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.

* 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?
* Items
  + trading
* Magic
* Shopping