WSOA3003A – Game Design IIIA

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Microproject 1 analysis

This prototype of *Roll For It* represents the concept for a chance-heavy turn based combat game, that makes use of contesting dice rolls between attacker and defender to determine if an attack is actually successful. Only if successful, a damage die is then rolled to determine how this attack affects the defender health points. The overall objective is to use the dice available to you to decrease opponent health and win the game by being the last one standing.

This game is inspired by the use of dice rolling for combat in tabletop games such as *Dungeons and Dragons.* I started by coding the base contesting D20 rolls and subsequent damage rolls that would decrease health points. However, there wasn't really any player interaction or system manipulation aside from clicking a button to attack and defend. There were no choices within the game and players had absolutely no control over any aspects. At this point it didn't matter what the difference between attack and defence rolls were, just which one was higher. I considered letting players use the difference as a bonus in subsequent rolls but this still felt too chance based and not interactive enough. I therefore decided to introduce currency, and a buying mechanic, into the game. Players get the option to visit the shop and buy items and upgrades on their attack turn.

CURRENCY

Whenever a player is successful in either their attack or defence contesting D20 roll, the difference between the rolls gets added to their currency pool. This currency can then be used to buy better weapons with higher damage values, health point top-ups, as well as bonus modifiers to the contesting attack or defence dice. I first had it split up into separate attack currency and defence currency that could only be spent on attack items and defence items respectively. However, I chose to merge it into one pool, allowing the player to decide where to spend it, giving them more choice in play style – whether they wish to play more offensive or defensive. This also leads to more interesting game play as players are no longer stuck in the banality of just clicking back and forth.

SHOP ITEMS

Each item that could be bought with currency points had some sort of drawback to purchases. While the player has a base weapon that deals D4 damage always in their inventory, bought weapons with higher damage are limited to 2 uses per purchase. Introducing a limit forces players to manage their currency strategically and save for future weapons.

The cost on modifier upgrades and health points increases with every purchase. For example, it costs 4 currency for a +1 bonus modifier to either the base attack or defence roll and this is a permanent bonus to the roll. The next +1 bonus costs 5 currency points to purchase as this essentially gives the player an overall +2 bonus to the specific roll. Increasing the cost stops the player from beefing up their bonuses too quickly (which also increases the probability of getting more currency per turn), making it harder to add an additional bonus point the stronger the modifier gets. Similarly, with health increases, it gets more expensive the more you use it. This hinders players from just constantly keeping their health topped-up.

REFLECTION

With the focus of this prototype on data design, the game presentation itself has been kept very simplified, but everything the player needs to know to interact with the core combat system has been communicated. Theoretically the enemy player also earns currency points, which are not shown to the player. But the player can actually keep an estimate of the enemy currency based on each turn's contesting dice rolls, if they want to. As this prototype is dealing with player interaction with the system, I have not included enemy AI coding for currency use. As such the enemy does not have access to the shop, which gives the player an increasing advantage as the game progresses. This has an impact on the player's interaction with the system, and so future prototypes would test how introducing enemy currency use would change gameplay.

The game is still majority chance based, but the shop allows for an increased feeling of agency which positively impacted playtest feedback once introduced. This can be built on more in future playtests to find additional ways of introducing strategy into gameplay. The game is currently very visually simplistic and word-heavy in terms of communication. Now that the core data system has been built and tested in this prototype, the communication of that system, as well as the game layout, can be improved in further prototypes of *Roll For It*.