RPGish game design

Motivation

Originally intended to be like D&D tactical encounters without much role-playing, but conducive to multiplayer on the computer. Standard D&D involves waiting while other players consider and execute their turn. I want to remove that by having players move simultaneously.

Might be able to have some roleplaying by having 2 modes of play. One mode is the tactical mode. Other mode is more like a dialogue tree, with options either being conversation or certain (possibly skill/attribute based) actions. A third mode could be free movement around a map when no enemies are present?

* Multiplayer
* Humans can play one or more heroes. Computer controlled heroes?
* Turn structure:
  + Upkeep/status evaluation
  + all humans plan move and other actions of their “heroe(s)” at same time
  + these moves/actions are executed
  + all “monsters” plan their move,
  + then all monsters execute their moves

Monsters could resolve sequentially, but this might be perceived as unfair.

* Dungeon/monster areas
  + Randomly generated encounters. Not sure whether to go Angband-like or D&D-like
    - Angband-like: almost totally random monsters placed on a “level”, occasional themed rooms or vaults
    - D&D-like, each encounter has a theme and a “motivation”
  + Necessity to run if encounter goes bad or looks too tough. For this to happen, need:
    - Ability to evaluate toughness or instadeath chance. Game tracks known monster abilities.
    - Time/speed/sufficient hitpoints to run before instadeath
  + Players don’t “walk” to desired level as in Angband. They choose the expected difficulty of the encounter from a menu or list of choices. The actual difficulty might not be what they expect (randomization of difficulty).
  + Without walking issue, not sure how to deal with food and/or food shortage, or whether to ignore food altogether. Could make each encounter choice have a food/time cost, both to arrive at encounter and to leave encounter.
  + An encounter might not be a single group of monsters. It might be several groups.
  + An encounter might not occur on a single “level”. Stairs to other levels would then exist.
  + Running to an adjacent level might always be possible. Some chance that adjacent level is occupied (maybe 25%). Some chance that nearby monsters pursue characters to adjacent level (maybe 25%).
  + Provide “premonition” of quality of loot on level. This is key to heightening the “fight or flight” decision.
  + Items are critical, greatly increase character’s power, and are found somewhat often. Sometimes a great item will be easily obtained, and sometimes it will require great risk.
  + Big areas, allow room to maneuver
* Player Characters
  + Many classes (as in Angband or D&D)
  + Limiting carrying capacity
  + Rapid power progression. “Completing or winning the game” should take between 20 and 40 hours. This gives the opportunity to play different character classes.
  + Death is painful, maybe final. Otherwise no reason ever to run.
  + Character customization beyond items, such as skill trees?
* Combat
  + Squares or hexes?
  + Can’t really allow actions that forcibly move an enemy (or friendly) creature. Otherwise simultaneous planning and execution becomes much more difficult. What about monster retreating? Maybe only after entire player’s turn.
  + Most attacks are standard, as in Angband or 3.5 D&D. Allow special moves, as in 4th D&D powers?
  + Friendly fire of course
  + Attacks of opportunity/zones of control would seem to be necessary
  + Can a character’s plan be thwarted? Tripped due to bad ground? Or fall into a trap?
  + What happens when a monster dies and you had planned to attack it?
  + Turns are between 4 and 10 seconds long.
  + Flanking provides benefit
  + Possibility that monsters are asleep or surprised. Possibility that players are surprised.
  + Possible special moves: grappling, tripping, overrun, lunge (wonder where these come from?)
  + Fixed number of attacks per turn (as in 1 standard action for D&D) or each attack uses some part of your turn, thus enabling multiple attacks if entire turn is spent adjacent to enemy and your attack is quick?
* Combat Model
  + Chance of hitting enemy. Attackers Dex and Int vs. defenders Dex and Int, modified by special skills or object attributes.
  + If successful, chance of penetrating armor
    - Chance of finding weak spot in armor, then little reduction in damage by armor. Again a Dex and Int vs Dex and Int comparison. Slashing and piercing have better chance of finding weak spot than blunt. Or maybe armor has some percent of strong coverage, some percent of less coverage, and some percent of no coverage.
    - If didn’t find weak spot, then damage reduced by armor. More damage reduction for slashing and piercing than blunt
  + If hit, then deal damage
    - Roll for damage(s), then subtract damage reduction from armor. Then apply elemental resistance.
  + Criticals? Physical resistance?
* Items
  + trading
* Magic
* Shopping
* UI
  + Two modes, ‘standard action mode’, and ‘move action mode’, selected by prominent radio buttons
  + Start turn in move action mode.
  + While in move action mode:
    - If right click on an allowed tile, then plot move. If still movement points left, display new allowed tiles. If all movement points used up, switch to standard action mode. Are there any movement actions that act on a distant, unoccupied square? If so, consider bringing up a menu with a shift-right-click.
    - If right click on an enemy, bring up list of allowed attacks/actions. This list should indicate the type of action each choice is (standard, full, swift, free, (move?)).
    - If right click on active char (self), then bring up list of allowed actions, again indicating the type of action in the list (standard, full, swift, move, free). One such choice will be to not move (but use up time). This delay or pause (if in the middle of movement) does constitute part of a move action.
    - If right click on an ally, bring up list of allowed actions, one of which will be to simply move to that tile. Again, identify action type.
    - In each of the three preceding cases, if a standard action is chosen and no move has been made, then stay in move action mode but mark standard action mode as used. If standard action is chosen and a partial move had already been made, mark both move and standard actions as used. (Might be feats that won’t require rest of move action to be wasted in this case)
  + While in standard action mode:
    - Highlight squares one is allowed to move to.
    - If attempt to conduct a move during a standard action (right click on allowed, unoccupied square), pop up a warning. Or maybe a choice if they still have move action remaining. If they don't accept the move, then bring up a menu of allowed standard actions that can be done on the unoccupied square.
    - Otherwise, same behavior as move action mode.
  + The UI should also contain a way to see all actions, even those which aren’t allowed at the moment, either due to a certain action type being used up, the lack of the proper pre-conditions, the condition of the character, etc.