Abstract:

Name of the Game: The Last Avatar - Mastering Bending Powers
Creators: Veronica, Alice, Alex, David
Overview: This is a four-player game based on the famous animation Avatar: The Last Airbender. In this game, you play the role as one of the element masters: Aang, Katara, Toph, Appa and Momo, or Zuko. You compete with each other to capture the necessary territories shown on your 3 given mission cards by using your unique "benders". You can capture territories by rolling the the attack dice in combination with action cards. The one who complete all the missions first wins.

Rules:

Goal: Complete your 3 missions first and win the game

List of Components:
- 55 Red benders
- 55 Blue benders
- 55 Green benders
- 55 Yellow benders
- 1 Map
- 60 Action cards (4 color-coded decks)
- 25 Mission cards
- 42 Territory cards
- 5 character description cards
- 6 dice (3 purple for attack and 3 blue for defense)
- Story pamphlet

Instructions:
1. Place the color coded deck action cards and benders on the corresponding corners of the map (red, blue, yellow, green)
2. Deal all the Territory cards. The extra 2 territory cards are free for anyone to conquer
3. If you have the most cards of any specific land you become the character of that land
    a. Fire = Zuko
    b. Water = Katara
    c. Wind = Appa and Momo
    d. Earth = Toph
    e. Have a lot of scrambled cards = Avatar Aang
4. After you know your character, get the character card and read your special power on the back of the card
    a. Katara: Can move between owned Northern and Southern Water Tribe
    b. Aang: Can choose an action card from anyone's deck
    c. Momo and Appa: Can fly between owned Air Temples
    d. Zuko: Freely move among Fire Nation owned territories
    e. Toph: Can boulder between owned Earth territories
5. Deal 3 mission cards per player. You can change 1 or 3 of the mission cards if you do not like them. After you complete a mission you get 5 extra benders

6. Take 30 benders according to your character and place them as you wish on your territory. Do not wait until everyone has place their benders just place them all together. Prioritize the territories which you need for your missions.
   a. Zuko = red benders
   b. Katara = blue bender
   c. Appa and Momo = yellow bender
   d. Toph = green bender
   e. Avatar Aang = yellow bender

7. <u>Attack</u>: One player starts by choosing an adjacent territory to attack. You must have benders on your territory to attack the adjacent territory.
   a. Roll the 3 purple attack dice according to the number of benders (if only have 2 benders on that territory can only roll 2 dice, if you have 1 bender only roll 1 die)
   b. The defender rolls the blue defense dice according to the number of benders on the territory
   c. Compare each dice scores with the other player. The highest score for each dice means the player loses a bender. In case of a die tie the defense player wins.
      i. Ex. Die 1: attack 6, defense 5 (attack wins, defense loses a bender)
      ii. Ex. Die 2: attack 2, defense 3 (defense wins, attack loses a bender)
      iii. Ex. Die 3: attack 3, defense 3 (defense wins, attack loses a bender)
   d. After one attack you can decide to keep attacking that same territory of stop your turn.
   e. If the defense loses all the benders you win the territory. The other player gives you that territory card.
   f. If you conquer a territory you draw an action card from your land's deck. If you are the avatar you can draw a card from any deck.

8. <u>Moving your benders:</u> You are able to move your benders to territories you own before you roll the dice on your turn. You can move your benders at anytime attack or defense if your character power permits.

9. <u>Action cards:</u> After you have actions cards you can play them on your next turn. You can also accumulate cards and create combos on the following turns. You may only use cards and make combos in the order you received your cards (**Bohnanza style)**. You are a bender and are learning your skills as you go. Action cards are thematically connected to your land so:
   a. Fire cards: strong attacks
   b. Water cards: strong fighting capabilities

c. Earth cards: defensive and have healing powers

d. Air cards: resourceful utility cards

10. <u>Conquering entire lands:</u> If you conquer an entire land not as part of your mission you get 7 extra benders

Winning: Complete your 3 missions first

Geography:

- Air Temples: 7 territories in 5 different areas (Northern, Southern, Western, Eastern, and Island Temple)
- Earth Kingdom: 17 territories in 2 different areas (Northern and Southern Kingdom)
- Water Tribe: 8 territories in 2 different areas (Northern and Southern Tribe)
- Fire Nation: 9 territories in 1 area

Design Process Statement:

Upon brainstorming our ideas for the thematic project, we were initially conflicted with settling with either James Cameron's Avatar or Nickelodeon's Avatar as our theme. We recognized that the four elements earth, water, air, and fire in the Nickelodeon version seemed easier to work with. We also decided to work with the Bohnanza mechanic.

Moving forward, our group drew inspiration with the card game "Pit." We thought we could achieve a similar game but with the matching elements, but the game would be too similar. Therefore, we maintained the idea of utilizing cards in our game, but continued researching our theme, and decided to integrate a map of the fictional universe. We then made an effort to closely follow the show's narrative storyline, orientating the game to reenact the story of the earth, air, and water nations to overthrow the dictatorship of the fire nation in a 1 vs. 3 type gameplay.

Our game initially consisted of an "Avatar" character which was supported by the other nations' characters who would offer resources or energy cards to the Avatar to defeat the firelord.The firelord would also maneuver in a way to capture or defeat the avatar to represent his condition of victory. Going through multiple iterations of our game, we had conceived ideas such as a tower defense system where players would have towers to defend and attack, but often times we felt an imbalance where the firelord would struggle against the other players.

