Brainiac Harvester Ship
Format: DCUO Game Story Outline and Story Path VO

[VIDEO]

Iconic characters deliver a tight, fun, and informative rewritten intro to the game's themes and mechanics with a story that unfolds naturally. This 15-minute instances shows my ability to:

1. *…teach and reinforce mechanics.*
2. *…document clearly and thoroughly.*
3. *…highlight player fun (e.g. multiple scenes that hype up the player).*
4. *…design with budget and scope in mind.*

Outline

The player is freed from Brainiac's Harvester Ship by Superman. After learning that the ship holds an invasion force, the duo joins forces with the rest of the Justice League to fight off Brainiac and destroy the ship!

Characters

- **Superman:** Assists and fights alongside the player.
- **Oracle:** The Justice League's friendly hacker. She frequently guides players from afar.
- **(The Justice League):** Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Green Lantern John Stewart, and Hawkgirl also provide support.

Location

Harvester Ship: Alien ship abducting super-powered people, namely… the player!

Functional Concerns

Dialogue
- Making everything work together, while feeling natural, iconic, and fun was a real challenge!

Gameplay
- Very simple story progression.
- Very simple mechanics progression.
- This is the hero version. Villains get the Legion of Doom with Lex Luthor!

Cutscene

The original cutscene was longer, but I insisted we keep it short! A long, fixed-length cutscene precedes this one, and players were unlikely to want more on top of it.

Room1: Superman flies in and frees the player from a Brainiac ship pod.	**Superman:** Need a hand? **Superman:** I'm Superman, and I'm going to get you off this ship. [...]

Free Moving

The original story here was way too over-stuffed: Superman freed us, and then immediately explained (paraphrasing) "We have to destroy the AI Core, defeat Brainiac, defeat his army, and escape." Too many goals! The new narrative progression starts simple and escalates naturally.

Room1: Continuation of cutscene dialogue.	[...] **Oracle [comms]:** We both are! **Superman:** And, that's Oracle. She's going to help us navigate through Brainiac's defenses. Be on your toes for Brainiac's sentries.
Teach: move & interact *Room1: Player moves to and interacts with Superman.*	**Superman:** I'm here to help. **Oracle [comms]:** Our exit's blocked; you're gonna need to smash your way through.
Teach: weapon attacks	**Oracle [comms]:** You've attracted some attention. Sentries are headed your way!

Hallway1: Player opens door with weapon attacks.	**Superman:** Here they come. Get ready for a fight.
Teach: combat *Hallway1: Player uses weapon attacks against enemies.*	**Oracle [comms]:** You can really hold your own! Good thing, because no way that's the last of 'em.
Teach: super movement (1) *Room2: Players scale a wall with their super movement.*	**Oracle [comms]:** I'm seeing the exit, up above! Can you reach it?
Teach: summoned enemies *Room3: Enemies appear.*	**Braniac [comms]:** You will not survive the will of Braniac.
Teach: Abilities *Room3: Players get their first attack Ability. Enemies appear.*	**Oracle [comms]:** Ooh, Superman's not the only one with powers! Let's see your stuff!
Hallway2: Players continue on.	**Oracle [comms]:** Bad news: we're going to have to cut through the AI Core to get to the exit. Expect heavy defenses.
Teach: harder enemies Room4: *Players encounter a mini-boss.*	**Oracle [comms]:** An Overseer?! Braniac's not messing around! **Braniac [comms]:** This will be your doom.

Cutscene
Originally, only Flash and Hal Jordan represented the rest of the Justice League. I changed the team to both feature more diversity and to evoke nostalgia for The Animated Series. These happen to also coincide with many of the changes Tim Gunn is making!

Also, we better communicated to players that these characters were for flavor, not function.

Originally they appeared in the same room as the players, who were then confused why they left down a nonfunctional teleporter. Keeping the JL separate removed the confusion and better conveyed the feeling of working together in the fight against Braniac.

Hallway3: Superman and Player look through a window into a hangar filled with Braniac enemies!	**Oracle [comms]:** Is that a full Braniac invasion force?! Good thing we're headed to the AI Core. If we destroy it, we can bring this whole ship down.
Hallway3: Batman, Wonder Woman, The Flash, Green Lantern John Stewart and Hawkgirl arrive to fight enemies in the hangar.	**Oracle [comms]:** More of the Justice League have arrived to back you up. They'll draw some of Braniac's attention.

Free Moving
Originally, this was a lot longer, centering Superman and some obscure backstory about Kandor. Simplifying here helped refocus on the player during key story moments.

I'm very proud of assembling the comms fight against Braniac in Hallway4. It let players anticipate both the fight against Braniac and the satisfaction of rescuing the Justice League without slowing them down.

Teach: defeat enemies before interacting with goals *Room5: Players reach the AI Core.*	**Overseer:** Gather reinforcements. **Brainiac [comms]:** Reinforcements incoming.
Teach: multi-step interact *Room5: Players deactivate shielding, then destroy 3 points of AI Core.*	**Superman:** We need to stop this ship from abducting anyone else. **Oracle [comms]:** Right. Deactivate that shielding. Use the terminal. **Oracle [comms]:** Yes! That exposed the AI Core! Destroy it!
Teach: NPCs come & go *Room5: Players encouraged to continue alone to exit / final boss.*	**Oracle [comms]:** Ship's going down and your best bet for escape is in the hangar: move! **Superman:** You go on ahead. I'll stay behind.
Teach: super movement (2) *Hallway4: Cool escape sequence! Player runs down a long hallway past scripted explosives.*	**Oracle [comms]:** Brace yourself! The JL's engaged Brainiac in the hangar! **GL John Stewart [comms]:** He's breaking through my shields! **Brainiac [comms]:** None will survive. **Wonder Woman [comms]:** I have your back. **Hawkgirl [comms]:** Wonder Woman? **Batman [comms]:** We've got this.

Cutscene
Such a fun Saturday-morning cartoon moment!

Room6: Brainiac is fighting the Justice League. He traps the JL behind a forcefield!	**Brainiac:** Witness now the folly of your efforts. **Brainiac:** Nothing can escape the control of Brainiac. **[...]**

Free Moving
Brainiac's combat barks aren't represented here, but I also gave them more variety.

Room6: Continuation of cutscene dialogue.	**[...]** **Oracle [comms]:** Focus on defeating Brainiac; I'll secure the teleporter!
Teach: boss fight mechanics *Room6: Player fight Brainiac solo. He has a very simple mechanic that rewards - but doesn't require - some movement.*	(systemic combat barks from Brainiac) **Oracle [comms]:** Dodge, now! (systemic combat barks from Brainiac)

Cutscene
Such a heroic moment for the players, being directly welcomed into Justice League!

Room6: Brainiac kneels, and the forcefield drops! Superman and the JL surround him.	-
Room6: Brainiac rises, blasting everyone back! Brainiac quips, then teleports out.	**Brainiac:** Do not think you have won, for I wear many shells. I am the source.

Room6: The JL move to greet the player, ending on their iconic V-formation.	**Superman:** If you're interested in joining the fight for justice, the League would be happy to teach you.
Room6: Camera points towards the teleporter.	-

Free Moving

Finding general coverage dialogue for this JL banter was difficult, but key to making the player feel like a welcomed member of the group. Also, Cinematics did an amazing job making this feel really heroic!

Teach: use teleporter *Room6: Cutscene ends. First indirect encouragement to use the teleporter. +Reminder of Oracle's name.*	**Oracle [comms]:** Yes-yes-YES! Teleporter's unlocked. Your pal Oracle's always got your back.
Room6: Fun additional supportive and welcoming banter between JL members and the player. Players are again indirectly encouraged to use the teleporter.	**Hawkgirl:** Thanks for the backup. **Batman:** This is your show, Oracle. **Oracle:** Thanks, Batman! *(Batman disappears.)* And… he didn't even take the teleporter? **Superman:** I don't know where he went. Very Batman. **GL John Stewart:** Hey, don't worry. We got your back. **Superman:** After you.
Reminder: Use teleporter! *Room6: Plays after a minute delay. A stronger reminder for players.*	**Oracle [comms]:** Uhhh. I wouldn't dawdle too long. The ship *is* coming down, you know.