and solutions, respondents could provide suggestions on what helped them or what they consider would help new players. These findings helped guide the project towards concrete game aspects that could be addressed to ease the onboarding experience. Grouped by the four most common challenging aspects, as seen in Figure 4.2.1.1, some commonly encountered solutions for each category were:

1. Understanding the rules
    a. Cheat sheets
    b. Common pitfalls explained
    c. Reference guide on generic terms

2. Role-playing in character
    a. Guide that references character archetype in different situations
    b. Exploration options
    c. Downtime mechanics

3. Character creation
    a. Archetypes
    b. Synergistic builds
    c. Overview of spells, actions and recommendations
    d. Connection between classes and builds

4. Combat mechanics
    a. Cheat sheets
    b. Game flow guidelines
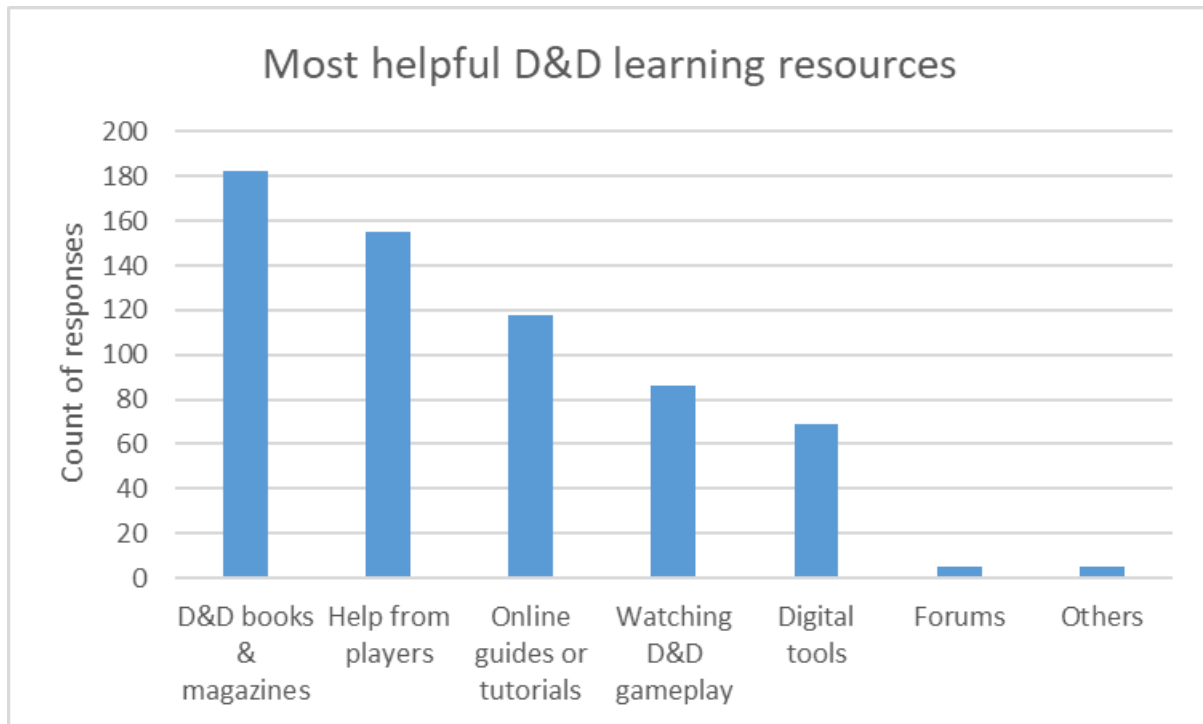
Figure 4.2.1.2: Survey results, most helpful learning resources for D&D players

Considering existing learning resources, responses showed that the three most helpful resources, shown in Figure 4.2.1.2, and their associated reasons were:

1. D&D books and magazines
    a. Good overview and structure
    b. Can improve understanding outside of game sessions
    c. Explained nuance and variations
    d. Comprehensive examples

2. Learning from other players
    a. Easy to get questions answered and get advice
    b. Entertaining
    c. Learning during situations
    d. Difficult concepts can be explained in specific situations

3. Online guides and tutorials
    a. Nice presentation of information
    b. Diversity of available resources and range of situations
    c. Can provide inspiration for own use
    d. In-depth focus on single elements
    e. Practical solutions for common problems
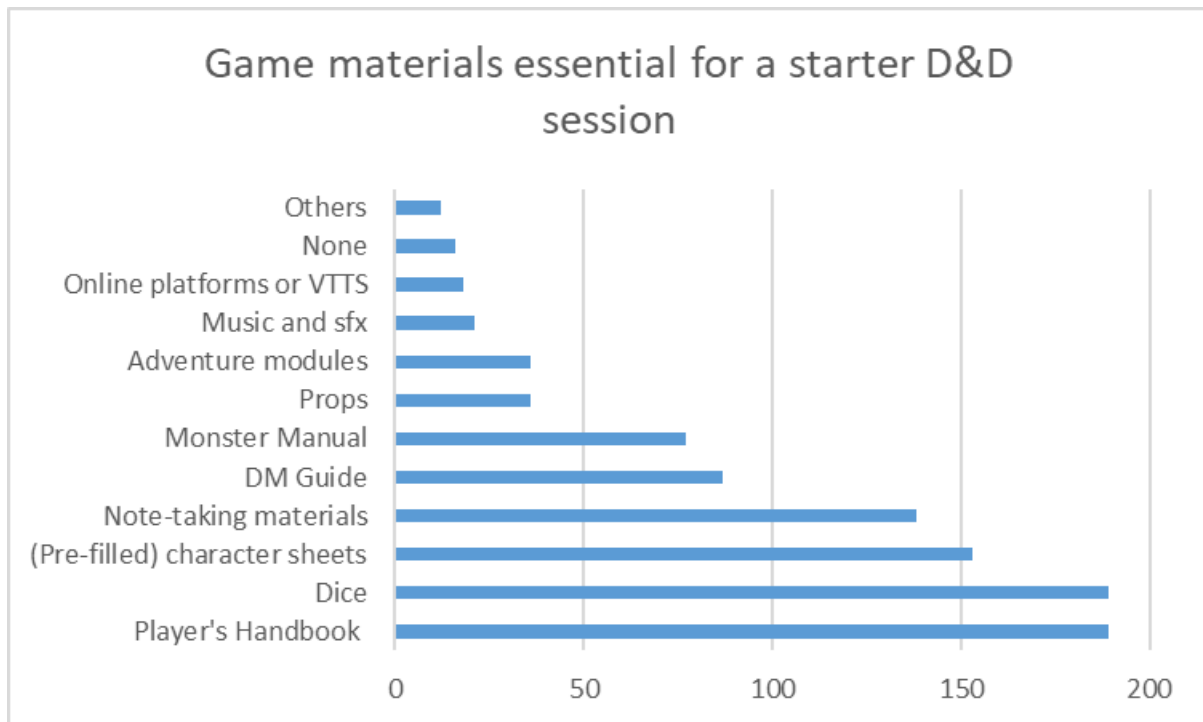
Figure 4.2.1.3: Survey results, essential game materials for a starting session

Displayed in Figure 4.2.1.3, community members expressed their preference regarding essential starting material for new players, outlining a clear preference for physical material over digital tools. The most popular answers were:

1. Handbooks and manuals
2. Dice
3. (Pre-filled) character sheets
4. Note-taking materials

Among the open–ended suggestions for improving the onboarding process, a few results were recurrent among responses:

1. Focus on session zero
2. Visual aids
3. Gradual exposure to mechanics in appropriate situations
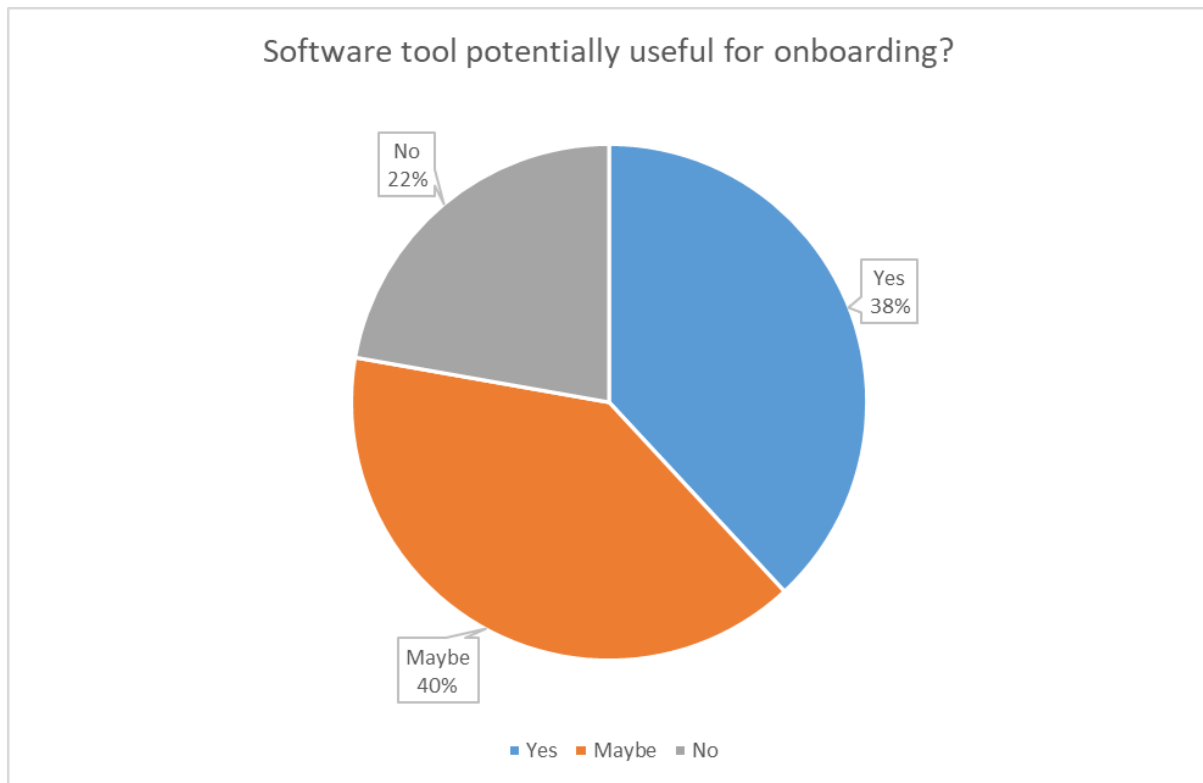
Figure 4.2.1.4: Survey results, viability of using a software product in the onboarding process

Regarding the viability of a software product for aiding the onboarding process, results were mixed among participants. 38% of the respondents mentioned that a dedicated digital onboarding tool could have varying degrees of success, while 22% of respondents argued that such a tool would ultimately detract from the learning experience. Some of the main arguments for and against digital onboarding tools are:

Pro:
- Simplified learning process
- Useful for getting over initial barriers
- Faster preparation time
- Easy reference across materials
- Reminding of information and modifiers

Con:
- Less immersion than playing with paper and pencil
- Could detract from problem solving
- Can limit players' imagination
- Could slow down the onboarding process instead of speeding up
- Might lead to overreliance and forgetting rules

An emergent idea across responses addressed the potential of such an onboarding tool in the early stages of a campaign, when players are still learning concepts and the tool does not distract from any game processes because they are not well-established among the players.

Respondents argue that as the game progresses and mechanics are learned, the tool decreases in value, and its value would lie primarily in the starting phases of games. Therefore, and with consideration to the other survey findings, the following list of community requirements was created:

Priority	Requirement
Must	The project must tackle one or more of the 4 most challenging game aspects: rules, character creation, role-playing or combat mechanics.
Must	The project must not be slower than existing onboarding processes.
Should	The project output should result in printable, physical materials that can be used during game sessions.
Should	The project should not detract from the learning experience by automating important game concepts.
Should	The project should contain specific and structured supporting material, such as cheat sheets.
Could	The project could focus on supporting the starting phases of a game/campaign, with less focus on later stages.

Table 4.2.1: D&D Community-based requirements

4.2.2 University of Twente

For addressing the needs and expectations of the University of Twente, semi-structured interviews were used because of the small number of participants and the relatively informal nature of the meetings. This method allowed for a collaborative development of targets and expectations specific to this project, with elements of brain-storming also serving to collaboratively create the list of requirements.

Priority	Requirement
Must	The project must address the TTRPG game genre.
Must	The project must make use of some form of algorithm or AI.
Should	The project output should offer open-ended narrative options, such that some elements can be filled in by the users.
Could	The project could include additional elements associated with combat mechanics, such as battle maps or dungeons.

Table 4.2.2: University of Twente Requirements

4.3 Preliminary Concepts

Based on the information gathered from the interview and survey results, three concepts were created for improving the D&D onboarding experience, using the methodology outlined in Chapter 3.

4.3.1 Session Zero Helper

The session zero represents a preparation session before the first gameplay session, where expectations and specific game aspects, such as game setting or focus, are discussed among players. This is often an overlooked phase by new players, who may feel compelled to jump straight into gameplay due to excitement or lack of information. Among the survey responses, several said this phase could bring many benefits to new players, if properly tackled.

Figure 4.3.1.1: Mind mapping of session zero helper concept

This concept comprises a software tool that a player group can use together to collaboratively develop a desirable campaign that they would like to participate in, while also going through a series of good practice checklists that ensure consistency and agreement between players. For example, items such as main story themes, starting level and story progression methods could be discussed in a collaborative fashion with the system, such that details can be adjusted based on user preferences and new insights. The purpose of this tool would be to specifically help with establishing the game setting (e.g. high fantasy, steampunk, cyberpunk), aiding with character creation with input from the players and preparing relevant game materials in the selected setting (maps, character sheets, cheat sheets). The content generation pipeline is showcased in Figure 4.3.1.2 below.
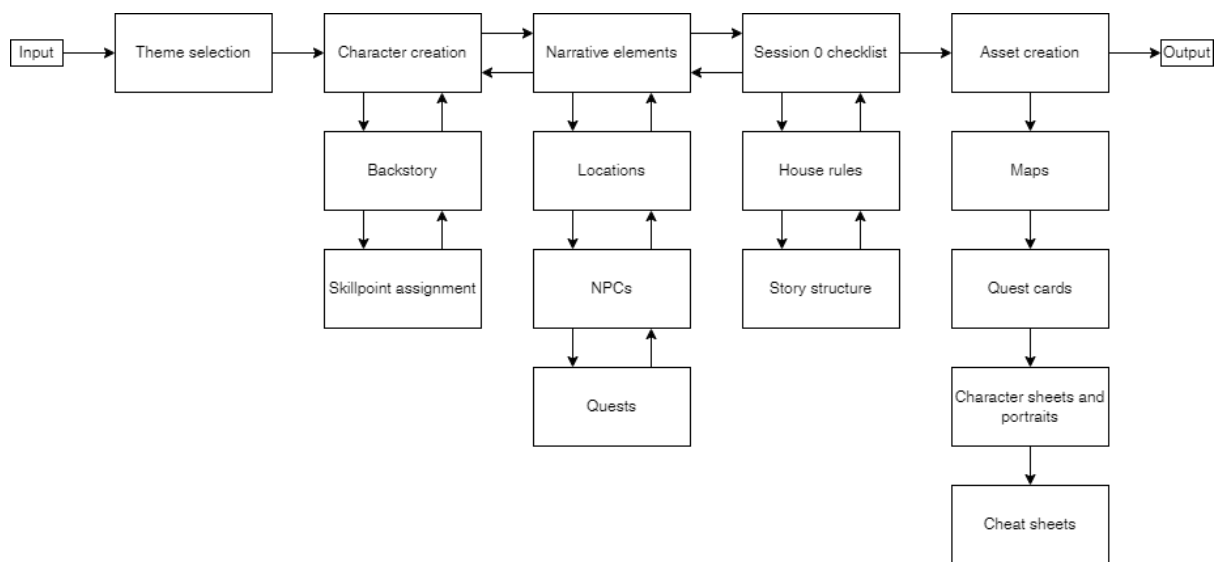
Figure 4.3.1.2: Session Zero Helper Pipeline

The main challenge areas addressed by this concept are character creation and rule understanding; players would be able to have more input compared to pre-made character sheets and campaign materials, while being helped to understand how their choices will impact their gameplay and provided with customised advice based on their decisions.

4.3.2 Micro Adventure Generator

D&D is based on three core pillars: exploration, socialising, combat. Across players, there are varying levels of proficiency and interest within each category, depending on their previous life or gaming experience. The survey results confirm this idea, with two of the most challenging aspects being considered combat mechanics and role-playing, which would fall under the combat and socialising pillars. As such, it would make sense to be able to practise these categories independently, focusing on relevant learning aspects per category.

Figure 4.3.2.1: Mind mapping of micro adventure generator concept

The Micro Adventure Generator concept represents a software tool where a player group can select one of the core mechanics (exploration, socialising, combat), and add additional details to create a custom 1-session adventure that focuses on elements that players want to learn or practice. Similar to the Session Zero Helper, players would be able to customise aspects of the campaign, such as the game setting or character creation, and would receive a set of appropriate game materials as output. On top of this, the scenarios created would be tailored to the characters in the party, such that each player would get time in the spotlight to develop class-specific skills for each pillar. For example, if the party contains a character of the Rogue class, which is a sneaky and nimble type of character, the micro adventure would include a scenario where the player would be guided to use stealth to accomplish certain goals.

More generally, the scenarios could take the form of pre-generated narrative-based quests in which verbal communication is key for achieving the mission goals (social pillar), pre-generated dungeons that rely on exploration for escaping (exploration) or pre-generated encounters where brute force is needed to rescue an imprisoned character (combat).
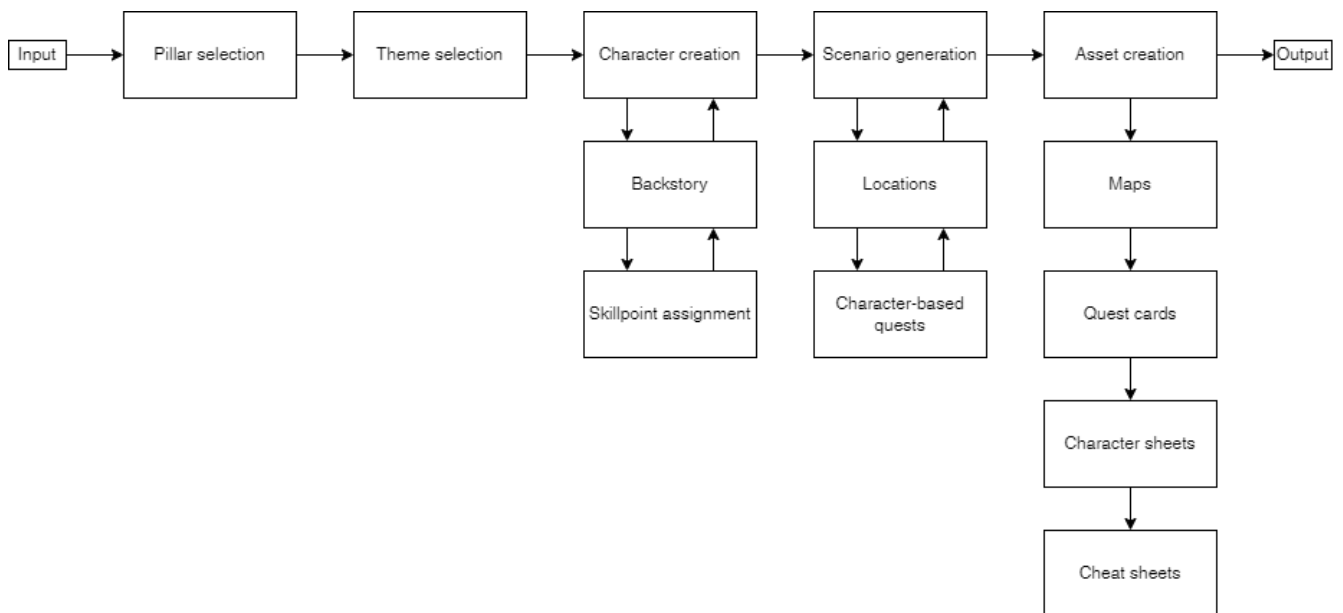
Figure 4.3.2.2: Micro Adventure Generator Pipeline

Similarly to the previous concept, the main areas addressed by this concept are also character creation and rule understanding. However, the differences between this concept and the previous Session Zero helper lie in the specificity of the output; the Session Zero Helper focuses on general campaign creation, while the Micro Adventure Generator focuses specifically on creating 1-session campaigns for practising certain skills and classes.

4.3.3 Collaborative Worldbuilder

An important part of game cohesion and role-play potential is supported by the world in which the campaign is set in. World-building is often a complicated and time-consuming process, in which the dungeon master (DM) iteratively develops world elements based on player input and personal inspiration. This area is addressed by existing onboarding solutions by offering pre-made world elements that players can integrate into their stories, but these often lack customizability and flexibility.

Figure 4.3.3.1: Mind mapping of collaborative worldbuilder concept

The Collaborative Worldbuilder concept represents a software tool which novice DMs can use to ease and speed up the worldbuilding process. This would be accomplished by following a clearly defined framework in which generative AI is used in the various worldbuilding stages to collaboratively generate and refine lore elements. The generated material could range from narrative material like plot hooks, character backstories or important game locations, to physical materials like continent maps, battle maps or dungeons. The technique of style transfer, as described in Chapter 2.3.2, could be possibly applied to enhance the appearance of the generated material, while maintaining coherence and the initial style format. For example, this technique could be applied to a rough dungeon layout paper sketch, turning it into a battle map populated with relevant objects and with an appearance fitting the selected game setting.
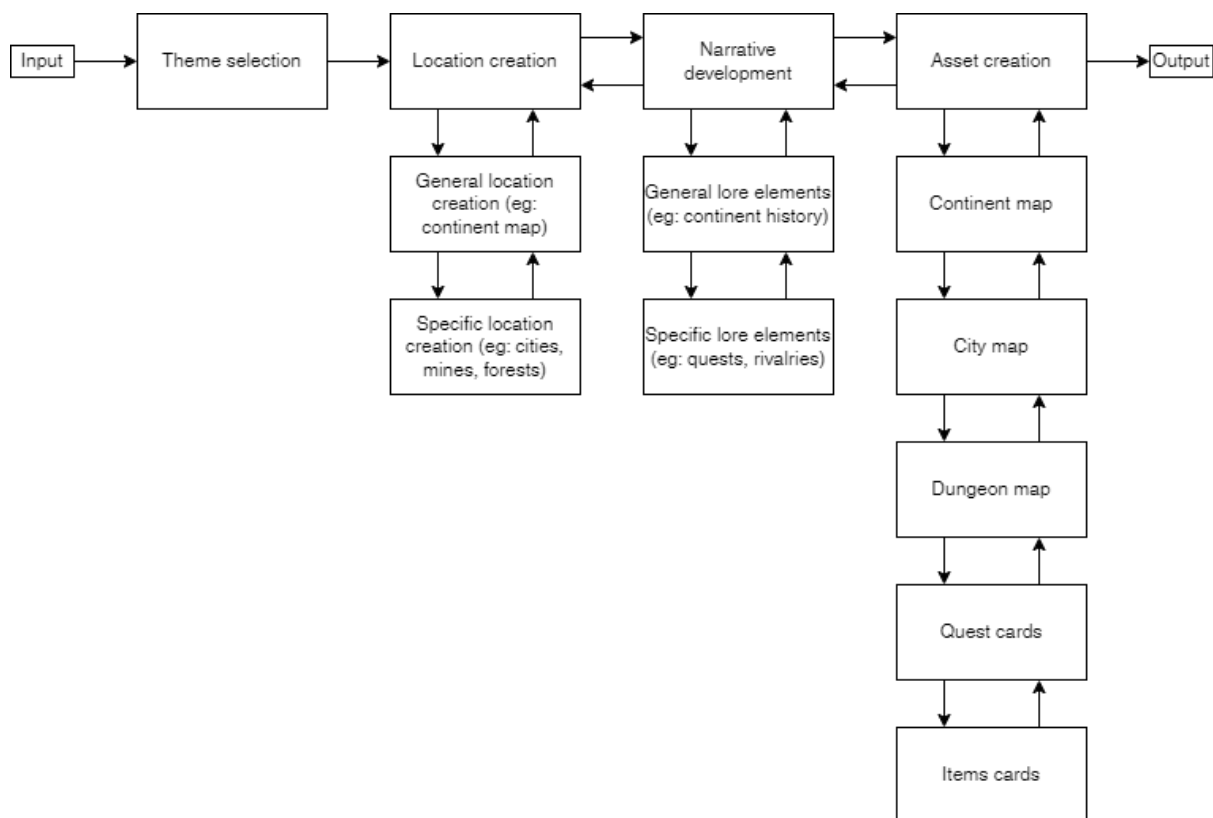
Figure 4.3.3: Collaborative Worldbuilder Pipeline

The main challenge addressed by this concept is role-play; by streamlining the development of worldbuilding and allowing more creative input from the side of the DM and players, this concept aims at creating game worlds the players are more familiar with and comfortable to role-play in.

Chapter 5 – Specification

This chapter describes the second stage of the CreaTe Design Process, the Specification phase. In this chapter, one of the previously mentioned concepts, the Micro Adventure Generator, is further developed. This concept has been chosen due to personal preference, and a high estimated viability of meeting the elicited stakeholder needs. Most significantly, this concept involves the least time spent in front of a computer, allowing players to get started playing with the least amount of interaction or friction. The final list of functional and non-functional requirements of the system is formulated, which serve to guide the implementation phase. The chapter concludes by presenting the system architecture on two levels of abstraction, starting with a general system overview and ending with a description of the system modules based on the formulated requirements.

5.1 Formulation of Requirements

Based on the information gathered in the previous chapters, such as background literature, state-of-the-art solutions, stakeholder needs, along with other contextual like time and monetary constraints, a list of system goals can be formulated. These system goals can then be translated into specific functional and non-functional requirements.

5.1.1 System Goals

Goal
Lower the entry barriers to Dungeons and Dragons.
Provide appropriate supporting materials for novice players.
Provide tailored learning opportunities and do not automate important game concepts.

Table 5.1.1: System goals

5.1.2 Non-functional Requirements

Based on the system goals, the following non-functional requirements were generated:

Priority	Requirement
Must	The total system cost must not exceed €60.
Must	The system must not be slower or more expensive than existing onboarding processes.
Should	The system should not detract from the learning experience by automating important game concepts.
Should	The system should generate materials that can be easily understood and are legible for all types of players.

Could	The system could include a user interface that is easy to use for people with no prior TTRPG experience.
Could	The system output material could be stylized in an appropriate theme with D&D.
Could	The system could implement a modular design, such that players can decide what system subcomponents they wish to use.

Table 5.1.2: Non-functional system requirements

5.1.3 Functional Requirements

Based on the system goals, the following functional requirements were generated:

Priority	**Requirement**
Must	The system must make use of some form of algorithm or AI.
Must	The system must tackle one or more of the 4 most challenging game aspects: rules, character creation, role-playing or combat mechanics.
Must	The system output must result in coherent and consistent materials fitting with the theme of D&D.
Must	The player group must be able to have some degree of input that directly influences the system's output.
Must	The system output must result in information that can be used for printable materials during game sessions.
Should	The system should contain specific and structured supporting material for each player, such as cheat sheets.
Should	The system output should offer tailored, open-ended narrative options, such that elements can still be filled in by the users.
Could	The system could focus on supporting the starting phases of a game/campaign, with less focus on later stages.
Could	The system output could result in ready-to-use physical materials that can be used during game sessions.
Could	The system could generate auxiliary elements associated with combat mechanics, such as battle maps or dungeons.
Won't	The system won't allow the player group to make intermediary changes after having input the starting variables.

Table 5.1.3: Functional system requirements

5.2 System Architecture

This section presents the architecture of the system on two levels of abstraction. Firstly, a system overview is provided, followed by an overview of the system modules and their functions.

5.2.1 Level 1: System Overview

As shown in Figure 5.2.1.1 below, on the highest level of abstraction, the system has both input and output functionality. The system takes in the player group's preferences as a single input source, and produces a set of game materials as output. In this concept, users cannot modify any of the parameters once the preferences are set; this system acts as a content generation pipeline, where the input values are sequentially passed and developed upon, concluding with the system output.
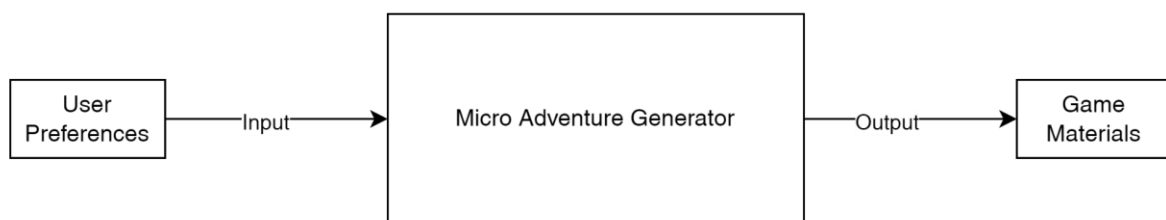
Figure 5.2.1.1: MAG System Overview

5.2.2 Level 2: System Modules

Continuing with the system decomposition, the system can be further divided into separate modules, each with its own purpose. As can be seen in Figure 5.2.2.1, the system has three main modules, which are implemented sequentially: character generation, campaign generation, and material preparation.
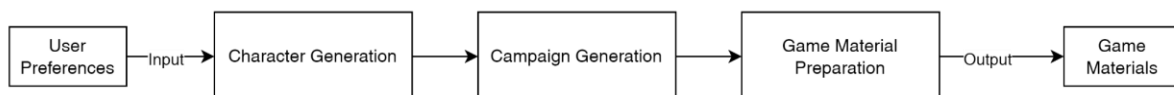
Figure 5.2.2.1: MAG Module Overview

These first two of the system modules are based on what most consider the foundation of a D&D game: the story, and its characters. Considering the system's requirement of creating tailored scenarios based on user input, the decision was made to first generate the player

characters, and then the campaign. This allows for a smoother integration of the characters' attributes into the main storyline, instead of having to construct the characters to fit the story. This also aligns with the requirement of allowing users to input personal preferences in regards to their own character, and those preferences having a noticeable effect on the output.

Lastly, the game material preparation module serves as a final layer that compiles and structures both generated and other external materials into an appropriate format for novice players. This layer was created as a result of the functional requirement of creating specific and structured materials for novices, meaning that additional resources need to be allocated for the presentation and nature of the output information.

A sequential implementation of these modules has been chosen based on the functional requirements of not allowing players to make intermediary changes and of generating coherent and consistent D&D-specific materials. This approach was chosen because of an important consideration: novice players may be overwhelmed by the availability of starting options, or may become distracted if the process of game creation becomes iterative. By implementing a content generation pipeline, the users are given clear boundaries, which ultimately serves to streamline the creation process and gets the players to the game table in a shorter period of time. The additional benefit of implementing a pipeline approach is that, due to the highly structured nature of intermediary processes, a higher level of narrative cohesion could be achieved.

Chapter 6 – Realisation

This chapter presents the third stage of the CreaTe Design Process, the Realisation phase. A general system overview of the functional prototype is provided in subchapter 6.1, followed by the explanation of each system module in detail, in subchapters 6.2 - 6.4. A sample of generated materials can be found in Appendix 2.

6.1 System Overview

The final system comprises a content generation pipeline, which is a structured, sequential process designed to streamline the creation of D&D game content. This pipeline focuses on generating contextually appropriate game materials to enhance the D&D onboarding experience. The generation process involves three main steps: taking in user inputs, intermediary processing and generation, and finalising with the output of custom game materials. These steps are detailed in subchapters 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4, which you may skip if desired.

The system is designed to be used as follows: the Dungeon Master (DM) discusses preferences regarding characters and the campaign (concept, theme, focus) with their player group. The DM then inputs these variables into the system to generate a campaign. The system takes the input and generates the necessary materials for a one-shot D&D campaign, a process that takes approximately 20 minutes and requires no additional input from the DM. The DM then receives the generated materials, which they distribute to the players for pre-game preparation. Printing the materials is recommended for improved access during the game, limiting the need for electronic devices. It is recommended that the players read the generated materials prior to the game session, as being unfamiliar with their characters or the campaign could extend the one-shot beyond the planned duration.

The design process began with the separate implementation and testing of each module subcomponent, culminating in the integration of these modules into the content generation pipeline. The planning and implementation schedule was as follows:

Week	Task
1	Design of program structure
2 & 3	Implementation of character generation
4 & 5	Implementation of campaign generation
6	Implementation of content generation pipeline & material preparation
7	Testing and bug fixing

Table 6.1.1: System implementation schedule

By implementing and testing components separately, testing time and costs were minimised. Each subcomponent was developed until the output met quality standards. Once this standard was achieved, generated values were stored for testing further components without regenerating previous ones. For instance, if character backstories were satisfactory, they were saved as text files for use in testing other components.

6.1.1 Implementation

The system was implemented using Python and runs locally, making use of OpenAI API calls to the GPT-4-turbo-2024-04-09 model. It consists of 1461 lines of code and 1620 lines of text used for prompts, which are stored in a separate file for ease of manipulation and iteration. The system is terminal-based with no graphical interface, as the scope of the project required only simple inputs from a single user.

The system's class diagram, as shown in Figure 6.1.1.1, includes the following components:
- Main: Entry point of the system, initialising the main components like the player characters and the campaign.
- Character: Handles functionalities related to creating and managing a game character, including generating attributes and saving data.
- Campaign: Manages the campaign's narrative and settings, utilising the World and Act classes to construct a coherent campaign structure.
- World: Creates the campaign setting, including geographical features, NPCs, and general story elements.
- Act (1, 2, 3): Develops segments of the campaign, detailing specific challenges, character interactions and story progression elements.

Data flows from the Main class to the Campaign, which passes necessary settings and character influences to the World and Acts. The Acts ensure continuity by passing storyline details from one to the next.
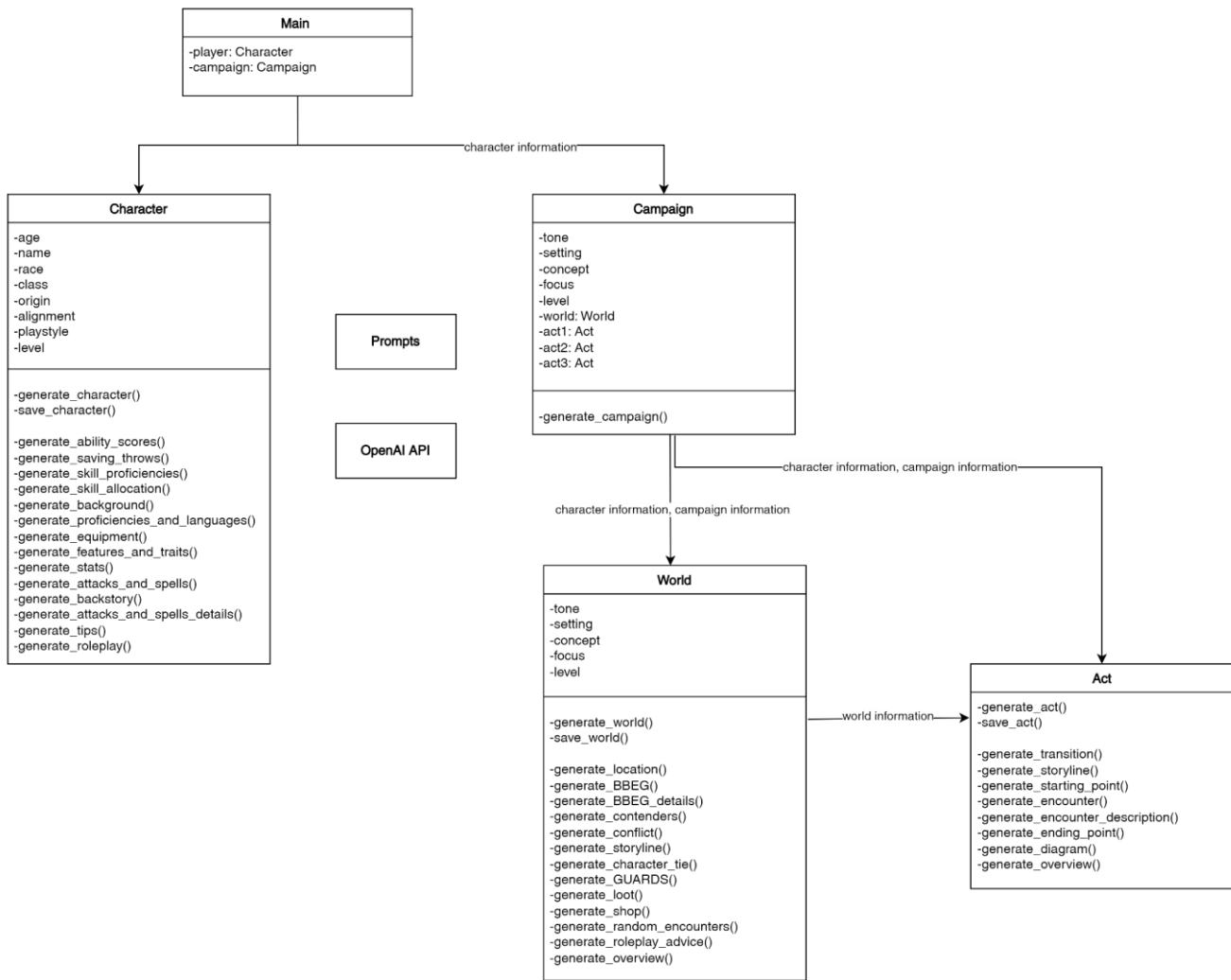
Figure 6.1.1.1: System class diagram

6.1.2 System Trade-offs

The system faces trade-offs between speed, content accuracy, and generation costs. Large Language Models (LLMs) benefit significantly from additional contextual information when generating content. For instance, providing the LLM with detailed information about specific game locations or character backstories can result in more coherent and contextually appropriate content. However, this comes at the expense of increased generation time and costs. The extra information included in the prompts adds token value and requires more processing time.

Commercial LLMs operate on a fixed price per processing and generation of tokens, with a token being roughly 0.75 words. For the model used in this project, gpt-4-turbo-2024-04-09, the costs are $0.01 per 1000 input tokens (prompts) and $0.03 per 1000 output tokens (generated content). During the development of this project, a more advanced and cost-

effective model, gpt-4o, was released by OpenAI. However, this model yielded worse results for certain tasks, leading to a reversion to the original model.

The campaign generation time and costs vary depending on the number of players and the campaign's theme. It has been observed that for some prompts, the outputs are more comprehensive and specific, while for others, they are vaguer and more concise. This variation is likely due to the nature of the input variables provided by the players. Commonly encountered themes, such as "adventure in a dungeon," result in more detailed material, whereas more specific and less common themes, like "adventure in space," might lead to more vague outputs due to limited training data on that topic.
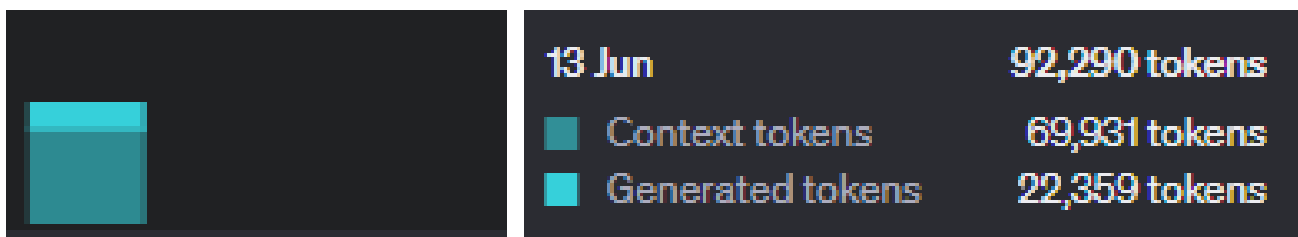
Figure 6.1.2.1: Tokens details for the generation of a one-shot campaign

As can be seen in Figure 6.1.2.1 above, the campaign generation for a user test session with four players and one dungeon master consisted of ~ 90000 tokens, which cost $1.37 and took about 20 minutes to generate. In this instance, only 24% of the total system tokens were counted towards generation, with 76% serving as internal input via prompts. This highlights the significant amount of contextual information reinforcement needed to maintain coherence. While the system could be optimised to reduce redundant input tokens, we believe that the majority of tokens would still likely be in the input prompts rather than the generated content.

A few other parameters, such as temperature and token limit, need to be specified via the API call. Temperature controls the "creativity" or randomness of the generated text, with higher values (e.g., 0.7) resulting in more diverse output and lower values (e.g., 0.2) yielding more deterministic results [46]. For this project, a middle-ground temperature of 0.5 was chosen to balance creativity and factual correctness, important for generating accurate D&D information. The token limit sets a threshold for the number of tokens generated in response to a prompt. This parameter was not especially relevant due to the varying nature of the tasks, and it was adjusted as needed based on the specific generation case.

6.1.3 System Limitations

Despite its capabilities, the system has several limitations. Occasionally, the LLM omits or forgets to generate some information even when specifically prompted, such as missing NPC stats. The system performs best with concise inputs; complex campaign ideas can confuse the LLM, leading to outputs that do not match the envisioned campaign. For example, if a DM

requests a campaign with several plot twists, the generated material might be incoherent or omit key campaign moments.

Encounter balance is another issue. The LLM may generate encounters that are too difficult, requiring the DM to manually adjust them. This often happens despite specific prompts to consider the party's level, characters, and spells. Vague encounters are also common, particularly when the campaign focus is "exploration," leading to puzzles without solutions or insufficient details, necessitating additional DM improvisation.

The LLM sometimes changes character names to more D&D-themed ones, which might not align with the player's desires. There are also minor errors in skill point or proficiency allocation, resulting in slightly underpowered or overpowered characters. The unpredictable nature of LLMs means that even with a specified output structure, the formatting can differ across generations, leading to small inconsistencies in similar categories.

6.2 Character Generation

Character creation in D&D represents the process by which players develop and define a fictional character within the game environment. Typically performed at the start of the game, this process involves several key actions: selecting character attributes, determining ability scores, choosing skills, picking equipment, and crafting a backstory along with character motivations, among others.
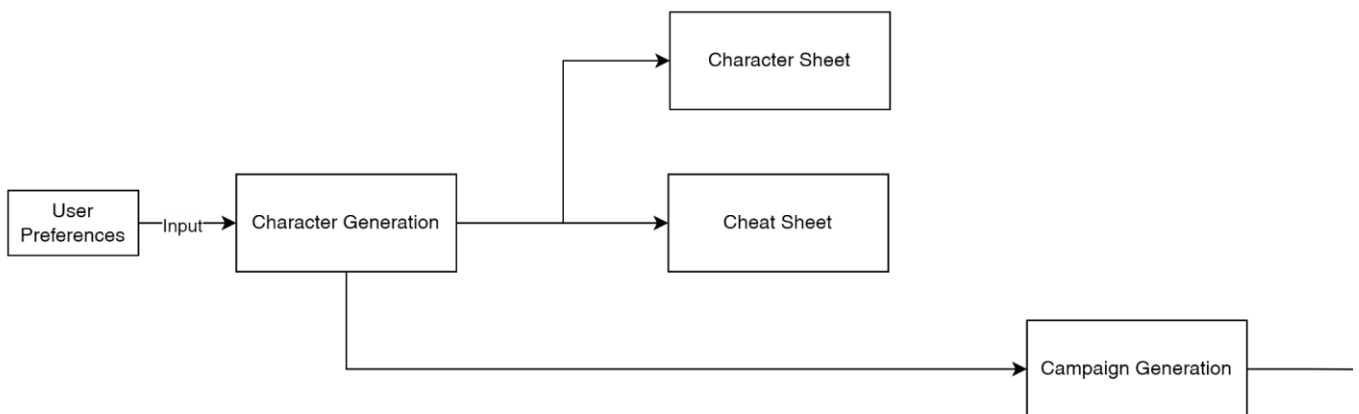
Figure 6.2.1: Character Generation pipeline connections

The decision to automate character creation was driven by the recognition that while character creation is a significant aspect of D&D, the complexity involved can be daunting and off-putting for novices, acting as a significant barrier to entry. By automating this process based on user input, multiple issues can be addressed. Players can customise their characters using concepts familiar to them rather than specific game terminology, which may lead to a stronger emotional connection with their characters and a more engaging campaign

experience, compared to using pre-made characters. For example, a player might describe their desired playstyle as "no brain, all muscles." Automation of this step also allows players to skip the typically lengthy character creation, enabling them to start playing sooner. By providing players with a complete character overview and relevant tips, the system makes it easier for new players to engage with the game without extensive research or preparation.