We felt that our game was following the show's narrative too closely and restricted us in developing a balanced game. Upon further brainstorming, we moved forward with the idea of a territory capture game in a free-for-all style. Players would maintain armies or in the context of the theme, "benders", to maneuver throughout the map. The benders could fight other territories

- the winner of the attack would be determined by a rolling dice mechanism where the attack dice and the defense dice outcomes were matched. The player with the highest roll per dice wins the that bender attack. We also restricted the bender movement as it would snowballing the game moving too quickly, but we decided to change this in the end to account for thematic flexibility. We also decided to keep an unsymmetric die roll possibility to accurately reflect the size of a nation's army. In the real game if a nation has a larger army they have a better chance to win.

When considering a win condition, our thought process was to have everyone have a similar goal but not the exact same one - we created mission cards that each player had to follow to win. In addition, these mission cards would be influenced by the narrative of the actual TV series. We initially set on having people complete a specific set of missions to win the game, represented by the nation's symbol on the mission card, but eventually settled with the idea of just completing three general missions which are thematically driven, but that each player could complete - hence the symbol on the card.

The game *Dominion* inspired us to create action cards that corresponded to a specific power element in the game. This was the area we felt could truly tie in the theme to the game. Players would be able to draw powers and use them to their advantage in a way that felt like there were simulating the benders. We did have the idea of feeling that players were "learning" their powers and decided to implement the sequential hand order usage mechanic like in Bohnanza so players would feel knowledgeable about their skills. The action cards could be used singularly or in combination with each other to make players feel like they were mastering their elements.

In terms of usage of the action cards, we initially thought of having an economy system of "energies" to represent the cost of using the cards but felt like having a source of economy and implementing it in the game was adding an extra layer of unnecessary complexity and decided against it. There was the idea of having the action cards represent a dual resource but felt that it would take too long for players to accumulate cards to use for an action that didn't feel rewarding enough and decided against it. We decided that action cards would be gained after conquering a territory.

We also decided to give each special character a special power giving balance to the game while remaining true to the theme. The Air Nation would move among Temples, the Fire Nation would have facilitated movement within its territory, the water nation could travel from the Southern Water Tribe to the Northern Water Tribe, and the Earth Kingdom could "boulder" among connected and player-owned Earth territories, the Avatar could draw action cards from other nation's decks - representing the Avatar by using different elements to his advantage.

Having a detailed layout of our game, the next move was to actually develop cards for the game. It took a massive amount of time outlining individual territories, designing them, creating mission cards and action cards.

It took time to think of mission and action cards hat not only followed the story but were balanced in difficulty. The approach to this aspect of the game was to make a very difficult

mission for each nation, semi-difficult mission for each nation, medium-difficult mission for each, and easy mission for each in which the difficulty was represented by how many territories were needed to be captured. If we had more time we would have liked to improve the cards to help players visually and go through multiple iteration ideas listed below.

Further Iterations:

1) Formalize the benders placing on territories at the beginning. Keep all place benders at same time based on personal missions. Then have 2 rounds where each player can change their bender positioning based on others' placement.
2) Play *Small World etc.* games to understand other useful mechanics
3) Make action cards wording more clear
4) Add territory mini map on mission cards to help with visual location of territory
5) No zero die roll option. Only equal dice battles iteration

Design Process Pictures:

Fig.1.1, 1.2: Map and Benders

Fig.2.1, 2.2: Nation *Benders, Attack and Defense Dcie, Territory and Mission cards*

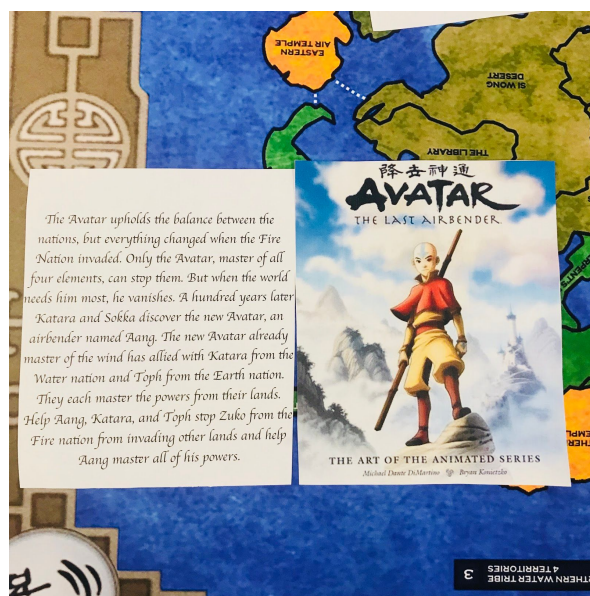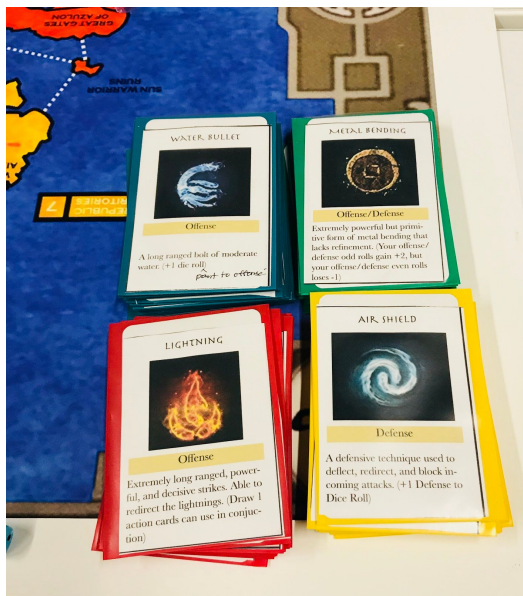*Fig.3.1, 3.2: Mission cards and Territory cards*

Fig.4.1, 4.2: Action cards and Story pamphlet

Fig.4.1, 4.2: Character cards with description and powers, Design notes

Fig.5.1, 5.2: Notes

Examples of Game Play: