

Cook AGILE!

Previous compulsory steps / Prior students' knowledge	None.
Learning objectives	Practice the project management principles of the AGILE philosophy.
Subjects	None in particular, this sequences focuses on the development of skills.
Recommended Age	All
Material needed	PCs or consoles (ps4/ps5, xbox, switch)
Sequence duration	1 hour
Individual or group activity	Group activity
Skills developed	Collaboration & teamwork, communication, problem-solving, planning
Price range of the game	10 - 15€
Similar games to use with the approach of the sequence	Overcooked 2

Step by step: how to implement the sequence



Figure 1: Overcooked gameplay (source: <https://www.voidu.com/fr/overcooked-2-3>)

In this sequence, students are going to play a chaotic, yet fun cooking game called Overcooked. The gameplay is about receiving orders at a restaurant and cooperatively preparing and combining ingredients in the most efficient manner to serve as many dishes as possible.

Controls are simple; the crux of the gameplay resides in the organization. Players must split tasks and circumvent the obstacles that are thrown at them, whether it is a haunted restaurant with moving tables or slippery icy floors.

Behind this simple premise hides a project management philosophy used in the software industry: AGILE development.

Setup ideas:

○ Locally

You can play in the classroom. If you have a single copy of the game, make several rounds with a group of students, then switch to another group. Let students that are not playing give advice in between rounds or note down what they think playing students should do to improve.

Once a round is over, let players discuss, debrief and plan. Only then, let other students share their observations and compare them with those of the players.

○ Remotely

You can host sessions remotely with small groups of students by having a Steam account and buying a copy of the game. You can then invite your students to a session. Use vocal apps such as Discord or Steam's built-in chat function. Thanks to the "Remote Play Together" functionality offered by Steam, you can have players with controllers connected to their pc play with you remotely. It's kind of simulating coach-coop gameplay.

For more information on Remote Play Together, see [this link](#).

- **Step 1: Enter into the chaos (5 - 10 minutes)**

Ask students to play a level without explaining much. They'll probably get a bad score. Switch to different groups each time if hosting locally.

- **Step 2: Analysis and corrective actions (5 - 10 minutes)**

Ask your students to play a level. After playing, they should identify what went wrong and what actions they could take to improve their performances.

Examples of issues they can find:

- We need to set proper roles (everyone is doing everything at the same time and it's a mess)
- We are not working well together
- It's not clear to everyone what they have to do to deliver their tasks
- One player had no idea what to do and was left without guidance
- Communication issues

And the actions they can decide to put in place:

- Planning before we start (Discuss what they have to do before starting the level)
- Communicate the whole time
- Do a discovery run where they analyse the level, note the types of dishes to make, but don't try to score points

- **Step 3: Iterating step 2 (15 minutes)**

At each run, players should try to assess if they accomplished the decided actions and analyse points that still need to be tackled, define new actions and try again. The point is to set up a continual improvement cycle.

- **Step 4: Debrief and discussion (15 minutes)**

Your students have learnt to be AGILE!

The AGILE philosophy is mainly used in software development, but it is gaining popularity in other fields. It is becoming an industry standard.

This [video](#) summarizes the AGILE project management style.

AGILE aims at breaking down a product delivery into small adaptive and iterative steps called sprints. At the end of every sprint, a piece of the product is produced or a weaker version.

➔ In Overcooked, a sprint is an attempt at a level, represented by the timer.

This organization permits us to show the small increments of the product to the client or to test it and get feedback faster and iteratively.

➔ The game shows this using the tips and the score at the end of a level. The more clients are served, the better the score.

In AGILE, the team gathers information on the users' needs iteratively and adapts quickly to it.

➔ In the game, the orders and their priority (order in the line) are exactly that!

The problems the team can encounter on the way can modify the organization and distribution of the roles.

➔ In Overcooked, this chaotic development environment is represented by the obstacles and ever-changing level layouts. Players need to be adaptive, as sticking to your initial task won't get you very far.

Finally, teams working with the AGILE method have ceremonies, small meetings before and after a sprint to evaluate the previous sprint and organize for the next.

➔ In Overcooked, moments in between levels are just as important as the gameplay. Players need to debrief and plan to optimise their next try.

Getting the game:

<https://store.steampowered.com/app/448510/Overcooked/?l=french>

<https://www.epicgames.com/store/fr/p/overcooked>

Consoles online/physical stores

References:

Image source: <https://www.voidu.com/fr/overcooked-2-3>

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