The main goal of this module is to generate all necessary information for a ready-to-play character, like a D&D character sheet and player-specific cheat sheets. These cheat sheets are designed to enhance the gameplay experience by clarifying gameplay mechanics and providing useful insights tailored to the generated character. The system is intentionally designed to be lenient with user inputs, allowing the incorporation of non-D&D terminology while still delivering functional and relevant game materials. This feature ensures that novice players can effectively use the system with minimal prior knowledge of D&D.

6.2.1 User Input

The character generation process starts by identifying and inputting the most basic elements, which are independent of each other. Based on popular online community materials [47, 48, 49], it is recommended that the D&D character creation process begins by selecting a character's Race, Class and Origin from the official Dungeons & Dragons content. New players are typically encouraged to select options from the core rulebook of D&D, the Player's Handbook [50]. These options are presented in Figure 6.2.1.1 below:

```
available_races = ["Dragonborn", "Dwarf", "Elf", "Gnome", "Half-
Elf", "Halfling", "Half-Orc", "Human", "Tiefling"]

available_classes = ["Barbarian", "Bard", "Cleric", "Druid",
"Fighter", "Monk", "Paladin", "Ranger", "Rogue", "Sorcerer",
"Warlock", "Wizard"]

available_origins = ["Acolyte", "Charlatan", "Criminal",
"Entertainer", "Folk Hero", "Gladiator", "Guild Artisan",
"Hermit", "Knight", "Noble", "Outlander", "Pirate", "Sage",
"Sailor", "Soldier", "Urchin"]
```

Figure 6.2.1.1: Core rulebook character variables

Given the system's requirement to accommodate some degree of leniency in user inputs, players are also given the option to create their own character origins. This flexibility allows players to use pop culture references or other transmedia elements to enrich their character's backstory. Origins typically have a minor effect on gameplay, providing an opportunity for further character customization, as displayed in Figure 6.2.1.2:

```
chosen_origin = "Hillybilly"
chosen_origin = "Club Bouncer"
chosen_origin = "Telechurch Priest"
chosen_origin = "Princess in Hiding"
chosen_origin = "Collector"
```

Figure 6.2.1.2: User-made character origins

Following the selection of race, class, and origin, the initial phase of the standard character creation process [47, 48, 49] prompts players to choose their character's alignment. This is an attribute that describes a character's ethical and moral outlook, and significantly influences the way a character is played; it is usually chosen from a nine-point alignment chart, as can be seen in Figure 6.2.1.3.

	Good	Neutral	Evil
Lawful	Lawful Good	Lawful Neutral	Lawful Evil
Neutral	Neutral Good	True Neutral	Neutral Evil
Chaotic	Chaotic Good	Chaotic Neutral	Chaotic Evil

Figure 6.2.1.3: D&D Character Alignment Chart [51]

Given the general applicability of this feature and its substantial role in character creation, coupled with the fact that it can be comprehended without requiring D&D-specific knowledge, the decision was made to allow users to select this attribute independently.

```
available_alignments = ["Lawful Good", "Neutral Good", "Chaotic
Good", "Lawful Neutral", "True Neutral", "Chaotic Neutral",
"Lawful Evil", "Neutral Evil", "Chaotic Evil"]
```

Figure 6.2.1.4: Character Alignment input options

Additionally, players are encouraged to personalise other aspects of their characters that do not significantly impact the mechanical process of character creation but increase personal connection, such as the character's name or age. An example of such inputs can be observed in Figure 6.2.1.5.

```
age = "45"
name = "Gib"
```

Figure 6.2.1.5: Example of user input

The final aspect of character input involves defining the character's playstyle in the player's own words, which is not typically included in standard character creation but encourages players to consider their character's approach to interactions and challenges within the game. This information also helps the system generate material more consistent with the users' preferences, enriching the character background and roleplaying opportunities. A few examples of playstyles were provided to the players, but they were free to make up their own, as shown in Figure 6.2.1.6:

```
example_playstyles = ["Melee Combat Focus", "Ranged Combat Focus",
"Diplomacy Focus", "Social Focus", "Loot Focus", "Stealth Focus"]

chosen_playstyle = "Scrappy Fisticuffs"
chosen_playstyle = "No Brain Go Punch"
chosen_playstyle = "Devoted"
chosen_playstyle = "Clumsy"
chosen_playstyle = "Calculated"
chosen_playstyle = "Paranoid"
```

Figure 6.2.1.6: Playstyle Examples and Custom User Inputs

Conclusively, the final character creation input parameters consist of age, name, race, class, origin, alignment, playstyle, and level, which are processed to generate a ready-to-play character. This structured yet flexible input system ensures that characters are both unique to the player's vision and integrated smoothly into the campaign.

```
player1 = Character("45", "Gib", "Dwarf", "Barbarian",
"Hillybilly", "Chaotic Neutral", "no brain, only muscles", "1")
```

Figure 6.2.1.7: Example of input parameters used for character generation

6.2.2 Character Sheet Generation

The generation of content for the character sheet has been organised according to the general categories found on a standard D&D character sheet. This standard format has been chosen over a simplified version to help players become familiar with regular playing materials. Each identified category is generated independently to ensure the LLM focuses on a single task at a time, thereby minimising the risk of errors or hallucinations. For legibility purposes, the categories have been colour coded as follows:

Colour	Category
Red	Ability Scores
Orange	Saving Throws
Yellow	Skill Modifiers
Dark Green	Proficiencies and Languages
Light Green	Character Stats
Blue	Attacks and Spells
Dark Blue	Equipment
Purple	Character Background
Pink	Features and Traits

Table 6.2.2.1: Categorisation of character sheet information

STRENGTH

DEXTERITY

CONSTITUTION

INTELLIGENCE

WISDOM

CHARISMA

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS

___ Strength
___ Dexterity
___ Constitution
___ Intelligence
___ Wisdom
___ Charisma

SAVING THROWS

___ Acrobatics (Dex)
___ Animal Handling (Wis)
___ Arcana (Int)
___ Athletics (Str)
___ Deception (Cha)
___ History (Int)
___ Insight (Wis)
___ Intimidation (Cha)
___ Investigation (Int)
___ Medicine (Wis)
___ Nature (Int)
___ Perception (Wis)
___ Performance (Cha)
___ Persuasion (Cha)
___ Religion (Int)
___ Sleight of Hand (Dex)
___ Stealth (Dex)
___ Survival (Wis)

SKILLS

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION)

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES

ARMOR CLASS

INITIATIVE

SPEED

Hit Point Maximum ___

CURRENT HIT POINTS

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

Total ___

HIT DICE

SUCCESSES ○—○—○
FAILURES ○—○—○

DEATH SAVES

NAME   ATK BONUS   DAMAGE/TYPE

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

CP
SP
EP
GP
PP

EQUIPMENT

PERSONALITY TRAITS

IDEALS

BONDS

FLAWS

FEATURES & TRAITS

Figure 6.2.2.1: D&D character sheet split by categories
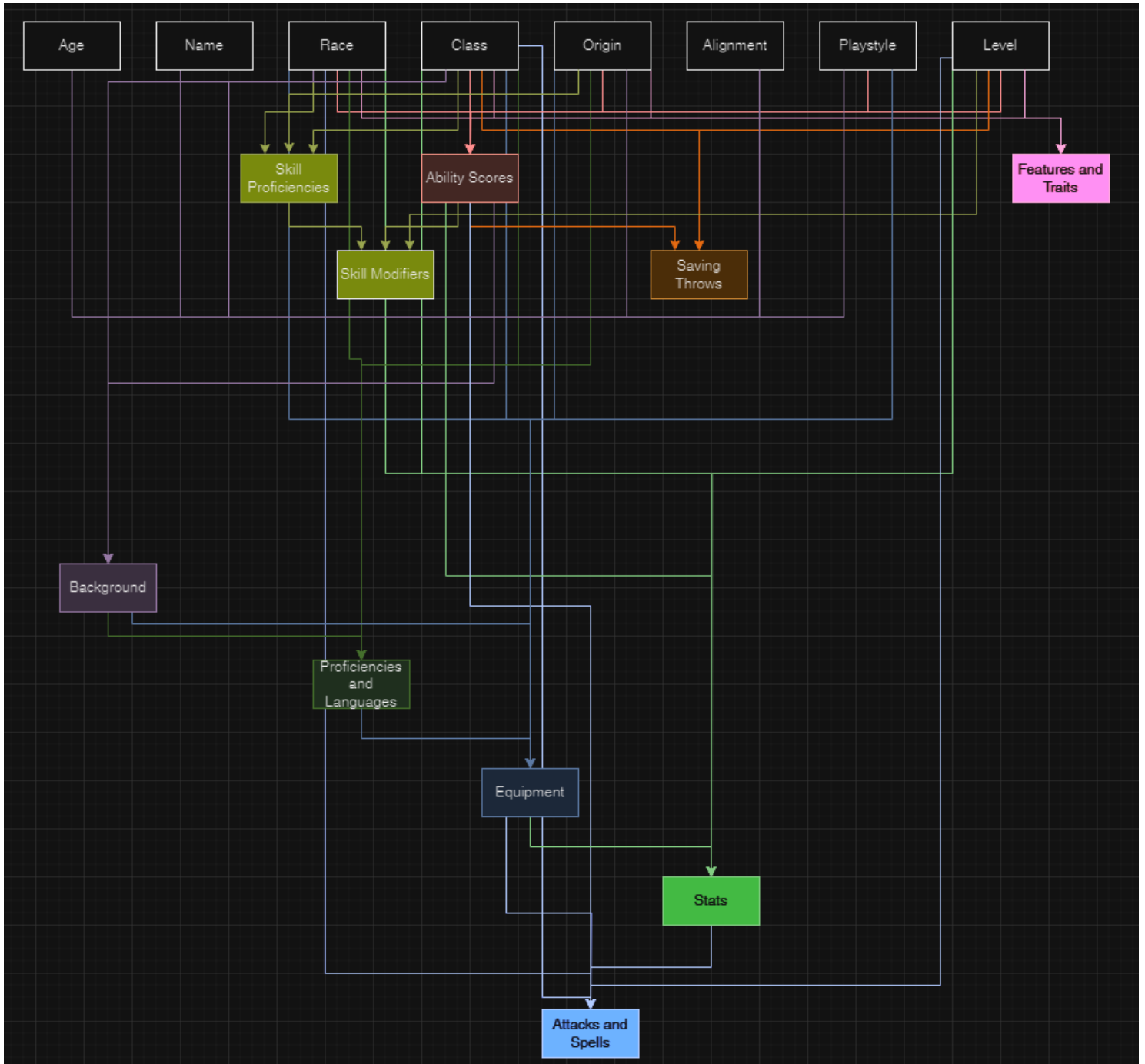
Figure 6.2.2.2: Dependencies of character generation

Figure 6.2.2.2 illustrates the dependencies within the character sheet generation process, as implemented in the Micro Adventure Generator prototype. Traditionally, the character creation process has fewer dependencies. However, due to the somewhat random and unpredictable nature of LLMs, additional contextual information is required to achieve satisfactory output in terms of correctness and narrative coherence.

For example, attributes such as race, class, origin, and playstyle are commonly passed to several sequential layers, such as background and equipment. This is done because the LLM benefits from the extra contextual information, even if it is not explicitly needed for the generation of the respective content. This results in improved consistency across categories, helping to create a cohesive character sheet. The drawback of this approach is the increased generation time and costs due to the additional contextual information provided in prompts as can be observed in Figure 6.2.2.3 below:

```python
def equipment_prompt(race, class_type, origin, playstyle,
proficiencies_and_languages, background):
    prompt = f"""
    Please create a short starting equipment list for my character
with the following characteristics:
    - Race: {race}
    - Class: {class_type}
    - Character origin: {origin}
    - Preferred playstyle: {playstyle}
    - Proficiencies and languages: {proficiencies_and_languages}
    - Character background information: {background}


    ----


    Instructions for Task Completion:
    - Your output should respect the D&D universe as close as
possible: locations, deities, names, equipment, etc.
    - Your output should not provide any other instructions or
guiding text to the user
    - You should write down equipment that respects the D&D rules
based on the characteristics I provided
    - Your output should not mention anything about currency or
gold, I will add that on my own
    - Your output should not include any extra information other
than the equipment
    - Your output should not include any formatting elements
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Armor: *type of armor my character has equipped*
        Weapons: *weapons my character has*
        Tools: *tools my character carries*
        Other: *any other equipment my character owns*
    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.2.2.3: Prompt used for generation of character equipment

The prompt structure, as shown in Figure 6.2.2.3, includes user-input information and potentially relevant, previously-generated information, such as character proficiencies and background. This approach allows the LLM to better understand the character and task, making more informed decisions to generate fitting equipment based on the character's class and playstyle, while also considering character-specific narrative elements.

By analysing Figure 6.2.2.3, the structure of all prompts used in this system can be broken down into 3 major components:

1. **Given information** - This is information that is provided to the LLM via the prompt, consist of either directly user input or passing previously-generated information

2. **Instructions for task completion** - This is a set of instructions that the LLM must follow for its task to be considered complete; This list of instructions can be modified depending on the nature of the desired generated material

3. **Desired output structure** - This is a strict structure that the LLM must use when returning generated material

This method, inspired by findings from the literature review on prompting techniques, achieves relatively consistent and open-ended results. Additionally, it facilitates iterative development; if the LLM outputs are unsuitable, any of the three major components can be adjusted until the desired output is achieved.

6.2.3 Cheat Sheet Generation

Cheat sheet generation depends on the previously generated categories on the cheat sheet. Consequently, cheat sheet generation occurs after the necessary categories have been generated. Figure 6.2.3.1 illustrates the dependencies for cheat sheet materials, which take in both user inputs and character sheet-generated material as input parameters.
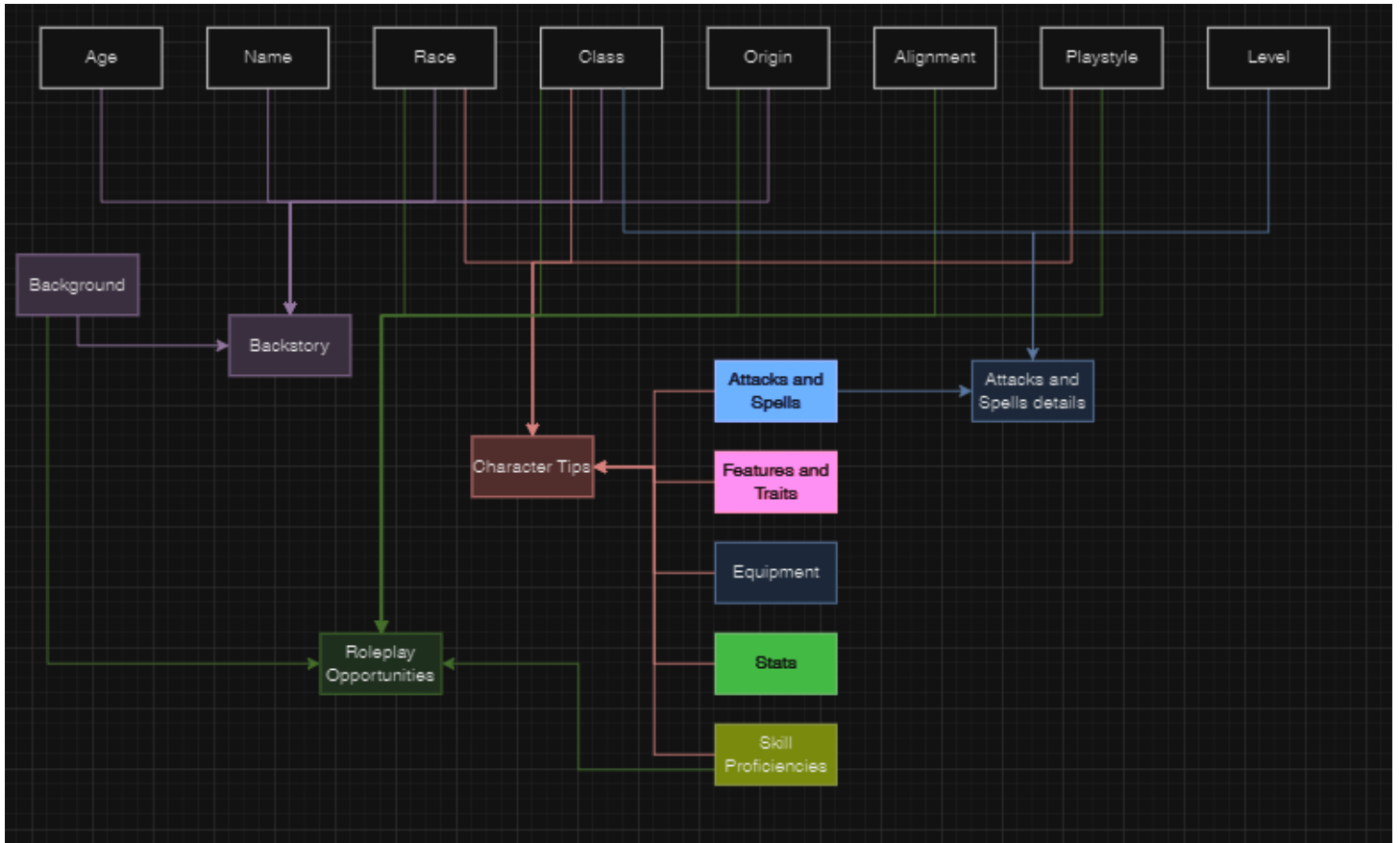
Figure 6.2.3.1: Cheat sheet dependency diagram

Based on short, informal interviews with the advisors, experienced D&D players and potential members of the target audience, it was decided that the cheat sheet should contain the following information:

1. Character backstory - A short paragraph that provides a more detailed description of each character, allowing novice players to better understand the character.

2. Character tips - A series of short and concise tips across several categories (social, combat, etc.). Based on these tips, novice players are given important information that would otherwise take time to research.

3. Role-play opportunities - A short paragraph describing how novice players can better impersonate their characters.
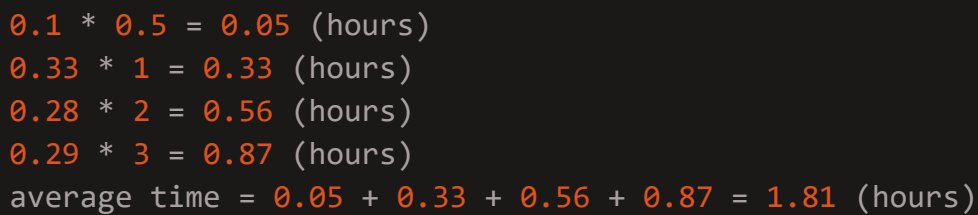
Following the initial prototype test sessions, an additional category was added:

4. Description of attacks and spells - Provides an in-depth overview of the character's spells and abilities, useful during in-game situations.

Upon completion of generating the character sheet and cheat sheet, the information is stored in a text file for further processing.

6.3 Campaign Generation

Campaign creation refers to the process of designing a series of interconnected challenges and scenarios that players explore over one or multiple gaming sessions. It usually involves detailed planning by the DM, who crafts the setting, storyline, challenges, and objectives that the players will encounter. Creating a campaign generally consists of, but is not limited to, concept development, world-building, developing non-player characters, creating a plot structure and designing encounters and challenges. According to the D&D blog Sly Flourish [52], there is a significant variance in preparation time across 3663 surveyed DM's, for a four-hour game session: 10% spend about 30 minutes, 33% spend about an hour, 28% spend about two hours, and 29% spend three hours or more. The conservative average preparation time for a four-hour game session is approximately 1.81 hours, as detailed in Figure 6.3.1:

```
0.1 * 0.5 = 0.05 (hours)
0.33 * 1 = 0.33 (hours)
0.28 * 2 = 0.56 (hours)
0.29 * 3 = 0.87 (hours)
average time = 0.05 + 0.33 + 0.56 + 0.87 = 1.81 (hours)
```

Figure 6.3.1: Calculation of average preparation time spent for a 4-hour game session

By automating campaign generation, the aim is to reduce the preparation time compared to creating a campaign from scratch, or costs compared to using pre-made materials; this reduction could be especially beneficial for new DMs or those introducing their novice friends to D&D. DMing allows for significant creative freedom and improvisation, so a less fine-grained approach to the generated material is acceptable. This flexibility also enables the DM to customise the campaign with their unique touch. The primary goal of this module is to generate coherent material that provides a solid foundation for running a campaign with minimal preparation time, yet allows for improvisation and modifications as needed. Ensuring the material's coherence is critical to avoid extending preparation time as the DM tries to piece together disparate elements.

6.3.1 User Input

The input for campaign generation is addressed explicitly to the DM, who discusses with the players their preferences and adds their own twist. This input process, as shown in Figure 6.3.1.1 below, is designed to be simple and lenient, minimising the effort required while still allowing the DM to express specific preferences.

```
tone = "Macabre"
setting = "D&D universe"
concept = "Players need to escape out of a Bhaal sacrificial
temple"
focus = "Exploration"
level = "1"
```

Figure 6.3.1.1: Initial input parameters for DM

During initial prototyping, it was found that deviating from the D&D universe setting drastically decreased the quality of the generated material, so that option was removed. Additionally, after consulting with advisors, it was deemed that starting at a level higher than 1 could be challenging for new players, so that option was also removed.

```
tone = "Macabre"
concept = "Players need to escape out of a Bhaal sacrificial
temple"
focus = "Exploration"
```

Figure 6.3.1.2: Revised input parameters for DM

The tone is essential to achieve the envisioned style and setting of the game. Without this parameter, all generated material would be very similar since it all occurs in the D&D universe, and without extra information, LLMs tend to output the most common and generic answers. The concept allows the DM to express the campaign's theme in natural language, ensuring that the generated material aligns with the envisioned theme. The focus represents one of the three core pillars of D&D: combat, exploration, or socialising. This variable allows the players to practise a certain type of interaction based on their group preferences.

6.3.2 Campaign Generation Process

Inspiration for the campaign generation process was drawn from multiple sources, such as the YouTube channels Bob World Builder [53], Geek and Sundry [54], and How to be a Great GM [55, 56]. Since there is no single way to create a D&D campaign, the process usually depends on the DM's preferences and experience. Extra attention was paid to sources discussing one-shots specifically, as these campaigns differ slightly from traditional, multi-session games.

Given the time constraints of a single game session, the game needs to be structured so that players can accomplish the final goal while still being entertained, without feeling rushed. A reputable source in the D&D community, How to be a Great GM [55, 56], suggests a

campaign structure specifically for one-shots with limited time: the 121 structure. This method consists of one intro, two obstacles, and one showdown. The advantage of this method over creating an open-ended campaign is that a satisfying conclusion can be achieved within the time limit, and less preparation material is needed as specific game events can be planned in advance. Additionally, the DM can guide players toward planned events and adjust the game's pace as needed.

The World

The campaign still needs a context—a world in which the action takes place. This setting allows the DM and players to immerse in the game world and allows for improvisation. Creating a specific setting brings more flavour to the game; otherwise, all campaigns might feel the same. Therefore, before generating story elements, the world setting must be established. Based on the previously described user inputs, the general world is generated. According to Bob World Builder [53], a D&D campaign can be reduced to a location, game characters (an antagonist and their minions, a group of contenders), character motives, and an obstacle. Other elements, such as plot hooks, extra NPCs, and player character ties to the campaign, can be added to enhance narrative cohesion and interaction potential.
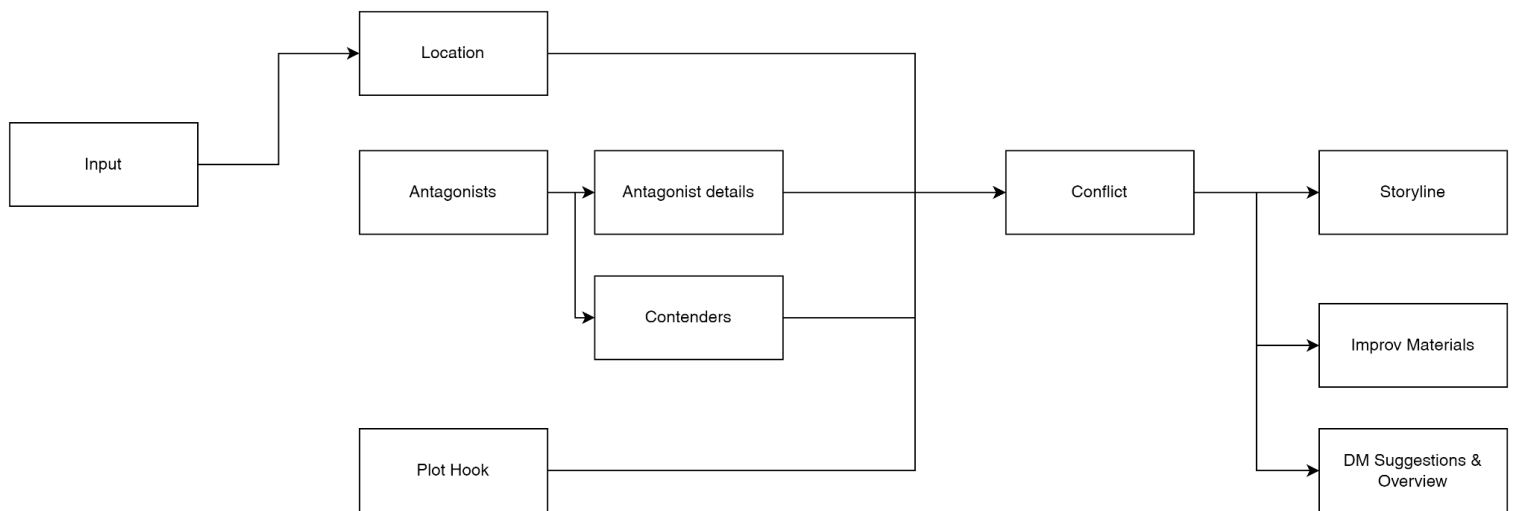
Figure 6.3.1.3: Pipeline of world generation elements

The first step in world generation involves creating the location where the game takes place. This is generated based on all input parameters to create a fitting location. The specificity of the location is generated on several levels: the specific location where the action takes place, the surroundings, the larger context, and the relation with other locations. The prompt for generating the location can be seen in Figure 6.3.1.4.

```python
def location_prompt(tone, setting, concept, focus):
    prompt = f"""
    I am planning a one-shot DnD campaign with the following
characteristics:
    -Tone: {tone}
    -Setting: {setting}
    -Campaign concept: {concept}
    -Campaign focus: {focus}

    Please help me create a location that would work well with my
story.
    ----

    Instructions for Task Completion:
    - Your output should not provide any other instructions or
guiding text to the user
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Specific location where action takes place: *name of
location* - *short description of location*
        Surroundings of *location*: *short description of
surroundings*
        Larger context: *short description of relevant context of
location*
        Relations: *short description of specific relations to
other nearby world locations*
    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.4: Prompt for generating the location of the campaign

Next, relevant characters are generated: antagonists and contenders. Initially, GPT-4 was allowed to choose from a given list and build on top with additional details. This approach aimed to generate characters fitting the world context. For example, if the adventure takes place near a dragon's lair, GPT-4 might choose a dragon and kobolds as antagonists.

```python
def contenders_prompt(tone, setting, concept, focus, location,
BBEG, races):
    prompt = f"""
    [...]

    ----
    Available contender types:
```

```
    -Kobolds
    -Imps
    -Colonists
    -Bots
    -Summons
    -Thralls
    -Wolves
    -Zombies
    -Soldiers
    -Cultists
    -Henchmen
    -Apparitions
    -Goblins
    -Spiders
    -Skeletons
    -Bandits
    -Oozes


    ----
    [...]


    - Your output should contain a single type of contender, which
is most relevant to the story
    - The contender type must be different to the type of BBEG and
minions
    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.5: Snippet of prompt for generating campaign contenders from a given list

However, it was observed that GPT-4 often preferred certain character types, resulting in similar outcomes across different campaigns. For example, GPT-4 would often choose "Cult leader and cultists" as the main antagonists, most commonly having the need of "Artefact" in order to achieve "Transcendence". To address this, some aspects of world generation were randomised from a pre-set list: the antagonists, their wants and needs, and the plot hooks tying player characters into the campaign. This approach ensured a wider variety of possible campaign scenarios. An example of the available options can be observed in Figure 6.3.1.6.

GPT-4 was still allowed to choose the contenders, as seen in Figure 6.3.1.5, due to the possibility of randomly selecting antagonists and contenders of the same type, which could be confusing to the players. A choice was made to have the antagonists and contenders of distinct types to facilitate clarity.

```
self.available_bbeg_wants = [
        "Love",
        "Revenge",
        "Transcendence",
        "Destruction",
        "Conquest",
        "Legacy",
        "Perfection",
        "Control",
        "Terror",
        "Expression"
    ]
```

Figure 6.3.1.6: List of possible antagonist wants

Following the choice of campaign characters, the next step of Bob World Builder's process is followed: the development of the characters and generation of character motives. This process involves providing GPT-4 with the chosen options and requesting further details, as seen in Figure 6.3.1.7:

```
def BBEG_details_prompt(tone, concept, location, BBEG,
chosen_want, chosen_need):
    prompt = f"""
    I am planning a one-shot DnD campaign with the following
characteristics:
    -Tone: {tone}
    -Premise: {concept}
    -Location: {location}
    -Antagonists: {BBEG}
    -BBEG want: {chosen_want}
    -BBEG need: {chosen_need}

    Please help me elaborate on the antagonist's motives.

    ----
    [...]

        BBEG Want: *short description of what BBEG wants, based on
want I provided*
        BBEG Needs: *short description of what BBEG needs in order
to get what they Want, based on need I provided*
    """
```

```
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.7: Snippet of prompt for generating antagonist details

The generation of contenders follows a similar process. This method achieves a wider variety of possible campaign settings than just letting GPT-4 generate everything based on the initial input; this way, the character details are further developed based on the generated world, creating a more cohesive narrative.

The campaign creation process highlighted by Bob World Builder ends with the definition of obstacles, the main conflict point that drives the game. The conflict is created by providing all the previously defined or generated variables to GPT-4, which is then tasked with creating the conflict point, as seen below:

```python
def conflict_prompt(tone, setting, concept, focus, location, BBEG,
BBEG_details, contenders, chosen_plot_hook):
    prompt = f"""
    I am planning a one-shot DnD campaign with the following
characteristics:
    -Tone: {tone}
    -Setting: {setting}
    -Premise: {concept}
    -Campaign focus: {focus}
    -World elements {location}
    -Antagonist & minions: {BBEG}
    -Antagonist motivations: {BBEG_details}
    -Contenders: {contenders}
    -Campaign plot hook: {chosen_plot_hook}

    Please help me create the conflict that will drive the
narrative for this campaign.


    ----


    Instructions for Task Completion:
    - Your output should not provide any other instructions or
guiding text to the user
    - Your output should creatively mix all of the characteristics
I mentioned, and create a consistent story
    - Your output should respect the D&D canon universe as close
as possible: locations, deities, names, etc.
    - Your output should use specific names of other characters,
deities or items
```

```
        - Your output should follow the structure:
            Plot Hook: *description of hook that gets characters tied
into the campaign, maximum 1 sentence*
            Conflict: *description of conflict, maximum 1 sentence*
            Character ties: *specific BBEG and contender ties to the
conflict, maximum 2 sentences*
            Resolution: *what the ultimate goal of the players is,
maximum 1 concise sentence*
        """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.8: *Snippet of prompt for generating campaign conflict*

This specific structure for the output was decided upon after several iterations. By asking GPT-4 to generate multiple categories, it can better incorporate previously generated information into subsequent outputs. For example, splitting conflict and resolution into separate categories allows GPT-4 to generate more detailed resolutions rather than vague ones that might result from not splitting the categories. However, it must be noted that this output is not visible to the players; it is a hidden variable that helps achieve a closer result to the players' desires and assists in later tasks with a better understanding of the campaign context for the LLM.

Following the generation of the campaign conflict point, and having completed all other steps forming the game's foundation, the storyline can be generated. By implementing the 121 structure, the storyline is split into three acts: introduction, obstacles, and showdown. A short description of each act is generated, providing the skeleton upon which each act is built. This prompt creates the structure of the campaign:

```
def storyline_prompt(BBEG, BBEG_details, contenders, conflict):
    prompt = f"""
    I am planning a one-shot DnD campaign with the following
characteristics:
    -Antagonist: {BBEG}
    -Antagonist motivations: {BBEG_details}
    -Contenders: {contenders}
    -Conflict: {conflict}

    Please help me create a storyline by acts for this campaign.


    ----


    Instructions for Task Completion:
    [...]
```

```
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Act 1: *introduction of players to campaign and their
initial tasks, max 2 sentences*
        Act 2: *description of intermediary act, max 2 sentences*
        Act 3: *description of climax and conflict resolution, max
2 sentences*

    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.9: *Snippet of prompt for generating campaign storyline*

The choice to set the limit to two sentences per act description was made because one sentence would result in very vague descriptions that hindered further generations, and three or more sentences negatively affected further generations. The model experienced confusion due to the large amount of text and missed important plot information while focusing on seemingly trivial aspects. For example, in some iterations, the model completely missed the showdown with the antagonists and instead created an encounter based on irrelevant information included in the act description. It was found that two-sentence act descriptions are the sweet spot, providing sufficient details for further generation without confusing the model.

After completing the foundational generations for the campaign, additional information can be generated to increase narrative cohesion and create a more detailed game world with room for improvisation. This constitutes a separate category for the generated materials, categorised as Improv Material, where the DM can mix and match different information based on their in-game needs. A way to add life and flavour to the game world is represented by the GUARDS method [57]: government buildings, underworld activities, altars, resources, defences, and social hubs. This involves creating one or more of the previously defined categories to facilitate various role-playing opportunities for the party. For each category, one NPC and specific loot they can offer are generated, allowing the DM to create mini-quests or challenges for the players. Snippets of the prompt can be seen in Figure 6.3.1.10.

```
def GUARDS_prompt(location, conflict):
    prompt = f"""
    [...]
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Government Buildings: *name* - *1 sentence description of
what can be done here*
            NPC: *name of related NPC* - *1 sentence description
of them*
            Loot: *name of loot* - *1 sentence description of how
```

```
to get it and what it does*

    [...]

    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.10: Snippet of prompt for generating GUARDS

The generated loot was further detailed in a separate prompt; this decision was made because it was noticed that the LLM sometimes misses certain points or characteristics if the two prompts are merged into one larger prompt. This also allowed for more control over the effects of the generated loot, such as making it balanced to the party's level or making it suitable and useful for the party characters. This loot was categorised as uncommon, providing considerable advantages for the players.

Continuing with the generation of items, several informal interviews suggested that generating a shop could be a good idea. Parties commonly go shopping together before embarking on an adventure, so this section could be used by the DM to provide players with items to buy. Considering the decision to fix the campaign level at 1, it was also decided to make the generated shop items "common." This is the lowest rarity in D&D and does not provide substantial benefits or advantages over the NPCs.

Similar to the generation of uncommon loot, the available items were generated based on the theme of the campaign and the party's characteristics. For example, if the party contained an assassin character, daggers could be available for sale. Some items, such as healing potions or expedition gear, would be available regardless of the campaign setting or characters.

Drawing inspiration from one of the D&D starter adventures, Lost Mines of Phandelver [58], a random encounter table was added to aid transitions between acts or any other moment where a transition point could be needed (for example, between two encounters). This section is created based on the campaign storyline, allowing the possibility of using random encounters interchangeably in various parts of the story.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll (d20)	Event
1	A group of drunken revelers, unknowingly followers of Bhaal, mistake the players for cultists.
2	A lost child, crying and scared, seeks help to find their way back to the festival.
3	A stray cat, oddly intelligent, leads the players to a hidden passage but disappears.
4	A sudden downpour forces everyone to seek shelter, providing a chance for stealth or theft.
5	A street vendor, selling cursed trinkets, offers a free item that may have unforeseen effects.
6	An overzealous city guard suspects the players of being up to no good and decides to follow them.
7	A local thief bumps into the players, accidentally dropping a map of the temple's secret entrances.
8	A mysterious cloaked figure offers cryptic advice but demands gold or a favor in return.
9	A street performer, who is actually a spy for Malvorus, attempts to gather information from the players.
10	An old woman, claiming to be a retired adventurer, offers to tell tales of the temple's dark past.
11	A sudden scream echoes from a nearby alley, a cultist has been caught stealing from a local.
12	A group of mercenaries are recruiting for a raid against rival factions, offering easy coin.
13	A hidden trap door is found under a loose cobblestone, leading to a forgotten storage room.
14	A bard, singing tales of ancient heroes, unknowingly hints at a secret way to defeat Malvorus.
15	A market stall explodes in flames, a diversion created by the Shadowed Ones to aid the players.
16	A sudden blackout engulfs the street, whispers of the Shadowed Ones fill the air.
17	A group of children playing mimic the ritual, unknowingly revealing the password to a locked door.
18	A wounded cultist, left for dead, begs for help and offers inside information in exchange for safety.
19	An ancient scroll found in a puddle contains spells that could aid in disrupting the ritual.
20	A divine intervention occurs as a celestial being briefly appears, guiding the players to safety.

Figure 6.3.1.11: Generated random encounter table
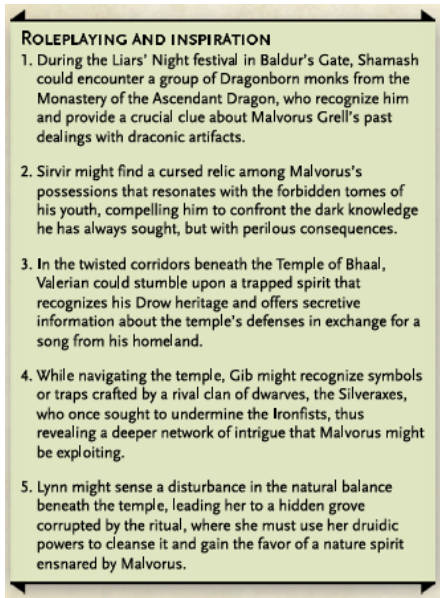
Lastly, a series of informational materials are generated for the DM based on the party's characteristics. This material aims to provide the DM with ways to further add depth and tie each character to the campaign.

Figure 6.3.1.12: Generated roleplay advice

Act Generation

All acts follow a similar structure, so for brevity, only the general act structure is described instead of detailing each act separately. Each act is generated independently to enhance program legibility and ease of access. This modular approach could facilitate future developments where the player group decides the number of acts they want in the campaign.
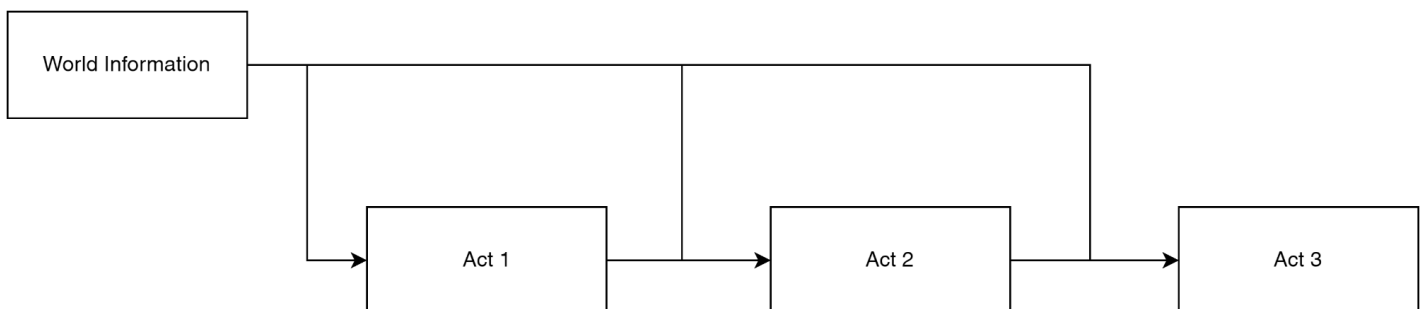
Figure 6.3.1.13: Pipeline of act generation

As can be seen in Figure 6.3.1.13, some general world information is passed to each act to ensure consistency with the game narrative. Additionally, information from the previous act is needed to maintain continuity, with the ending point of the previous act serving as the starting point for the current act.

To ensure coherence between acts, the generation of transition points is essential. This guarantees that each act remains contained within the given storyline description and does not deviate from the story.

```python
def act1_transition_prompt(storyline, conflict):
    prompt = f"""
    [...]
    Instructions for Task Completion:
    [...]
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Act1 Goal: *1 sentence description of specifics of what
players need to accomplish to complete act 1*
        Act1 Failure: *1 sentence description of negative
consequences of players failing to accomplish the goal*
        Starting point: *short description of how Act 1 starts*
        Ending point: *short description of how Act 1 ends after
completion of the goal(s), and transition into act 2*

    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.14: Snippet of prompt for generating act transitions

The purpose of this prompt, by generating the act goal and failure points, is to give more context to the LLM, explicitly generating what is required of the players to complete the act. The starting and ending points ensure the act remains contained within the storyline description, maintaining coherence across acts.

Based on the creation of this transition information, the within-act storyline can be created. This is done according to the previously mentioned 121 method: for Act 1, there is one intermediary encounter; for Act 2, there are two intermediary encounters; for Act 3, there is one intermediary encounter. This provides the overview of the act storyline, with the components generated separately.
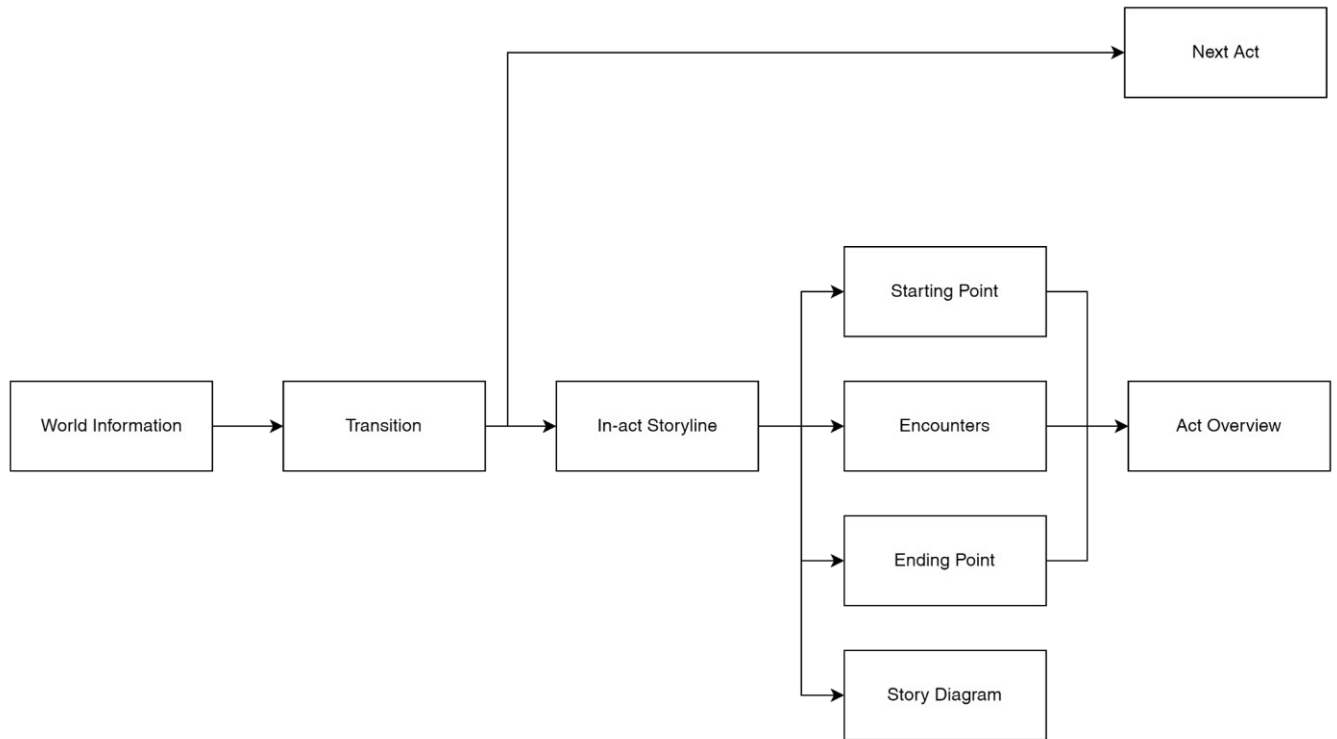
Figure 6.3.1.15: Pipeline of within-act generation of elements

As can be seen in Figure 6.3.1.15 above, after the act storyline has been created, three main elements are generated:

- Starting point: A very short description of how the act begins.
- Encounters: The challenges that the players need to overcome.
- Ending point: Concludes the act and transitions to the next act.

These elements are later fleshed out with their specific prompts. Additionally, an in-act story diagram is created, giving the DM a visual overview of the act's events.

The starting and ending points of the acts are similar in prompt structure, helping the DM introduce the main events of the act in a logical manner. They contain descriptive text, which the DM can read aloud to introduce or describe the setting to the players. These elements are not crucial to the story and can be adapted or ignored as needed.

```
def act1_ending_point_prompt(storyline):
    prompt = f"""
    [...]
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Encounter name: *name*
        Encounter Description: *what DM reads in 3rd person to the
party, to introduce the ending point of act 1; e.g. You now sense
```

```
a faint smell of ...*
        Location: *name* - *general description of the setting*
        Development: *explain to DM how this transition leads
towards ending point of the act*
    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.16: Snippet of prompt for generating starting and ending points

The most important part of each act is the encounter generation, which are the challenges that the players will need to overcome. This is done using two prompts: one creates the main body of the encounter, and the other generates descriptives and additional events or effects. This split approach ensures that details are not missed, as the LLM tends to skip details in longer prompts.

```
def act1_encounter_prompt(level, focus, races, classes, abilities,
storyline):
    prompt = f"""
  [...]
    - Your output should follow the structure:
        Encounter name: *name*
        Location: *name* - *general description of the setting
        Environment: *description of topography, weather, and
other tactical elements that might be of use to the players, e.g.
is the enemy behind fortifications, is there elevation, are there
things to hide behind*
        Environment challenges: *description of potential
challenges for the players, e.g. chasms, civilians in battlefield,
rough terrain*
        Encounter type: *choose or combine from: combat,
deception, delay, dilemma, event, guardian, interaction, obstacle,
puzzle, skirmish, surprise, trap*

        Party Aim: *specific thing players need to accomplish in
this encounter to progress towards act goal*
        Resolution: *specific solution for the encounter that DM
needs to know*

        Main NPC: *name* (character/monster type)
        Main NPC stat block: *stat block containing AC, HP, speed,
ability scores, skills, resistances, immunities, senses,
languages, challenge rating*
        [...]
```

```
    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.17: Snippet of prompt for generating encounters

Generally, an encounter is a short scene in which the player characters are actively doing something to progress through the story [59]. The information necessary for generating encounters, such as encounter descriptions of stat block structure, was inspired by one of the D&D starter modules [58]. Possible encounter types, as proposed by the D&D Wiki [60], were chosen by the model depending on the campaign focus: if the players chose combat, the model would choose a skirmish; if exploration, the model would choose puzzles. Additional elements, such as the party aim, rewards, and resolution of the encounter, allow the model to generate specific solutions. This ensures the encounters are not vague and align with the characters' abilities and the campaign's focus. Without these variables, the model would often generate vague encounters, such as puzzles or riddles without solution. This is still the case, but to a lesser degree.

Given that the generated material is intended for theatre of the mind play, extra attention is paid to the descriptions of the environment. The second encounter prompt concerns the generation of descriptive information, such as what the DM reads when introducing the encounter, along with additional improv material.

```
def act1_encounter_description_prompt(encounter, backstories):
    prompt = f"""
    [...]
        If encounter is taking too little: *information in text
box that DM can read to slow down this encounter, if it is taking
too little*

    """
    return prompt
```

Figure 6.3.1.18: Snippet of prompt for generating encounter details and descriptions

The additional improv material is based on suggestions from How to be a Great GM [55, 56]. They recommend having additional information that can be added or subtracted from encounters to achieve the desired timing. The LLM generates random events that the DM can trigger, along with specific instructions to adjust the pace of each encounter. Some events are tied to the characters' backstories, testing the characters and making players act in character or choose another personal interpretation.

Lastly, an act overview is generated based on the in-act storyline. However, after multiple test sessions, this feature was removed because users deemed it unnecessary, as the information was already contained within other parts of the documents.

6.4 Game Material Preparation

This final step in the pipeline integrates generated content with other essential, non-generated content that is especially useful for novices, presenting it in a structured and consistent manner. Not all content provided needs to be custom-generated; some includes generic D&D advice, such as a glossary explaining game terms and mechanics, drawn from the existing D&D rulebook, the Player's Handbook [50], and other valuable online community resources such as the Level 1 Geek blog [61].

Ideally, this process would have been fully automated, allowing the system output to flow directly into the text editor and character sheet filler, with the game materials automatically formatted in a D&D theme. This would eliminate the need for manual user input. However, this was outside of the project's intended scope. Consequently, certain tasks within this module are performed manually: while the generated textual information is processed and structured according to the predetermined format, the text requires manual input and formatting into D&D specific formats. This involves the user copying and pasting text from the output file into a dedicated text editor and the respective character sheets.

Despite these manual steps, this implementation does not detract from the prototype's functionality. It was considered an acceptable solution, particularly because the evaluation of the prototype, as detailed in Chapter 7, focuses more on the quality and relevance of the content generated rather than its structural presentation. Nonetheless, the inclusion of D&D-themed materials remains an important thematic element that enhances the final presentation and improves the overall user experience.

6.4.1 Presentation

For the styling of output materials, the Homebrewery [62], an open-source text editor, was used to ensure the final documents mirrored the standard D&D theme. This tool was chosen due to its ability to format text similarly to the original D&D books, offering a consistent look and feel across all materials. It supports various formatting elements, such as text boxes, highlighting, and tables, enabling efficient organisation and presentation of information with minimal effort. Moreover, using D&D-themed materials helps players become accustomed to the typical layout seen in general D&D resources, as this style is widely recognized and used within the D&D community.

THE HOMEBREWERY V3

WELCOME TRAVELER FROM AN ANTIQUE LAND. Please sit and tell us of what you have seen. The unheard of monsters, who slither and bite. Tell us of the wondrous items and and artifacts you have found, their mysteries yet to be unlocked. Of the vexing vocations and surprising skills you have seen.

HOMEBREW D&D MADE EASY

The Homebrewery makes the creation and sharing of authentic looking Fifth-Edition homebrews easy. It uses Markdown with a little CSS magic to make your brews come to life.

Try it! Simply edit the text on the left and watch it *update live* on the right. Note that not every button is visible on this demo page. Click New ⊞ in the navbar above to start brewing with all the features!

EDITING AND SHARING

When you create a new homebrew document ("brew"), your document will be given a *edit link* and a *share link*.

The *edit link* is where you write your brew. If you edit a brew while logged in, you are added as one of the brew's authors, and no one else can edit that brew until you add them as a new author via the ⓘ **Properties** tab. Brews without any author can still be edited by anyone with the *edit link*, so be careful about who you share it with if you prefer to work without an account.

Anyone with the *share url* will be able to access a read-only version of your homebrew.

PDF CREATION

PDF Printing works best in Google Chrome. If you are having quality/consistency issues, try using Chrome to print instead.

After clicking the "Print" item in the navbar a new page will open and a print dialog will pop-up.

- Set the **Destination** to "Save as PDF"
- Set **Paper Size** to "Letter"
- If you are printing on A4 paper, make sure to have the **PRINT → 🗋 A4 Pagesize** snippet in your brew
- In **Options** make sure "Background Images" is selected.
- Hit print and enjoy! You're done!

If you want to save ink or have a monochrome printer, add the **PRINT → 🌢 Ink Friendly** snippet to your brew!

HOMEBREW MUG
NATURALCRIT

V3 VS LEGACY

The Homebrewery has two renderers: Legacy and V3. The V3 renderer is recommended for all users because it is more powerful, more customizable, and continues to receive new feature updates while Legacy does not. However Legacy mode will remain available for older brews and veteran users.

At any time, any individual brew can be changed to your renderer of choice via the ⓘ **Properties** tab on your brew. However, converting between Legacy and V3 may require heavily tweaking the document; while both renderers can use raw HTML, V3 prefers a streamlined curly bracket syntax that avoids the complex HTML structures required by Legacy.

Scroll down to the next page for a brief summary of the changes and features available in V3!

NEW THINGS ALL THE TIME!

Check out the latest updates in the full changelog here.

HELPING OUT

Like this tool? Head over to our Patreon to help us keep the servers running.

This tool will **always** be free, never have ads, and we will never offer any "premium" features or whatever.

BUGS, ISSUES, SUGGESTIONS?

- Check the Frequently Asked Questions page first for quick answers.
- Get help or the right look for your brew by posting on r/Homebrewery or joining the Discord Of Many Things.
- Report technical issues or provide feedback on the GitHub Repo.

LEGAL JUNK

The Homebrewery is licensed using the MIT License. Which means you are free to use The Homebrewery codebase any way that you want, except for claiming that you made it yourself.

If you wish to sell or in some way gain profit for what's created on this site, it's your responsibility to ensure you have the proper licenses/rights for any images or resources used.

CREDITING US

If you'd like to credit us in your brew, we'd be flattered! Just reference that you made it with The Homebrewery.

MORE HOMEBREW RESOURCES

If you are looking for more 5e Homebrew resources check out r/UnearthedArcana and their list of useful resources here. The Discord Of Many Things is another great resource to connect with fellow homebrewers for help and feedback.

Figure 6.4.1.1: Homebrewery text editor with D&D-based styling

6.4.2 File Structure

The output materials for the campaign are categorised into three distinct sections: materials for all players, for the Dungeon Master only, and for players only. This organisational approach ensures that sensitive information such as plot developments and specific encounters remain hidden, accessible only to the DM, while allowing for personal player details to be kept private or shared at each player's discretion.

Materials for All Players

1. Disclaimer (non-generated material) - Acts as an introduction to both the system and the provided game materials. This section describes the system's functions and limitations, along with general information about the campaign such as generation time, costs, and variables used. It also includes an extensive glossary of D&D terms tailored to support understanding during a one-shot campaign. This glossary aims to be more comprehensive than the standard one found in the D&D rulebook, facilitating easier reference during gameplay. Lastly, the disclaimer ends with a session zero checklist that the party should complete before starting the game. Additionally, a session zero checklist is provided, emphasising the importance of setting table expectations and fostering an enjoyable experience, an aspect often overlooked but crucial for engaging play.

Materials for the Dungeon Master

1. Campaign Overview (generated and non-generated material) - This section offers a general overview of the entire campaign, including the main theme, key NPCs, and important plot elements. This overview helps the DM prepare for the broader narrative arcs and ensures they can guide the gameplay smoothly and effectively. Moreover, it includes specific suggestions for integrating player characters into the story, based on their backstories, and offers additional context-related improv material such as locations, names, and items that can be used as needed.

2. Act 1/2/3 (generated material) - Each act contains thorough details about the respective segment of the campaign, setting up the challenges, character introductions, and conflicts. These sections equip the DM with essential details on how to effectively drive the narrative forward, including descriptions of locations, interactions with NPCs, and information on encounters. Unlike traditional manuals, NPC stat blocks are integrated directly within these sections to enhance usability and speed during gameplay. Additionally, potential events and opportunities are suggested, generated with consideration of the player characters' competences and abilities, allowing the DM to tailor events specifically to the party's characteristics.

Materials for Players

1. Character Sheet (generated material) - Each player receives a character sheet that includes all the necessary information about their character, such as their ability scores, skills, equipment, spells, and background. This sheet is needed for players to participate in the game, as it contains all the information needed to make decisions and understand their character's capabilities.

2. Cheat Sheet (generated material) - A handy reference that includes the character's detailed backstory, role-playing advice, and character tips tailored to the specific campaign. This cheat sheet is designed to help novices quickly grasp the basics of gameplay without needing to consult the main rulebook frequently. It promotes smoother gameplay and helps players feel more confident and engaged.

Chapter 7 – Evaluation

This chapter presents the last stage of the CreaTe Design Process: the Evaluation phase. During this chapter, the testing method and procedure are described, followed by an evaluation of the functional prototype based on multiple user studies. Supporting documents for these user studies can be found in Appendix 8. You may skip to subchapter 8.1 for a more concise overview of the study findings.

7.1 Procedure

The evaluation involved 15 participants divided into three testing groups: one group of four, one of five, and one of six. The demographic information such as gender and age were not measured, as it was deemed irrelevant to the study's objectives. The key criterion for inclusion was an interest in Dungeons & Dragons (D&D); people without any interest were excluded, while participants with varying levels of experience and interest were welcomed.

Participants were recruited via the University of Twente Board Game association Discord server and via the Creative Technology year 2 and 3 group chats on WhatsApp. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants could register on a Google Form for one or multiple time slots indicating their availability within the allocated testing week. Registration was open for three days, before the closing of the form. Groups were formed based on availability, with a maximum of six participants per group to ensure manageability and a focused testing session. Participants with lower experience levels were prioritised for group formation. Those who could not be matched due to availability conflicts or group limits were informed and thanked for their interest. Furthermore, participants were free to withdraw at any time from the testing session.

Participants were compensated with snacks during the testing sessions and a set of D&D dice they could keep. A bundle of 30 dice sets [63] was purchased for this evaluation, and each participant was allowed to choose one set containing seven dice. The estimated compensation value per participant, including snacks, was approximately €3.

7.1.1 Experiment Setup

The testing setup included a Zoom H1n microphone for audio recording the focus groups, and an Asus ROG G14 Zephyrus 2021 laptop for running the campaign generation script, formatting documents in D&D style, and taking observation notes during the sessions.

Participants were seated at a rectangular table with the DM at one end and players on either side. The researcher was seated at the other end of the table, as to not disturb the game session or draw attention. If that position was unavailable, the researcher was seated in a place where the players could not have direct view without turning around. The setup is illustrated in Figure 7.1.1.1:
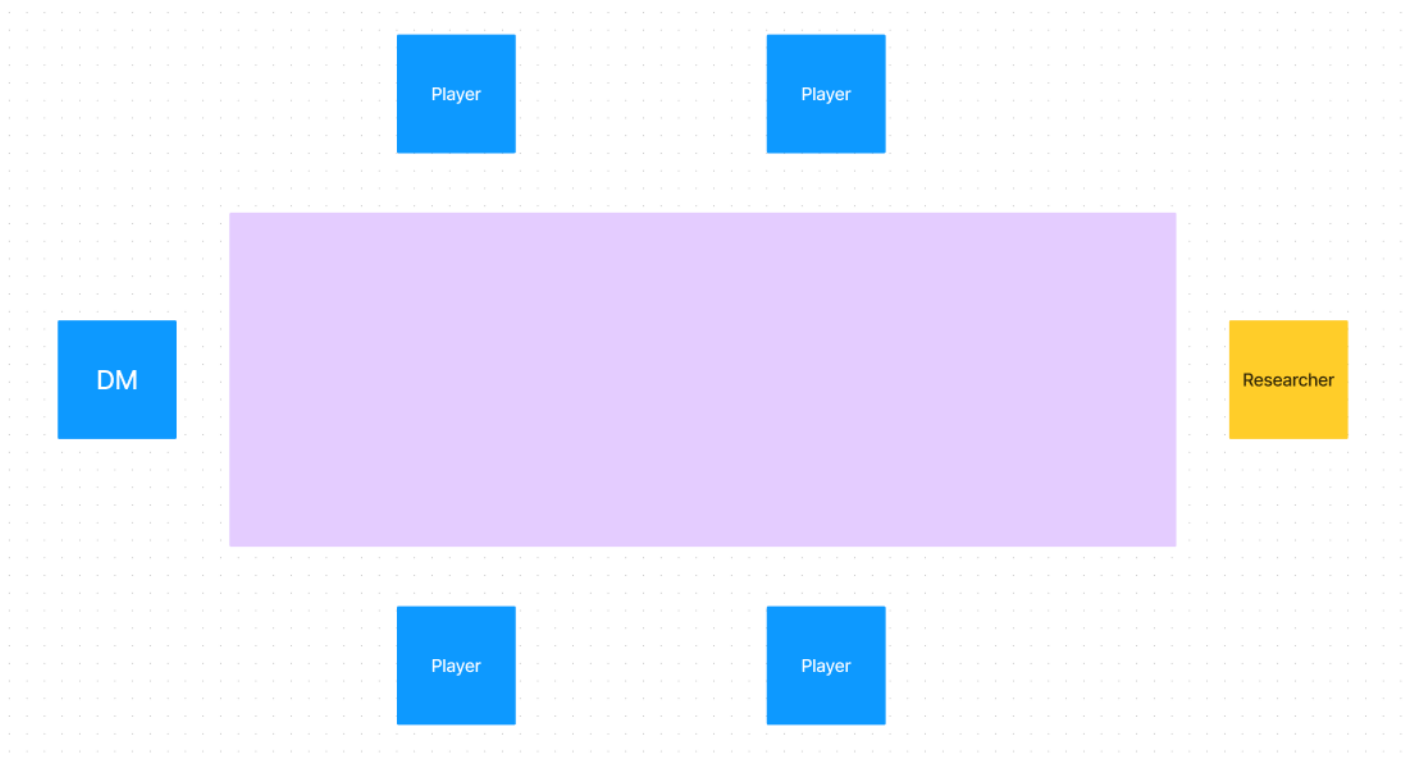
Figure 7.1.1.1: Experimental setup

7.1.2 Participant Process

The testing procedure began with group formation, where players decided on roles for the testing procedure. DM roles were voluntary; if no one volunteered, the most experienced participant was chosen, though this was not needed as all DMs were voluntary. Following the distribution of roles, participants provided input based on their roles. Players filled in their character's age, name, race, class, origin, alignment, and playstyle, as shown in Figure 7.1.2.1:

```
age, name, race, class, origin, alignment, playstyle
example: 30, Uri, Half-Elf, Rogue, Criminal, Chaotic Neutral, Sneaky
```

Figure 7.1.2.1: Parameters provided to players before generation

The DM provided preferences for the campaign with input from the players. Changes could be made until 24 hours before the session to allow time for generation, formatting, and printing of materials. The final game materials were sent to participants at least 12 hours prior to the session.

On the testing day, participants received a physical informed consent form and a briefing document, along with a paper copy of their respective generated materials. Once all

participants were present and had completed the documents, a general briefing was given. The test session included a pre-game survey, a D&D game session, a post-game survey, and a focus group.

The pre-game survey [Appendix 3], taking 5-10 minutes, gathered initial measurements on player experience, interest level, perceived difficulty in learning D&D, perceived entry barriers, confidence in role-playing, character creation, rule interpretation, and campaign management. After the survey, a campaign checklist was completed with everyone's input to set expectations. The checklist included items such as maximum game length, PG rating, custom rules or potential triggers.

This was followed by a D&D game session conducted using the generated materials [Appendix 2]. However, the participants were not limited to the generated game materials, and were free to use any other generated materials they desired. There was no participation or intervention on the part of the researcher, the role was entirely observational. The DM was notified occasionally of the time left based on the time limit agreed by everyone. Once the time limit was reached, the game session would be stopped, and the next part of the test procedure would begin. However, all games managed to conclude in time for the next part. The average game length was ~ 2h 30 min

The post-game survey [Appendix 4], similar to the pre-game survey, measured changes in the variables and gathered suggestions or complaints. It included additional long-answer questions regarding frustrations, suggestions, and the likelihood of using such a tool in the future. Following the survey, a semi-structured focus group was conducted to gain deeper insights into the participants' experiences. This approach allowed for richer data collection and a more comprehensive understanding of the user experience, leveraging group dynamics to build on responses and generate new ideas. This focus group [Appendices 6, 7] also allowed for gathering any information that might have been omitted from the survey.

7.1.3 Design and Analysis

A thematic analysis was chosen due to the project's nature and the evaluation focus, making it infeasible to conduct enough tests for significant statistical conclusions. However, some quantitative metrics were measured to compare before and after using the system.

Inductive coding was used for data analysis. This method creates codes based on collected data, allowing for labels to arise from the data itself. This approach is valuable for exploring complex phenomena without imposing pre-existing notions, providing a nuanced understanding. This participant-centred method ensures that findings are rooted in the data and not imposed by external codes.

Moreover, due to the nature of the study requiring a significant time investment on the part of the participants, and the limited availability of participants willing to dedicate such time, the groups could not be randomised; instead, they were formed based on the availability of the

testers – the effect of this is that in some groups, the players were previously acquainted with each other, which could have had the effect that players were more comfortable with each other, which could have led to richer roleplay sessions.

7.2 Study Demographics

The user study took place across three separate test sessions, each with a different number of participants. Each group had exactly one DM, with the rest of the participants being players. The groups were composed as follows:

Participant	Role in Testing	Previous Experience
Participant 1	Dungeon Master	1-5 sessions
Participant 2	Player	20+ sessions
Participant 3	Player	20+ sessions
Participant 4	Player	1-5 sessions

Table 7.2.1: Group 1 information

Participant	Role in Testing	Previous Experience
Participant 1	Dungeon Master	20+ sessions
Participant 2	Player	20+ sessions
Participant 3	Player	11-20 sessions
Participant 4	Player	6-10 sessions
Participant 5	Player	1-5 sessions

Table 7.2.2: Group 2 information

Participant	Role in Testing	Previous Experience
Participant 1	Dungeon Master	6-10 sessions
Participant 2	Player	1-5 sessions
Participant 3	Player	none
Participant 4	Player	none
Participant 5	Player	none
Participant 6	Player	none

Table 7.2.3: Group 3 information

For analysis purposes, the experience categories were grouped as follows: 0-10 sessions were considered low experience, 11-20 sessions as medium experience, and 20+ sessions as high experience. This resulted in the following distribution across participants:
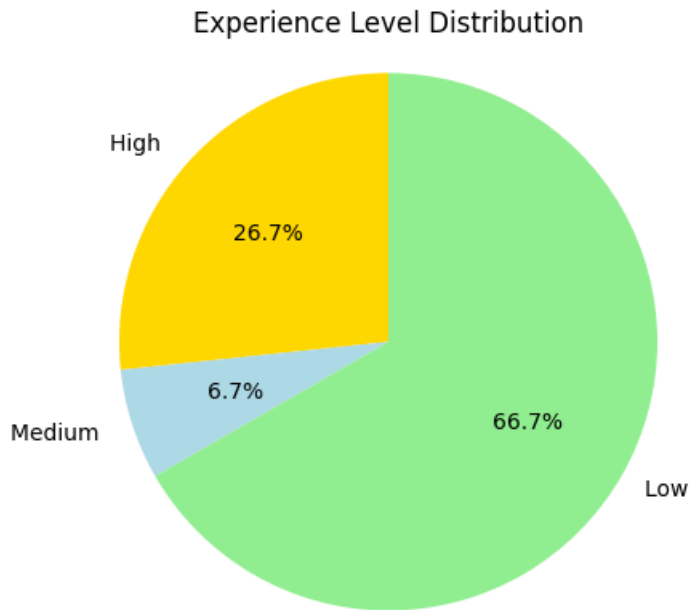
Figure 7.2.1: D&D experience level among participants

This distribution, while not ideal for a study targeting D&D novices, still allows for valid conclusions, with 66% of participants having low D&D experience. Additionally, since all D&D players start off as novices, high-experience insights remain valuable. To be noted that the analysis will focus primarily on players and dungeon masters with low experience levels.

Role	Experience Level	Data Points
Dungeon Master	High	1
Dungeon Master	Low	2
Player	High	3
Player	Medium	1
Player	Low	8

Table 7.2.4: User study data points

7.3 System Weaknesses

Two general system weaknesses were identified: the generated material may contain errors or can sometimes be vague.

Errors in the generated material were of two types: factual inaccuracies and missing information. Factual inaccuracies, compared to existing D&D lore and information, require proofreading and correction. Missing details necessitate extra improvisation by the players. Participants noted that errors in character sheets were less significant compared to errors in the campaign. As one participant mentioned, *"The mistakes are also not the worst, because if you make a character for the first time then you also have mistakes in the character sheet."*

Generated material also sometimes lacked clarity, were unintuitive, or poorly connected to previous campaign materials. This issue was more pronounced in generations with more complex campaigns descriptions. For example, some quests were introduced abruptly, and the motivations or reasons behind actions were not always clear. One participant noted *"You know, we're thrown into the center and suddenly, you know, the main quest is given to us right in front of our nose without explanation"*

Some generated encounters also lacked sufficient detail for immediate use, requiring extra preparation from the DM. This was more likely in campaigns with an exploration theme; for example, one DM remarked *"I searched for them [the solutions], because it only says solve puzzle."* Additionally, the solutions for some encounters varied in specificity and relevance, as noted by a participant: *"A lot of the encounters had a number of ways to solve them, and some of those were very unintuitive."*

Errors in character creation, while potentially minor, have less impact than errors in the campaign. Conversely, campaign errors can disrupt the storyline and require extra preparation time. It has been noticed that experienced DMs adapt more easily to these errors and maintain game flow, while less experienced DMs might struggle, leading to disruptions as they pause to re-read and search for solutions.
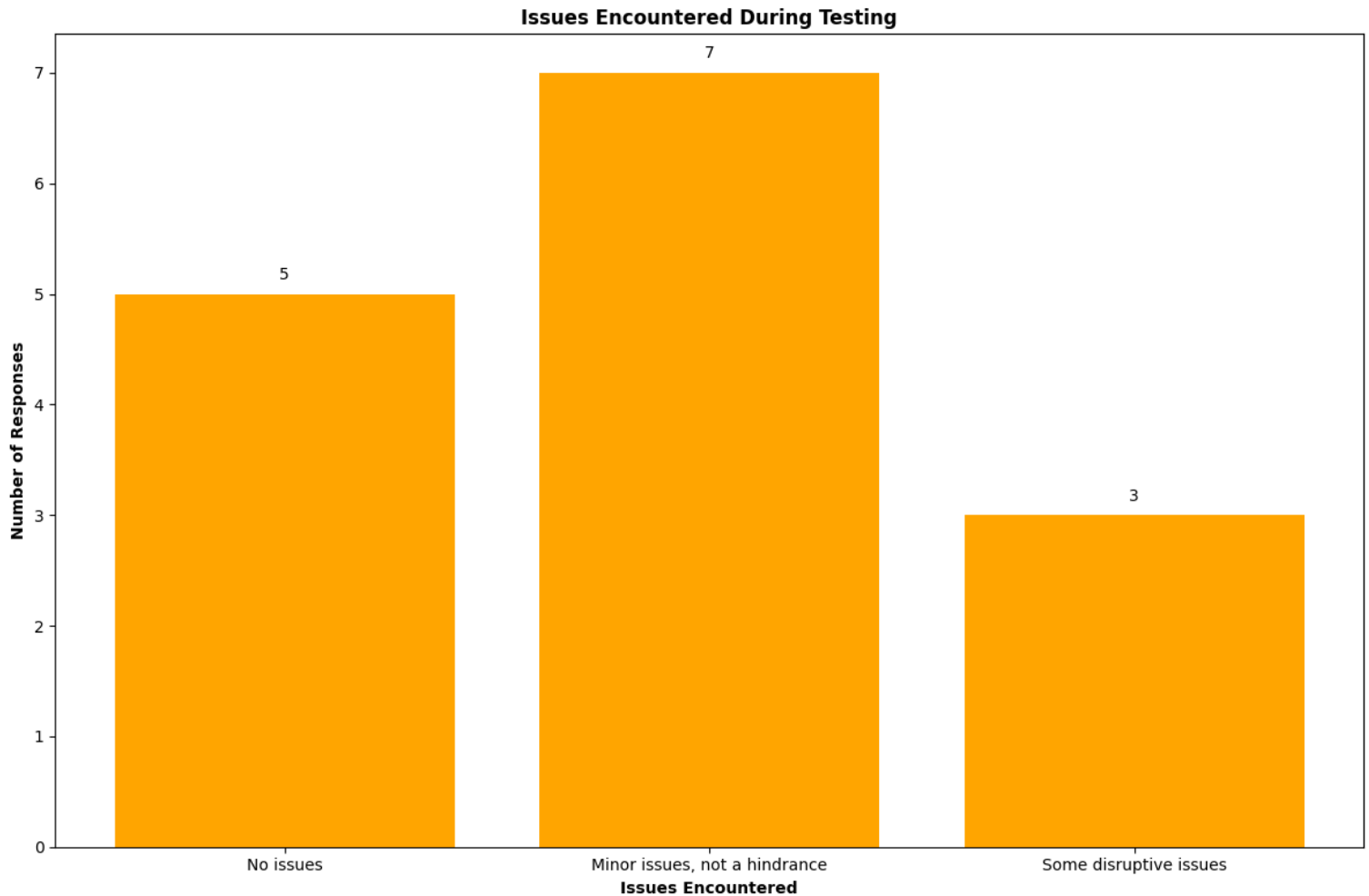
Figure 7.3.1: Severity of issues encountered with generated materials during testing

As shown in Figure 7.2.1.1, the majority of participants experienced minor issues that were not a hindrance, closely followed by participants that experienced no issues, indicating a generally positive testing experience. The presence of some disruptive issues, although less frequent, suggests that there are still areas that could benefit from improvement.

7.4 System Strengths

The main strengths of the system, as identified from the focus group transcriptions, include reducing mental load and preparation time, improving game understanding, providing learning opportunities, inspiring personal creativity, increasing confidence in abilities, and offering customizability.

Participants appreciated the reduced mental load associated with using the system compared to starting a new campaign from scratch. One participant noted, *"I didn't have to think about the stats or even think about the personality traits of the character too much. Like to pick that myself, that takes so much time and mental power and I can't choose."* This was particularly

significant for character creation, where participants felt that assistance was especially useful for novice players, due to it being a significant entry barrier to D&D: "*But I think in that sense this really does help because if you want to start playing D&D and then the first thing you're met with is OK, now fill in this math. I think that is the biggest problem. But if you just get this and it's like, OK, what do you want to play as if somebody was standing next to you and like walking you through. Yeah, that's a big offloading.*"

The system also helped reduce preparation time for DMs: *"Yes, I think this works. [...] Works just being able to get started playing without having to do the math. Helps also with DMing. This way you don't have to get lost in all the DM videos where they say build the world, build a city, think of how the economy works..."*

Participants also noted that the generated material contributed to an improved understanding of the game and provided learning opportunities. One participant said, *"But the sheets actually helped me a lot. It was very easy to understand and I liked it overall."* Another added, *"So it gives good GM experience for changing stories."* Novice participants appreciated the additional general and customised information, mentioning the usefulness of having these overviews: *"You can use things like this until you are more confident in your knowledge of D&D rules and all the stuff that can happen in the campaign"*.

Some players noted that the system might not directly teach D&D but could help players start playing, which is equally valuable: *"I think that not as a purpose of learning D&D. Not the greatest, but it gets you to learn all the other things except for character creation. A little bit. But as a way to introduce people to D&D. Think it's pretty good."* Another participant added, *"I think it would get you to the table and I think that's the most important one."* These participants emphasised the importance of gaining game experience for learning D&D, and that the system could lower barriers for new players to start playing.

Some participants simply appreciated the generated materials, citing the system's potential to inspire or motivate them for other projects. One participant stated, *"I want to do an actual campaign now."* Another added, *"I just have random inspiration for other stuff."* These remarks indicate that even if the system does not produce perfect game materials, it can still generate interesting scenarios or environments that may serve as a solid foundation for other campaigns or personal projects.

Significantly, testers reported increased confidence in their abilities after using the generated materials. They noted that being given a character background and advice boosted their confidence in roleplaying: *"I wouldn't have made such a thing, because there is something sort of restrictive about sharing your own ideas and then if it doesn't stick with the group, it's you're kind of left alone. So I'm being given something and playing with it as opposed to, look at what I made and I think for a lot of players that would help."* Users felt that, while the story was relatively simple, it allowed for development at a comfortable pace: *"The simpler story made me feel more comfortable to actually do stuff in the game and just explore my options."* Another participant added, *"Personally, for me it went from zero to hero [the*

confidence]. I mean, yeah, I definitely would feel much more confident in myself if I was to play in a D&D campaign again, because now I feel much more familiar with the game mechanics and how it works".

Lastly, players appreciated the customizability of the campaign setting, compared to other existing starter adventures. One participant noted, *"I really liked how much different it was, for a first level adventure [...] And this one on the story side felt really different, which something I really did like, like it felt way more unpredictable"* Another participant remarked, *"I have more freedom than I would expect from the first view on it".* The customizability of an AI-based system might prevent the repetition often seen in D&D campaigns, where different groups end up playing through the same scenarios. By providing a more tailored experience, the system ensures that each gaming session can stand out, increasing replay value: "*So this is a good way to avoid everyone playing the same story."* One participant noted, *"It really doesn't shine as much in numbers, which is kind of expected from AI, but it really does shine in creativity."* Regarding the quality of the generated campaign, one participant remarked: *"Yeah, I actually didn't think that at first that that campaign was made by AI. I assumed in the middle that it's probably AI, but it felt quite natural in a way"*

7.5 Effects on Participants

The highest increase in participant confidence was observed in role-playing abilities, closely followed by rule interpretation, with the smallest increase in character creation. This outcome was expected since characters are fully generated with character sheets, offering minimal player input and lacking generated material to explain character aspect choices.
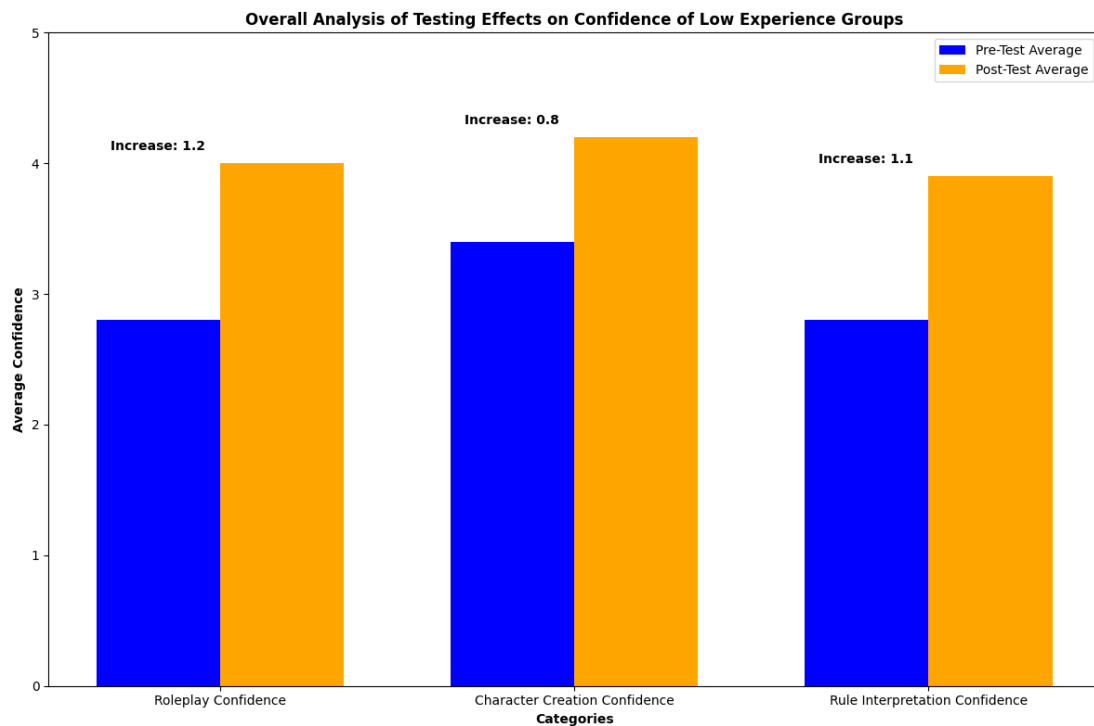
Figure 7.5.1: Before and after testing confidence levels of low experience participants

Analysis of the testing effects on the confidence of low experience participants suggested some improvements. As seen in Figure 7.5.1, the average roleplay confidence increased by 1.2 points, from 2.8 pre-test to 4 post-test. Character creation confidence saw a smaller increase of 0.8 points, rising from 3.4 to 4.2. Rule interpretation confidence improved by 1.1 points, from 2.8 to 3.9.

Roleplay Confidence
Before the test, low experience players had the lowest average roleplaying confidence, while high experience players had the highest, as shown in Figure 7.5.2. Interestingly, the pre-test average confidence level was higher for low experience DMs than for high experience DMs. Across all groups except one, there was an increase in roleplay confidence from pre-test to post-test, suggesting that the testing environment or provided materials could help in boosting participants' roleplaying confidence. There was no change in the high experience player group, indicating that these players were already confident in their roleplaying skills, and the testing process did not alter their confidence levels. Medium and low experience players showed improvements in confidence, with the most substantial increase observed in low

experience players, suggesting that the testing process is particularly beneficial for those who initially have lower experience.
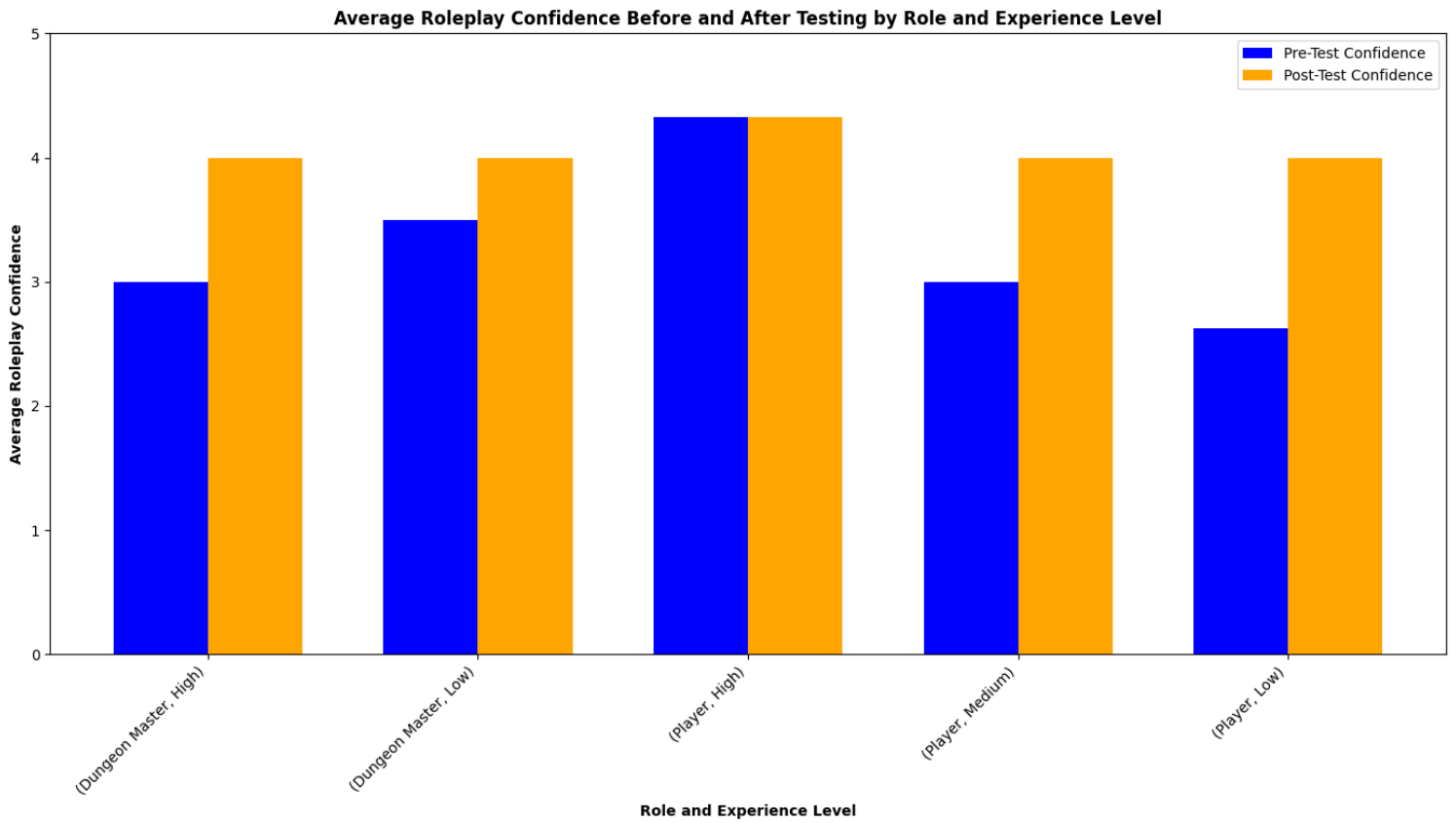
Figure 7.5.2: Average role-playing confidence, grouped by testing role and experience level
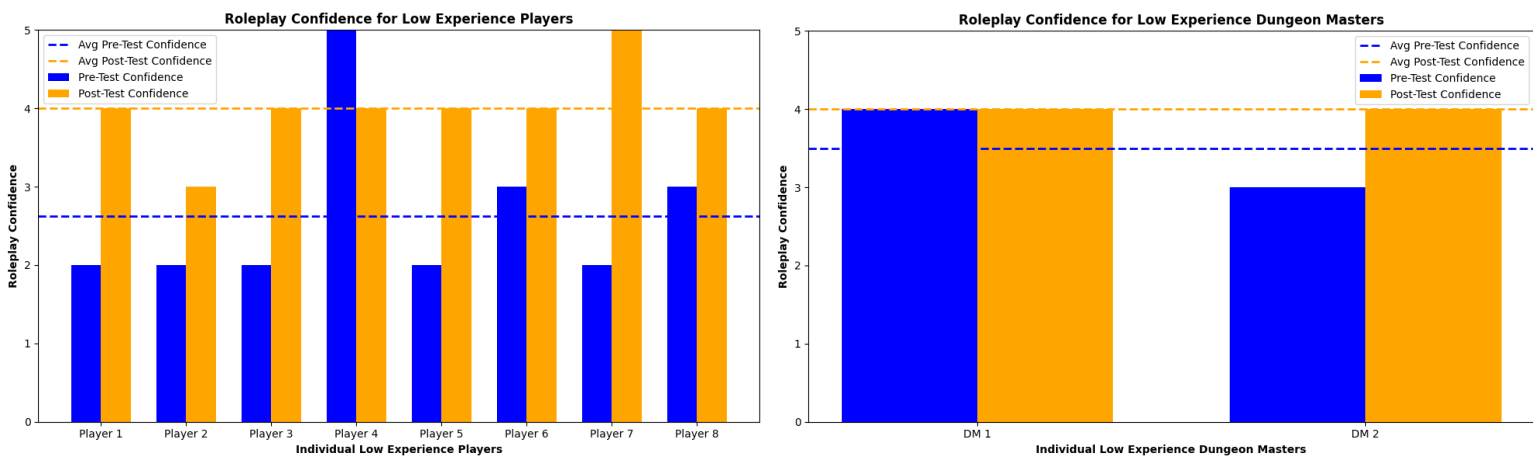
Figures 7.5.3 & 7.5.4: Individual role-playing confidence for low experience players & DMs

For low experience participants, DMs saw an increase from 3.5 pre-test to 4 post-test, and players experienced an increase from 2.625 pre-test to 4 post-test. Pre-test roleplay confidence scores for low experience players ranged from 2 to 5, indicating different initial confidence levels. Most players had a relatively low initial confidence, with five participants at confidence level 2 and two at level 3, demonstrating the need for an intervention to boost their confidence. Post-test confidence scores were relatively consistent, ranging from 3 to 5, suggesting that the testing or learning process had a levelling effect, bringing most players to a higher confidence level. Seven out of eight players experienced an increase in roleplay confidence, while one experienced a decrease. The increase was expected, but the decrease might be due to overinflated expectations or a higher perceived confidence that was adjusted during actual gameplay.

For low experience DMs, one Dungeon Master showed no change in confidence, indicating that their roleplaying confidence level was not affected by the use of the generated materials or testing environment, while another Dungeon Master showed an increase in confidence from 3 to 4, suggesting a positive impact from the testing environment or generated materials. Pooling together low experience DMs and players, eight participants gained an increase in roleplaying confidence, one remained unchanged, and one decreased. This overall trend suggests a positive effect of the system in enhancing roleplaying confidence, particularly for users with initially lower confidence levels.

Character Creation Confidence

The pre-test and post-test character creation confidence of each participant was measured to determine whether the system could boost their confidence in this area. Participants rated their confidence on a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating "not confident at all" and 5 indicating "very confident." Notably, only three out of the five groups showed a change in character creation confidence; both high experience DMs and players did not show any changes, potentially indicating their existing confidence in this area. Low experience players presented a relatively high starting value for character creation confidence (3.625), while the lowest pre-test values were observed in categories with a small number of data points: low experience DM (2) and medium experience player (1).
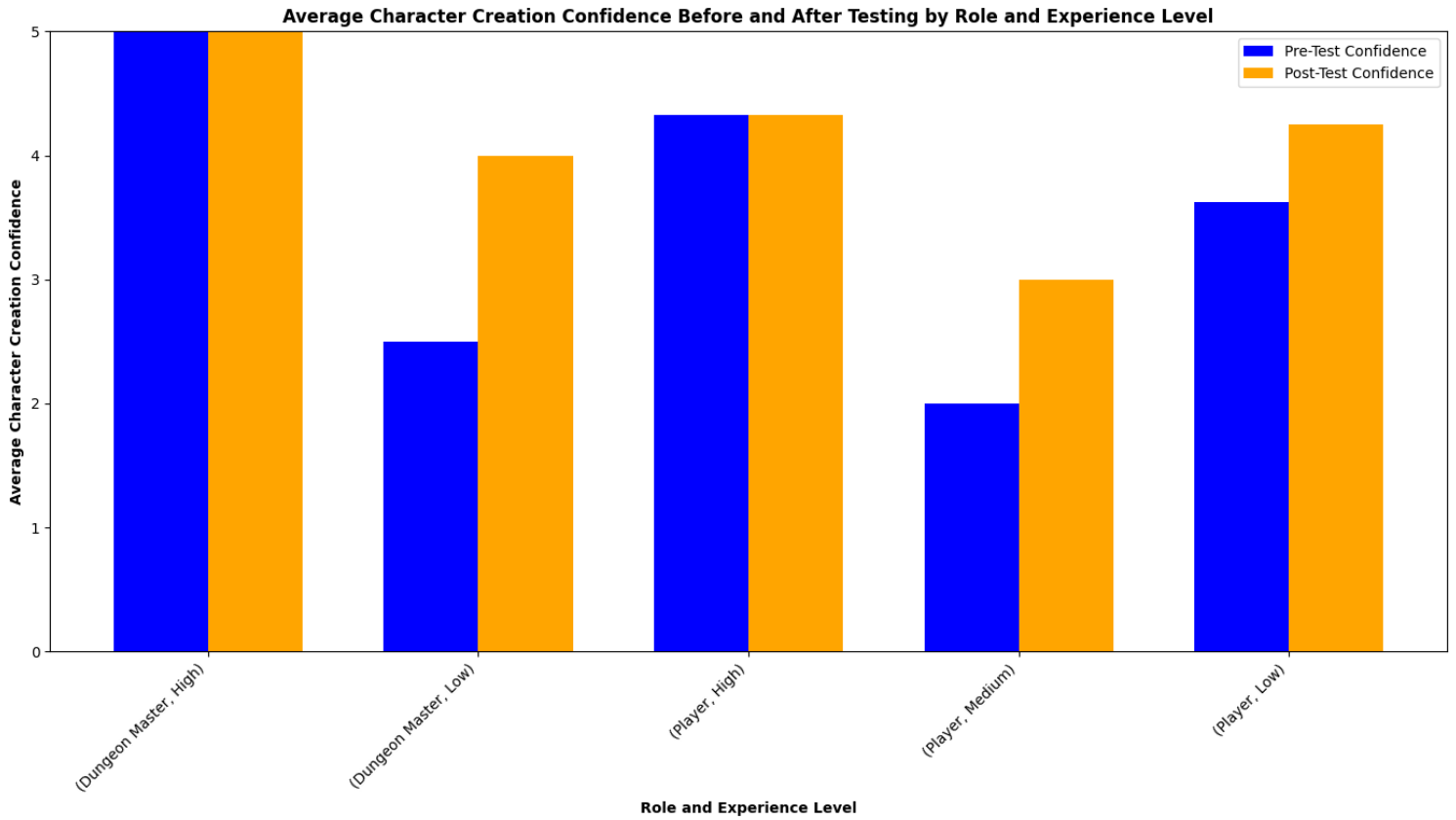
Figure 7.5.5: Average character creation confidence, grouped by testing role and experience level

The changes in character creation confidence were as follows: low experience DMs increased from 2.5 pre-test to 4 post-test; medium experience players increased from 2 pre-test to 3 post-test; and low experience players increased from 3.625 pre-test to 4.25 post-test. Based on the pre-test confidence levels, and excluding categories with a low number of data points, it might be argued that character creation might not be as significant a factor as previously thought.
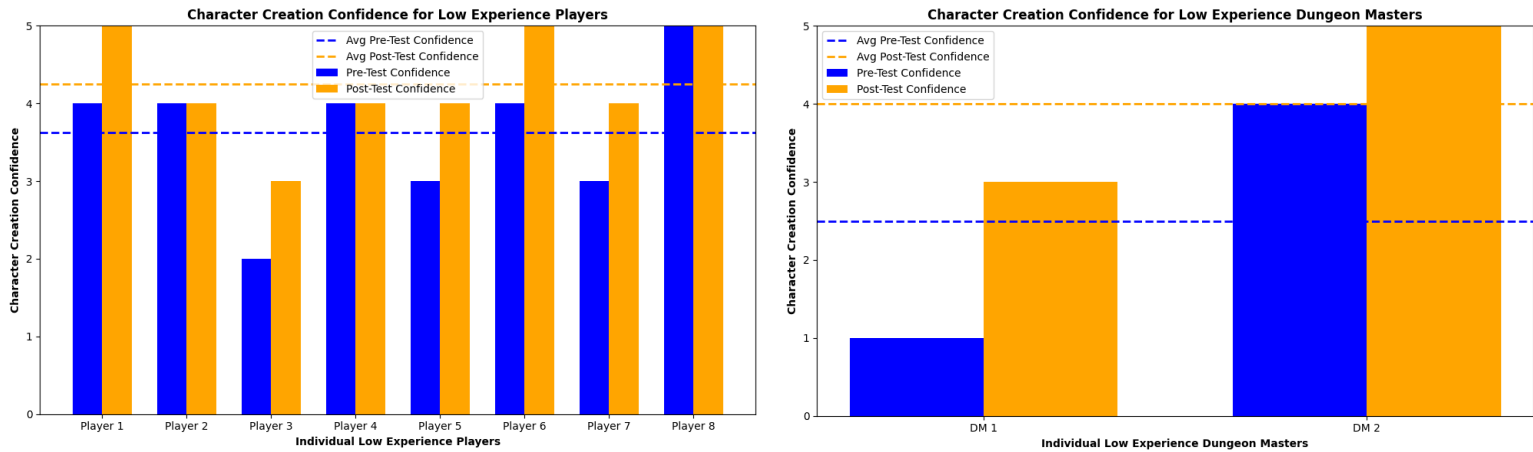
Figures 7.5.6 & 7.5.7: Individual character creation confidence for low experience players & DMs

For low experience players, most had moderate initial confidence (3 or 4), indicating that work in this area might not be as crucial as other parts of D&D. Initial confidence levels were quite high, with an average of 3.625. Across all participants, there were either increases (five participants) or no changes (three participants) in character creation confidence; no decreases were observed. Any increases in character creation confidence were just by 1 point.

For low experience DMs, both experienced an increase in confidence in character creation. There was significant variation in pre-test confidence levels, with one Dungeon Master starting with a very low confidence level (1) and the other with a higher level (4). The participant with a lower initial confidence level experienced a bigger confidence increase than the participant with a higher starting confidence level.

Overall, by pooling DMs and players into the low experience group, seven participants experienced an increase in character creation confidence, and three participants experienced no change in confidence level. This could indicate that the system may improve confidence in character creation.

Rule Interpretation Confidence

The pre-test and post-test character rule interpretation confidence of each participant was measured to determine whether the system could boost their confidence in this area. Participants rated their confidence on a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating "not confident at all" and 5 indicating "very confident." Similar to character creation confidence, only three out of five groups experienced any change in confidence levels for rule interpretation abilities.
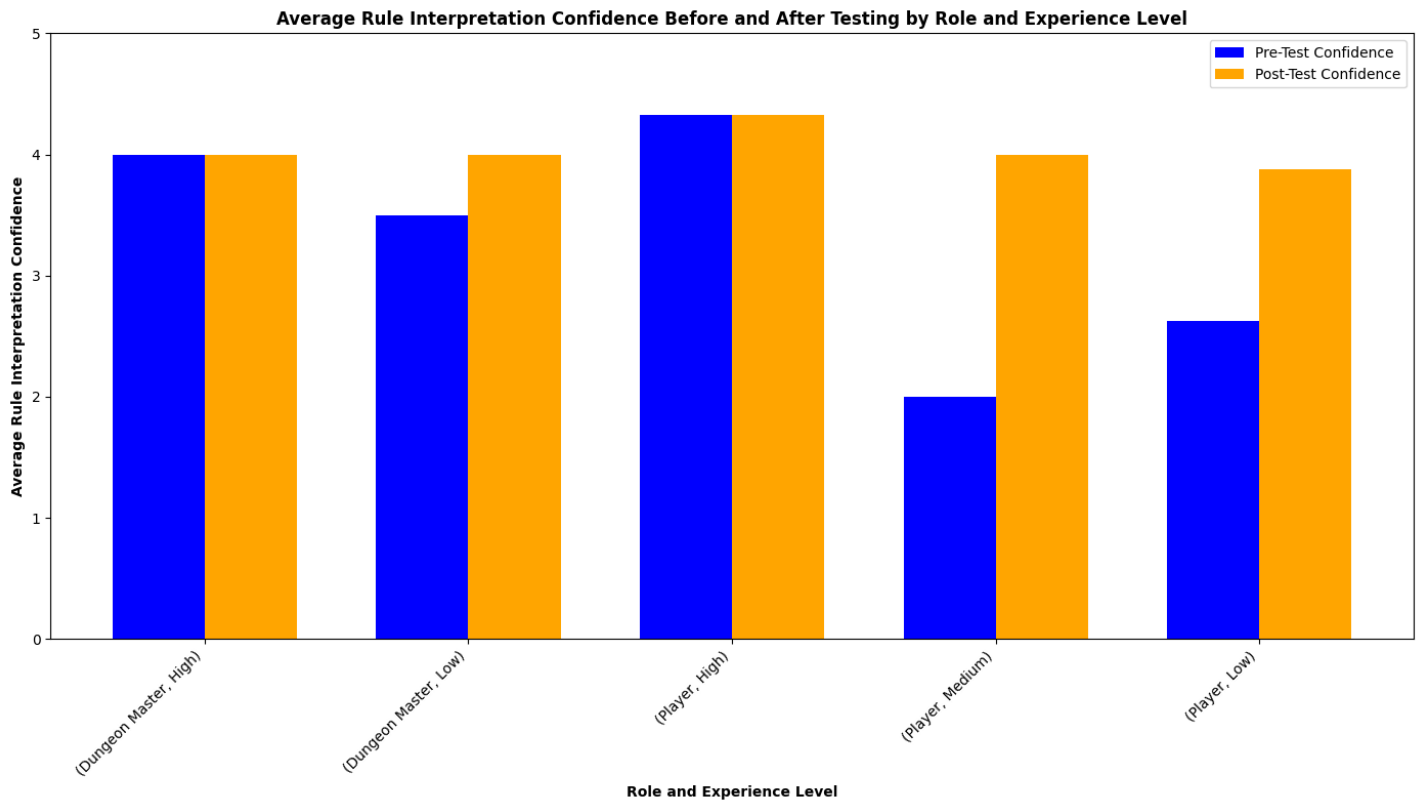
Figure 7.5.8: Average rule interpretation confidence, grouped by testing role and experience level

As seen in Figure 7.5.8, groups with high experience levels did not show any changes, suggesting their confidence levels were unaffected by the generated materials. The only improvements were observed in low and medium experience groups, indicating that the system might be viable only for users with lower experience levels.
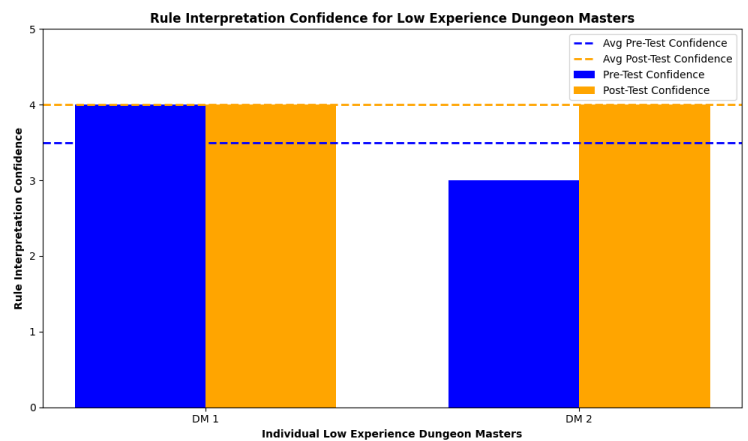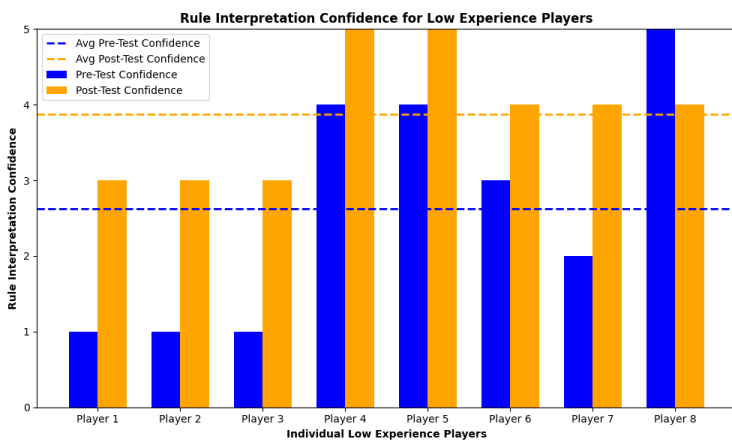
Figures 7.5.9 & 7.5.10: Individual rule interpretation confidence for low experience players & DMs

For low experience players, seven out of eight participants experienced an increase in rule interpretation confidence, while one participant experienced a decrease. The average pre-test confidence was 2.625, and the average post-test confidence was 3.875, marking an increase of 1.25 points. The range of starting confidence levels varied significantly (from 1 to 5), but later equalised after testing (3 to 5). Notably, one participant showed a slight decrease from 5 to 4, possibly due to unrealistic expectations of their own abilities being adjusted during the game.

For low experience DMs, one experienced no change in rule interpretation confidence, while the other experienced a 1-point increase. The average pre-test confidence for low experience Dungeon Masters was 3.5, and the average post-test confidence was 4. There was minor variation in pre-test confidence levels, with one Dungeon Master starting at 4 and the other at 3. The higher average starting confidence for this category might due to the fact that the volunteering DMs previously had experience as players.

Overall, when pooling low experience players and DMs, eight participants experienced an increase in rule interpretation confidence, one participant experienced no change, and one participant experienced a decrease. This might indicate that the system could help with confidence in rule interpretation.

Perceived Learning Complexity

To assess the perceived complexity of learning Dungeons & Dragons (D&D), participants rated the complexity on a 5-point scale, where 1 indicated "very simple" and 5 represented "very complex." Our goal was to determine whether the system could decrease the perceived complexity of the game.

When examining the average perceived learning complexity, as shown in Figure 7.5.11, most groups showed a reduction of perceived game complexity post-test. This might suggest that the testing process or the materials used clarified concepts or made the learning process seem less complex. However, external factors, such as help from other players, familiarity with game concepts through play, or information from other sources, might also have influenced these results.

Interestingly, DMs with high game experience had the highest perceived learning complexity on average, possibly due to their awareness of additional intricacies or rules unknown to less experienced players. However, this group contained only one data point, so results may vary with a larger sample size. Players with low experience had the second-highest perceived complexity, which was expected.
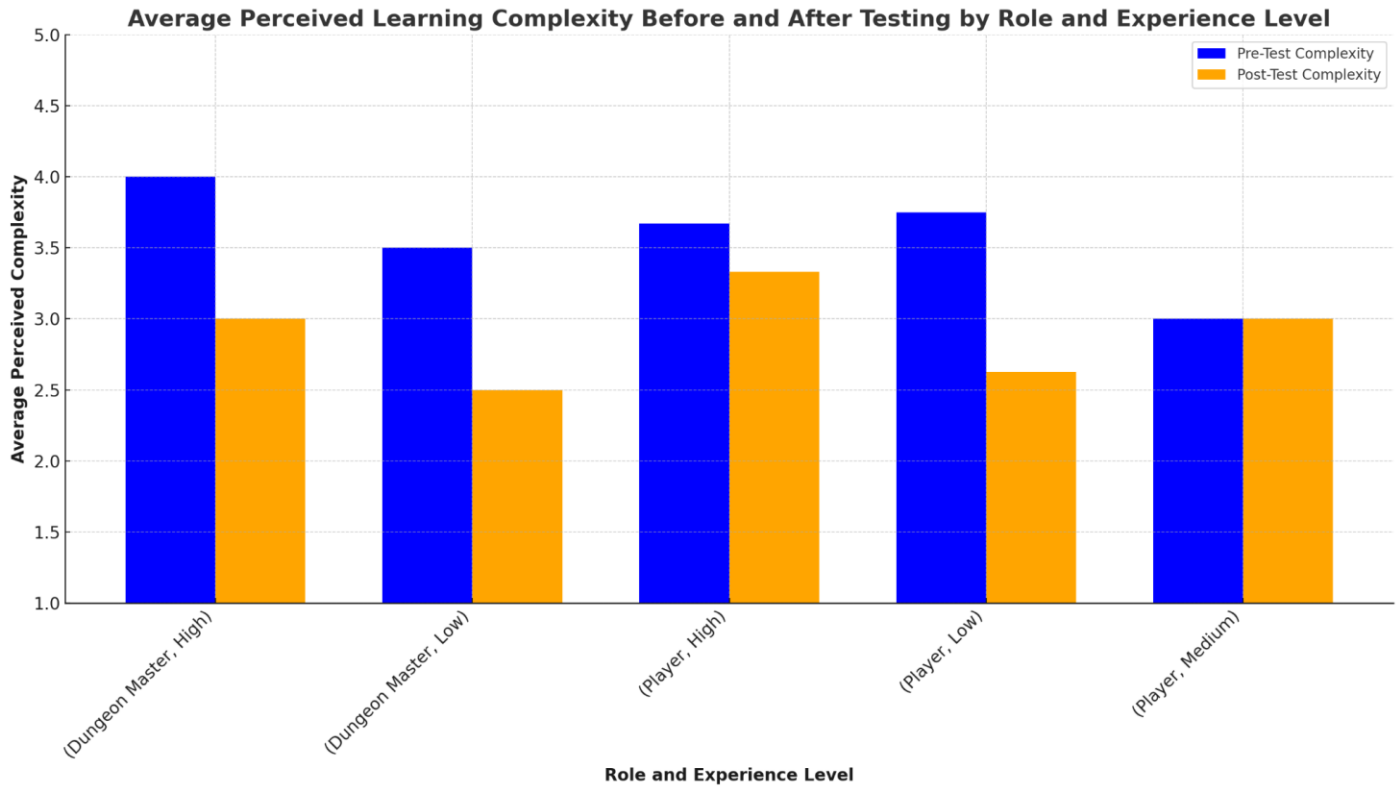
Figure 7.5.11: Average perceived learning complexity, grouped by testing role and experience level
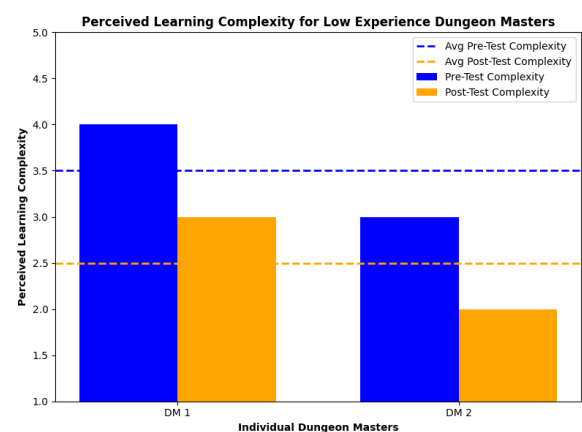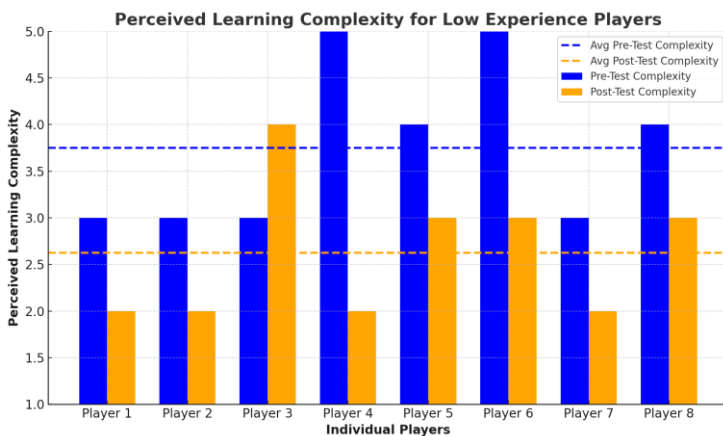
Figures 7.5.12 & 7.5.13: Perceived learning complexity for low experience players & DMs

Focusing specifically on low-experience players, the individual pre-test complexity ratings ranged from 3 to 5, and the post-test ratings ranged from 2 to 4. Seven out of eight participants experienced a decrease in perceived learning complexity post-test, indicating that the testing process helped clarify game aspects. One participant experienced an increase in

complexity post-test, suggesting possibly increased uncertainties. Overall, the general trend might suggest that the generated learning material made D&D appear less complex to low-experience players.

For low-experience Dungeon Masters, both individuals showed a reduction in perceived learning complexity from pre-test to post-test. Additionally, their campaign management confidence increased, as shown in Figure 7.5.14. The average pre-test confidence was 1.5, which rose to 3.5 post-test, with both individuals experiencing a 2-point increase. This could indicate that the test session environment or materials provided better tools, knowledge, or reassurance in their ability to manage campaigns.
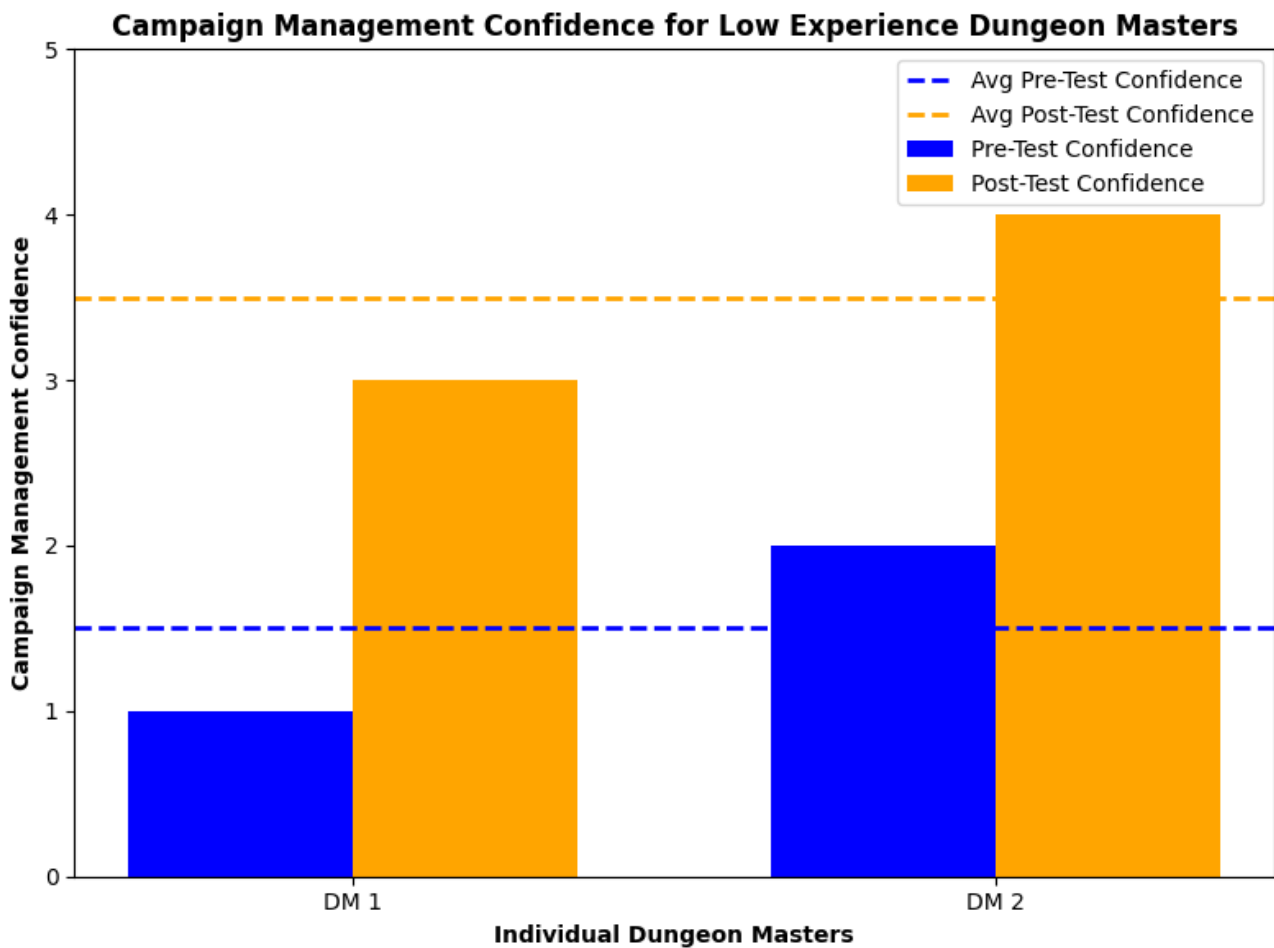
Figures 7.5.14: Campaign management confidence for low experience DMs

7.6 Appreciated Features

The most appreciated features of the system, as identified by participants, are character creation, narrative and encounter generation, and the provision of supporting information.

Participants valued the complete character generation process, highlighting how it removes significant entry barriers for new players: *"For the first time playing it's really nice to have a pre generated character because combing through all the information is a lot of work for the first time.".* One other participant stated: *"It cut the preparation time a lot which was my main concern with trying out a new game I'd never played before".*

Some users considered the narrative generation to be the most useful element, with the system being able to generate interesting world details: *"The background had overlap with another character which was nice."* Some participants, especially those with lower experience levels, found the supporting information to be a very useful inclusion in the generated materials; It allowed for *"Quick access to information and easy to comprehend summaries"* and provided *"Descriptions of abilities, spells and features (their usual DnD description might feel a bit too complicated)".*

7.7 Diversity in Interactions & Player Freedom

Participants reported varying levels of perceived freedom and diversity in the generated materials. The emerging themes were: a desire for more freedom and diversity in interactions, satisfaction with the existing level of freedom, and appreciation for the promotion of novel and unpredictable scenarios.

Some participants, particularly those with higher experience levels, expressed a desire for greater diversity in the generated materials. They felt that the encounters could benefit from more variety and depth: *"I would expect more than one combat encounter in a oneshot."* and

Some participants, particularly those with higher experience levels, expressed a desire for greater diversity in the generated materials. They felt that the encounters could benefit from more variety and depth. One participant mentioned, *"I would expect more than one combat encounter in a oneshot"* while another noted, *"It felt a bit like, you know, we were getting the same encounter. But, you know, 3 flavors".* Additionally, a participant shared, *"I preferred maybe a bit more planning that we would like to get some, maybe information."* Overall, it was observed that players of all experience levels prefer a mix of all encounter types, covering all three pillars of D&D (combat, exploration, and social interaction), rather than focusing on a single playstyle as initially hypothesised.

Other participants felt that the system provided an adequate amount of freedom, allowing them to explore various aspects of the game. One participant remarked, *"I have more freedom than I would expect from the first view on it"* and another added, *"I think the amount of inputs we have right now was quite perfect."* The starting level was considered appropriate, with

higher levels potentially causing confusion due to the increased number of choices. As one participant explained, *"Level 3 you already have many choices. The reason that level one has so few things is just because it is the simplest, and most intros are given at level one, because then you're not overwhelmed by abilities."* Some participants even felt that the system might offer too much freedom and suggested that further restrictions could be beneficial, noting, *"I think also in the prompts that you gave, like the things that we could fill in, a lot of those were not necessary."*

Several testers highlighted the system's potential to create novel scenarios for starter campaigns, which are typically very similar and do not always connect player characters in meaningful ways. One participant observed, "*So this is a good way to avoid everyone playing the same story"* and another appreciated the connection the system created between characters, saying, *"I also like that, uh, I didn't realize that you would have Yondala as well. So that's just the random god. [...] And the connection that that gave our characters, I think was pretty nice because I immediately felt like our characters, aside from also being halflings, had at least some kind of connection already."* Participants noted that random campaigns elements, even if not entirely serious, can still work because players are generally accepting of unexpected developments. One participant reflected this sentiment: *"I do think in general D&D players are quite accepting of just random stuff happening, which is also sometimes because the DMs improvise sometimes very stupid, which is also very fun."*

7.8 Difficulty Level

Participants' feedback on the difficulty level of the generated encounters revealed three main themes: unbalanced encounters, the importance of party size, and appropriateness for beginners.

In the first two test sessions, participants frequently felt that the generated encounters were not properly balanced for the party. This often resulted in the generated monsters or antagonists being too powerful for the players to realistically defeat. One participant remarked, *"And then we finally get into combat and then we're like, I don't think we want to fight. This seems too strong."* Another added, *"I liked the story, but it was not power scaled correctly at all,"* while another noted, *"Definitely wasn't scaled properly for a first level."* The frustration with unbalanced encounters was further revealed by another participant: *"If you think about the range, the amount of users, can I just do that every turn? It's like frightened. Frightened. Frightened. You lose."*

Some participants highlighted that the number of party members is especially important for the encounters. The first test session had one participant missing, which might have influenced the difficulty of the encounters. One of these participants mentioned, *"Yeah, the final combat was too high, but that was only because we had three players, I think."* Another added, *"If we have four, it probably would have been doable."* In the third test session, the party consisted of five player characters, which might have made the encounters too easy for

the players. As one of those participants observed, *"And I think it's really built for a party of four, rather because they [the players] easily went through it."*

Modifications were made to the system prior to the third test session to ensure more balanced encounters. However, considering the larger party size of this session, it might have been too easy. One participant noted, *"I think it was quite easy, no one died. I think it was very beginner friendly."* Another added, *"I think it's still very beginner friendly, like it's not easy, it's not boring or something. It's not too easy. Just beginner friendly mostly and I think it works for the beginner campaigns."* A third participant simply stated, *"Yeah, I'd say it's easy."*. These observations suggest that encounters could be balanced on the easier side for novices, to prevent frustration and ensure game systems and mechanics are learned smoothly.

7.9 Campaign Structure

The participants generally found the story well-structured and easy to follow, which was particularly beneficial for beginners. One participant noted, *"In terms of just following the story, I found it very easy."* This simpler narrative helped players feel more comfortable exploring their options within the game, as highlighted by another participant: *"The simpler story made me feel more comfortable to actually do stuff in the game and just explore my options."* The campaign's flow was also appreciated: *"Yeah, I actually didn't think that at first that that campaign was made by AI. I assumed in the middle that it's probably AI, but it felt quite natural in a way."*

The timing of the campaign was deemed appropriate given the context, with one participant commenting, *"Yeah, but otherwise genuinely otherwise, one shots can take half the one shot just to get the party going. [...] So it was a good way to start."* Supporting materials were considered relevant and useful by novice players, especially during combat: *"Was definitely useful, especially with combat. While in combat I did check it a lot to see what my abilities were and like how I needed to move."*

Despite the overall positive feedback, some participants noted that the campaign took longer than anticipated. One participant observed, *"I think it proceeded really nice, although it took quite a bit more time than expected."*. One low-experience DM expressed that additional preparation time would have been beneficial: *"I think I could have adjusted this story by making more time go for the guards so they could acquire the weapon [...] I think that would have been a better story but oh well."*

Some participants felt that parts of the narrative were too abrupt, leading to a rushed feeling in the story's progression. For instance, one participant mentioned, "*It felt a bit too sudden. Like we're suddenly in the middle of the city, you know, approaching the city and suddenly getting things explained."* Another added, *"The entire start of a random old dude being like, OK, so you are a party now is a bit…"*. Some users, particularly one of the low-experience

DMs, found the quantity of information overwhelming and suggested that it could be better structured. They mentioned *"It may have some suggestions in some pages, but I couldn't really keep track of them. I think it would be way easier to have just a bullet point from each character like. Most important tips or something like this on a very reachable starting page. Because it was more in a very narrative way of putting it."* They further added, "*I feel like the information is good, but it's a little bit too slow to use during the gameplay itself."* The suggestion for more concise bullet points was common among testers: *"Bullet points would be nice to make it more accessible during game play [...] still there was a lot of information and it only started working when I made my own bullet points."* While some participants appreciated the detailed descriptions, others felt that cutting down on these in favour of a more concise structure would be beneficial. One participant remarked, *"Yeah, there was indeed for the start a bit of flavor that was more confusing than additive."*

There was a noticeable split in preference between standard D&D character sheets and more beginner-friendly formats. Some players preferred the traditional sheets, with one participant saying, *"Actually like this one because it taught me a lot. I think I've played with both of them, but I like this one better."* Another participant supported this sentiment: "*Yeah, I personally prefer this one because it's the one I've always used."*

Conversely, others suggested that character sheets designed for beginners would be more appropriate: *"There are also character sheets that are meant for beginners because this is the default D&D sheet."* Another participant added, *"You also have sheets that help with combat order and things you can do and that might also be nice to include in such a beginner bundle."*

The D&D styling format received positive feedback, one participant stating, *"I just want to add. I love that it's actually D&D format. Like it's fonts and stuff. It brings a lot. Yeah, it does actually, like add a lot."*

As shown in Figure 7.9.1, the majority of players found the game materials to be on the coherent side of the spectrum, with 11 players rating the materials towards coherent, 3 players giving neutral ratings, and 1 player rating the materials towards incoherent. The most dominant rating was "somewhat coherent," indicating that most players found the game materials generally good but not perfect. The small "somewhat incoherent" segment indicates that major issues with coherence were not common, but there is still room for improvement.
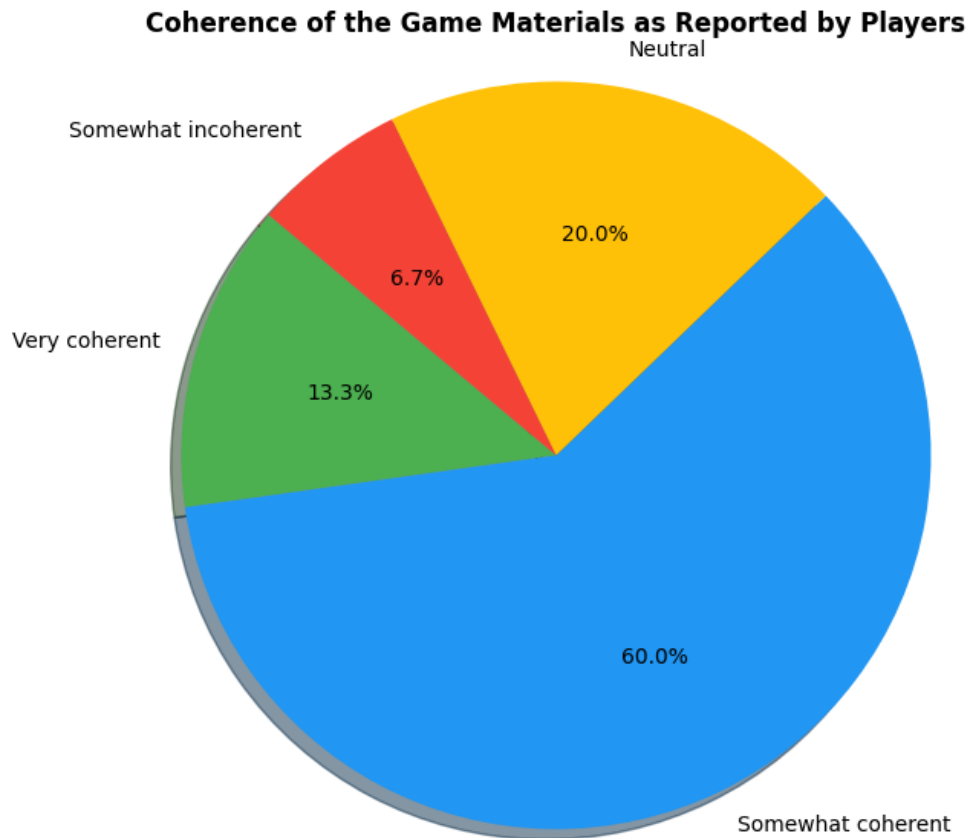
Figure 7.9.1: Coherence of game materials

To be noted, the coherence of the materials may also be influenced by the Dungeon Master's experience and ability to improvise; a DM with less experience and a lower ability to improvise may negatively affect the perceived coherence of the game materials.

7.10 Backstory Integration

The system generated custom character traits based on user input, which some players found surprising and engaging. For instance, one participant shared, *"I had bouncer insight."* This led to an interesting dynamic where players debated the trait's potential effects and usage situations. Another player noted, *"That was just you using your skill, right? It was not really in the campaign."* This kind of feature could enhance the connection between players and

their characters, sparking discussions about how such features could be integrated into gameplay.

Some participants reported feeling motivated by their character's generated backstory to behave in certain ways during the game. One player mentioned, *"I did find some extra motivation for my character to go on a quest to retrieve a magical artifact, because that's where my interest lies as a character."* This indicates that well-integrated backstories could influence players' in-game decisions and enhance their role-playing experience.

However, some participants experienced instances where their character's role was left unfulfilled due to unclear information in the DM-provided materials. One participant remarked, *"But like for example my character, he was basically on a quest to try and help to heal people and I have had 0 targets to heal. Heal the deer? No."* On a similar note, several participants noted that the integration of character backstories was often vague or missing crucial information. For instance, one player stated, "*And then also in the background there was like, yeah, make solutions to your biggest fear. But then I had to based on very much nothing I had to project what the biggest fear of the character would be."* Another added, *"Yeah, in general, integrating some of the character back stories in the documents can work, but is currently just not working very well [...] I feel like it's just trying to fit the back stories in instead of actually making them make sense.".* Generally, DMs expressed a desire for more detailed information about each character to facilitate better integration and storytelling: *"Yeah, I also didn't know that there was this short piece of text about your characteristics, but I knew nothing about any of you."*

Other participants tied the lack of backstory integration to the campaign's theme, suggesting that certain themes restrict the potential for integration. One player explained, "*I think it's also connected to a story of a ritual, and this adventure doesn't allow for much choice and you have to go to a ritual and fight the boss in the end."* Another added, *"Yeah, I don't think that in the story prompt there was much place to make huge decisions to begin with."* Some players felt that their backstory had only a minor impact on the storyline and would have liked more racial ties integrated into the narrative. One participant observed, *"It was some elements, but not much to be honest. The story didn't really make a big difference if I was a dragonborn or if I wasn't one."*

Despite limitations, testers felt that their decisions still mattered in certain aspects of the campaign and appreciated not feeling fully railroaded. One participant said, "*I think the decisions mattered in some ways, like in ways where for example, we could talk to people instead of fighting them."* Another added, *"Like we're mentioned and I don't know, just characteristics and it was nice and even as small machines, which don't really influence anything still feel more included in the story in a way."* This could indicate that while backstory integration could be improved, the system still allowed for meaningful player interactions and decision-making.

7.11 Physical vs Digital

Participants generally favoured physical materials over virtual solutions due to their ease of use. One participant noted, *"Yeah, yeah, it's so much easier to just use. That for sure."* The sentiment was supported by another user, who remarked *"Way easier than searching through tabs. Yeah."*.

The tactile nature of physical materials also pointed towards being more engaging than digital materials. One participant shared, *"I think it is more engaging."* Another explained "*But paper, again, gives much more atmosphere and vibe to the whole thing and just feels like the true old D&D, which people like a lot you know."* Additionally, the physical act of rolling dice was emphasised as important: *"But yeah, physical is way better and I even used the DND beyond the app and I like literally rolling the dice now and also as a DM, which I never experienced before, I like being sheltered, having my own thing here."*.

Participants also highlighted the potential distractions posed by digital materials. One mentioned, *"Yeah. No, but like if. I was doing an actual tabletop setting. The flick open really quick to see what I was doing, what my character was like somewhere and looking on my screen and trying to zoom out."* Another added, *"Because when I'm for example on my phone or my laptop I'm getting distracted constantly. And like it's easier to just put your phone aside and you just have everything that you need nearby."*. This could indicate that as hypothesised, physical game materials might be more appropriate for novice players, allowing for more focused game sessions with minimal distractions. Additionally, the physical materials were also seen as beneficial for community building and promoting social interaction. One participant observed, "*I think it is genuinely for. Literally just for getting people to play quickly, it's good."* Later on, they continued, *"This could allow FANAAT [University of Twente's Board Game association] to set up a one shot evening somewhere earlier in the year that you can use this. Set it up and play it basically in one evening, which I think is for getting new people into it."*

Despite the overall preference for physical materials, some participants acknowledged that virtual materials could be more suitable for complex situations. One participant explained, *"Yeah. The only reason I use virtual is because I use virtual more often is partially because I often play online, and when you already have a laptop, and secondly because. Often virtual is harder to lose in my opinion, and. Sometimes with the more complicated games. Virtual is easier because it calculates stuff."* Multiple participants suggested a hybrid approach, especially for dynamic game elements that frequently change, such as inventory or HP. One participant mentioned, "*It's not that easy to keep track of some certain things that are number-oriented because people constantly forget to write it and. Just remove it, etcetera, etcetera. But other than that, I definitely prefer physical materials."* Another added, *"I think what might work is like some hybrid approach where things which get changed a lot are electronic and things which are usually consistent are on paper."* Similarly, another participant noted, *"But for example, like health points or something. Constantly writing it down and then erasing it. You don't know where exactly to try it and keep track of this on the current character sheets. So, yeah, it's also for a hybrid approach."*

In general, time spent on devices during testing was quite low; they were used only in situations where a rule had to be clarified or a spell's/attacks description did not provide the desired information. No other supporting materials were used in the campaign (DM guide, Monster manual), although they were available nearby during testing. A standard DM screen was used, but participants reported that it would not be necessary for a starting campaign.

7.12 User Suggestions

For future development, users had multiple suggestions for making the product completer and more suitable for onboarding.

Firstly, participants emphasised the need for checking the accuracy of the generated materials. One participant suggested, *"It needs to double check itself to see if everything has been properly filled in, as many things were missing."* Another added, *"Let somebody double-check and edit any errors which might happen due to the generation.".* This may suggest that this role could be done automatically, or by one of the players with more game experience.

Some players also recommended simplifying the generated materials to make them more accessible. Suggestions included, *"Just have your back story summarized in a few parts"* and *"Bullet points would be nice to make it more accessible during gameplay."* One participant also mentioned, *"Use simplified character sheets. There are ones that have been designed to use with kids, which lowers the complexity,"* and another suggested using *"More accessible language."* in response to the fantasy-themed words generated by the system for flavourful descriptions.

Conversely, others preferred more detailed explanations and overviews of game information such as spells, stats, and D&D terms. One participant proposed improvements in structure, *"Maybe some referencing on the pages. Like you can find this point more detailed in there so I could not spend that much time navigating them."* Another suggested additional explanations, *"If there was a document accompanying this that's telling you like the numbers,"* while others called for *"More info about roleplaying"* and *"More explanation for fantasy creatures names like who are they."*

Participants had different perspectives on the amount of user input freedom. Some suggested reducing the number of inputs to further lower the entry barrier: *"If you could somehow give it a playstyle and it would automatically determine this race works, this class works. You're lowering the bar to entry even more."* Similarly, another user proposed, *"Just one choice of play style and possibly name so that you can just actually get the thing and then the AI will explain the choices. Like I picked this class because it does about what you want and then it could be useful to really cut down all the time."* Alternatively, others preferred more customization and freedom of choice. One participant suggested, *"Something that you get*

multiple characters out of it that are similar, but then it gives you a short description of what each one is or how it would be expected to be played, so that when you get your character, you're not immediately tied to one character with one playstyle.

An emerging concept was to allow users to include references from their pop culture and have the system make decisions based on that. One participant mentioned, *"Something that might be fun to add there is an IP. As in, you can for example also add in something like Legolas or I want to play something that feels a lot like Mario."* They continued, "*That would allow people to take their culture references and use that as input because most people will have some pop culture references that they know that can be applied to D&D. But most people won't know what an artificer does."*

For the DM campaign preparation part, an iterative collaboration with the AI agent was commonly suggested. One participant noted, *"Or a back and forth in between. I think that would be the most interesting back. Back and forth so it's more collaborative because something I try to do whenever starting a campaign is to make players collaborate on what the characters are, so they all kind of fit together."* Another added, *"Maybe it's nice to have as a dungeon master the option to sort of talk to the AI like oh, I want something like this and AI give suggestions."* This could indicate that DMs may desire more input on the campaign materials than the players desire on their characters. A possible implementation of this would be to make a modular system where the players and DM decide what type of variables they input and what is generated by the system. One participant suggested, *"The best one would be to make it modular to make it say OK I know that I want these things and I can fill them in already for myself or I don't know what I want, give me some options."*

Lastly, several participants highlighted the importance of visual aids. One participant explained, *"I was building a map inside of my head and it was not building itself."* Another added, *"But when you as a player receive a note or like a map with some directions, that would be cool to have it visualised in some way also, because not only it makes you be in the story, but also because visualising maps and locations is always nice, especially for stuff like temple which is difficult to imagine."*. This feature could prove especially useful for new players, which may have a hard time visualising a game world entirely using theatre of mind.

7.13 Future use

Players reported varying levels of likelihood for future use, with different use cases and reasons.

Some users indicated they would use a similar system for personal inspiration, incorporating elements of the generated campaign but not relying entirely on the generated materials. One participant noted, *"I already ask GPT for Ideas. I make my own campaign usually, but sometimes I need something like a personal Idea or something. Or like what can be found in*

a town and then GPT gives me a list of stuff." Another added, *"Probably; as a DM I might want to use a DM tool to generate the first adventure."* Additionally, one player mentioned, *"I will say that the way the story was translated through you did sound very interesting and I was impressed with the way that the story was generated."*

However, other participants expressed no interest in using a similar concept due to reasons such as already having their own inspiration or believing that personal experience yields better results. One participant stated, *"I personally would not. I have too many ideas."* Another shared, *"For the characters, I wouldn't use it because again I have ideas myself and also I think I can fill in the character sheet better."*

It was suggested that such a system would be beneficial for first-time playing but not ideal for first-time DMing. A participant explained, *"I think that the story generation bit is really nice for the first time playing, but not for the first time DMing. Yeah, it might help creating your own story if you already have some experience with DND."* In some cases, it was argued that additional onboarding assistance would still be necessary for players. As one participant highlighted, *"As in its current shape, where you need to immediately like to write in all the data, I wouldn't recommend it to my players. [...] But for the players, I think some point of onboarding is still needed, and if I need to be next to them to make them use the AI, then might as well help them make the character."*

Some participants saw value in using the system to introduce new player groups to the game. One low-experience tester mentioned, *"To start playing it, I think I would use it."* Another added, *"For literal babies, first session like for complete newbies to the system, yes I think I would use the character generation. Maybe the dungeon generation is good for starting DMs, but again, I don't have experience with the dungeon generation."*

Participants were asked to rate their likelihood of using a similar tool in the future on a 5-point scale, where 1 = very unlikely and 5 = very likely.
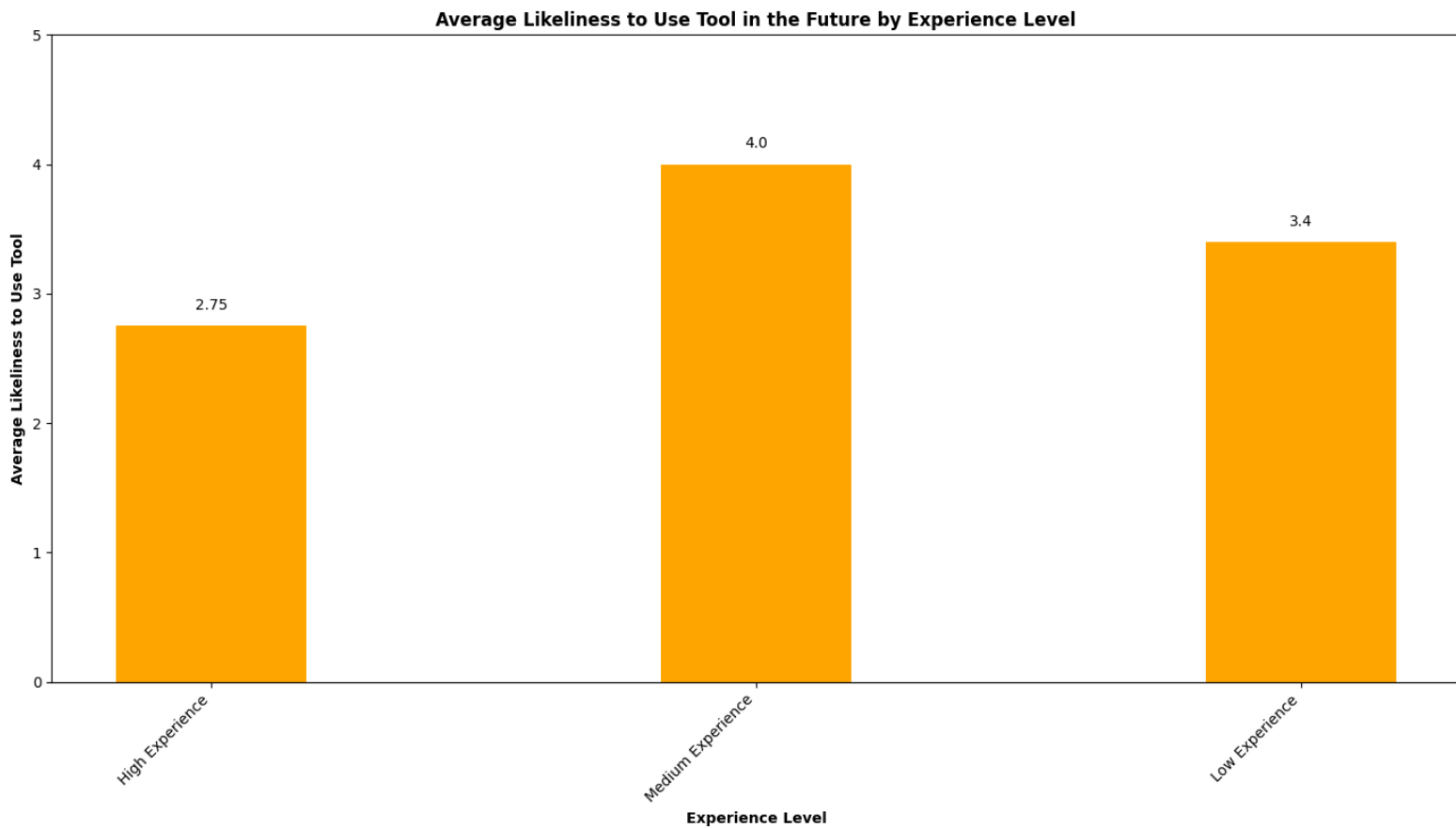
Figure 7.13.1: Average likelihood to use system in the future, grouped by experience level

The results indicate a trend based on experience levels. As expected, low experience players show a higher likelihood of using the tool compared to high experience players. High experience players are the least likely to use the tool, which might suggest their confidence in managing without additional support or their preference for more advanced or customizable tools. The medium experience category had a single data point, making it difficult to draw any conclusions.

To measure any potential changes in interest levels in D&D, we conducted pre-test and post-test surveys using a 5-point scale, where 1 represented "not interested at all" and 5 indicated "extremely interested." None of the participants had an initial interest level in D&D lower than 3, indicating that the exclusion criteria were applied properly. Notably, all changes in

interest levels occurred among players with low experience levels; participants with medium and high experience levels did not show any changes in their interest levels.
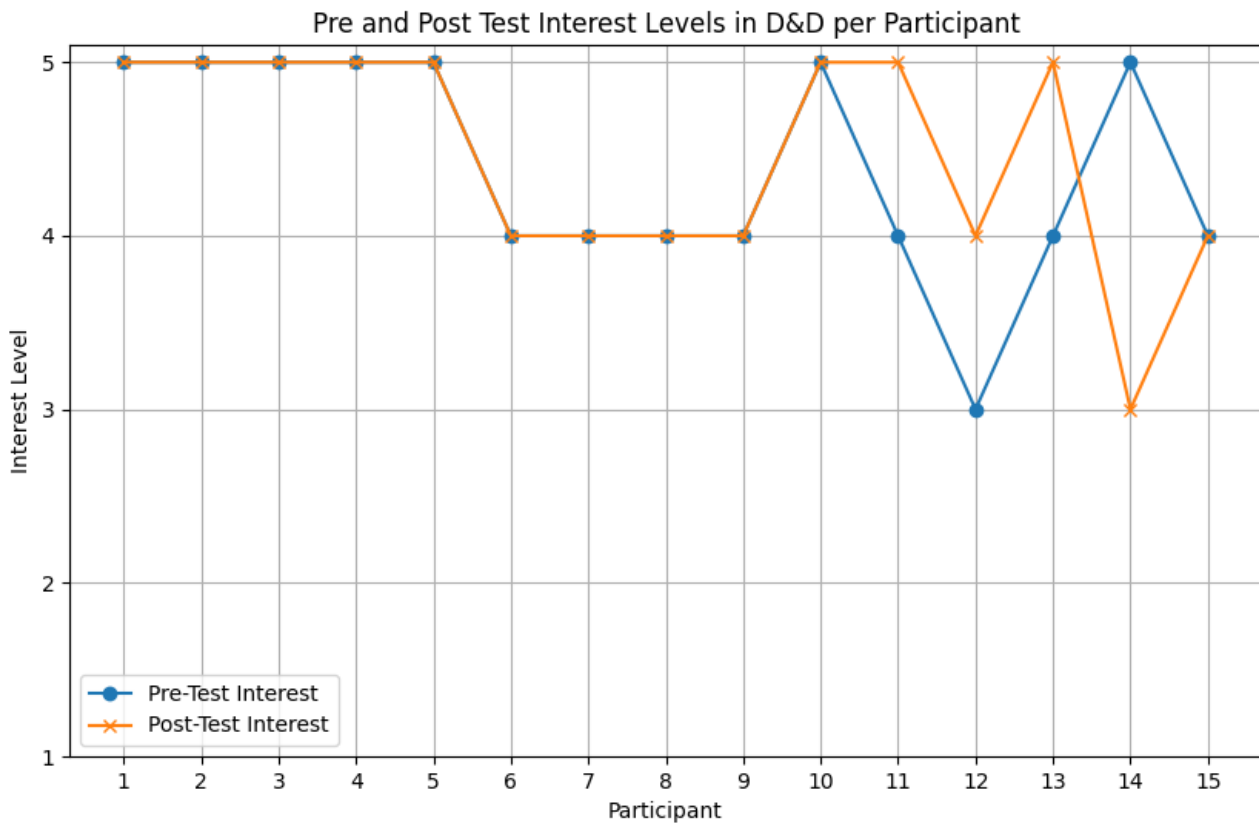
Fig 7.13.2: Individual pre-test and post-test interest levels in D&D

Overall, there were 11 pairs where interest values did not change, suggesting that the testing session generally did not affect the participants' interest in D&D. Some participants showed an increase in interest by one point, with two instances of interest increasing from 4 to 5 and one instance from 3 to 4, totalling an increase of 3 points. However, there was one instance where interest decreased from 5 to 3, resulting in a total decrease of 2 points. This decrease might be due to reasons such as mismatched expectations or a particular aspect of the game session that didn't resonate with the participant.

Chapter 8 – Discussion & Conclusion

This chapter presents a discussion of the results of the user study, along with an evaluation of the system requirements. The implications and limitations of this work are described, along with a section detailing possible suggestions for future work on the topic. This chapter ends with a concluding statement on this research project.

8.1 General Findings

The most significant weaknesses of the system include the occasional errors and vagueness in the generated materials. The most notable strengths are reducing mental load and preparation time, contributing to improved game understanding, providing learning opportunities, and supporting an increased confidence in users' abilities.

For participants with low D&D experience, the system notably increased confidence across all tested categories—roleplaying, character creation, and rule interpretation. The use of the system also helped reduce the perceived learning complexity for novice D&D players. Participants particularly valued the comprehensive character generation process, which removed the entry barrier of needing to research character creation independently. They also appreciated the creation of a custom game narrative and supporting materials.

Regarding user experience, opinions on the campaign structure were mixed. Some players found the quantity and structure of the materials overwhelming, while others appreciated the detailed descriptions. While there were some coherence issues, most participants rated the materials towards the coherent end of the spectrum. Diversity in interactions also contained mixed opinions: experienced players desired more varied interactions, whereas low-experience players were satisfied with the given freedom, preferring simpler stories for starting sessions. The difficulty level was initially deemed too high in the first two test sessions, and after adjustments, it was considered easy in the final session. As such, further efforts are needed to achieve a balanced difficulty level for the generated campaign. Character backstory integration had minimal impact on the main storyline, with few moments where backstory elements were integrated. Despite this, some players felt their decisions mattered in other ways, such as having the option to talk instead of fight during encounters.

There was a clear preference for physical materials over digital ones, attributed to increased engagement and a preference for tangibility. However, a hybrid approach was suggested for dynamic game elements, such as loot, which are notoriously hard to keep track of. Participants provided several suggestions for improving the generated materials. One key area identified was the structure of these materials, with feedback indicating the need for further refinement. Testers had varying perspectives on user freedom: some desired more customization options, proposing a modular approach, while others felt that letting the system generate more game elements could further decrease entry barriers. A prevalent comment among participants was to give Dungeon Masters more freedom and to make interactions with the system more conversational, similar to current chatbots like ChatGPT, until the final

details are decided. Several participants also highlighted the potential of generating visual materials to support the starting experience.

Regarding future use, participants expressed varying levels of interest. Some expressed willingness to use parts of the generated materials for their campaigns, while others showed no interest due to already having sufficient inspiration. A few participants mentioned they would consider using the system if they were new players or for introducing a new player group, given that further refinements are implemented.

8.2 Evaluation of Requirements

8.2.1 Non-functional Requirements

Priority	Requirement	Evaluation	Justification
Must	The total system cost must not exceed €60.	Accomplished	The system cost totals €37.
Must	The system must not be slower or more expensive than existing onboarding processes.	Accomplished	Material generation for a one-shot adventure cost ~ €1.3 and takes ~ 20 minutes.
Should	The system should not detract from the learning experience by automating important game concepts.	Accomplished	The system automates character creation which was not deemed an essential learning experience for new players.
Should	The system should generate materials that can be easily understood and are legible for all types of players.	Partially accomplished	Generally, the generated materials were understood by the participants. However, some participants found the structure of the materials confusing.
Could	The system could include a user interface that is easy to use for people with no prior TTRPG experience.	Not accomplished	The system has no input interface.
Could	The system output	Partially accomplished	The output material is

Priority	Requirement	Evaluation	Justification
	material could be stylized in an appropriate theme with D&D.		stylized using a D&D text editor, but the editing needs to be done manually.
Could	The system could implement a modular design, such that players can decide what system subcomponents they wish to use.	Not accomplished	The system did not feature a modular design, all players use the same subcomponents.

Table 8.2.2.1: Evaluated non-functional system requirements

8.2.2 Functional Requirements

Priority	Requirement	Evaluation	Justification
Must	The system must make use of some form of algorithm or AI.	Accomplished	The system uses a LLM as a core technology.
Must	The system must tackle one or more of the 4 most challenging game aspects: rules, character creation, role-playing or combat mechanics.	Accomplished	The system addresses all 4 of the most challenging game aspects to varying degrees.
Must	The system output must result in coherent and consistent materials fitting with the theme of D&D.	Accomplished	The user study supports the claim that the generated materials are generally coherent and consistent with the D&D theme.
Must	The player group must be able to have some degree of input that directly influences the system's output.	Accomplished	The system output is dependent entirely on user input.
Must	The system output must result in information that can be used for printable materials during game sessions.	Accomplished	The system output consists of text files that can be printed.

Should	The system should contain specific and structured supporting material for each player, such as cheat sheets.	Accomplished	The system output contains structured game materials for both players and DM.
Should	The system output should offer tailored, open-ended narrative options, such that elements can still be filled in by the users.	Partially accomplished	The generated materials contained tailored scenarios based on party preferences and characteristics. However, some participants felt that the pre-generated story was too limiting and that party mechanics could be better integrated.
Could	The system could focus on supporting the starting phases of a game/campaign, with less focus on later stages.	Accomplished	The system generates material for a one-shot starting at level 1.
Could	The system output could result in ready-to-use physical materials that can be used during game sessions.	Not accomplished	The generated materials need to be manually processed using the Homebrewery text editor before printing.
Could	The system could generate auxiliary elements associated with combat mechanics, such as battle maps or dungeons.	Not accomplished	The system does not generate any auxiliary materials.

Table 8.2.2.1: Evaluated functional system requirements

8.2.3 Evaluation

Overall, the system demonstrates a capacity to reduce the complexity and preparation time associated with learning and playing D&D, particularly for novice players. It effectively integrates AI technology to address several game aspects and produces generally coherent materials that support D&D game sessions. However, the system can benefit from further refinements in user interface design, customization options, and clarity of materials to enhance its overall utility. The current implementation has successfully met the most important functional and non-functional requirements: the must-have requirements have all been accomplished, the should-have requirements have either been accomplished or partially accomplished, and three out of six could-have requirements have been accomplished or partially accomplished. Conclusively, all three of the system goals have been partially or fully achieved.

8.2.4 System Goals

Goal	Evaluation	Justification
Lower the entry barriers to Dungeons and Dragons.	Accomplished	The system successfully lowered 1 or more entry barriers to D&D for most participants.
Provide appropriate supporting materials for novice players.	Accomplished	Based on the user study, the results indicate that the generated materials are relevant and helpful for novice players
Provide tailored learning opportunities and do not automate important game concepts.	Partially accomplished	Some learning opportunities were provided, but more could be integrated in the campaign based on party characteristics.

Table 8.2.4.1: Evaluated system goals

8.3 Implications

AI-generated content holds significant potential to decrease the entry barriers to Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) with further development. The ability to generate content that is surprisingly coherent when implemented in a content generation pipeline suggests that AI already can provide valuable support in creating complex game materials. As automated content generation continues to advance, it may become more popular and widespread, potentially rivalling human-made content across modalities and industries. Significantly, this technology also has the potential to create engaging learning scenarios and provide customised instructions tailored to individual learning goals, which could be further developed into practical classroom solutions. By leveraging such capabilities, teachers and designers could enhance the learning process for diverse audiences, across a broad range of subjects.

8.4 Limitations

Several limitations affected the development and evaluation of this system. The researcher's lack of prior knowledge of D&D meant that no design choices could be made based on personal intuition or experience; the diverse approaches to D&D content creation required significant research time to identify and integrate appropriately into a cohesive method. The project also faced constraints related to time and budget, as it was not sponsored and relied on the researcher's own resources. Finding participants with low experience levels was especially challenging, resulting in mixed testing groups that may have influenced the outcomes. Distinguishing between the benefits brought by the system and the natural benefits of gaining D&D experience by playing was also one of the main limitations of the research.

8.5 Future Work

Future research could focus on incorporating retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) to enhance the accuracy and reliability of generated materials. RAG might improve generated content by integrating facts fetched from external sources, such as a comprehensive database of D&D-related information. This approach would ensure that the generated content aligns closely with established D&D materials and rules. Alternatively, future research could consider fine-tuning a LLM with D&D-specific parameters. This would involve training the model on a smaller, task-specific dataset, tailoring it to generate more accurate and contextually appropriate content. To ensure the quality of the generated materials, future work could also investigate the efficacy of self-performed accuracy checks before system output. Lastly, future research could involve testing the system with a larger and more representative sample of the target audience, across a wider range of scenarios. Between testing of existing onboarding materials and ones generated by the system might provide a more realistic evaluation of the system, and could uncover additional novel insights or more generalizable findings.

8.6 Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, conclusions can be formulated in regards to the main research question posed in Chapter 1:

RQ: "How might content created through generative artificial intelligence enhance the onboarding experience for novice Dungeons & Dragons players?"

According to the community survey, the most challenging game elements for new players consist of understanding the rules, role-playing in character, character creation, and combat mechanics. To address these challenges, consistent and relatively accurate D&D content can be generated by allocating resources to prompt engineering and by implementing a robust content generation pipeline.

All in all, generative artificial intelligence can be used to enhance the onboarding experience for novice D&D players by implementing a content generation pipeline that creates custom one-shot adventures and supporting materials based on player desires, with minimal input effort required. By easing the onboarding process for D&D, a wider audience can benefit from using Dungeons & Dragons as a tool for personal development.

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Appendix

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT in order to format the document according to the expected standards. After using this tool, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

Appendix 1 - D&D Community Survey

D&D Onboarding Experience - A Community Survey

Dear D&D and greater TTRPG Community,

I am conducting a survey as part of my research to gather insights into the onboarding experiences of novice players in Dungeons & Dragons.
The purpose of this survey is to understand the challenges faced by new players and to identify game concepts that are particularly beneficial for easing the learning process.

Participating in this survey involves completing an **online questionnaire** that should take approximately **5-10 minutes**. Your responses will be **anonymous, and no personal data will be collected**. Please be assured that all responses will be kept
confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. By completing the survey, you consent to the use of the data as described above. The answers will be stored for the duration of my research project (March-July 2024), and deleted afterwards.

Should you have any questions regarding the survey or my research, please do not hesitate to contact me at:
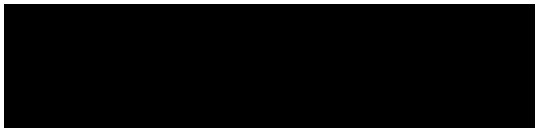
Thank you very much for considering participating in this research. Your input is greatly appreciated and will play a significant role in my research of enhancing the D&D experience for new players.

Sincerely,
Luca Andrei
Creative Technology Student at University of Twente

Not shared

* Indicates required question

As a new player, what aspects of D&D do/did you find the most challenging? *
(select all that apply)

- [ ] Character creation
- [ ] Understanding the rules
- [ ] Role-playing in character
- [ ] Combat mechanics
- [ ] Skill checks
- [ ] Following the narrative
- [ ] Other: _____

Are there any particular game concepts where you wish you had more guidance or resources when starting out? (optional)

Your answer

How did you initially learn to play D&D? *

- ( ) Through friends or family
- ( ) By joining a local or online game group
- ( ) By watching online tutorials or guides
- ( ) Self-taught through the Player's Handbook or other books
- ( ) Other: _____

What do you feel were the positive and negative aspects of this learning method? (optional)

Your answer

What resources or tools did you find most helpful when learning D&D? (select all that apply) *

☐ Official D&D books (Player's Handbook, Dungeon Master's Guide)

☐ Online guides or tutorials

☐ Help from other players

☐ Digital tools or apps

☐ Watching D&D gameplay

☐ Other: _____

Why did you find them useful? (optional)

Your answer

What could be done to improve the onboarding experience for new D&D players? (optional)

Your answer

Would you have found a software tool providing as-you-play guidance and custom pre-game materials helpful when you were learning D&D? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

Why or why not? (optional)

Your answer

What game materials are essential for a starter D&D session? (select all that apply) *

☐ Player's Handbook

☐ Dungeon Master's Guide

☐ Monster Manual

☐ Dice sets

☐ Filled-in character sheets

☐ Maps and miniatures

☐ Adventure modules or campaign guides

☐ Note-taking materials

☐ Online platforms or virtual tabletops (VTTs)

☐ Background music or sound effects

☐ None; improvisation is key

☐ Loot cards

☐ Other: _____

What role do you play in D&D games? *

○ Regular Player

○ Dungeon Master

○ Both

How long have you been playing Dungeons & Dragons? *

○ Less than 3 months

○ 3-6 months

○ 6-12 months

○ 1-2 years

○ More than 2 years

How often do you play D&D? *

○ Weekly

○ Every 2 weeks

○ Monthly

○ Other: _____

Do you have any other suggestions or comments about how to make D&D more accessible and enjoyable for novice players? (optional question)

Your answer

Appendix 2 - Sample of Generated Output Materials

DISCLAIMER

The Micro Adventure Generator uses AI to streamline several aspects of Dungeons & Dragons campaign creation, such as character creation and narrative development. While efforts are made to ensure accuracy and consistency, the AI-generated content may not always align with the established D&D rules or follow a consistent narrative structure. Please feel free to change or improvise on any aspects that seem off.

Furthermore, please note that AI models are prone to biased and stereotypical output, as a result of their training datasets. Should any material of such type appear in your campaign, please exercise discretion and report this to the design team. Thank you and have fun!

RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

It is recommended to maintain flexibility by adapting the storyline to incorporate players' decisions and actions, ensuring their choices meaningfully influence the narrative's direction.

Keep the pace steady, focusing on progressing the main story while avoiding excessive time on trivial details. Additionally, ensure that all players remain engaged by balancing elements of combat, exploration, and role-playing, and by giving each player opportunities to highlight their character's unique strengths and impact the story.

THE DUNGEON MASTER

The Dungeon Master (DM) is crucial in Dungeons & Dragons, serving as a referee, narrator, and character actor. As a referee, the DM manages gameplay by interpreting and applying the rules during ambiguous situations. In the role of a narrator, the DM drives the narrative forward, setting the pace, introducing challenges, and narrating the outcomes of players' actions, thus connecting players to the D&D world. Additionally, the DM controls all non-player characters, ranging from enemies like monsters to neutral figures like townsfolk. Despite controlling the game's antagonists, the DM's primary role is to ensure a fair and engaging experience for the players, not to compete against them.

> **RULES TO PLAY BY**
> - *Flexibility:* When unsure about a rule, prioritize keeping the game flowing by improvising.
> - *Collaboration:* Remember that it's not about competing against the players. Instead, encourage a collaborative environment where all players can contribute equally.
> - *Fairness:* Operate in a fair and impartial manner, maintaining consistency in how rules are applied.

IMPROVISING ABILITY CHECKS

When managing ability checks, the DM often has to improvise beyond the scenarios outlined in the adventure. If an action seems straightforward, with no real challenge involved, the DM can decide the outcome without requiring a roll. Conversely, if an action is impossible, the DM should inform the player that it fails. For actions that require checks:

1. Determine which ability score and associated skill best fit the player's described action, from the list below:

- **Strength checks:** Athletics.
- **Dexterity checks:** Acrobatics, Sleight of Hand, or Stealth.
- **Intelligence checks:** Arcana, History, Investigation, Nature, or Religion.
- **Wisdom checks:** Animal Handling, Insight, Medicine, Perception, or Survival.
- **Charisma checks:** Deception, Intimidation, Performance, and Persuasion.

2. Set the Difficulty Class (DC): Establish how difficult the task is to succeed in:

- **Easy (DC 10):** Requires basic competence or a bit of luck.
- **Moderate (DC 15):** Requires more skill or a combination of natural ability and training.
- **Hard (DC 20):** Demands exceptional ability or a significant amount of luck and specialized training.

3. Determine the Result: If a player meets or exceeds the DC with a roll, they succeed at the task. If they don't, they fail.

GLOSSARY

Encounter: Any situation where players must resolve challenges, typically through combat, negotiation, or problem-solving.

Initiative: Determines the order of actions in combat, based on a roll of a d20 plus a character's Dexterity modifier.

Attack Roll: The dice roll used to determine whether an attack hits the intended target. This roll involves a d20 plus any relevant modifiers based on the attacker's proficiency, ability scores, and any other applicable bonuses.

Damage Roll: The roll that determines the amount of damage dealt by an attack or spell. This varies by weapon or spell and often includes additional modifiers from ability scores or magical effects.

Hit Points (HP): A numerical value representing how much damage a character can take before being knocked out or killed.

Ability Scores: The six basic attributes that define a character's talents and shortcomings: Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma.

Turn: Segment of time (roughly 5 - 15 sec) during which a player or NPC can act during a combat round.

Short Rest: A period of in-game downtime, typically about one hour, during which characters rest and regain strength. Players can use this time to spend hit dice to restore hit points and regain some class abilities that are refreshed on a short rest.

Long Rest: A longer period of in-game downtime, usually 8 hours, where characters sleep or perform light activity like keeping watch. A long rest allows characters to regain all lost hit points and expended spell slots, and it refreshes abilities that require a long rest to use again.

Action: A discrete measurement of what a character can do on their turn, such as attacking, casting a spell, or using a device.

Reaction: An action taken in response to a trigger of some kind, which often occurs outside of the character's turn. Examples include opportunity attacks and some spells that are triggered by events.

Opportunity Attack: A type of reaction made against a creature moving out of your reach, allowing you to make one melee attack.

Multiattack: A feature of some monsters that allows them to make multiple attacks in one action

Condition: Specific effects that alter what a character can do, such as being Blinded, Paralyzed, or Poisoned.

Advantage and Disadvantage: Mechanics that allow a player to roll two d20s, selecting the higher roll for advantageous conditions and the lower roll for disadvantageous conditions.

Critical Hit/Fail: An outcome based on rolling a d20 in combat where a 20 is a critical hit, usually resulting in double damage, and a 1 is a critical fail, often leading to a negative consequence.

Line of Sight: The ability of a character to see a target or specific area, crucial for targeting spells and ranged attacks.

Ranged Attack: An attack made with a weapon or through a spell from a distance. Ranged attacks often have penalties when made close to enemies.

Melee Attack: An attack made with a weapon or through physical means at close range.

Concentration: Some spells require the caster to maintain concentration to keep their magic active. If the caster takes damage or is otherwise disrupted, a concentration check may be required to see if the spell continues to function.

Passive Perception: A measure of how well a character can notice hidden objects or subtle cues in their environment without actively searching. It's calculated as 10 plus the character's Perception skill modifier.

CAMPAIGN CHECKLIST

This checklist lays the foundation for a successful and enjoyable campaign by aligning group expectations, establishing clear communication, and fostering a supportive gaming environment. This is necessary to prevent potential conflicts and misunderstandings, making the actual gameplay sessions more focused on the adventure and fun.

TIME ALLOCATION

Decide on the game length before the start of the session. Split it among acts as follows:

- Act 1: 25% of campaign time
- Act 2: 50% of campaign time
- Act 3: 25% of campaign time

TABLE EXPECTATIONS

- Smartphone Use: Is phone use allowed during the session?
- PVP: Are PvP interactions allowed?
- Rollbacks: Are rollbacks allowed? Under which conditions?
- PG Rating: What is the acceptable level of content (PG, PG-13, R)?
- Triggers: Are players uncomfortable with any potential themes or game elements?

HOUSE RULES

- Restrictions: Are there any specific restrictions (e.g., no evil characters, specific banned races/classes)?
- Crits: How will crits and crit fails be handled?
- Character Death: What are the rules surrounding character death?
- Rests: When are characters allowed to take short and long rests?
- Potion Usage: Is it acceptable to consume potions as a bonus action rather than a full action during combat?
- Spell Components: Can non-costly material components for spells be disregarded to streamline spellcasting?
- Automatic Knowledge: Can certain information related to a character's background or high Intelligence automatically be known without a roll?

CAMPAIGN INFO

- Tone: Macabre
- Concept: Players need to escape out of a Bhaal sacrificial temple
- Focus: Exploration
- Party level: 1
- Generation cost: ~ $1.5
- Generation time: 20 mins

Night of Shadows at Bhaal's Altar

THE CAMPAIGN UNFOLDS OVER LIARS' NIGHT, starting with the players' capture and transportation to the temple as intended sacrifices. As they awaken in the eerie, bone-littered chambers of the temple, they must navigate a labyrinth of treachery, haunted by the ethereal Shadowed Ones' tormented spirits bound to the temple. The players' ultimate goal is to thwart Malvorus's ritual, escape the clutches of his minions, and expose his nefarious plans to the authorities of Baldur's Gate.

BACKGROUND

Deep in the mist-enshrouded Deadwood Forest lies the Black Altar of Bhaal, a sinister temple where the god of murder is worshipped through dark rituals and blood sacrifices. The temple's proximity to Baldur's Gate allows Malvorus Grell, a power-hungry industrialist, to exploit its dark energies. Malvorus, obsessed with achieving immortality, collaborates with corrupted cultists and hired mercenaries to secure sacrifices needed to empower his arcane experiments.

PLOT HOOK

During the vibrant festivities of Liars' Night in Baldur's Gate, the players are abruptly seized by Malvorus Grell's mercenaries. They find themselves in the grim underbelly of the Black Altar of Bhaal, overhearing the chilling plans for their own sacrifices. Cryptic assistance comes from the Shadowed Ones, spirits who sway unpredictably between seeking release and desiring to fulfill Bhaal's dark will. The players must decide whom to trust as they plot their escape and attempt to disrupt the dark ritual that could grant Malvorus dominion over life and death.

CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

The campaign is structured using the 121 method: 1 encounter in Act 1, 2 encounters in Act 2, and 1 final encounter in Act 3. The time allocation per act should be as follows: 1/4 time for Act 1, 2/4 time for Act 2, 1/4 time for Act 3.

Act 1: During the lively Liars' Night festival in Baldur's Gate, the players, enjoying the festivities, are suddenly ambushed and captured by Malvorus Grell's mercenary enforcers. They awaken in the dimly lit chambers beneath the Temple of Bhaal, overhearing plans for their imminent sacrifice.

Act 2: As they navigate the twisted corridors of the temple, the players encounter the Shadowed Ones, who offer cryptic clues and assistance in exchange for promises of releasing them from their eternal torment.

Meanwhile, they must stealthily avoid or confront the corrupted cultists and the vigilant mercenary guards.

Act 3: The players discover the heart of the temple where Malvorus is about to commence the dark ritual using the Black Altar of Bhaal. They must disrupt the ritual, confront Malvorus, and escape the temple, deciding along the way whether to seek help from the conflicted Shadowed Ones or rely solely on their own strengths and wits.

THE CONTENDERS

The Shadowed Ones are ethereal remnants of previous victims sacrificed at the Black Altar of Bhaal. These tortured souls, bound to the temple, exist in a state of conflict. They fluctuate between aiding the players to gain freedom from their suffering and fulfilling the dark will of Bhaal, which they believe might grant them eternal rest. Their motivations are complex and unpredictable, influenced by their desire for release and their lingering connection to the temple's sinister purpose.

THE ANTAGONISTS

Malvorus Grell, a ruthless industrialist from Baldur's Gate, seeks to harness the dark energies of the Black Altar of Bhaal to achieve immortality and establish a legacy of power over life and death. His mercenaries, recruited from the criminal underbelly, enforce his will for gold, while his corrupted cultists, blinded by promises of power, assist in dark rituals believing they will ascend in his new order. Malvorus's need for constant sacrifices drives his sinister agenda, using both human and material resources to fuel his arcane machineries and rituals.

THE PARTY

Shamash, Sirvir, Valerian, Gib, and Lynn, each driven by their own quests for personal growth and redemption, found their paths converging at the Monastery of the Ascendant Dragon during a rare celestial alignment that drew seekers of truth from across the realms. Recognizing each other's unique abilities and shared values, they formed a bond over their mutual respect for balance, knowledge, and freedom. Their camaraderie was solidified when they jointly thwarted an attack on the monastery by dark forces, revealing each member's strengths and flaws. Motivated by a shared desire to protect the innocent and thwart evil, the group decided to travel together to Baldur's Gate for the Liars' Night, seeking knowledge, allies, and the chance to test their mettle.

Unbeknownst to them, their arrival during the chaotic festivities would soon entangle them in a sinister plot orchestrated by Malvorus Grell, testing their newfound alliance and their commitment to their ideals.

LOCATION OUTLINE

Specific location where action takes place: *The Black Altar of Bhaal* - An ancient, eerie temple built deep within a secluded forest, featuring dark stone walls adorned with chilling motifs of death and sacrifice.

Surroundings of the Wobbly Peaks: The temple is surrounded by the dense, misty Deadwood Forest, known for its perpetual twilight and the haunting echoes of unknown creatures. The forest floor is littered with bones and remnants of failed rituals and sacrifices.

Larger context: The Black Altar is one of the few remaining active temples dedicated to Bhaal, the god of murder. It is a place of dark worship where Bhaal's followers come to perform gruesome sacrifices under the cover of night, hoping to gain favor or power through their bloody offerings.

Relations: The temple is relatively isolated but lies to the northwest of the city of Baldur's Gate. This proximity to a major city ensures a secretive yet steady flow of the god's followers. To the east lies the Cloakwood, another forest known for harboring druids who occasionally attempt to cleanse the area of its malevolent influences.

IMPROV MATERIAL

This is some additional situational material that you can incorporate in the campaign if needed.

Government Buildings: *Hall of the Night's Silence* - A dark chamber within the Black Altar where cultists gather to receive their sinister orders.

- **NPC:** *High Priestess Velnara* - A devoted and ruthless servant of Bhaal who oversees all sacrificial rituals.
- **Loot:** *Dagger of the Dark Deed* - Can be stolen during a chaotic ritual, enhances stealth attacks when used under the cover of darkness.

Underworld Activities: *The Shadowed Corridors* - Hidden passages within the temple walls used by the cultists to move unseen and carry out abductions.

- **NPC:** *Brother Krell* - A scheming cultist who knows the secret routes and traps of the temple.
- **Loot:** *Phantom Cloak* - Found in a hidden alcove, grants temporary invisibility when worn in the temple.

Altars: *The Bleeding Stone* - The central sacrificial altar of the Black Altar, soaked with the blood of countless victims.

- **NPC:** *The Whispering Shade* - A spirit of a former high priest, bound to the altar, who knows the weaknesses of the temple.
- **Loot:** *Amulet of the Betrayed* - Can be retrieved from beneath the altar, wards off direct attacks from Bhaal's followers.

Resources: *The Library of Shadows* - A repository of forbidden lore on dark rituals and the history of the cult of Bhaal.

- **NPC:** *Scribe Malthus* - A disillusioned cultist who secretly opposes Malvorus's plans and can provide helpful information.
- **Loot:** *Tome of Blood Rites* - Hidden in a false bookshelf, contains spells that can disrupt or alter dark rituals.

Defenses: *The Guardians' Hall* - A fortified area housing the elite mercenaries who protect the temple.

- **NPC:** *Captain Verok* - The commander of the mercenaries, fiercely loyal but respects strength and cunning.
- **Loot:** *Shield of the Fallen* - Awarded by Captain Verok for proving one's combat prowess, absorbs the first lethal blow struck against the bearer.

Social Hubs: *The Gathering Veil* - A seemingly serene garden used by the cultists to relax and socialize away from their grim duties.

- **NPC:** *Lady Serin* - A charismatic cultist who recruits new members and can be swayed to provide assistance for the right price.
- **Loot:** *Ring of Whispered Pacts* - Can be won in a game of deceit among the cultists, allows the wearer to detect lies.

Uncommon Loot

Dagger of the Dark Deed
Weapon (Dagger)

Details: A sleek, shadowy blade that seems to absorb the light around it, perfect for a stealthy approach.
Effect: Grants a +2 bonus to attack rolls when used in dim light or darkness.

Phantom Cloak
Wondrous Item (Cloak)

Details: This ethereal cloak shimmers with a ghostly light and feels insubstantial to the touch.
Effects: Grants the wearer the ability to become invisible for up to 10 minutes once per day while within the temple.

Amulet of the Betrayed
Wondrous Item (Amulet)

Details: An ancient amulet, cold to the touch, bearing the crest of a forgotten priest of Bhaal.
Effects: The wearer gains resistance to necrotic damage and advantage on saving throws against spells cast by followers of Bhaal.

Tome of Blood Rites
Magic Item (Book)

Details: A forbidden tome bound in dark leather, containing eerie illustrations and rituals dedicated to Bhaal.
Effects: Allows the reader to cast the spell 'Protection from Evil and Good' once per day without using a spell slot.

Shield of the Fallen
Armor (Shield)

Details: A heavy iron shield bearing the scars of many battles, emblazoned with the symbol of a fallen warrior.
Effects: Absorbs the damage from one lethal blow that would reduce the bearer to 0 hit points, once per day.

Ring of Whispered Pacts
Wondrous Item (Ring)

Details: A delicate silver ring that hums with a faint, almost inaudible whisper when worn.
Effects: Allows the wearer to cast 'Detect Thoughts' once per day without using a spell slot.

Shop

Party starting gold: 75 GP each

Healing Potion
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 50 GP
  Effect: Heals 2d4 + 2 HP when consumed.

Dagger
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 2 GP
  Effect: Melee weapon, 1d4 piercing damage, light, finesse, thrown (range 20/60).

Quarterstaff
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 2 GP
  Effect: Melee weapon, 1d6 bludgeoning damage, versatile (1d8).

Explorer's Pack
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 10 GP
  Effect: Includes a backpack, a bedroll, a mess kit, a tinderbox, 10 torches, 10 days of rations, and a waterskin. The pack also has 50 feet of hempen rope strapped to the side.

Holy Symbol
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 5 GP
  Effect: Required for Clerics and Paladins to perform many of their spells and channel divinity.

Spellbook
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 50 GP
  Effect: Essential for Wizards to record and prepare their spells.

Leather Armor
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 10 GP
  Effect: Armor (light), AC 11 + Dex modifier.

Shield
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 10 GP
  Effect: Increases Armor Class by 2 when wielded.

Thieves' Tools
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 25 GP
  Effect: Used to pick locks and disarm traps.

Flute
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 2 GP
  Effect: Musical instrument used by Bards to cast spells and perform.

Component Pouch
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 25 GP
  Effect: Contains the material components necessary for spellcasting.

Iron Pot
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 2 GP
  Effect: Useful for cooking meals while camping.

Rope, 50 feet
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 1 GP
  Effect: Useful for climbing, binding, or other utility needs.

Tinderbox
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 5 SP
  Effect: Allows you to start a fire with ease.

Waterskin
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 2 SP

  Effect: Holds 4 pints of liquid, essential for hydration during travel.

Rations (1 day)
  Rarity: Common
  Cost: 5 SP
  Effect: Sufficient food for one day.

RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

Roll (d20)	Event
1	A group of drunken revelers, unknowingly followers of Bhaal, mistake the players for cultists.
2	A lost child, crying and scared, seeks help to find their way back to the festival.
3	A stray cat, oddly intelligent, leads the players to a hidden passage but disappears.
4	A sudden downpour forces everyone to seek shelter, providing a chance for stealth or theft.
5	A street vendor, selling cursed trinkets, offers a free item that may have unforeseen effects.
6	An overzealous city guard suspects the players of being up to no good and decides to follow them.
7	A local thief bumps into the players, accidentally dropping a map of the temple's secret entrances.
8	A mysterious cloaked figure offers cryptic advice but demands gold or a favor in return.
9	A street performer, who is actually a spy for Malvorus, attempts to gather information from the players.
10	An old woman, claiming to be a retired adventurer, offers to tell tales of the temple's dark past.
11	A sudden scream echoes from a nearby alley, a cultist has been caught stealing from a local.
12	A group of mercenaries are recruiting for a raid against rival factions, offering easy coin.
13	A hidden trap door is found under a loose cobblestone, leading to a forgotten storage room.
14	A bard, singing tales of ancient heroes, unknowingly hints at a secret way to defeat Malvorus.
15	A market stall explodes in flames, a diversion created by the Shadowed Ones to aid the players.
16	A sudden blackout engulfs the street, whispers of the Shadowed Ones fill the air.
17	A group of children playing mimic the ritual, unknowingly revealing the password to a locked door.
18	A wounded cultist, left for dead, begs for help and offers inside information in exchange for safety.
19	An ancient scroll found in a puddle contains spells that could aid in disrupting the ritual.
20	A divine intervention occurs as a celestial being briefly appears, guiding the players to safety.

Act 1

Goal: The players must escape their initial confinement and gather information about the temple layout and the dark ritual's timing.

Failure: Failure to escape or gather sufficient information results in the players being unprepared for the challenges ahead, increasing the likelihood of their recapture or sacrifice.

Starting point

As the players regain consciousness in the dimly lit chamber, they notice a loose stone in the wall. Behind it, they find a small, rusty key and a cryptic note suggesting the key opens a passage to the temple's undercroft, a less guarded area where they might find more information about the temple layout.

Intermediary Encounter

The players use the key to access the undercroft, a sprawling network of storage rooms and forgotten shrines beneath the temple. Here, they must navigate through shadows and avoid patrolling cultists. In a dust-covered library within the undercroft, they discover a hidden map detailing the temple's layout, including secret passages and the location of the ritual chamber. A half-burned diary next to the map reveals the timing of the dark ritual, scheduled to coincide with the peak of the Liars' Night moon.

Ending point

With the temple map and ritual timing in hand, the players overhear the cultists' conversation about the final ritual preparations from their hiding spot in the alcove. Armed with crucial information and the cover of darkness, they prepare to move deeper into the temple's sinister corridors, setting the stage for the challenges that await in Act 2.

Act 1 Story Diagram

```
Players regain consciousness -> Find key
and note behind loose stone -> Navigate
to undercroft with key -> Avoid cultists
and explore undercroft -> Discover map
and diary in library -> Overhear cultists
discussing ritual -> Prepare to
infiltrate deeper into temple
```

1. Whispers in the Dark

As your senses return, the cold, damp air of the chamber greets you. Your eyes adjust to the dim light, revealing rough-hewn stone walls that enclose a small, seemingly forgotten room within the ancient temple. Each of you: Dragonborn, Tiefling, Half-Drow, Dwarf, and Half-Elf, find yourselves lying on the cold stone floor, your memories of how you arrived here frustratingly elusive. The silence is broken by a faint scratching sound coming from one of the walls. Upon investigation, you discover a loose stone. Behind it lies a small, rusty key accompanied by a crumpled, cryptic note. It reads, "The key to salvation lies beneath. Seek the undercroft for truths hidden from prying eyes." The urgency of the message suggests that this key opens a passage to less guarded areas of the temple, potentially leading you to understand more about this mysterious place.

Location: *Chamber of Echoes* - A small, secluded room deep within the Temple of Shadows, known for its forgotten artifacts and secret passageways. The temple itself is rumored to be a site of dark rituals and ancient secrets, located on the outskirts of the city of Waterdeep.

NPCs: *Morrin Shadowweave* - Half-Elf - Seeker of Forbidden Knowledge - Morrin is a former acolyte of the temple who turned against its dark practices. With deep knowledge about the temple's layout and secrets, he seeks to prevent the completion of the dark ritual. He appears to the party as a spectral figure, a result of a curse that binds him to the temple. His translucent form flickers as he speaks in hushed tones, urging the adventurers to act quickly before the temple's cultists consolidate their power.

Development: As the party uses the key to explore the temple's undercroft, they will need to rely on stealth and cunning to avoid the patrolling cultists. The exploration of this area will not only provide them with a better understanding of the temple's layout but also equip them with crucial information needed to thwart the impending dark ritual. The discovery of the hidden map in the undercroft's library will serve as a pivotal moment, guiding them towards the ritual chamber and setting the stage for further encounters with the temple's dark dwellers.

2. WHISPERS IN THE SHADOWS

As the party descends into the musty depths of the Undercroft Library, their eyes adjust to the dim, flickering light filtering through the cracks above. Dust motes dance in the air, and the smell of old parchment and mold is almost overwhelming. The library is a labyrinth of toppled bookshelves and scattered scrolls, a testament to long-forgotten knowledge. Whispered echoes suggest they are not alone; Brother Sylas and his cultist followers lurk nearby, zealously guarding the secrets entombed here. The objective is clear: retrieve the hidden map without alerting the cultists and escape to thwart the dark ritual they prepare for.

Location: Undercroft Library - A dimly lit, dusty chamber filled with ancient books and scrolls, partially collapsed shelves, and an aura of forgotten secrets.

Environment: The library is cluttered with fallen bookshelves creating partial cover and narrow pathways. The air is musty, and faint echoes hint at distant movements. Dim light filters in through cracks in the ceiling.

Environment Challenges: Navigating the cluttered and unstable stacks of books and scrolls, avoiding noise that could alert patrolling cultists nearby.

Encounter Type: Puzzle, Skirmish

Party Aim: Retrieve the hidden map and escape without alerting the cultists.

Resolution: Players must solve a puzzle to access the hidden compartment containing the map and then either sneak out or deal with any cultists they encounter.

REWARD

Retrieving the hidden map provides crucial information about the temple layout, aiding in navigating to the ritual chamber. Additionally, the half-burned diary offers insight into the cult's plans and timing, crucial for planning the interruption of the dark ritual.

BROTHER SYLAS
Human Cultist

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	12	10	10	13	11

Vulnerabilities none
Skills Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +3
Resistances none
Immunities none
Senses normal
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4

NPC Traits: Brother Sylas is a gaunt figure, with sharp features and a hood that shadows his eyes. He smells faintly of incense and mold. He is deeply devoted to the dark cult's cause, fears failure above all, and desires to rise in the cult's ranks.

NPC Alignment: Neutral Evil

NPC Motivations: Guarding the secrets of the undercroft and ensuring the ritual preparations are not disturbed.

NPC Hostility: Suspicious and hostile towards intruders.

NPC Information: Standard human defenses, no special vulnerabilities.

ACTIONS

Dagger attack +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

CULTISTS (x2)

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 9
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11	12	10	10	13	11

Vulnerabilities none
Skills Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +3
Resistances none
Immunities none
Senses normal
Languages Common
Challenge 1/4

ACTIONS

Dagger attack +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

PLAYER OPPORTUNITIES

1. Stealthy Retrieval

- Description: Utilize the shadows and clutter to approach the hidden compartment silently.
- Consequences: Avoids confrontation but high risk of alerting cultists if failed.

2. Distraction

- Description: Use Thaumaturgy or Druidcraft to create a minor distraction, drawing cultists away.
- Consequences: Temporarily clears the area, risk of increased guard if detected.

3. Negotiation/Deception

- Description: Attempt to bluff or negotiate with Brother Sylas using Deception or Persuasion.
- Consequences: Could reduce hostility or extract information, risk of combat if failed.

4. Direct Confrontation

- Description: Engage the cultists in combat to clear the path.
- Consequences: Direct risk of harm, but immediate resolution if successful.

5. Magic and Cunning

- Description: Use Dissonant Whispers or Sacred Flame to incapacitate or distract Brother Sylas.
- Consequences: Draws attention but quickly reduces threat level.

POTENTIAL EVENTS

1. Echoes of the Past

- **Event Description:** As the party navigates through the cluttered library, Shamash accidentally knocks over a small pile of books. The sound echoes strangely, louder than expected, stirring the air with a ghostly whisper. The whispers coalesce into brief, spectral images of past scholars and cultists, replaying their last moments.
- **Event Effects:** The spectral display distracts the cultists momentarily, providing the party with a brief opportunity to move unnoticed or prepare an ambush. However, the visions are unsettling, requiring each party member to make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute.
- **Characters:** The party may gain a stealth advantage, but potentially at the cost of their composure.

2. The Collapsing Shelf

- **Event Description:** As Valerian deftly maneuvers through a narrow passage, his cloak catches on a splintered shelf teetering on the brink of collapse. With a creak and a crash, the shelf topples, sending books flying and dust clouds billowing.
- **Event Effects:** The noise alerts Brother Sylas and his cultists, who begin to converge on the party's location. The fallen shelf creates a temporary barrier that can be used for cover, providing +2 AC to anyone behind it but also slowing movement in that area.
- **Characters:** The party must deal with the immediate threat of confrontation or find an alternative escape route quickly.

ENCOUNTER TIMING

If the encounter is taking too long: *A sudden, sharp crack above signals the partial collapse of the ceiling, hastening the need to retrieve the map and escape. Dust and debris fill the air, reducing visibility but also providing cover. The urgency adds a ticking clock element, pushing the players towards quicker decision-making.*

If the encounter is taking too little time: *Brother Sylas, realizing the potential threat of the intruders, decides to secure the map himself. He begins a ritual to transport the map to a safer location, chanting in a deep, resonant tone that fills the library. The party now has not only to retrieve the map but also to interrupt his ritual, adding layers and complexity to their mission.*

3. Whispers in the Shadows

As you carefully pocket the temple map and the diary's revelations, the faint murmur of voices catches your attention. Peering from behind an ancient, cobweb-draped statue, you see two robed figures conversing in hushed tones. The flickering torchlight casts long, dancing shadows as they discuss the final preparations for tonight's dark ritual. Their words are laced with urgency and fear, hinting at the catastrophic consequences should they fail to please their deity. As they depart, their conversation fades, leaving behind a heavy silence that beckons you deeper into the heart of the temple.

Location: *Shadowed Alcove* - A small, hidden recess in the undercroft's library, surrounded by towering bookshelves and forgotten relics.

Development: This encounter offers the players a crucial insight into the cultists' plans and the importance of their mission. The overhearing of the cultists' conversation not only confirms the urgency of stopping the ritual but also provides a clear timeline, emphasizing the need for stealth and haste. As the cultists disperse, the players are left with a moment of calm to strategize their next move, using the shadows to their advantage as they prepare to navigate through the more perilous sections of the temple, leading into the challenges of Act 2.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

CHARACTER NAME: Gib

Barbarian	Hillybilly	
CLASS & LEVEL	BACKGROUND	PLAYER NAME
Dwarf	Chaotic Neutral	
RACE	ALIGNMENT	EXPERIENCE POINTS

STRENGTH
+3
17

DEXTERITY
+1
12

CONSTITUTION
+3
16

INTELLIGENCE
-1
8

WISDOM
+0
10

CHARISMA
+1
13

INSPIRATION

PROFICIENCY BONUS +2

SAVING THROWS
- ⦿ +5 Strength
- ○ +1 Dexterity
- ⦿ +5 Constitution
- ○ -1 Intelligence
- ○ +0 Wisdom
- ○ +1 Charisma

SKILLS
- ○ +1 Acrobatics (Dex)
- ⦿ +2 Animal Handling (Wis)
- ○ -1 Arcana (Int)
- ○ +3 Athletics (Str)
- ○ +1 Deception (Cha)
- ○ -1 History (Int)
- ○ +0 Insight (Wis)
- ○ +1 Intimidation (Cha)
- ○ -1 Investigation (Int)
- ○ +0 Medicine (Wis)
- ⦿ +1 Nature (Int)
- ○ +0 Perception (Wis)
- ○ +1 Performance (Cha)
- ○ +1 Persuasion (Cha)
- ○ -1 Religion (Int)
- ○ +1 Sleight of Hand (Dex)
- ○ +1 Stealth (Dex)
- ⦿ +2 Survival (Wis)

PASSIVE WISDOM (PERCEPTION) 10

OTHER PROFICIENCIES & LANGUAGES
Armor: Light armor, medium armor, shields
Weapons: Simple weapons, martial weapons
Tools: None
Languages: Common, Dwarvish

ARMOR CLASS 16

INITIATIVE +1

SPEED 25

Hit Point Maximum
CURRENT HIT POINTS 15

TEMPORARY HIT POINTS

HIT DICE Total 1d12

DEATH SAVES
SUCCESSES ○ ○ ○
FAILURES ○ ○ ○

ATTACKS & SPELLCASTING

NAME	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE/TYPE
Greataxe	+5	1d12+3 (slashing)
Handaxe	+5	1d6+3 (slashing)

EQUIPMENT
CP
SP
EP
GP
PP

Armor: Scale mail
Weapons: Greataxe, two handaxes
Tools: None
Other: Explorer's pack, amulet of Marthammor Duin, flask of dwarven ale

PERSONALITY TRAITS
Brash and boisterous, Gib loves a good fight and a good laugh, often at inappropriate times. His straightforwardness and lack of tact are as well-known as his fearlessness.

IDEALS
Freedom, as Gib believes in living each day according to his whims and desires, unbound by society's strictures.

BONDS
His clan and family, despite his wandering ways, Gib is fiercely loyal to his kin, often recounting tales of his ancestors and their exploits.

FLAWS
Impulsiveness and a lack of foresight, Gib's decisions are guided by immediate needs or desires, which often leads to trouble or misunderstandings.

FEATURES & TRAITS
Dwarven Resilience: Advantage on saving throws against poison, and resistance against poison damage.

Stonecunning: Double proficiency bonus to History checks related to the origin of stonework.

Rage: In battle, you can enter a rage as a bonus action. While raging, you gain advantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws, you gain a bonus to damage rolls, and have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Unarmored Defense: While you are not wearing any armor, your Armor Class equals 10 + your Dexterity modifier + your Constitution modifier.

Hillfolk Resilience: You are accustomed to rough terrains. Gain advantage on saving throws against exhaustion and advantage on Athletics checks when navigating hilly or rocky terrain.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Gib, born amidst the echoing mines and towering peaks of the Iron Hills, was cradled in the rugged arms of his clan, the Ironfists. From early childhood, his laughter and cries mingled with the clang of hammers and the roar of forges, shaping his spirit as steadfastly as the metal his kin so deftly worked. As a teen, Gib's adventurous spirit was kindled by tales of distant lands and ancient battles recounted by his grandfather, Thrain Ironfist, a revered warrior of their clan. These stories filled him with a restless energy that his friends, Dwalin and Nali, often struggled to match during their youthful exploits chasing mountain goats or wrestling each other on the windswept plateaus.

Adulthood saw Gib embracing the path of the Barbarian, his heart and soul resonating with the wild, untamed essence of the warrior's way. His belief in freedom and self-guidance, inspired by the wandering god Marthammor Duin, often led him beyond the boundaries of the Iron Hills to seek challenges worthy of his strength. However, Gib's impulsive nature once led him to challenge a formidable and mysterious traveler to a duel, mistaking the stranger's intentions as hostile. The aftermath was disastrous, leaving part of his village in disrepair after the traveler, revealed to be a powerful mage, retaliated with a burst of arcane energy. The incident not only cost Gib the trust of some of his kin but also burdened him with a heavy debt to repair the damages.

Chastened but undeterred, Gib now seeks to temper his rash impulses with the wisdom of his ancestors and the guidance of Marthammor Duin, hoping to still roam the lands but with a mindfulness that might prevent past mistakes from repeating. His journey is not just one of physical wanderings but also of an internal quest to find the balance between his indomitable spirit and the responsibilities he bears to his clan and family.

ROLE-PLAY OPPORTUNITIES

As Gib, the boisterous and impulsive dwarf barbarian, you can fully embrace your character's love for freedom and disdain for societal norms by often choosing actions that prioritize personal desires or the thrill of the moment over long-term consequences. In social interactions, play up Gib's lack of tact and straightforwardness, perhaps by bluntly speaking your mind in delicate situations, which can lead to humorous or chaotic outcomes. Your reverence for Marthammor Duin can be shown through a strong desire to explore new territories in the game, perhaps even suggesting spontaneous side quests or detours that promise adventure. Show your loyalty to your clan by incorporating tales of your ancestors into conversations or using them as a basis for your decisions, especially in situations that involve the welfare of your group. Lastly, your character's impulsiveness can be highlighted in combat scenarios or critical decision points, where Gib might rush in without a plan, relying on brute strength and sheer will to see through challenges.

TIPS

1. **Maximize Rage Usage**: Enter Rage as a bonus action at the start of combat to make the most of its benefits. While raging, you have resistance to common damage types (bludgeoning, piercing, slashing) and you deal extra damage with your melee attacks. Always try to be in Rage when fighting, as it boosts your damage output and durability significantly.

2. **Leverage Unarmored Defense**: Though you have scale mail, consider situations where Unarmored Defense might provide a better Armor Class. Calculate your AC with Unarmored Defense by adding your Dexterity and Constitution modifiers to 10. If this number exceeds your AC with scale mail (especially as your Dexterity or Constitution increases), it might be beneficial to switch, particularly in scenarios where mobility and less encumbrance are advantageous.

3. **Utilize Environmental Advantages**: As a Hillfolk Resilient Dwarf, use rocky and hilly terrains to your advantage during combat. Position yourself where you can use the terrain for cover or higher ground, enhancing your defensive capabilities and making it difficult for enemies to approach you. This can be especially useful in outdoor encounters.

4. **Employ Weapon Strategies**: Use your Greataxe for high damage output, especially during Rage for added damage bonus. The Greataxe is ideal for single powerful strikes. Keep handaxes ready for throwing, allowing you to deal damage at a distance or when closing in on enemies. This versatility lets you adapt to various combat situations.

5. **Focus on Strength-Based Tasks**: With your character's high strength and advantages on Strength checks while raging, volunteer for tasks in the game that require brute force, such as breaking down doors, moving heavy obstacles, or arm-wrestling NPCs. These can lead to alternative solutions or advantages in your adventure.

6. **Play into the 'Muscular but Dumb' Role**: Embrace your character's lower intellect in role-playing scenarios by making decisions that are straightforward and action-oriented. This can lead to humorous or unexpected outcomes that enrich the game experience. However, rely on your proficiencies in Survival, Nature, and Animal Handling to demonstrate competence in outdoor and natural settings, balancing your character's simpler decision-making approach with expertise in specific areas.

ABILITY DESCRIPTION

Spell slots available: 0

Recharge: N/A

Class advice: As a Barbarian, you do not have spell slots or cast spells at level 1. Focus on using your physical attacks effectively.

Greataxe - This is a two-handed melee weapon. When you hit with the Greataxe, you roll a 1d12 die and add +3 to the result for the damage. This attack is useful for dealing a large amount of damage to a single target.

Handaxe - This is a light, one-handed melee weapon, but it can also be thrown. When you hit with the Handaxe, you roll a 1d6 die and add +3 to the result for the damage. This weapon allows for versatility, as you can engage enemies at a distance by throwing it (range 20/60 feet) or fight up close.

Appendix 3 - Pre-testing Survey

MAG pre-testing user survey

▧ Not shared

☁

* Indicates required question

How many D&D sessions have you played before? (including one-shots) *

○ None - This is my first time

○ 1-5 sessions

○ 6-10 sessions

○ 11-20 sessions

○ 20+ sessions

What role do you have the most experience with? *

○ Player

○ Game Master

○ Both

○ None

What is your interest level in D&D? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not interested at all	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely interested

How complex do you believe learning D&D is? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very simple	○	○	○	○	○	Very complex

As a new player, what entry barriers to D&D do/did you find the most significant? (select all that apply) *

- ☐ Character creation
- ☐ Understanding the rules
- ☐ Role-playing in character
- ☐ Combat mechanics
- ☐ Skill checks
- ☐ Following the narrative
- ☐ Monetary costs
- ☐ Preparation time required
- ☐ Managing the game (as a GM)
- ☐ None
- ☐ Other:

How confident are you in your D&D roleplaying abilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

How confident are you in your D&D character creation abilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

How confident are you in your D&D rule-dependent abilities (e.g. combat, skill checks, etc.)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

How confident are you in managing a D&D campaign as a game master? (question only for GM)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

Role in testing *

○ Player

○ Game Master

Full Name *

Your answer

Appendix 4 - Post-testing Survey

MAG post-testing user survey

* Indicates required question

After having used the generated materials, what is your interest level in D&D? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not interested at all	○	○	○	○	○	Extremely interested

After having used the generated materials, how complex do you believe learning D&D is? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very simple	○	○	○	○	○	Very complex

From the perspective of a new player, what entry barriers to D&D were lowered by the generated materials? (select all that apply) *

☐ Character creation
☐ Understanding the rules
☐ Role-playing in character
☐ Combat mechanics
☐ Skill checks
☐ Following the narrative
☐ Monetary costs
☐ Preparation time required
☐ Managing the game (as a GM)
☐ None
☐ Other:

After having used the generated materials, how confident are you in your D&D roleplaying abilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

After having used the generated materials, how confident are you in your D&D character creation abilities? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

After having used the generated materials, how confident are you in your D&D rule-dependent abilities (e.g. combat, skill checks, etc.)? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

After having used the generated materials, how confident are you in managing a D&D campaign as a game master? (question only for GM)

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not confident at all	○	○	○	○	○	Very confident

Did you encounter any issues or frustrations while using the generated game materials? *

○ No issues

○ Minor issues, not a hindrance

○ Some disruptive issues

○ Major issues, materials were difficult to use

How coherent did you find the game materials of the campaign? *

○ Very incoherent – The storyline had many gaps and inconsistencies.

○ Somewhat incoherent – There were noticeable gaps or inconsistencies in the storyline.

○ Neutral – The storyline was neither particularly coherent nor incoherent.

○ Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow

○ Very coherent – The storyline was well-structured and flowed logically from start to finish.

How likely are you to use a similar tool in future D&D sessions? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very unlikely	○	○	○	○	○	Very likely

What feature of this tool did you find most helpful during your gameplay? *

Your answer

In what ways can the tool be improved to better assist new players in learning D&D? *

Your answer

Do you have any other suggestions or comments about how to make D&D more accessible and enjoyable for new players? *

Your answer

Role in testing *

◯ Player

◯ Game Master

Full Name *

Your answer

Appendix 5 - Pre and Post Testing Survey Results

Role in testing	No. of D&D sessions	Most experienced role	Pre-test interest level in D&D	Post-test interest level	Pre-test perceived learning complexity	Post-test perceived learning complexity
Player	1-5 sessions	Game Master	5	5	3	4
Player	20+ sessions	Both	5	5	4	4
Player	20+ sessions	Game Master	5	5	4	3
Game Master	1-5 sessions	Player	5	5	4	3
Player	6-10 sessions	Game Master	5	5	3	2
Player	1-5 sessions	Player	4	4	3	2
Player	11-20 sessions	Game Master	4	4	3	3
Player	20+ sessions	Both	4	4	3	3
Game Master	20+ sessions	Player	4	4	4	3
Game Master	6-10 sessions	Player	5	5	3	2
Player	None	None	4	5	5	2
Player	None	None	3	4	4	3
Player	None	None	4	5	5	3
Player	None	None	5	3	3	2
Player	1-5 sessions	Player	4	4	4	3

Most significant entry barriers	Entry barriers addressed by the project
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Role-playing in character	Role-playing in character, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Skill checks	Character creation, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules	Character creation, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Skill checks	Character creation, Skill checks, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Preparation time required	Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Preparation time required
Character creation, Combat mechanics, Following the narrative, Preparation time required	Character creation, Understanding the rules, Role-playing in character, Combat mechanics, Skill checks, Monetary costs, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Preparation time required	Character creation, Preparation time required
Character creation, Monetary costs, Preparation time required, Managing the game (as a GM)	Character creation, Role-playing in character, Preparation time required
Character creation, Role-playing in character, Following the narrative, Managing the game (as a GM)	Character creation, Monetary costs, Preparation time required
Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Managing the game (as a GM)	Combat mechanics, Skill checks, Following the narrative, Preparation time required, Managing the game (as a GM)
Combat mechanics, Skill checks, Monetary costs, Preparation time required, Managing the game (as a GM)	Character creation, Preparation time required, Managing the game (as a GM)
Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Skill checks, Monetary costs, Preparation time required, Managing the game (as a GM)	Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Skill checks
Understanding the rules, Preparation time required	Character creation, Understanding the rules, Combat mechanics, Skill checks, Following the narrative, Preparation time required
People can't organize for a session	Skill checks, Preparation time required
Understanding the rules, Preparation time required, People can't organize themselves to have a session + difficult to find people in general + understanding the process	Character creation, Role-playing in character, Combat mechanics, Preparation time required

Pre-test roleplay confidence	Post-test roleplay confidence	Pre-test character creation confidence	Post-test character creation confidence	Pre-test rule interpretation confidence	Post-test rule interpretation confidence	Pre-test campaign management confidence	Post-test campaign management confidence
3	4	5	5	5	4		
4	4	4	4	4	4		
4	4	4	4	4	4		
4	4	1	3	4	4	1	3
3	4	4	5	3	4		
2	5	3	4	2	4		
3	4	2	3	2	4		
5	5	5	5	5	5		
3	4	5	5	4	4	3	4
3	4	4	5	3	4	2	4
2	4	4	5	1	3		
2	3	4	4	1	3		
2	4	2	3	1	3		
5	4	4	4	4	5		
2	4	3	4	4	5		

Issues encountered	Coherence of the game materials	Likeliness to use such a tool in the future
Some disruptive issues	Somewhat incoherent – There were noticeable gaps or inconsistencies in the storyline.	1
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	4
No issues	Neutral – The storyline was neither particularly coherent nor incoherent.	4
Some disruptive issues	Neutral – The storyline was neither particularly coherent nor incoherent.	4
Some disruptive issues	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	3
No issues	Very coherent – The storyline was well-structured and flowed logically from start to finish.	5
No issues	Neutral – The storyline was neither particularly coherent nor incoherent.	4
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	2
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	1
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	4
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	3
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	4
No issues	Very coherent – The storyline was well-structured and flowed logically from start to finish.	4
No issues	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	3
Minor issues, not a hindrance	Somewhat coherent – The storyline had a few minor gaps, but it was generally easy to follow	3

Most useful feature	What can be improved
It helps with most of the character creation aspects which are just reading and filling in	It needs to double check itself to see if everything has been properly filled in, as many things were missing
for new players, removing the task of creating the characters is quite handy. But someone is needed to check the completeness	use simplified character sheets. There are ones that have been designed to use with kids, which lowers the complexity. I have never used one, soooooo, not sure, but could be worth a look.
Character background	Some additional descriptions of what their spells do
Generation of a story and NPCs	The whole story is nice as preparation, but key bullet points with a character overview for during gameplay is nicer. Additionally, an overview of the "extra" things players can do would be nice.
Help with the backstory	Explanation on how to do stuff and why stats are the way they are
Character creation was very easy	Help them create characters by themselves
Generating the story	More info about roleplaying
The background had overlap with another character which was nice.	It might be good to tell the player how the character was created so they can be helped with making their character
The Worldbuilding to adept from	Encounter-balancing, running it at level 2 or 3
Npc creation and environment descriptions, generated random encounters	Add references, like look at section wtv for more info. Add more info or enemies bonuses. Simpler words and bullet points would make navigating the materials easier.
calculating all the stats and keeping in mind every aspect of dnd rules while doing this, adding additional traditional DND events during the adventure	The players can choose what they want to generate and what they want to make themselves (if they want to make their own adventure for example) Also adding an automatic calculation of skill checks while the game is going/reminders of things to keep in mind coz again DND can get too heavy on additional things that you need to keep in mind
Quick access to information and easy to comprehend summaries	A page with a glassary of some basic terminology
It cut the preparation time a lot which was my main concern with trying out a new game I'd never played before	I think the tool successfully assist new players while still letting players make their own decisions, so i wouldn't change anything
Pre made character sheet	More accessible language, more explanation for fantasy creatures names like who are they
Descriptions of abilities, spells and features (their usual DnD description might feel a bit too complicated), character background and role-play ideas may help with feeling the character better and give a basis to their story, especially for people not familiar with DnD lore	Let somebody double-check and edit any errors which might happen due to the generation, offer more customization in the choosing of spells f.e.

Other suggestions
Just have a casual setting for the first session
Having the flavourful skill descriptions really helps, since it speaks to the imagination
Some very basic introduction to how combat works and what sort of actions are possible
Supplying choices between paths of action would be nice. And maybe a flow chart-like structure for the game flow.
Being able to roll your own stats is part of the fun. So maybe having a guid to roll stats instead of just giving them might be fun.
This was really good. I guess maybe a rulesheet that explains combat basics or something.
Explaining how the decision about the character were made ("you have a +3 in dexterity because it matches with your main stat" etc.)
It already is quite popular
Start with one-shots in less complex systems, then work your way up
Objects always work, like miniatures and props gain higher interest, visuals are better than text
A2 english words and a summary of rules
Very basic rule explanation (like turns)
No
Maybe pictures or more visual explanations
A more detailed explanation of common mechanics perhaps, such as what do stats influence, what saving throws are, attack roll VS damage roll, etc

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Appendix 6 - Thematic Analysis by Categories

System Weaknesses

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
A few errors here and there, which can be fixed by just having someone who knows the game quickly look at it. And also a number of details on enemies which is missing. I did fill in some blanks here and there. But for example then stuff like hey, what race is this sorcerer like? Yeah, that's the one thing I don't know because I have no experience with races. Yeah, it doesn't have a range. It's like it's missing You know, we're thrown into the center and suddenly, you know, the main quest is given to us right in front of our nose without explanation. Yeah, there was indeed for the start a bit of flavor that was more confusing than additive. And I also have proficiency in stealth, despite not having proficiency in stealth. The mistakes are also not the worst, because if you make a character for the first time then you also have mistakes in the character sheet. A lot of the encounters had a number of ways to solve them, and some of those were very unintuitive It was a bit frustrating that no one was willing to tell us what was going on. So everything felt a bit vague. Yeah, they came up to us and we were trying to basically negotiate with them. And they went from "Give us the heart" to "We're going to kill you". So it's like oh, maybe that's like a big thing of the plot at the Harvest Festival. But no, it wasn't. I feel like it's just trying to fit the back stories in instead of actually making them make sense. I searched for them (the solutions), because it only says solve puzzle. But for this one, it was really, uh, you go here, you cannot fight it. But there's also no real extra information to get. Then you go here, you can't fight it. But there's also no real extra information to get and that.	Minor errors or missing information Mistakes are not that significant Vague, unintuitive or incoherent content

System Strengths

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
It was fine. Like you don't have to think a lot about the character. It just already is there. I like it. I didn't have to think about the stats or even think about the like personality traits of the character too much. Like to pick that myself, that takes so much time and mental power and I can't choose. This is more general knowledge and also simplifies the calculations a lot. And I also think that generally just generating sheets makes the entry level a lot easier, if that makes sense, just because you don't have to spend time understanding what the stats are, what the skills are, which you need to pick It was nice that I could always rely on some random material sheet stuff to put on and just play around it And if you really want it to D&D and you want to make it easier for the GMs as well. And if you have this kind of tool and you just let it fill in to the people who want to participate. Makes it a lot easier to start a One Shot and get people into D&D. Yeah, it significantly cut down on the preparation time. If you have none and regardless of how you do your character creation, having a whole bunch of ideas laid out for the GM to work with, even if they get changed along the way, we're playing D&D. Everything gets changed. So it makes it more open to people who maybe want to try out being a GM For the first time playing it's really nice to have a pre generated character because combing through all the information is a lot of work for the first time. But I think in that sense this really does help because if you want to go start playing D&D and then the first thing you're met with is OK, now fill in this math. I think that is the biggest problem. But if you just get this and it's like, OK, what do you want to play as if somebody was Standing next to you and like walking you through. Yeah, that's a big offloading. Yes, I think this works. [...] Works just being able to get started playing without having to do the math. Helps also with DMing. This way you don't have to get lost in all the DM videos where they say build the world, build a city, think of how the economy works. Generally, I think for really just picking up and playing, the value is pretty high up there. It's not perfect because again, the flaws. I think that for the player side this is quite nice to have the pre generated characters Now I feel like it can maybe help to like you know, reduce the amount of time needed for a new player to like make an entire character It was really nice that a lot of stuff was already explained But the sheets actually helped me a lot. It was very easy to understand and I liked it overall. Yeah, I think it made it very easy to understand as a beginner and it made for a nice demo game. you can use things like this until you are more confident in your knowledge of D&D rules and all the stuff that can happen in the campaign So it gives good GM experience for changing stories.	Reduced mental load and preparation time Improved game understanding and provided learning opportunities Provided personal inspiration or motivation Increased confidence in own abilities Customizability

But I think in D&D, a lot of the experience comes from the people you're playing with and the dungeon master

Yeah, saying like any experience is a good experience. I mean, it was a good experience as well, like, you know, generally looking at doing and being accustomed to game playing and how it is going, I think

I think that not as a purpose of learning D&D. Not the greatest, but it gets you to learn all the other things except for character creation. A little bit. But as a way to introduce people to D&D. Think it's pretty good.

I Think you it would get you to the table and I think that's the most important one.

The best, the best thing it does is that it gets you playing, as you said in terms of and it gets you a bit familiar with some of the playing mechanics

but if I was completely new. Nobody's gonna tell you this stuff beforehand, and yeah, and a lot of this stuff you will learn when it comes, when it happens

I think the tips are really good for that.

There's five people or more sitting at your table. And then you might miss it. But if it's already some things here.

Was definitely useful, especially with combat. While in combat I did check it a lot to see what my abilities were and like how I needed to move.

Yeah. Understanding how to behave as a certain class or a race.

I think like in the future if I played D&D, maybe I will do my own background, but for the tips I would still use this AI at least in the first sessions to write to me what I should do. Because the tips are quite useful, like we usually have to research a lot or ask someone if you're starting out with a race or class that you are not very familiar with.

I found the ability description to be incredibly useful because usually, I feel that the abilities are written in a way which is very friendly for experienced players because they already know a lot of stuff and they need a really short way of writing down things so that they can see the spell like ohh what this does. But for beginners that doesn't really work [...] I also used it as well and I guess for me they were not that incredibly useful because I was already familiar with most mechanics in a way, but they were useful in just getting the general idea of what I can do and just thinking about other possibilities and options.

Those random encounters were very nice because you were just walking into the forest and I was like, OK, I don't know what to do

I want to do an actual campaign now.

I just have random inspiration for other stuff.

Yeah, the setting I think was interesting.

But by adding this environmental effect, I think. Really added more depth I think to the gameplay and so this was some inspiration from Baldur's Gate, so I don't know. Like the environmental turn and everything, and I should. I should have used them like this in combat or just as a constant element of Oh my God, you're in a temple. We need to hurry, but it's nice to know that I can use the environment as an enemy.

I will say that the way the story was translated through you did sound very interesting and I was impressed with the way that the story was generated

If you have new players, actually, I mean I guess you can get inspiration as well if you want to start something entirely new.

The simpler story made me feel more comfortable to actually do stuff in the game and just explore my options.

I mean, the story definitely felt well made, though it was more simple. But again, I would rather have a simpler story for the first time I play a game and it gave me the opportunity to actually have time to understand some aspects of the game as well

I didn't quite know how to visualize all of this stuff, and I used some cheeky stuff like "The tunnel is quite dark. We cannot go there."

I wouldn't have made such a thing, because there is something sort of restrictive about sharing your own ideas and then if it doesn't stick with the group, it's you're kind of left alone.

So I'm being given something and playing with it as opposed to, look at what I made and I think for a lot of players that would help.

Yeah, I haven't played much D&D at all and when I get this story made for me, it gives me a little more confidence in trying to role play as that character.

It means you're not trying to force your OC on people, but you've got a character and you try to play that.

And the connection that that gave our characters, I think was pretty nice because I immediately felt like we, our characters, aside from also being halflings our characters had at least some kind of connection already.

Personally, for me it went from zero to hero. I mean, yeah, I definitely would feel much more confident in myself if I was to play in a D&D campaign again, because now I feel much more familiar with the game mechanics and how it works

I mean, I really was afraid of not being able to, like, understand stuff that fast, but I guess it now I would say I'm not as afraid for sure.

I think for me what mattered is just actually playing a normal game for once, and that experience is what made me more confident. But the fact which made this experience good is the fact that it was easier to start because of the ready characters and everything, so I guess it all stays together in this.

Yes, I remember that in Baldur's Gate 3, and now I feel more confident playing that game because the first time playing the game I was not very good.

Your character background helped me a lot to like to feel my character better to understand their back story and how they act in general. Tips also help me a lot with utilizing my abilities and preferring one under or over another.

I really liked how much different it was, for a first level adventure [...] And this one on the story side felt really different, which something I really did like like it felt way more unpredictable

This is a fun, quirky campaign, but it's definitely not as absurd as your campaigns can get.

I have more freedom than I would expect from the first view on it

So this is a good way to avoid everyone playing the same story

it really doesn't shine as much in numbers which is kind of expected from AI but it really does shine in creativity

Yeah, creating a narrative and also just creating backgrounds

Yeah, I actually didn't think that at first that that campaign was made by AI. I assumed in the middle that it's probably AI, but it felt quite natural in a way

| Compared to pre made ones I guess. These will likely not be that similar, I guess. You will probably get something, it can be highly customizable I guess.

So generating is and like increasing the variance, especially for settings like Comic Con and similar things. I think it really has a strong place there.

I think especially starter campaigns are hard to find because there are many campaigns. They're like their level 5 level like that you can one shots that you can buy or whatever. One shots for starter play for starter games and starter players are very difficult. | |

Most Appreciated Features

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
For the first time playing it's really nice to have a pre generated character because combing through all the information is a lot of work for the first time. Yes, useful. Yeah, sure. It helps with most of the character creation aspects which are just reading and filling in for new players, removing the task of creating the characters is quite handy Character background Generation of a story and NPCs Help with the backstory Generating the story The background had overlap with another character which was nice. The Worldbuilding to adept from Npc creation and environment descriptions, generated random encounters calculating all the stats and keeping in mind every aspect of dnd rules while doing this, adding additional traditional DND events during the adventure Quick access to information and easy to comprehend summaries It cut the preparation time a lot which was my main concern with trying out a new game I'd never played before Pre made character sheet Descriptions of abilities, spells and features (their usual DnD description might feel a bit too complicated), character background and role-play ideas may help with feeling the character better and give a basis to their story, especially for people not familiar with DnD lore	Character creation Narrative and encounter generation Accessible and relevant supporting information Reduced preparation time

Diversity in Interactions and Player Freedom

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
I would expect more than one combat encounter in a oneshot. I have more freedom than I would expect from the first view on it I preferred maybe a bit more planning that we would like to get some, maybe information. I would maybe like to talk to some of the townspeople to see what's going on with the Harvest Festival, So this is a good way to avoid everyone playing the same story I think also in the prompts that you gave, like the things that we could fill in a lot of, those were not necessary There could have been more variety in encounters. I think perhaps yes. Or more reveals to be learned sort of. It felt a bit like, you know, we were getting like, the same encounter. But, you know, 3 flavors For the DM side, it is a real advantage to have thought of the story yourself I do think in general D&D players are quite accepting of just random stuff happening, which is also sometimes because the DMs improvises sometimes very stupid, which is also very fun. I also like that, uh, I didn't realize that you would have Yondala as well. So that's just the random god. [...] And the connection that that gave our characters, I think was pretty nice because I immediately felt like we, our characters, aside from also being halflings our characters had at least some kind of connection already. Like I think what we had here was fine. (number of inputs) I think the amount of inputs we have right now was quite, quite perfect. Yeah, yeah, this was good for a beginner. Yeah, this is a good input. Now what I would normally do for one shot is generate one or two more characters than players But the list you had now was quite nice, They would also need too many options, like if you're playing level 6. Then oh, I choose a cleric. It's not just for this one. It didn't ask me for a domain. Yeah, but if we went for level 6, then it would have asked me for so many more things. Between taking spells, I guess. Level 3 you already have many choices like the reason that level one has so little things, it's just because it is the simplest, and most intros are given at level one, because then you're not overwhelmed by abilities.	Want more freedom and diversity in interactions There is freedom in interactions Promotes novel and unpredictable scenarios

Difficulty Level

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
And then we finally get into combat and then we're like I don't think we want to fight. This seems too strong. If you think about the range, the amount of users, can I just do that every turn? It's like frightened. Frightened. Frightened. You lose. I liked the story, but it was not power scaled correctly at all. Yeah, encounter balance was off. Definitely wasn't scaled properly for a first level I would still very much recommend not doing this at level one. Too high Yeah, the final combat was too high, but that was only because we had three. Players, I think. If we have 4, it's probably would have been doable, I think it was quite easy, no one died. I think it was very beginner friendly. Yeah, I'd say it's easy. For the first encounter, I lowered its health and seeing how easy they kill it, I just left everything else the same as it was generated afterwards. And I think it's really built for a party of 4, rather because they easily went through it. Yeah, no one died and no one was that low. I think it's still very beginner friendly, like it's not easy, it's not boring or something. It's not too easy. Just beginner friendly mostly and I think it works for the beginner campaigns.	Unbalanced encounters Depends on number of party members Easy, appropriate for beginners

Campaign structure

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
I just want to add. I love that it's actually D&D format. Like it's fonts and stuff. It brings a lot. Yeah, it does actually, like add a lot. in terms of just following the story, I found it very easy Yeah, but for time sake this was perfectly fine. I think it proceeded really nice, although it took quite a bit more time than expected. It felt a bit too sudden. Like we're suddenly in the middle of the city, you know, approaching the city and suddenly getting things explained. I feel like in general, having like an act 1-2-3 can help to give some clarity to you. But It doesn't really, you know, do anything It's one quest line. Yeah. It's not multiple quest lines that tie into each other. I think I could have adjusted this story by making more time go for the guards so they could acquire the weapon [...] I think that would have been a better story but oh well. The entire start of a random old dude being like, OK, so you are a party now is a bit… Yeah, but otherwise genuinely otherwise, one shots can take half the one shot just to get the party going. [...] So it was good way to start. Yeah, I actually didn't think that at first that that campaign was made by AI. I assumed in the middle that it's probably AI, but it felt quite natural in a way The simpler story made me feel more comfortable to actually do stuff in the game and just explore my options. But as it was posed I think I had enough, like improv materials to work with but in terms of just following the story, I found it very easy And most of them do feel similar (to pre-made oneshots) because you are kind of rushing through a story trying to make it fit in shorter time than necessary. Like it looks pretty good. It looks pretty coherent. There's just details missing in places. I think the tips are really good for that.	Well structured for intended use case and appropriate supporting materials Took longer than expected More preparation time would have helped Abrupt or rushed Split of Preference of standard material vs custom formats D&D format appreciated Overwhelming quantity of information or poorly structured

There's five people or more sitting at your table. And then you might miss it. But if it's already some things here.

Was definitely useful, especially with combat. While in combat I did check it a lot to see what my abilities were and like how I needed to move

Your character background helped me a lot to like to feel my character better to understand their back story and how they act in general. Tips also help me a lot with utilizing my abilities and preferring one under or over another

There are also character sheets that are meant for beginners because this is the default D&D sheet.

Actually like this one because it taught me a lot. I think I've played with both of them, but I. Like this one better.

Yeah, I personally prefer this one because it's the one I've always used.

you also have sheets that help with combat order and things you can do and that might also be nice to include in such a beginner bundle.

The backstory I think might be a bit too much for a new player.

Bullet points would be nice to make it more accessible during game play [...] still there was a lot of information and it only started working when I made my own bullet points.

No, I think, there was just too much information and all this stuff I wanted to use wasn't there and all the stuff.

I feel like the information is good, but it's a little bit too slow to use during the gameplay itself.

having like an act 1-2-3 can help to give some clarity to you. But It doesn't really, you know, do anything

Yeah. It's not multiple quest lines that tie into each other

Yeah, there was indeed for the start a bit of flavor that was more confusing than additive

It may have some suggestions in some pages, but I couldn't really keep track of them. I think it would be way easier to have just a bullet point from each character like. Most important tips or something like this on a very reachable starting page. Because it was more in a very narrative way of putting it.

Backstory Integration

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
I had bouncer insight.	Non D&D generation
	Motivated role-play by backstory
That was just you using your skill, right? It was not really in the campaign.	Unfulfilled character role/quest
I did find some extra motivation for my character to go on a quest to retrieve a magical artifact, because that's where my interest lies as a character	Vague or missing information
But like for example my character like he was basically on a quest to try and help to heal people and I have had 0 targets to heal. Heal the deer? No.	Minor impact on storyline
Yeah, I also didn't know that there was a fair there was this short piece of text about your characteristics, but I knew nothing about any of you.	Depends on chosen theme
I think that was also missing, usually at the start of the session, you just have everyone basically explain their character and we didn't really do that.	Decisions mattered in some ways
And then also in the background there was like, yeah, make solutions to your biggest fear. But then I had to based on very much nothing I had to project what the biggest fear of the character would be.	
It was some elements, but not much to be honest. The story didn't really make a big difference if I was a dragonborn or if I wasn't one.	
I think it's also connected to a story of a ritual, and this adventure doesn't allow for much choice and you have to go to a ritual and fight the boss in the end.	
Yeah, I don't think that in the story prompt there was much place to make huge decisions to begin with	
I think the decisions mattered in some ways, like in ways where for example, we could talk to people instead of fighting them.	
Like we're mentioned and I don't know, just characteristics and it was nice and even as small machines, which don't really influence anything still feel more included in the story in a way.	
Yeah, in general, integrating some of the character back stories in the documents can work, but is currently just not working very well because one I don't actually have the back stories, which is quite annoying and two, most of it is trying, I feel like it's just trying to fit the back stories in instead of actually making them make sense.	

Physical or Digital

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
Yeah, yeah, it's so much. Easier to just use. That for sure. Yeah. The only reason I use virtual is because I use virtual more often is partially because I often play online, and when you already have a laptop, and secondly because. Often virtual is harder to lose in my opinion, and. Sometimes with the more complicated games. Virtual is easier because it calculates stuff. Yeah. No, but like if. I was doing an actual tabletop setting. The flick open really quick to see what I was doing, what my character was like somewhere and looking on my screen and trying to zoom out. Way easier than searching through tabs. Yeah. I Think it is genuinely for. Literally just for getting people to play quickly, it's good. As you already mentioned conventions and stuff, I could definitely see the use of this in people's living rooms or yeah I think this would allow for like FANAAT on like the DM. This could allow FANAAT to. Set up a one shot evening somewhere earlier in the year that you can use this. Set it up and play it basically in one evening, which I think is in for getting new people into it. I think it is more engaging because when I'm for example on my phone or my laptop I'm getting distracted constantly. And like it's easier to just put your phone aside and you just have everything that you need nearby. I'm biased towards board games, so that's why I think that physical materials are nicer just because I like board games, because they are physical and using electronic materials all the time, it doesn't feel the same. [...] But paper, again, gives much more atmosphere and vibe to the whole thing and just feels like the true old D&D, which people like a lot you know. I think that physical material is definitely help a lot with the immersion, but I also think that it's maybe about some sort of balance because while it is very easy to access the overview, it's not that easy to keep track of some certain things that are number-oriented because people constantly forget to write it and. Just remove it, etcetera, etcetera. But other than that, I definitely prefer physical materials. On this one, because it was very difficult for me to keep the track of the initiative in the combat, maybe that was because, like. If we had the initiative cards, it would have been easier, but also it was difficult differentiating from the two types of mercenaries or enemies or whatever. So I had to find a way to label them and connect them with the miniatures on the map. And find a place to do that on the sheet. But overall, yeah, maybe just a very small container on the side with, like, you have 4 encounters and this is for each one of the players. So I can have enough space to write about their health and everything underneath it. But yeah, physical is way better and I even used the DND beyond the app and I like literally rolling the dice now and also as a DM, which I never experienced before, I like being sheltered, having my own thing here.	Ease of use In virtual harder to lose track and better for complicated games Digital can be distracting Community building and promoting social interaction More engaging Preference for tangibility Hybrid approach for dynamic elements Material structure and layout should consider changing elements

Yeah. Oh yeah. Rolling dice is a very important part and it's very nice. And the dice are nice, I think what might work is like some hybrid approach where things which get changed a lot are electronic and things which are usually consistent are on paper But for example, like health points or something. Constantly writing it down and then erasing it. You don't know where exactly to try it and keep track of this on the current character sheets. So, yeah, it's also for a hybrid approach.	

User Suggestions

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
just have your back story summarized in a few parts bullet points would be nice to make it more accessible during game play I would still very much recommend not doing this at level one. But for me, what's kind of missing from this [...] If there was a document accompanying this that's telling you like the numbers If you could somehow give it a playstyle and it would automatically determine this race works, this class works. You're lowering the bar to entry even more Or a back. And forth in between. I think that would be the most interesting back. Back and forth so it's more collaborative because something I try to do whenever starting a campaign is to make players collaborate on what the characters are, so they all kind of fit together. something that you get multiple characters out of it that are similar, but then it gives you a short description of what each one is or how it would be expected to be played, so that when you get your character, you're not immediately tied to to 1 character with one playstyle I think also in the prompts that you gave, like the things that we could fill in a lot of, those were not necessary, The best one would be to make a modular to make it say OK I know that I want these things and I can fill them in already for myself or I don't know what I want, give me some options. maybe some referencing on the pages. Like you can find this point more detailed in there so I could not spend that much time navigating them. I was building a map inside of my head and it was not building itself. But when you as a player receive a note or like a map with some directions, that would be cool to have it visualized in some way also, because not only it makes you be in the story, but also because visualizing maps and	Accuracy check Simplified game materials More in-depth explanations & overviews: spells, stats, D&D terms, Balancing Simpler system for getting players into TTRPGs Varying user input freedom (+pop culture ref) Iterative collaboration with AI agent Visual representations Guided character progression

locations is always nice, especially for stuff like temple which is difficult to imagine.

Yeah, if you were involved in the creation process. So I think it might be a disadvantage a DM to have a fully pre generated story, but having it as a tool that you can use to help generate stories

I always make a list of names that belong to a race that you might encounter

Just one choice of play style and possibly name so that you can just actually get the thing and then the AI will explain the choices. Like I picked this class because it does about what you want and then it could be useful to really cut down all the time

Maybe it's nice to have as a dungeon master the option to sort of talk to the AI like oh, I want something like this and AI give suggestions

Because I could have been like, you know, maybe my back story about my back story did not end in tragedy. I don't want to have a tragic backstory, basically.

Something that might be fun to add there is an IP. As in, you can for example also add in something like Legolas or I want to play something that feels a lot like Mario

That would allow people to take their culture references and use that as input because most people will have some pop culture references that they know that can be applied to D&D. But most people won't know what an artificer does.

Yeah, so just having an overview of what is sort of possible. I think it helps spark some interest.

Might be fun if you want to make a higher level character sheet. And then just present the one for level one and then say hey, you're going to level 2, so you can now upgrade these two things.

Have a little bit of input in your playing style and maybe like a tiny note. You know you should change these things if you don't know something like that. If you're planning on leveling up, that is, you don't need that

Is this to get people into role-playing or to get people into D&D? Because if you want to get people into table top playing. You're probably better off using a simpler system.

It needs to double check itself to see if everything has been properly filled in, as many things were missing

use simplified character sheets. There are ones that have been designed to use with kids, which lowers the complexity

Some additional descriptions of what their spells do

key bullet points with a character overview for during gameplay is nicer. Additionally, an overview of the "extra" things players can do would be nice.

Explanation on how to do stuff and why stats are the way they are

Help them create characters by themselves

More info about roleplaying

It might be good to tell the player how the character was created

Add more info or enemies bonuses. Simpler words and bullet points would

make navigating the materials easier.	
The players can choose what they want to generate and what they want to make themselves (if they want to make their own adventure for example)	
A page with a glossary of some basic terminology	
More accessible language, more explanation for fantasy creatures names like who are they	
Let somebody double-check and edit any errors which might happen due to the generation, offer more customization in the choosing of spells f.e.	

Likelihood of Future Use

Focus Group Transcript	Emerging codes
Yes	Yes, for inspiration
	No, already have inspiration
I personally would not. I have too many ideas.	Good for first time playing, but not for first time DMing
I already ask GPT for Ideas. I make my own campaign usually, but sometimes I need something like a personal Idea or something. Or like what can be found in a town and then GPT gives me a list of stuff.	Yes, to introduce a new player group
	Extra onboarding still needed for the players
I think that the story generation bit is really nice for the first time playing, but not for the first time DMing. Yeah, it might help creating your own story if you already have some experience with DND.	
To start playing it, I think I would use it.	
As in its current shape, where you need to immediately like to write in all the data, I wouldn't recommend it to my players. Probably; as a DM I might want to use a DM tool to generate the first adventure. [...] But for the players, I think some point of onboarding is still needed, and if I need to be next to them to make them use the AI, then might as well. Help them make the character.	
For literal babies, first session like for complete newbies to the system, yes I think I would use the character generation. Maybe the dungeon generation is good for starting DMs, but again, I don't have experience with the dungeon generation	
For the characters, I wouldn't use it because again I have ideas myself and also I think I can fill in the character sheet better	
I will say that the way the story was translated through you did sound very interesting and I was impressed with the way that the story was generated.	
I personally wouldn't use it, but I can see other people using it.	
Can you send me the campaign after this? By the way, I'm interested to at least look at it.	

Appendix 7 - Unedited Focus Group Transcript

Transcript 1

How do you describe your overall experience with this AI generated campaign?

Speaker 2

Well, the big question I have is how would the DM part was generated because like the player part except for know a few errors here and there, which can be fixed by just having someone who knows the game quickly look at it. I think it was fine. The backstory I think might be a bit too much for a new player. Yeah, because like, I got basically one entire page of back story.

Speaker 5

That's too much as a starting player to have like in detail?

Speaker 2

I think, yeah, I think you should just have a quick short. Like your character came from this place, this is what they did. Basically just have your back story summarized in a few parts. And, you don't need that much.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Because if you start at level one, you're also not an experienced adventurer in the world.

Speaker 2

No, like you should just have a quick like this is what your character is roughly, and the rest you can make up yourself, I think.

Speaker 3

Wrote it in the form as well, but I think it would be nice if you do have the full page, but also supply it a bullet point list so people can read it through for inspiration.

Speaker 3

I think for new players the whole story is nice, but bullet points would be nice to make it more accessible during game play, because right now I have to. I read it through and then I summarized it, but then still there was a lot of information and it only started working when I made my own bullet points.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 5

So it's like you had to search through the information to find the things that you needed?

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 2

I got a heart attack for a second. I looked and I saw resistance to bludgeoning and piercing. I was like what the ****, but that's what it's there.

Speaker 3

The other tree, yeah. It's a good thing.

Speaker 5

These are all AI generated.

Speaker 2

I assume this was AI generated because no, no, no D&D thing does have just has bludgeoning and piercing resistance without having like non magical things for our challenge.

Speaker 3

Well, I fixed them.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 3

You could have put it on fire and I think you would have won.

Speaker 2

We have, we had, we had one person.

Speaker 3

Where you can have literal fire, you can just build fire.

Speaker 3

The tree is not going to be moving.

Speaker 6

We could afford to, yeah.

Speaker 1

But we didn't want to fight it with a tree.

Speaker 3

That's fair.

Speaker 2

I mean, if I was playing a chaotic character that tree would be dead.

Speaker 1

Ohh yes.

Speaker 2

But I was good. So no.

Speaker 1

I was very confused.

Speaker 6

Too concerned with what wildlife you wanted to eat?

Speaker 2

OK. And the race, you could also fight the race also, these challenges are way too ...

Speaker 1

But having a lot of characters that you're not able to fight also is a bit frustrating if everything you encounter is.

Speaker 2

Yeah, especially at. You know it has been a long while and like the first basically combat encounter. We're not supposed to fight in the 2nd combat, we're not supposed to fight and then we're not supposed to fight. And then we finally get into combat and then we're like I don't think we want to fight. This seems too strong.

Speaker 6

And then it's also the case of. You have these two very powerful entities, and then we're just there doing their dirty work, even though they are stronger.

Speaker 1

And we're not allowed to fight back.

Speaker 3

I was also very confused by the missing of the second fight, because I have my first paper.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I fully expected it when we entered the forest and encountered the deer at first that we had to fight something there because usually you start out with. Like some sort of small thing that's at the very beginning.

Speaker 1

I would expect more than one combat encounter in a oneshot.

Speaker 2

I don't know where it is.

Speaker 6

Sorry. Yeah, but for time sake this was perfectly fine. Yeah, and.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 6

Also like I think what happened is because the theme of the game was exploration, the AI just took that.

Speaker 1

Yeah, we have made the exploration, yeah.

Speaker 7

Vulnerable to radiant damage.

Speaker 3

Oh yeah, yeah. I had no idea what you were asking. I'm sorry I couldn't see it. Can I look at it? I'm sorry.

Speaker 7

I think this is vulnerable to radiant damage, no?

Speaker 2

The last line of text at the bottom from the wraith: vulnerable to radiant image. I could have one shotted.

Speaker 3

Yeah, but I looked over here.

Speaker 1

But that was the break.

Speaker 2

Yeah, but it doesn't. It's AI. AI. No, no, no.

Speaker 3

I don't ******* know.

Speaker 2

A no, the AI is weird. I've tried generating things.

Speaker 2

Well, I mean it says here that the radiant that's because like, the vulnerable to radiance damage is not included here.

Speaker 5

So it should be there.

Speaker 4

It should be there, yeah.

Speaker 5

Up I think. Consistency is like the biggest issue.

Speaker 3

I was very confused by this because there was a lot of stuff to do, but there was nowhere to do it.

Speaker 5

Almost. I put it like before as improved material as just if you want to just put that somewhere or give it to the players somehow.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I feel like the information is good, but it's a little bit too slow to use during the gameplay itself. So maybe for example, if you have to read one, you're like they can solve it, they can't solve it and then you can just follow a tree, something like that, to go for solutions. And there was a lot of stuff to do. But with character types that we didn't have, so that for example an alchemist could do something better. Or we could do something with a bard.

Speaker 4

Let me see. OK, let's see.

Speaker 2

Both.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I think a lot of things can happen, sort of happens on the spot. If a player asks, can I try this? Can I figure this out? Then you decide. Yeah, sure.

Speaker 5

But then you would need to know what would happen.

Speaker 1

Yeah, but that usually is just improvising, like almost always, that has to be improvisation because you cannot have a list of all the things that can happen in all the responses like. DM-ing is 80% improvising. I would say you have a list of just things you want to get to sort of, and then when the player tries on something you just figure out what the **** happened

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 7

We would have won the fights. He's also vulnerable to radiant damage. He would have died.

Speaker 3

You never asked me. That.

Speaker 1

Yeah, but we cast guiding bolt. It's radiant damage. So he would have died instantly. Wow. OK, we won. We won.

Speaker 7

I hit him with radiant.

Speaker 3

Wait what the radiant damage. What does that do?

Speaker 1

That's just damage. Has a type like. His guiding bolt has radiance type.

Speaker 6

The tree is weak to fire, so yeah, demon creatures are weak to holy light.

Speaker 1

Yeah. So the first guiding bolts if he was hit with the main, that guy would have done double damage. Yeah.

Speaker 2

This would be 14 doubled to 28.

Speaker 1

Yeah. So we would have won.

Speaker 3

Well, I'm sorry I tried.

Speaker 2

And also you have you also had like the dark whispers is a bit more for you. It says DC13 wisdom save or be frightened.

Speaker 3

I didn't understand that at all.

Speaker 2

Yeah, it doesn't have a range. It's like it's missing. If you think about the range, the amount of users, can I just do that every turn? It's like frightened. Frightened. Frightened. You lose.

Speaker 3

I also didn't. You asked me how many people you hit at the same time and just wasn't there. So I said what I wanted.

Speaker 2

Now I assume that eldritch blast is a thing where if you're level 5, it can shoot at 2 targets.

Did this manage to keep you entertained throughout the storyline? If yes, why? If not, why not?

Speaker 1

Yes, yes, I would say so. I would say especially in the second-half, once we entered the forest, it was a bit frustrating that no one was willing to tell us what was going on. So everything felt a bit vague.

Speaker 2

Also, it felt like I'm confused. Yeah, I think also the main thing was remembering the 12 people. Yeah, they came up to us and we were trying to basically negotiate with them. And they went from "Give us the heart" to "We're going to kill you".

Speaker 1

And we were like in like the half second we just showed up and. They were like, what the ****?

Speaker 3

Yeah. So the prompt that I had for this was that you were recruited by someone and then after that you found out that you were working for the bad guy. But to enforce that belief I was like, I'm just gonna make the main good guy a very hot headed person. To not have patience at all.

Speaker 2

Like I get it. But he was a bit too hot headed? Like he should have explained a bit more why he's attacking us and then we could have tried to maybe persuade him because I'm pretty sure. I said can I persuade him? And he said, Yeah, I think that was one of them.

Speaker 3

Well, you tried and then you said something where there was like, you know.

Speaker 2

Because I like something like that. But yeah.

How coherent did you find the storyline of the campaign, and did you feel any particular moments were disjointed?

Speaker 1

Yes, one Legolas showed up.

Speaker 6

Yeah. And the grim Reaper.

Speaker 2

Yeah, it felt a bit like at least the start. It felt a bit too sudden. Like we're suddenly in the middle of the city, you know, approaching the city and suddenly getting things explained. You know, we're thrown into the center and suddenly, you know, the main quest gift for us right in front of our nose without explanation.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And just like here, have a map and then basically runs away.

Speaker 6

Yeah.

Speaker 2

And then you know the city, you know, certainly, you know, an understated guy sells some daggers and then that was it. That was the entire city part. I preferred maybe a bit more planning that we would like to get some, maybe information. They were like, how have you not heard of the dark hearts? Gee, I wonder, because we couldn't talk to anyone.

Speaker 2

It was a bit, you know, I would maybe like to talk to some of the townspeople to see what's going on with the Harvest Festival, because there was also a thing. So it's like oh, maybe that's like a big thing of the plot at the Harvest Festival. But no, it wasn't.

Speaker 6

Yeah, there was indeed for the start a bit of flavor that was more confusing than additive.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I was also very confused. I'm sorry for not doing that very well.

Speaker 2

Yeah. No, no. Look, it must be expected. You know, just immediately getting like an entire sheet, like, I don't know how many pages that was, but I was reading that and I was, I was getting confused, so.

Speaker 2

I mean, I feel like in general, having like an act 1-2-3 can help to give some clarity to you. But It doesn't really, you know, do anything. Yeah.

Speaker 6

It's one quest line. Yeah. It's not multiple quest lines that tie into each other

Speaker 1

It's not Lord Of the Rings. Yeah. Walk, walk, walk, walk.

Speaker 2

Ohh, just wondering where the hell did he appear from? Like you know the guy, that dark sorcerer. Because I feel like he was just there. At least it felt to me like we were. We were searching.

Speaker 6

To that sorcerer.

Speaker 2

Yeah, like we. We were looking for the guards. So we followed the trail of the guards and then suddenly poof, he's there. I don't know if you were supposed to appear there when we were looking.

Speaker 3

For the guards, the idea was that they were in the camp of the guards, so like the guards were camping in the open space, so I didn't have that, I think. And then he was there because he knew you were looking for the guards and he was looking for the guards to take them out or something.

Speaker 3

But I think I could have adjusted this story by making more time go for the guards so they could acquire the weapon which could destroy the gem and then could mark I could have made more time this this strong person instead of the actual work so you don't have to that name.

Speaker 3

I think that would have been a better story but well.

How well did the system integrate your characters into the campaign? Did you feel that this the background influenced the storyline in any way?

No

Speaker 2

I don't think any of us have had.

Speaker 6

Like, I had bouncer insight.

Speaker 2

Yeah, like that. Didn't really. That was just you using your skill, right? It was not really in the campaign.

Speaker 1

I mean, I did find some extra motivation for my character to go on a quest to retrieve a magical artifact, because that's where my interest lies as a character, but.

Speaker 2

But like for example my character like he was basically on a quest to try and help to heal people and I have had 0 targets to heal. Heal the deer? No. But the deer I was just able to medicine patch up because only his back leg was hurt. He wasn't like any mortal danger or anything.

Speaker 6

I was just there.

Speaker 2

Just just, you know every single entity like do you need healing? No, no, no, no, no. OK, well.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I also didn't know that there was a fair there was this short piece of text about your characteristics, but I knew nothing about any of you. I only knew you're racist.

So as a DM, would you like to have an overview of the characters themselves?

Speaker 3

Well, yeah a very short overview. I also filled in the form I think.

Speaker 2

And I think that was also missing, usually at the start of the session, you just have everyone basically explain their character and we didn't really do that. We had like maybe like you know. 10 seconds of like oh. Yeah, I'm a frog and I heal people.

Speaker 1

Yeah. I'm a dwarf. I like cool artifacts.

Speaker 6

I'm a human.

Speaker 1

I call everyone lad or lass.

Speaker 3

Yeah. And then also in the background there was like, yeah, make solutions to your biggest fear. But then I had to based on very much nothing I had to project what the biggest fear of the character would be. So I was like, OK, which kind of animals eat frogs? And I was like maybe a hawk. Then I was. Like, OK, but what would humans be scared of? And I was like, yeah, poverty. But how am I going to be doing that? So death, I guess. And I was like, OK, I'm gonna go. Lord of the Rings. Let's go.

What about the difficulty level of the challenges? What do you think about them?

Speaker 2

Too high?

Speaker 1

Yeah, the final combat was too high, but that was only because we had three. Players, I think.

Speaker 2

If we have 4, it's probably would have been doable, but the thing is though, I don't know how.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 2

You probably didn't max your character, right? Just because I did a bit of, you know, I made sure that my character wouldn't die. Well, that didn't really help, but I put points into the Constitution extra.

Speaker 1

Ohh no I changed nothing.

Speaker 6

Also didn't change a thing.

Speaker 2

No like because my racial attributes they weren't allocated. That's also great. So I put them in Constitution and then I moved. I swapped my Constitution and took 30 scores to get 16 16 instead of 17 15.

Speaker 6

Hmm yeah.

How does this AI generated campaign compare to pre-made one shots? Do you think there are any advantages or disadvantages?

Speaker 2

I can't tell because I haven't played a previous one shot.

Speaker 3

Did we play pre-made? One shots. OK.

Speaker 2

I also haven't been in any standard ones. I've only been in beginnings of campaigns and then I died and then the and then the campaigns ended.

Speaker 6

I have. I have been in 4 one shots excluding this one. And most of them do feel similar because you are kind of rushing through a story trying to make it fit in shorter time than necessary.

Speaker 2

Yeah. That's why they usually just end up being longer.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 6

But for this one, it was really, uh, you go here, you cannot fight it. But there's also no real extra information to get. Then you go here, you can't fight it. But there's also no real extra information to get and that.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 6

That there could have been more variety in encounters.

Speaker 1

I think perhaps yes. Or more reveals to be learned sort of.

Speaker 6

Of yeah, because now suddenly the Necromancer appears as well.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, it felt a bit like, you know, we were getting like, the same encounter. But, you know, 3 flavors basically because. You know it's an approach thing. You can't fight thing, thing tells you vague things. That which doesn't really help because the story itself is a bit confusing. And then you move to the next thing. If you can't fight because there's twelve of them and then move to the next thing and then.

Speaker 1

They look very tough.

Speaker 2

And then the next thing appears to do 48 plus like 6 damage with one attack.

Speaker 6

Yeah, yeah. In terms of story progression, it was more of a.

Speaker 5

Yeah, fair enough. I think this might be because of the large amount of text also for the DM, hard to process all this and maybe it gets confusing.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I think the amount of text is maybe a bit overwhelming, because if there's so much text, you're like, Oh well, there's a story written, so I should follow the story completely and. And that kind of ***** it over.

Speaker 6

I think that for the player side this is quite nice to have the pre generated characters. Someone needs to check them if they're generated correctly, but they also just work without them being fully correct.

Speaker 4

Hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah, right.

Speaker 6

But for the DM side, it is a real advantage to have thought of the story yourself, because then you can more easily adapt on the fly and improvise because you already know what's happening if you have.

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, that is true.

Speaker 2

Yeah, you're pictured in your head and everything.

Speaker 6

Yeah, if you were involved in the creation process. So I think it might be a disadvantage a DM to have a fully pre generated story, but having it as a tool that you can use to help generate stories I think.

Speaker 1

Then again, there do exist a lot of premades D&D stories.

Speaker 6

But then again you. Spent you'd have the time or take the time to delve into it and there was no real time for that now.

Speaker 2

Now I feel like it can maybe help to like you know, reduce the amount of time needed for a new player to like make an entire character with someone.

Speaker 6

Yeah.

Speaker 2

But it's not really something you can basically just give to a group of four new players and be like, I guess this helps because I think it might even confuse them more than if they follow that tutorial. Or something.

Speaker 3

Yeah, the idea for a story that's nice. But then, yeah, there should be. Bullet points so you can make your own story out of it.

Speaker 6

So yeah, that's that.

Speaker 3

So it's just inspiration instead of actually just following.

Speaker 6

I think that I think would make it very much more usable. If it's more of a bullet point, it's easier to get an overview of what's happening as an idea, and then you can also way easily fill in things or skip bullet points instead of it being one big text.

And would you say to have some sort of random encounters or how would envision this type of?

Speaker 6

But that might.

Speaker 2

Because, like I do think you know, maybe having like a short list of, you know, things that you can do when you don't know what to do would be nice. Some type of encounters maybe?

Speaker 3

Yeah, those random encounters were very nice because you were just walking into the forest and I was like, OK, I don't know what to do or you were making a lot of noise. So it's like, yeah, **** you need to whisper there. So I was like, OK, I'm gonna be having you save the deer. And then when you're calming the deer down, you'll be silent. You will hear the whispers.

Speaker 1

Lists of random encounters are always nice to have, like as a dungeon master, just random **** that can happen.

Speaker 2

Yeah, sometimes, you know, because I've had this happen before. I've planned for them going north-south, east and West and since. Just a tiny bit north and then immediately go northeast and like, well, even what am I supposed to do? Because I didn't describe anything.

Speaker 1

We take the story and we move it over there.

Speaker 2

And just like, oh, God, yes, there's a mudslide with like a giant. Yeah, it makes sense.

Speaker 1

Yes.

Speaker 2

Because I do think in general D&D players are quite accepting of just random stuff happening, which is also sometimes because the DMs improvises sometimes very stupid, which is also very fun. Yeah, like God hitting me on my head

Speaker 4

Yes, but also sometimes players improvise something very stupid and then the DM just has to roll with it then.

Speaker 4

Ohh yeah.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 3

I want to do an actual campaign now.

Speaker 1

Yes, and something you think with yourself and see how that feels.

Speaker 3

Yeah, yeah. Well, actually, I want to be a player. I want to learn more before I am GM.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 3

I like being annoying instead of having to fix other people being annoying.

Speaker 4

OK.

Speaker 2

You can be annoying as a DM too.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I did. I hate your lightning.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yes, that was very annoying. I was like, I'm going to like I was at the health where I was like, if I use healing spell now, it won't be fully effective, God dammit. That's why I was like, please let him hit me with his shield, you know.

Speaker 3

I was very glad that you. You were the one who was the lowest at running away because I wanted you to run away. But I was like, OK, I can have you trip over a medicine somewhere. I had some trouble.

Speaker 2

Damn, I did. I did. I did. Like the heating potion, but I do think having it be having it certainly expire or anything like that seemed a bit weird.

Speaker 3

How to do that?

Speaker 4

OK.

Speaker 3

Yeah, it was also like if you wait for a fight to use it, then yeah, I wanted to fix the lightning damage, but I also didn't want you to wait for the fight before you used it.

Speaker 1

I mean, that's up to the player. Then you just give them a healing potion and they can decide. To use it or not?

Speaker 2

Yeah, and if I then die. I'm just like, oh, well, I should have used that healing potion. Yeah. And then it's my fault instead of, you know, the DM like, basically because you basically forced me to just basically, you said like.

Speaker 1

Yeah.

Speaker 2

This heating potion, drink it now because I was also like.

Speaker 1

Yeah, it expires now.

Speaker 2

Could I? Was also like could I purify it so it wouldn't spoil and if you allowed that instruction that would have felt really cool for me. It was like oh, I got use of this niche spell. Which would have been horrible for the fight, but it would have been cool.

Speaker 3

I didn't know it was a spell. I thought it was one of those things where you just said, hey, this is now happening. And I was like, yeah, but then. It's maybe a little bit overkill, but that's maybe my experience again.

Speaker 2

It was it, it was. It was a spell, though. If I used that spell, I wouldn't have had the guiding bolt and we would have lost.

Speaker 1

I think for most things as a DM, your intuition has to be that the player wants to do something. OK, let them do it, see what happens.

Speaker 6

Yeah, roll 20, see what happens.

Speaker 2

At least let them attempt this, yeah.

Speaker 6

There are also character sheets that are meant for beginners because this is the default D&D sheet.

Speaker 1

Yeah, you have simplified character sheets.

Speaker 6

You have simplified character sheets that might also be worth looking into.

Speaker 3

Actually like this one because it taught me a lot. I think I've played with both of them, but I. Like this one better.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I personally prefer this one because it's the one I've always used.

Speaker 6

Yes, I have switched. To one where all the skills are already allocated to each of your stats sources, it's sorted and not alphabetically, which helps me with finding things.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

Yeah, also pretty nice.

Speaker 2

No, like, I'm not saying this is like the best one, but like, it's nice to have a sort of like standard. And this has become the standard over the years.

Speaker 6

Yeah, that's fair. But what I was working towards is you also have sheets that help with combat order and things you can do and that might also be nice to include in such a beginner bundle.

Do you think your confidence has changed?

Speaker 3

No, I think, there was just too much information and all this stuff I wanted to use wasn't there and all the stuff.

Speaker 3

It was very large, so there was so much information to actually go through. And then I didn't have the time to prepare it, which wasn't partially my own fault, but also because I didn't get discord notification. So I was very lucky I saw your first request at all, but then I handed it in really late, and then I didn't have time to actually read.

Through it I think that might have helped a lot. But for example then stuff like hey, what race is this source like? Yeah, that's the one thing I don't know because I have no experience with races.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I know that that is also like me at the start. I also had a problem like someone asked for a name and I was like oh God a name oh dear.

Speaker 2

No, but that's just something you gain as you DM, you start to, you know, think of names beforehand because they will ask because they always do.

Speaker 1

I always make a list of names that belong to a race that you might encounter and.

Speaker 3

Yeah, but they're because of that. I swore there was some.

Speaker 1

I figure out who will.

Speaker 3

I swore somewhere there was like, hey, we have these countries aligning and I was like, oh, yeah, this is awesome. I can find people who are coming from one of the other countries to help with the thing. And then I couldn't find it anymore. So yeah.

Speaker 2

I mean also having maybe a list. You mean like basically you know this is … Yeah, maybe.

Speaker 1

I believe there's also some random names on your DM screen, I think.

Speaker 3

Ohh not sure, I didn't have time to study that either.

So based on this experience, would you be open to using like an AI tool to generate? Not necessarily the full one, but like some materials for prepping it.

Speaker 3

Yes

Speaker 2

I personally would not.

Speaker 1

I already ask GPT for Ideas.

 Speaker 2

No, like I personally like. I have too many ideas.

Speaker 1

I make my own campaign usually, but sometimes I need something like a personal Idea or something. Or like what can be found in a town and then GPT gives me a list of stuff.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, that. I have used it for inspiration sometimes, but it tends to give me some very weird out of topic answers.

Speaker 1

Yeah, but sometimes I really like that.

Speaker 3

Yeah, I said single player, it was really nice.

Speaker 6

That explains it.

Speaker 3

I think the way that the information was written was nice, but the way it was structured may not be the way to go.

Speaker 5

Yeah, but the idea itself of having like a generative campaign that you can use.

Speaker 3

Yeah, but then a few stuff should be added, such as neighboring countries or different races of people, or the interests of that kind of stuff and maybe names.

Speaker 6

I think that the story generation bit is really nice for the first time playing, but not for the first time DMing.

Speaker 6

As in a fully new player DM, using this might get [overwhelming].

Speaker 2

Like it might, what you're basically saying is it might help creating your own story, right? Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 6

Yeah, it might help creating your own story if you already have some experience with DND.

Speaker 1

Yes.

Speaker 6

So for the first, having played a few one shots and then. Using this to create your own, yeah. But I would not recommend it, I think, as a new player to go straight to a pre generated story.

Speaker 3

I also had a lot of difficulty with the fact that for act three I somehow had to end up within the forest again. But you also had this as a problem with the AI, but you also that sigil that you got. From the tree and.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 3

Because you've got that you should be able to see all the paths out of the forest, but then you had to go out of the forest and you had to go into the. Just again, I was like, OK, but then you just need to go another way in the forest.

Speaker 2

Well, yeah, that also confused me a bit because I was like, you know, we were trying to leave the forest and we were, it seemed like we were going like this. And I was like, we have something.

Speaker 3

Out for anyone.

Speaker 2

That allows us to go straight, right? Yeah.

Speaker 3

I was confused as well.

This then leads me to the last question from the perspective of a novice player. Do you think such a tool would be useful in any way, and if not, what would you change about it?

Speaker 3

I think everything I've said before.

Speaker 2

We've already described most of the points like you know, if the character sheet gets generated, at least you know properly enough, yeah, then that should be fine for new players.

Speaker 6

For yes, for the first time playing it's really nice to have a pre generated character because combing through all the information is a lot of work for the first time.

Speaker 2

Yeah, you have, you have to know how Wiki dots basically work because if you have wiki dots you can do it all yourself, but you have to know what to look for. Basically, yeah.

Speaker 1

Maybe it's nice to have as a dungeon master the option to sort of talk to the AI like oh, I want something like this and AI give suggestions and then you can tell that, OK, work this out more or get rid of this part.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah. Because you basically generated it and then gave it to us instead of generating it, then looking at it. And then like, oh, I would like, like so much more of this and it gets generated and then basically after all of that, the session starts. That would have, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 5

Alright.

Speaker 2

Because I could have been like, you know, maybe my back story about my back story did not end in tragedy. I don't want to have a tragic backstory, basically.

Speaker 6

That's a bit for the future development section.

Speaker 1

Yeah, yeah, probably.

Speaker 1

Future possibilities.

Would you say, as a new player having some sort of input on your character is better than having like a pre made?

Speaker 4

Hmm.

Speaker 1

For characters, not necessarily.

Speaker 2

Like I think what we had here was fine. Yes, if you want this to be more specific, you could have basically like a baldur's gate where you just step by step, you know, get asked for, you know first this input, give me this input then generates it and then the next input.

Speaker 1

I think the amount of inputs we have right now was quite, quite perfect.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, this was good for a beginner. Yeah, this is a good input. Now what I would normally do for one shot is generate one or two more characters than players so that everyone can choose one that they'd be interested in. But the list you had now was quite nice, something that might be fun to add there is an IP. As in, you can for example also add in something like Legolas or I want to play something that feels a lot like Mario. Or Bowser

Speaker 2

Right. Yeah. But like, you know, how would you? Play for that stuff.

Speaker 7

Jump on people.

Speaker 1

Specifically, it depends on the level and what kind of choice you can make.

Speaker 6

That would allow people to take their culture references and use that as input because most people will have some pop culture references that they know that can be applied to D&D. But most people won't know what an artificer does.

Speaker 3

If you say, hey, I go to Level 3 and you can. You can do that. So then the shift for level one and say, hey, you're definitely not gonna make this. This choice and then.

But for example, you say it's this option would be better than just having. Pre made character that you.

Speaker 6

I don't know if it will be better, but I would be interested in what it would turn up?

Speaker

Yeah.

Speaker 5

In like stats wise but for you as a player to be more interested to play the game.

Speaker 6

Yeah, that's it. It might be easier for people that really don't know D&D to have some pop culture reference.

Speaker 4

Yeah.

Speaker 1

I think my attraction to D&D maybe is figuring out what sort of things are possible, like looking at other races, looking at all the classes and thinking, wow, this is really cool. I really want to play something like this. Yeah, so just having an overview of what is sort of possible. I think it helps spark some interest.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I have the same thing. I was like, you know, jumping seems fun. I'll try something with jumping and then I just looked at jumping and like, oh, hey, the monk is jumping. Yeah. Oh, hey, this is. Jumping on the ground is jumping.

Speaker 1

I think you jumped once. I jumped once.

Speaker 2

I jumped twice. Twice. OK.

Speaker 2

Because like I I tried with the grung and with the double jumping, triple jumping, double jumping. I think I had like 300 feet of jumping, but I don't think it works in D&D. If you go with the basics I think jumping is just moving so you can't.

Speaker 5

OK, well I don't have any other questions, but if you have any closing remarks, I would appreciate it.

Speaker 3

Yeah. Might be fun if you want to make a higher level character sheet. And then just present the one for level one and then say hey, you're going to level 2, so you can now upgrade these two things. So you can choose between this and this and then go until you are at level 5. So on.

Speaker 2

Have a little bit of input in your playing style and maybe like a tiny note. You know you should change these things if you don't know something like that. If you're planning on leveling up, that is, you don't need that.

Transcript 2

How would you guys describe your overall experience with this AI generated campaign?

Speaker 3

It's not power scale correctly. It was fun. I liked the idea. I liked the story, but it was not power scaled correctly at all.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah, encounter balance was off. And also a number of details on enemies which is missing, the cultists from the first acts had no attacks, so they would just be making armed punches. If you ever got into a fight with them. But then again, there's four of them and the High Priestess, which is a bit much for a first level party. Also, Zephyrus and four chaotic elements was too much. Also, the chaotic elementals had one action which didn't even specify what it did, which is a bit, so I just downscaled the earlier elemental. I'm giving Zephyros advantage against all magic and non magic attacks. Is just resistant to everything.

Speaker 4

No, just it resists pretty much all damage.

Speaker 2

That's why it was so difficult to get to that.

Speaker 4

Yeah, he was ridiculously powerful.

Speaker 4

Also, just an ability that says you can cast fireball against the first level party. Yeah, it doesn't matter what you do. It's just instant death. Like he could also cast like others like Thunder?

Speaker 2

Thunder is a first level spell. That one's fine.

Speaker 4

Oh, Ice storm and Thunder wave.

Speaker 2

Thunder wave again is that first level spell, but Ice Storm is I think not the spell at all.

Speaker 4

It's most definitely Ice Storm.

Speaker 1

You can see.

Speaker 6

Definitely wasn't scaled properly for a first level, but it also… The adventure felt, I really liked how much different it was, for a first level adventure, whenever I was looking into running something, it was always like there's four wolves and like 1 bear or like just a criminal and they're all kind of the same. And this one on the story side felt really different, which something I really did like like it felt way more unpredictable. And the weird thing between cultists fighting each other. That was quite fun.

Speaker 2

I know like I know [name] DMing abilities which are pretty good. So I'm curious how much you've filled it in, But. But I know that with the prompt being absurd. This is only slightly absurd. This is a fun, quirky campaign, but it's definitely not as absurd as your campaigns can get.

Speaker 4

No, that's true. And I did fill in some blanks here and there. The way that the cultists interacted, they were having a perfectly normal fight. I didn't like that, that was the most important thing that I changed. I left out an entire encounter because we were out time; most of the actual world with all the gravity shenanigans is what is going on. But the way that the cultists reacted to mostly you was changed. From boring cultist things to whatever we turned into, and also the Zephyrus decently talking. They would have just attacked you the moment he saw you. Pretty much according to the sheet. But that's boring.

Speaker 2

I mean it makes sense for the character though.

Speaker 6

Yes, and the prompt also included that the focus will be combat.

Speaker 1

Yeah, right. Yeah, I think it makes sense.

Speaker 4

Yeah. Although in the end you only fought thrice.

Speaker 6

What we asked for. For a one shot, that's quite a bit, I think.

Would you say that this campaign kept you engaged and entertained throughout the storyline?

Speaker 6

Yeah, yeah, for sure. Like, the storyline was the definitely best part.

Did it feel coherent or disjointed in any particular parts?

Speaker 2

Well, not to us, but I think that [DM name] did decent work for that?

Speaker 4

There was. OK, so the interaction between the cultists and Zephyr was just OK. So the cultist did something and for some reason they know where Zephyr is. That is a bit like. OK, sure, yeah. Of course they knew where the orb is, but then also the question there's a bunch of cultists. Why wouldn't they go after the first? So that's a bit also… The entire start of a random old dude being like, OK, so you are a party now is a bit…

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Speaker 2

Yeah, but otherwise genuinely otherwise, one shots can take half the one shot just to get the party going. So it was good way to start.

Speaker 4

Yeah, yeah, that's which is also fun.

Speaker 2

I think it would be better if we actually all know Orin beforehand and then. Because then we trust him. We trust him to also bring us together reasonably. And then.

Speaker 4

That is actually something I was missing. Like all of these, these pieces of paper mentions the characters and their backstories. I would also like to see the back stories, yes. As a DM that is just useful information to have and also. A lot of the encounters had a number of ways to solve them, and some of those were very unintuitive because most of them were something along the lines of: person X or Y make this and this save to do this and that which is it can give you a bit of guidance on what to do with your party. Ends up doing something like that, but it's highly unlikely your party will take a route. Like that, OK.

Speaker 2

Because like, it doesn't have any saying for proficiencies worked in it. And I also have. Proficiency in stealth, despite not having proficiency in stealth. Like the bonus seems to take in the proficiency while there are no proficiency dots and I don't have any proficiencies leftover to put in that.

Speaker 1

Yeah, and that is a thing that you can just sometimes mess up for no apparent reason.

Speaker 2

But aside from that. As a new player, I don't know if I would know how I got to an 18 armor class or whatever, or 12 hit points. So while it can get people into D&D I don't know if it teaches them to create the character because. They just put their things in there. They get a character sheet and.

Speaker 2

And so, depending on what your point is. There is.

Speaker 1

The main point was that you get started.

Speaker 2

Yeah, like a pre generate.

Speaker 4

Also, I very much feel like some people play D&D for character creation. I know lots of people who have more characters than they will ever play. And also people who get into D&D, who get into D&D because they first want to make the character. And then play.

Speaker 2

But I think that's good about this, partially because before you you don't know how to make a character that you want, maybe. So you can fill in the bits here. Apparently yesterday someone used the bouncer as background and they got a unique background trait thing. So you can just use things that are not in the base rules of D&D and still get something semi functional.

Speaker 5

Yeah, I think it's like it's nice to get a background story basically for a character as well. Like, I feel like there's a couple of like, fantasy festivals or something to go to, and there they do one shots or it's like Comic Con or stuff. Also do one shots. And if you really want it to D&D and you want to make it easier for the GMs as well. And if you have this kind of tool and you just let it fill in to the people who want to participate. Makes it a lot easier to start a One Shot and get people into D&D.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah, it significantly cut down on the preparation time. If you have none and regardless of how you do your character creation, having a whole bunch of ideas laid out for the GM to work with, even if they get changed along the way, we're playing D&D. Everything gets changed.

Speaker 2

Yeah, exactly.

Speaker 4

That is very nice because it saves you a lot of effort if you don't want to spend that effort. So if anything, it makes it a lot easier for GMs.

Speaker 5

Yeah. So it makes it more open to people who maybe want to try out being a GM

Speaker 2

And it means that you don't have …. Ah, that I've played two times myself and also I have seen multiple other people play where he helped the sheep go into a tree because the sheep comes to you with a speak and speak with animal thing and I've played that four times. I've seen it. It has come by multiple times and I'm like everyone's playing that. So this is a good way to avoid everyone playing the same story because the GM can throw their ideas onto something and then get a thing they might be working with. And most people on an adventure path will change bits anyway to make it more personal. So it gives good GM experience for changing stories.

Speaker 4

Yeah, in general, integrating some of the character back stories in the documents can work, but is currently just not working very well because one I don't actually have the back stories, which is quite annoying and two, most of it is trying, I feel like it's just trying to fit the back stories in instead of actually making them. Makes sense because it's some point having to roll because it having to roll for something good or bad to happen because the character has a certain backstory is also just quite boring.

Speaker 4

Because backstory shouldn't have any negative effects, they should just have opportunities.

Speaker 2

It also depends on what kind of negative effect it has. What examples do you have ?

Speaker 2

Bad like I don't mind if people were like, ohh that person this person because my character was like a Princess in hiding. So If someone was like, oh, you are. We know you are from that family. Then I think that would be a nice character thing, even though it's bad because people are taking it.

Speaker 4

So something like. The DM should incorporate Igor's struggles with tradition for innovation by setting a DC-15 wisdom check when he encounters magical anomalies in the wobbling peak, challenging him to either embrace or resist using chaotic magic to solve problems. Which is just.

Speaker 2

It's not great. Yeah, that's true. I mean, it's cool to have to have them pointed out. It's meh to have them make a check.

Speaker 4

That's a very good point if. You just point them out. Like this is a major key part of their back story. So think about incorporating this instead of giving a concrete example. Yeah. I mean, you noticed that I skipped all of it because it it wouldn't.

Speaker 5

And instead of forcing it into the. Story forcing it.

Speaker 2

But as pre-gens the characters work OK again. The mistakes are also not the worst, because if you make a character for the first time then you also have mistakes in the character sheet. As long as people don't base their next character like try to determine the rules on the old character.

Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 4

Suppose I would still very much recommend not doing this at level one.

Speaker 6

You know, I think so. I think level one is not necessarily a problem. If it's really fun for onboarding it. I agree level one is kind of boring. But for me, what's kind of missing from this and what I also wrote in the survey is that I like that you get a character sheet, but if you're a new player next time you're going to make one, you're still going to be just as lost. If there was a document accompanying this or even not accompanying you this, but accompanying you, that's telling you like the numbers. Thing to be so if there's something like oh, you have +3 in strength because we chose a 15th to go 15 to go there and you get a + 1 from halfling or whatever, and we chose that one because it fits nicely with your ability here, like if it's more of an explainer thing then like sure. Pre done thing for players that would help more. Yeah. And again it really doesn't shine as much in numbers which is kind of expected from AI but it really does shine in creativity and like just generating something.

Speaker 5

You know, creating a narrative.

Speaker 4

Yeah, creating a narrative and also just creating backgrounds.

Speaker 6

Especially if it's something that actually combines backgrounds of characters into a story, because that's the biggest thing. If you're getting a pre generated thing then, none of the characters are actually going to be incorporated in the story automatically. So if AI could be used to just specifically put the characters together and generate the story from there, I think that's very interesting.

Speaker 4

I think as we already mentioned, just pointing out the important parts of the background and how you could incorporate them instead of strictly setting how to incorporate them would be very nice. But I would have most definitely not glossed over the part and decided, ah yes.

Speaker 1

Yeah, OK, OK, I get what you're saying. That was one of the things I was trying to like because we pre generated characters you don't really have like the same connection. So I thought that you inputting some variables and then getting like a character would make it so you're more connected.

Speaker 2

I think that is true. I think it does. It is true because it is like in DND and most many RPG's. There are pregenerated characters which are just characters created by this in this case, wizards of the coast that can be used by people new to the game, or if you want to test something, that's what I used it for. Which are just characters with stats and with a back story that's tied like they all are part of the same 4 factions. So they also tie it into each other. They have connections. And I think this is a great way to create such characters, because they also don't explain how the character actually is created. So in that respect, I think this works very well for them.

Speaker 4

On that note, I don't know how it felt for people actually making a character. But as a new player also having to decide on class and race and age and all of that, some of those really don't matter. If you could somehow give it a playstyle and it would automatically determine this race works, this class works. You're lowering the bar to entry even more. At least I would feel. Like it would. Yeah, but then you really need the accompanying documents. This is why we chose the class.

Speaker 2

I think, and I think that's very true.

Speaker 6

Or a back. And forth in between. I think that would be the most interesting back. Back and forth so it's more collaborative because something I try to do whenever starting a campaign is to make players collaborate on what the characters are, so they all kind of fit together. But also there's preexisting relationships, and this did scratch that itch a bit like I'm giving you something. I'm telling you, I'm a telechurch priest and then figuring out what the AI spews out of it is. Interesting, but if it was more of a back and forth, if I told him, oh, I'm interested in a Tele church priest. OK, what kind of place teller you're thinking about this, but then, oh, this could fit with these races. Like, so I'm making these choices, but not all of them up front immediately. So it's in the guiding process more than just data. Which of course is more work but I really like the idea just if it was like steps, yeah, yeah.

Yeah. In future work that I did consider it like, we're just input like using natural language like I want to play a brawler or something like this and then.

Speaker 5

Those things maybe there's, like, you can get. If this would be a final product and you're and it's like and connect to the internet or something that you get multiple characters out of it that are similar, but then it gives you a short description of what each one is or how it would be expected to be played, so that when you get your character, you're not immediately tied to to 1 character with one playstyle. Especially for new players, I guess it gives them all and more a little bit more options and.

Speaker 2

I think also in the prompts that you gave, like the things that we could fill in a lot of, those were not necessary, I think as well. The main one that is completely unnecessary I think is age. I think that would be completely fine to be generated.

Speaker 4

Also, because new players have no. Clue about how certain bases age. If you put in like a war forged, you're canonically not older than 30. Stuff like that. Elves can be hundreds of years olds.

Speaker 2

But I also think that you don't have a name. Coming up with a name is not necessary either, I think. Because. Think you can get the character like. I don't know. I just had to name my character. I was like, I don't know I. Don't know what the characters gonna be like, but if you want to give.

Speaker 5

I guess I guess you. Your character's name should be an option. The best one would be to make a modular to make it say OK I know that I want these things and I can fill them in already for myself or I don't know what I want, give me some options.

Speaker 4

And then yeah, It just gives something.

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah. I think the play style is the most important because most people have that.

Speaker 6

But people might not know.

Speaker 4

And if they don't have that, then you have at least one experienced version to help you think if placed out.

Speaker 6

Yeah, but I think that would be the role of AI. I think in a perfect scenario, I come to the AI and I'm like, OK, I don't know what I want to do, so I might help play some. Like I think I want to play a character that does this or I might come with like, I want to be an Elven Princess and they're all. That's all I wanted to do. And then from there, working with it, collaborating as if having an expert next to me and it's like guiding me through the process. I start with whatever I want and then it fills in the gaps and we work together.

Speaker 4

And then and then rather than having an actual person next to you who could do the same but the AI does more Work and does it faster.

Compared to traditional like pre-made one shots, do you think this type of campaign would have any advantages or disadvantages?

Speaker 4

No clue. I've never played.

Speaker 5

I mean. Yeah, yeah, I think I guess. Compared to pre made ones I guess. These will likely not be that similar, I guess. You will probably get something, it can be highly customizable I guess.

Speaker 6

That's the biggest thing, like from the pre-made ones, the pool of them is surprisingly small of, like good ones and ones that have been played through and stuff. I was really surprised, like trying to find something I want to play is not easy. So generating is and like increasing the variance, especially for settings like Comic Con and similar things. I think it really has a strong place there.

Speaker 2

I think especially starter campaigns are hard to find because there are many campaigns. They're like their level 5 level like that you can one shots that you can buy or whatever. One shots for starter play for starter games and starter players are very difficult. Uh. And it's insane. Honestly, I don't know. Maybe the D&D starter box, I don't know. Pathfinder First Edition maybe also second edition? Has it had a starter box and that first? The adventure was pretty good at teaching the main mechanics, especially because it ended with a dragon fighting a young dragon, which you can't defeat.

Speaker 2

So the point is that it teaches you run away if you meet a ******* dragon. It's great. You can defeat it. You get, like a lot of items that are to defeat the dragon, but we never we didn't get all the items and so two good characters died and my character.

Speaker 4

Same here. You missed a couple of magic items that are really useful when fighting all of that.

Speaker 2

Yeah. That happens, but you know, the idea is that. I'm pretty sure that the idea with that final thing is to run away if things get too hairy. It's an important lesson to learn in D&D.

Has your confidence in participating in the in the sessions changed in any way? As I think this was already asked, but is there like a noticeable thing that changed from this?

Speaker 2

No, but I think it's difficult to. Ask experienced players.

Speaker 4

I just have random inspiration for other stuff.

Speaker 2

Yeah, the setting I think was interesting.

Speaker 6

I will say what it does allow as a player. For example the thing with, the name of god, Yondala. If it was something I came up with, I wouldn't have made such a thing, because there is something sort of restrictive about sharing your own ideas and then if it doesn't stick with the group, it's you're kind of left alone.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 6

But in this case it's just. It either works as a joke or it's funny because, but I feel free to do it because. It's not mine anyways, So I'm being given something and playing with it as opposed to, look at what I made and I think for a lot of players that would help.

Speaker 5

Yeah, I haven't played much D&D at all and when I get this story made for me, it gives me a little more confidence in trying to role play as that character.

Speaker 2

It means you're not trying to force your OC on people, but you've got a character and you try to play that.

Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

I also like that, uh, I didn't realize that you would have Yondala as well. So that's just the random god.

Speaker 6

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

And the connection that that gave our characters, I think was pretty nice because I immediately felt like we, our characters, aside from also being halflings our characters had at least some kind of connection already.

Speaker 4

Yeah. Normally that's quite difficult to get in D&D. Because people just make what they want to make, and generally there's very little. Yeah. Overlapping what people do, especially in this case, non clerics usually have nothing with any sort of God. Which in this case wasn't the case.

Speaker 2

I try to usually give my characters at least a deity you know. Like the most.

Speaker 4

Yeah, that's fair.

From the perspective of a novice player, do you think such a type of tool could be useful in any way?

Speaker 5

Yes, useful. Yeah, sure.

Speaker 2

I think that not as a purpose of learning D&D. Not the greatest, but it gets you to learn all the other things except for character creation. A little bit. But as a way to introduce people to D&D. Think it's pretty good.

Speaker 6

I Think you it would get you to the table and I think that's the most important one.

Speaker 4

The best, the best thing it does is that it gets you playing, as you said in terms of and it gets you a bit familiar with some of the playing mechanics, but thankfully those aren't that complicated.

Speaker 2

Yeah. didn't need tips. I don't know if anyone else here needed the tips. Again, you are probably the newest player here.

Speaker 5

Yeah. Like, I mean, yeah. I knew. Most of these as well already, but that's only because I already played a couple a couple times, but if I was completely new. Nobody's gonna tell you this stuff beforehand, and yeah, and a lot of this stuff you will learn when it comes, when it happens. And if then your game master doesn't realize it or something like that and then you might ...

Speaker 2

I think the tips are really good for that.

Speaker 4

Which happens more than enough.

Speaker 5

Not just, yeah. There's five people or more sitting at your table. And then you might miss it. But if it's already some things here.

Speaker 4

And another argument to give the DM also all of the character sheets.

Speaker 2

It's good to give the DM the character sheets.

Speaker 6

Unrelated to that question, but something I just realized when reading these tips is. The tip is to maximize use of lucky and brave. So like it's telling me, you know, set yourself up in positions where you might get frightened to use the brave. So like, use your character ability. But what they the AI tried to incorporate our back story into the story. It didn't actually do the thing where it's like. Putting mechanics into the story specifically so that the players get a chance to shine, which is something I always try to do. Like if I have a brave mechanic if some if one of the players has a brave mechanic then you specifically put a monster into the fight that causes frightened.

Speaker 4

There was a. Yes, there was. I believe there was somewhere. But it was skipped

Speaker 6

That would be like, but that's the thing, like mechanical synergies would be very nice.

Yeah, I did, but. Like, yeah, I get so like you build the encounter based on the party so you can like, actually use the mechanics.

Speaker 6

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah, I believe there was something that caused frightening at least. Oh, it was IT was the. Lady. Yeah, it was the lady.

Speaker 5

Ah.

Speaker 2

Yeah, we didn't. Fight.

Speaker 5

No.

Speaker 4

It was for your who introduced herself, who introduced herself as Lady? Yeah. She yeah, she could cause fear. But you didn't fight her. You only. Fought one of her minions, Gurb.

Speaker 5

Yep.

Speaker 6

Gurb and then healed him.

Speaker 4

One thing in general, though, that's my personal opinion. Is this to get people into role-playing or to get people into D&D? Because if you want to get people into table top playing. You're probably better off using a simpler system.

Speaker 5

Yes.

No, it's it was for DND specifically because that's my like research project.

Speaker 4

Yeah, because the problem part of the problem is that when people think of tabletop role-playing games, they only think of D&D. If they don't, if they are not really familiar with the subject and D&D. Face it, it's not the best place to start.

Yeah.

Speaker 2

It's not the most complicated, especially 5th edition is relatively simple for its kind, but it's still a complicated, relatively complicated one. It's outdated right now.

Speaker 4

Through what converts to so many other things like, I wouldn't want people starting pathfinder either. But like there, there's more than enough systems. It's a bit rough around the edges and just generally but.

Speaker 2

Yeah. That's just a bit rough. No, I mean like. Rough to play cause you died pretty quickly.

Speaker 4

There are definitely other systems that getting people to play tabletop RPGs would be better, and because they're simpler, I think an AI would also be able to do more.

Yeah, fair enough. Yeah.

Speaker 5

Yeah, but I guess more people know D&D.

Speaker 2

Yeah, exactly. So they want to play D&D

Speaker 4

Yeah, which is a problem.

Speaker 5

Yeah, and that's the problem with the larger tabletop role-playing games, yeah.

Speaker 2

Well, I mean using D&D as a gateway drug isn't the worst.

Speaker 4

Either no, there there's worse options. There's many better.

Speaker 5

I mean, yes, the fact that D&D, kind of. Got popular by accident, really.

Speaker 5

Yeah, it was like.

Speaker 6

This is the first one. Like the reason the end is the biggest one is.

Speaker 3

No.

Speaker 6

Because it was the first big one.

Speaker 2

It was the 1st. It was one of the first ones, but, and it has lasted, but the reason it's popular now, I don't think it's necessarily because it was the 1st.

Speaker 5

One no, no, it's just like it just became iconic. It's just, you know, it was the.

Speaker 4

If you see it is, this is the big one that everyone knows and therefore it is the one that everyone defaults to, even though there are other systems.

Speaker 5

Yeah, just series and shows and movies. It's always, always D&D, you know.

Speaker 2

I genuinely think that part of the big D&D thing was critical role and Stranger Things. Those tools brought it into like this is a thing that is not just a thing basement dwellers play.

Speaker 6

You know in Stranger Things, it's very much in the basement.

Speaker 2

Yeah, but I think I. Don't think the characters are like new, you know. So yeah, right. So. It makes it less slightly less stigmatized, and I think that's what helped a lot, but that was D&D. I don't think it was the 5th edition because judging by I think Stranger Things is supposed to take place in the early 2000s.

Speaker 6

Yeah.

Speaker 6

Right and 5th Edition doesn't exist there yet.

Speaker 5

No, no, it's 1970 right now.

Speaker 6

But I think in that sense this really does help because if you want to go start playing D&D and then the first thing you're met with is OK, now fill in this math. I think that is the biggest problem. But if you just get this and it's like, OK, what do you want to play as if somebody was Standing next to you and like walking you through. Yeah, that's a big offloading.

Speaker 2

Yes, I think this works.

Speaker 2

Experience I think even without someone next to you teaching you how to. Works just being able to get started playing without having to do the math. Helps also with DMing. This way you don't have to get lost in all the DM videos where they say build the world, build a city, think of how the economy works.

Speaker 6

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2

Yada yada, this gives you a world that's like OK, this probably. Works and then you can work in it.

Speaker 4

The world, yeah, the world. There was enough world even though there wasn't a lot of world, that was more than enough world and there were more than enough inhabitants so worked fine. All of the other details.

Speaker 2

For the. Yeah, I think.

Speaker 4

The world was very nice. The story was just nice.

Speaker 2

Generally, I think for really just picking up and playing, the value is pretty high up there. It's not perfect because again, the flaws.

Speaker 5

Yeah.

Ideally the way like I wanted to build it initially was that you also input the level, so you get like based on the level you also get the encounters that. That was so hard to make, so I just like scrapped it. Left the level one.

Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 6

They would also need too many options, like if you're playing level 6. Then oh, I choose a cleric. It's not just for this one. It didn't ask me for a domain. Yeah, but if we went for level 6, then it would have asked me for so many more things. Between and taking spells, I guess.

Speaker 4

Yeah, you really don't want to go to like more than Level 3.

Speaker 2

Level 3 you already have many choices like the reason that level one has so little things, it's just because it is the simplest, and most intros are given at level one, because then you're not overwhelmed by abilities.

Speaker 6

So, let's say we started a long campaign, use this to generate level 1 to onboard all the like. Let's say nobody played before. And then with every level you're doing the character building thing. So like you are learning to build a character, you're just slowly doing it. OK, now I'm learning how to pick my weapons, my abilities, at some point increasing stats, and then you're learning the small number increases the big numbers. So like, if you were to play a long campaign, this would definitely work for the other thing as well. For like a slow onboarding.

So like you start with this kind of thing and then you. Can just build on top.

Speaker 6

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 5

If you have new players, actually, I mean I guess you can get inspiration as well if you want to start something entirely new.

Speaker 2

In theory, but I think I have often experienced. Too many characters that I never play, but then still I come up with new characters for most campaigns for the playing because it's like, oh, this character doesn't quite fit in this way.

Speaker 4

I totally agree. We have a homebrew horror campaign this vacation. So instead of making one class, one race and one background, I have three classes, 5 races and two backgrounds playing them all impossible. It's just what happens.

Based on this experience, do you see like with your current level, using this type of tool in your like any activities at all?

Speaker 5

To start playing it, I think I would use it.

Speaker 6

As in its current shape, where you need to immediately like to write in all the data, I wouldn't recommend it to my players. Probably; as a DM I might want to use a DM tool to generate the first adventure.

Speaker 5

MHM.

Speaker 6

But for the players, I think the. Some point of onboarding is still needed, and if I need to be next to them to make them use the AI, then might as well. Help them make the character.

Speaker 2

I think uh, really for. For literal babies, first session like for complete newbies to the system, yes I think I would use the character generation. Maybe the dungeon generation is good for starting DMs, but again, I don't have experience with the dungeon generation, but I think I would.

Speaker 4

There weren't any dungeons. There were just things.

Speaker 2

Yeah, but for the the, the, the one shot. But for the characters, I wouldn't use it because again I have ideas myself and also I think I can fill in the character sheet better. And for the GM, I think it would be more

Speaker 2

It's difficult because I definitely have moral qualms of using AI for generating anything, but also that I will say that the way the story was translated through you did sound very interesting and I was impressed with the way that the story was generated. That I think. Personal choice. I wouldn't use it because. Yeah.

Speaker 4

As for assuming that all of the flaws that we've talked about are patched, because that's much easier to judge, character creation. Maybe if you have completely new players assuming that there is.

Speaker 2

Yeah.

Speaker 4

Just one choice of play style and possibly name so that you can just actually get the thing and then the AI will explain the choices. Like I picked this class because it does about what you want and then it could be useful to really cut down all the time because it's really you who wants to use this AI if you want to cut down on time as much as possible.

If you want to cut. down on the time just a bit, you're probably better off asking a player who really knows what they're doing, because then you're already making more decisions, so you're better off just.. As for the story, it makes good stories. I have no clue. I think other generative AI also make good stories. So using this one over any particular other one would just be that they are already made into like encounters and stuff. I personally wouldn't use it, but I can see other people using it.

Speaker 2

Can you send me the campaign after this? By the way, I'm interested to at least look at it.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I would like to see it just out of curiosity and see what it actually looks like.

Speaker 4

Like it looks pretty good. It looks pretty coherent. There's just details missing in places.

Speaker 2

Yeah. In my character's back story, there was Princess in hiding. Despites her prowess ours the secretive nature once led her to withhold crucial information during the skirmish. Since bandits resulting in unnecessary casualties among companions, what information?

Speaker 4

Yeah. So I did have points encountered like that. Someone was a Princess in hiding, but I didn't know anything.

Speaker 6

I just want to add. I love that it's actually D&D format. Like it's fonts and stuff. It brings a lot. Yeah, it does actually, like add a lot.

Speaker 5

Yes.

As like a very, very short last question, I basically made physical material because lots of people said that physical is better than virtual. Do you agree?

Speaker 5

Yeah, yeah, it's so much. Easier to just use. That for sure.

Speaker 2

Yeah. The only reason I use virtual is because I use virtual more often is partially because I often play online, and when you already have a laptop, and secondly because. Often virtual is harder to lose in my opinion, and. Sometimes with the more complicated games. Virtual is easier because it calculates stuff.

Speaker 5

Yeah. No, but like if. I was doing an actual tabletop setting. The flick open really quick to see what I was doing, what my character was like somewhere and looking on my screen and trying to zoom out.

Speaker 6

Way easier than searching through tabs. Yeah.

Speaker 5

Do you want this back?

No, you can. I mean if you want your sheets, then you can keep it.

Speaker 5

Yeah, I'll keep them.

Speaker 6

To remind me of how it died.

Speaker 2

I at least went down in a blaze of glory. I should not have let go.

Speaker 4

Yeah, the thing only had 22 health.

Speaker 2

The final thing.

Speaker 4

The yeah. The thing only had 22 health, but it had resistance again against every…

Speaker 2

The gem?

Speaker 4

Just you just want to inspect the gem? Sure, go ahead. You won't deal enough damage before you're dead. Like, yeah, I think if …, the thing would have blown up. That's probably what would have happened.

Speaker 6

Thank you all for the session. Very fun. It's my first time playing D&D as opposed to GMing yeah.

Speaker 4

Yeah, you've never played before.

Speaker 6

No, I'm. I'm forever the GM. Yeah.

Speaker 4

So you were that person. Well, I'm glad to free you of that burden.

Speaker 6

Thank you. Yeah, thank you. Bye. Bye bye.

Speaker 2

I Think it is genuinely for. Literally just for getting people to play quickly, it's good.

Speaker 4

As you already mentioned conventions and stuff, I could definitely see the use of this in people's living rooms or yeah.

Speaker 2

I think this would allow for like FANAAT on like the DM. This could allow FANAAT to. Set up a one shot evening somewhere earlier in the year that you can use this. Set it up and play it basically in one evening, which I think is in for getting new people into it.

Speaker 4

Yeah, that would actually work.

Speaker 2

I think it could. It could almost even be a kick in thing.

Speaker 4

It's a bit long for that, isn't it?

Speaker 2

Well, you know, yes, but that that's why you make it an special event on the kick in, not just like they have the board game night. Now you can make a dungeon night where you go there you get a group, you get this. I think it would could work. It would obviously it would obviously be long but you know.

Transcript 3

How would you describe your overall experience with this AI generated campaign?

Speaker 2

Positive.

Speaker 3

It was fine. Like you don't have to think a lot about the character. It just already is there. I like it.

Speaker 4

I like that more than my previous two one shots I had if you can call that in the experience, they were near by themselves, so it's not really a fair comparison, but it was really nice that a lot of stuff was already explained and I didn't have to think about the stats or even think about the like personality traits of the character too much. Like to pick that myself, that takes so much time and mental power and I can't choose. So yeah, it's easier to just have everything at once.

Speaker 1

Oh, it was my first D&D experience and before this it always seemed to me very difficult to start. But the sheets actually helped me a lot. It was very easy to understand and. I liked it overall.

Speaker 5

Yeah, I think it made it very easy to understand as a beginner and it made for a nice demo game.

Speaker 6

Yeah. I think overall, it's also my first experience for a D&D campaign. And I think that overall, you can use things like this until you are more confident in your knowledge of D&D rules and all the stuff that can happen in the campaign because it's really hard to imagine without any experience what exactly should happen during the campaign and I guess, ChatGPT like generalizes the knowledge. And then you can make more specific campaigns in the future. This is more general knowledge and also simplifies the calculations a lot.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And I also think that generally just generating sheets makes the entry level a lot easier, if that makes sense, just because you don't have to spend time understanding what the stats are, what the skills are, which you need to pick. And you just do the general picking like, oh, I want this class and this race and then you have everything ready.

Speaker 7

And as a DM, it came to me very interesting because I thought from a linear story point of view that's going to be a very linear game play. And that's first I thought that we're proceeding through the end very fast. But you know, you're never counting on what players might and might not do. So, it was nice that I could always rely on some random material sheet stuff to put on and just play around it. I have more freedom than I would expect from the first view on it and I think it proceeded really nice, although it took quite a bit more time than expected.

Would you say that this campaign keep kept you engaged throughout the storyline? Why or why not?

Speaker 3

Yeah, I actually didn't think that at first that that campaign was made by AI. I assumed in the middle that it's probably AI, but it felt quite natural in a way, especially because you don't expect it. With this tutorial, it goes very smoothly.

Speaker 2

I agree, and I think that although it's not a human written story in a way that it doesn't have any amazing plot twist or like usual stuff which brings people into the stories just because it's a good story. But I think in D&D, a lot of the experience comes from the people you're playing with and the dungeon master. So what matters more is how people behave and not the whole story component; The story component, which was important, was coherent and it was, you know, whole and pretty interesting.

Speaker 4

I think while the story was quite simple, I wouldn't want to have a more complicated story as a beginner. The simpler story made me feel more comfortable to actually do stuff in the game and just explore my options.

Speaker 6

Yeah, also true. Even if you have a very complex story in your head and like amazing turns. And then the very deep thoughts and ideas behind the story. As a beginner, you still can lack a lot of like gameplay elements and stories that can still make it engaging and in the line of D&D. Like random events based on your character stats and people can overlook it. I think the AI just takes it like still in the story and tries to put those D&D elements inside. So you like to have different things going on except for the story.

Speaker 5

I mean, the story definitely felt well made, though it was more simple. But again, I would rather have a simpler story for the first time I play a game and it gave me the opportunity to actually have time to understand some aspects of the game as well. So yeah.

Speaker 7

Maybe it's also the thing that we chose that's very cultist related and dark that didn't allow for that much interesting stuff to happen as it would happen in a town, or as much as funny, light hearted encounters and so on. But as it was posed I think I had enough, like improv materials to work with and I got a bit overwhelmed by the idea of being in the temple because I didn't quite know how to visualize all of this stuff, and I used some cheeky stuff like "The tunnel is quite dark. We cannot go there." Because I couldn't really know what to put next, but in terms of just following the story, I found it very easy, maybe some referencing on the pages. Like you can find this point more detailed in there so I could not spend that much time navigating them.

Speaker 2

Did you also have generated maps or something? No.

Speaker 3

That makes sense because I was building a map inside of my head and it was not building itself. It was like that part was bad because I was very lost. I was like, go to the right and then you have to go again left or right. What about that left? No.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I think it would also help us as players, but I think it's more of a long term campaign thing. But when you as a player receive a note or like a map with some directions, that would be cool to have it visualized in some way also, because not only it makes you be in the story, but also because visualizing maps and locations is always nice, especially for stuff like temple which is difficult to imagine. But yeah, I think it made sense from you, it was obvious where the story wanted us to go. Not in a big way. But yeah, like that way it was already.

Speaker 6

I mean, there was this take with which you can choose if you want to exit the temple or break the ritual. And then you kind of didn't have an exit or you missed it, I don't know.

Speaker 7

Yeah, it was more like a lot of the NPCs pointing you towards the ritual. But yeah, a very important element from you finding yourself trapped somewhere. So yeah, and there was no actual entry and I didn't emphasize that at much at first. Because I wanted you to still explore and everything but afterwards. I was like: I don't know where the entry is, you need to go to the black altar, please.

Speaker 2

I also don't know if the riddles were generated. I guess so.

Speaker 7

I searched for them, because it only says solve puzzle. So I searched for standard and D&D puzzles like logic puzzles and color coding and so on.

Speaker 2

OK. It was nice.

Speaker 6

Did it suggest the like events on? Based on the characteristics of the characters or something.

Speaker 7

It may have some suggestions in some pages, but I couldn't really keep track of them. I think it would be way easier to have just a bullet point from each character like. Most important tips or something like this on a very reachable starting page. Because it was more in a very narrative way of putting it.

How well did this project integrate your characters into the campaign, and did you feel that your characters decision influenced the storyline?

Speaker 3

Sometimes, like when it was mentioned that oh if your dragon born, you have a good approval from someone or something. It was some elements, but not much to be honest. The story didn't really make a big difference. If I was a dragonborn. Or if I wasn't one.

Speaker 6

I think it's also connected to a story of a ritual, and this adventure doesn't allow for much choice and you have to go to a ritual and fight the boss in the end.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I don't think that in the story prompt there was much place to make huge decisions to begin with. And I also think that that's alright for like the first campaign and for a short campaign and it really would have been unmanageable. If we could have just done stuff which is a lot different to what was proposed. I think the decisions mattered in some ways, like in ways where for example, we could talk to people instead of fighting them. The usual things, yeah.

Speaker 7

It's also that usually races, at least not really classes, because they matter more in combat, come into place in where you have a lot of variety of NPC's, while here you always have like that stuff because you're in a macabre temple.

Speaker 2

But it's still the racism. Like we're mentioned and I don't know, just characteristics and it was nice and even as small machines, which don't really influence anything still maybe feel more included in the story in a way.

What did you think about the difficulty level of the challenges in this campaign?

Speaker 3

I think it was quite easy, no one died. I think it was very beginner friendly.

Speaker 2

Yeah, I'd say it's easy.

Speaker 7

I also like the first one of the, the aids for the first encounter, I lowered its health and seeing how easy they kill it, I just left everything else the same as it was generated afterwards. And I think it's really built for a party of 4, rather because they easily went through it. And I think they actually went through some combinations of mechanics. I don't know if from your previous test a party of four, it's like that's doable, but they vanished everyone very fast, I think. But also, I tried to allow as much aiding before the final battle. So I let them short rest, I give them healing potions and so on. I don't know if that would still be the case if there was no resting.

Speaker 6

Yeah, no one died and no one was that low.

Speaker 2

I think it's still very beginner friendly, like it's not easy, it's not boring or something. It's not too easy. Just beginner friendly mostly and I think it works for the beginner campaigns.

Speaker 3

Yeah.

Has your confidence in participating in the any change in any way after using these materials?

Speaker 4

Personally, for me it went from zero to hero. I mean, yeah, I definitely would feel much more confident in myself if I was to play in a D&D campaign again, because now I feel much more familiar with the game mechanics and how it works.

Speaker 6

Yeah, saying like any experience is a good experience. I mean, it was a good experience as well, like, you know, generally looking at doing and being accustomed to game playing and how it is going, I think.

Speaker 5

I mean, I really was afraid of not being able to, like, understand stuff that fast, but I guess it now I would say I'm not as afraid for sure.

Speaker 2

I think for me what mattered is just actually playing a normal game for once, and that experience is what made me more confident. But the fact which made this experience good is the fact that it was easier to start because of the ready characters and everything, so I guess it all stays together in this.

Speaker 3

I think I feel even more comfortable playing Baldur's Gate, maybe because to be honest, when I played it, I know that the rules are from DND, but I didn't know them, so sometimes stuff was happening and I wasn't understanding why it's happening and I was constantly getting attacked from behind. Now I'm seeing this and I'm like, oh, you'll be attacked. Yes, I remember that in Baldur's Gate 3, and now I feel more confident playing that game because the first time playing the game I was not very good.

Did you find the second sheet with the tips and the background? Did you find it useful in any way?

Speaker 5

Was definitely useful, especially with combat. While in combat I did check it a lot to see what my abilities were and like how I needed to move.

Speaker 4

Your character background helped me a lot to like to feel my character better to understand their back story and how they act in general. Tips also help me a lot with utilizing my abilities and preferring one under or over another.

Speaker 6

Yeah. Understanding how to behave as a certain class or a race.

Speaker 3

I think like in the future if I played D&D, maybe I will do my own background, but for the tips I would still use this AI at least in the first sessions to write to me what I should do. Because the tips are quite useful, like we usually have to research a lot or ask someone if you're starting out with a race or class that you are not very familiar with.

Speaker 2

I found the ability description to be incredibly useful because usually, I feel that the abilities are written in a way which is very friendly for experienced players because they already know a lot of stuff and they need a really short way of writing down things so that they can see the spell like ohh what this does. But for beginners that doesn't really work and it was nice. Having like. A human way, however funny that sounds with AI, of describing those abilities which just says that the text and the background also help to fill the character and the understand the character more like and the tips. I also used it as well and I guess for me they were not that incredibly useful because I was already familiar with most mechanics in a way, but they were useful in just getting the general idea of what I can do and just thinking about other possibilities and options.

Speaker 7

Oh yeah, for the beginning encounters. I didn't really use them because maybe that's why this campaign took so long, but I thought it's because I personally don't like tense time-based games so I don't want to add anything more tension to it for the first encounter. They also killed everyone so there was no reason for them going stealthy, but in the last one, yeah, they felt very nice to navigate with in terms of increasing urgency in the last final battle. So yeah, it was until later stages that they realized about the symbols. But by adding this environmental effect, I think. Really added more depth I think to the gameplay and so this was some inspiration from Baldur's Gate, so I don't know. Like the environmental turn and everything, and I should. I should have used them like this in combat or just as a constant element of Oh my God, you're in a temple. We need to hurry, but it's nice to know that I can use the environment as an enemy. Let's say that the players also need to focus on.

Speaker 2

It did feel like it was having a time limit. So yeah, I think the part about making it also like an enemy, and the environment turn worked, but again, I played Baldur's Gate. So maybe that's why.

Do you feel like having physical like printed materials is an advantage over playing this game digitally?

Speaker 3

I think it is more engaging because when I'm for example on my phone or my laptop I'm getting distracted constantly. And like it's easier to just put your phone aside and you just have everything that you need nearby.

Speaker 2

I'm biased towards board games, so that's why I think that physical materials are nicer just because I like board games, because they are physical and using electronic materials all the time, it doesn't feel the same. I guess for me one of the comfortable alternatives would be using something like an iPad, which you can draw or like an Android tablet with a pen. It doesn't feel it's not the same as a laptop, and it's also not the same as a phone, and I don't use that as often, so I guess I could just open the form there and write and double it there because it's not very comfortable to change stuff on paper. But paper, again, gives much more atmosphere and vibe to the whole thing and just feels like the true old D&D, which people like a lot you know.

Speaker 4

I think that physical material is definitely help a lot with the immersion, but I also think that it's maybe about some sort of balance because while it is very easy to access the overview, it's not that easy to keep track of some certain things that are number-oriented because people constantly forget to write it and. Just remove it, etcetera, etcetera. But other than that, I definitely prefer physical materials.

Speaker 7

On this one, because it was very difficult for me to keep the track of the initiative in the combat, maybe that was because, like. If we had the initiative cards, it would have been easier, but also it was difficult differentiating from the two types of mercenaries or enemies or whatever. So I had to find a way to label them and connect them with the miniatures on the map. And find a place to do that on the sheet. But overall, yeah, maybe just a very small container on the side with, like, you have 4 encounters and this is for each one of the players. So I can have enough space to write about their health and everything underneath it. But yeah, physical is way better and I even used the DND beyond the app and I like literally rolling the dice now and also as a DM, which I never experienced before, I like being sheltered, having my own thing here.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Oh yeah. Rolling dice is a very important part and it's very nice. And the dice are nice, I think what might work is like some hybrid approach where things which get changed a lot are electronic and things which are usually consistent are on paper. And for example, for like when the character. There's a lot of new papers get printed, or maybe something like that or using some like coins. Or not exactly currency, but any of the, small items you have in a lot of board games with different symbols like cardboard stuff like using that for some numerical values maybe. Yeah. But I think that it's a common problem in D&D.

Speaker 6

And I think, like, I don't know how much it is applicable in this research, but there's like cards, these markers and like you can have a card for weapon or just a guide, what's the weapon is because well, from the DND campaign, and character to character it's all different and you cannot have a unified list of weapons. But for example, like health points or something. Constantly writing it down and then erasing it. You don't know where exactly to try it and keep track of this on the current character sheets. So, yeah, it's also for a hybrid approach.

 Speaker 2

Considering a hybrid approach. I also wanted to add that I think a nice addition would be to read all the generated things and then maybe edit them partially or like check on them whenever all the stuff and the skills are correct and consistent. I didn't personally notice any inconsistencies in my sheet but that might be because we don't have experience or it might actually not have any inconsistencies. And yeah, and because I don't know, it could be noticed a bit that some stuff wasn't fully fit with each other. And for example, on the character sheet and on the description sheet, I had different abilities. And I still checked both, so I don't think that it hindered my experience, but I think that it's a great addition to just reading it again and editing it would make it even better.

Appendix 8 - Consent Form & Briefing Document

Briefing Document - Micro Adventure Generator Testing

Thank you for volunteering to participate in a testing session for my Bachelor's project! The purpose of today's session is to evaluate a prototype I developed, aimed at improving the Dungeons and Dragons onboarding experience. This prototype makes use of generative artificial intelligence, taking in player group campaign preferences using natural language, and outputs a set of customized game materials created with novices in mind. The results of these test sessions are going to allow me to evaluate the effectiveness of generated game materials and gather insights into how they affect the players' understanding and confidence.

Test Session Structure

During today's session, you will be part of a group of 4 or 5 players. The player with the most experience will be chosen as a Dungeon Master, and the rest will be regular players. The test activities are structured as follows: We will begin with a pre-game orientation that includes a brief overview of the session goals, an explanation of the game materials you will be using, and the completion of a pre-game survey to assess your initial understanding of D&D and confidence as a player. Following this, you will participate in a standard D&D game session using the provided materials. You are encouraged to interact naturally with the game and materials as you would in any regular session.

After the gameplay, we will conduct a post-game discussion to gather your thoughts and feedback on the effectiveness of the game materials. This discussion will focus on how well the materials facilitated your understanding and enjoyment of the game. You will then complete a second survey to evaluate any changes in your understanding and confidence, which will be conducted via a Google form. We will conclude the session with some final remarks and explain how your feedback will be utilized.

Confidentiality and Data Use

Regarding confidentiality and data use, your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time. All responses, from both the surveys and discussions, will be kept confidential and anonymous, with no personal demographic information collected. Audio from the focus group will be recorded for transcription accuracy but will be deleted after transcription is complete. Audio recordings will be made strictly of the focus groups; any other parts of testing, such as gameplay, will not be audio recorded. All data will be securely stored and accessible only to the research team. The findings from this research will be presented at a bachelor thesis defense, but no information could be traced back to any of the testers.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact me at:
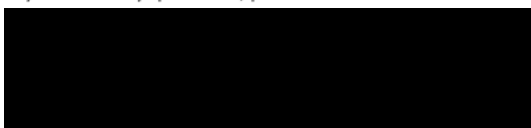
Consent Form for Testing the Micro Adventure Generator
YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please tick the appropriate boxes   Yes   No

Taking part in the study

I have read and understood the study information dated [__/__/____], or it has been read to   O   O
me. I have been able to ask questions about the study and my questions have been answered
to my satisfaction.

I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study and understand that I can refuse to   O   O
answer questions and I can withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a
reason.

I understand that taking part in the study involves completing a questionnaire, participating in O   O
a D&D game session, and a subsequent focus group. The focus group is going to be audio-
recorded, and the questionnaire is going to be completed by the participant using their own
device of choice. The audio recordings are going to be transcribed as text and the information
will be anonymized, after which the audio recordings will be deleted.

Use of the information in the study

I understand that information I provide will be used for evaluating a Bachelor's Thesis project;   O   O
the project and the findings will be presented in front of the defence committee and will be
published on an online repository.

I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as [e.g.   O   O
my name or where I live], will not be shared beyond the study team.

I agree that my responses can be quoted in research outputs   O   O

I agree to be audio recorded.
                                                                                                   O   O

Signatures

_____   _____ _____
Name of participant   Signature   Date

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I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant and, to the best of my ability, ensured that the participant understands to what they are freely consenting.

_____   _____   _____
Researcher name   Signature   Date

Should you have any questions regarding the research, please do not hesitate to contact me at:
Luca Andrei, ███████████████

Or my supervisor at:
Marcus Gerhold, ███████████████

Contact Information for Questions about Your Rights as a Research Participant
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to obtain information, ask questions, or discuss any concerns about this study with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact the Secretary of the Ethics Committee/domain Computer & Information Science at the University of Twente by ███████████████

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