**DES 212 Playtest Report**

**Designer:**  Jennifer Assid **Project Name:** Ranged Combat Sim

**Date:** 28/02 - 06/03/2022 **Project Version:** Prototype (v0.1)

**Playtest Goals**

Determine whether the signifiers on screen inform the player about how to play the game

Determine the current balance between the available abilities

Determine the difficulty of each enemy and how the affects the player’s strategy

**Playtest Notes**

**Test #1: Dillon Goicoechea (dillon.goicoechea@gmail.com)**

*Overall, this playtest was very informative on the current state of the combat system. Playtest began without any information provided to the player to deduce whether the signifiers on screen were enough for them to form a schema / understanding. This proved to be difficult. Player didn’t understand that they had to use the number keys (1,2,3,4) to attack (would probably do well to put “ABILITIES” above the signifiers like with the Movement and Targeting currently on screen). Player also didn’t read the ability descriptions at the beginning and instead opted for a “spam whatever becomes available” approach. The movement, however, was easily understood without any additional help.*

*After a few rounds of fumbling, player was given a debriefing on the base mechanics of the game. Even with the different abilities pointed out, the player still opted for their initial approach. Player also mentioned not understanding the Willpower v Patience (though did understand their relationship with a standard Health v Mana set up) – this could possibly be corrected by changing the visual icons next to the bars and perhaps changing the colors? Player mentioned that the UI elements on screen did make sense once they were aware of their relation to the gameplay but did comment that the green text was hard to read (simple fix). When asked directly about each ability, the player understood what each one did (but was very unsure about the Persuade ability) but mentioned that the only ones that seemed to do anything were the Melee attacks (which are the ones that remove health from the enemy). The difference between melee and ranged was hard to deduce and player commented that the melee itself felt too far away.*

*The player could visually distinguish each enemy from one another but couldn’t point out how their fighting styles were different from one another. The player noted that they felt the same but that the Fire Hatchling was a “weak bitch” – the balancing of the enemies needs to be readdressed and each enemy needs to have more personality from one another. As for the theme, the player agreed that the naming conventions made sense and were thematically similar but wanted to highlight that “Talk” should be changed to “Growl” since hatchlings don’t talk.*

**Test #2: Liam Sarett (liam.sarett@digipen.edu)**

*Overall, this playtest also yielded a lot of information as to the state of the simulation in its current state. The player started off with immediate appreciation of the theme – enjoying the blurb provided in the top right – and took the time to read which each ability did. They also immediately grasped that the ability text changed color when the abilities were able to be used and commented on how efficient and nice that was to add. After ready the abilities, the player demonstrated hesitance to use the abilities that use health (commenting that they didn’t want to kill themselves) – a revisit to the ability costs needs to happen based off this playtest. The player also commented on how they didn’t know how close they had to be to the enemy for the ability to occur – it would serve well to have some sort of indicators in front of the enemy (cone with circle grid?) that change colors based on when the ability is able to be used.*

*When the player enacted Persuade – they showed confusion as to who was receiving the damage reduction (them or the enemy) and commented that the enemy was entering Beast Mode. When asked to elaborate, the player said that when an enemy turns red, they think that the enemy is about to unleash a heavy attack (changing the enemy’s color shift the gray would mitigate this effect). The player also commented on how he didn’t want to use the second ability (Deep Breath) because it took away health – even though it restored patience (removing the utilization of health might be something to explore). As far as the ranged versus melee attack difference, once the player was made aware of what Persuade was meant to do, they clearly understood which attacks were melee and which were ranged. No strategy was developed beyond mashing whichever ability came up first.*

*The player was very receptive to the UI displayed on screen (except for targeting which is a premature implementation for the next iteration of the simulation). They enjoyed the abilities changed color when they were able to be used and that there were indicators underneath the bars to display which mode was active. The only thing the player commented on what making the player damage dealt yellow was a bit confusing (suggestion to make both red – would need to figure out some sort of way to distinguish).*

*The player felt that each enemy was distinct from one another but did comment that it was mainly because of their shapes and how far away they were to attack.*

**Test #3: Mason Kaschube (mason.kaschube@digipen.edu)**

*Once again, this playtest provided a lot of interesting feedback as to the simulation’s status. Unlike that other two playtests, this player did not enter blindly having sat through the previous playtest with Liam. As such, the base controls of the game were explained before entering though the player commented that the on-screen UI had already been informing them of it. The player also came in understanding what each ability did in theory though having never applied them before. Like the other two play tester, the player didn’t seem to develop a strategy beyond “mash whichever ability is available” which, the player commented, the UI helped them understand when abilities were available and when they were not.*

*The player stated that each ability felt unique, and one didn’t feel too overpowered compared to the others. They shared the previous play tester’s feeling with the “Beast Mode” and suggested maybe having some sort of icon (confusion swirl) to better impart the true meaning of the ability. The player did say that the melee vs ranged abilities did feel different from one another, but the ranged ability felt lacking given that is didn’t seem to do any damage.*

*The movement of the player itself did feel a bit weird. At one point, the player couldn’t move on their own anymore and was locked into place (will need to revisit the code to see why) and got stuck a bit further away from the enemy then what the player was expecting. Improving the player agency over the movement would help mend this disconnect.*

**Playtest Analysis**

*Overall, all the playtests gave a fresh perspective on the simulator and are helping to decide future adjustments that will be made. All around, the state of the UI on the screen was appreciated and intuitive with the only complaint being in reference to the colors. As such, the only modification to the existing UI will be to change the color of green the abilities turn to when they are available and change to color of the damage done to enemies while still making it distinct from the damage done to the player. Other adjustments that will be made (through experiencing other combat simulations) will be as follows: a number value next to each of the characters bars in the top left so the player can understand how much of each asset the have (# of asset currently / max number of asset possible); a cone in front of the player with tally lines on it to show the range of each ability and the tally marks will change colors along with the ability; and change when an enemy is persuaded to change color to gray as opposed to red.*

*All the playtests show that the third ability – Persuade – felt lackluster because of its lack of damage imparted onto the enemy (even though the enemy is getting effected). Adding a slight damage to the enemy might prove to be beneficial. As for the other abilities – there is currently no need to adjust their balance in between each other. With that being said – it would be beneficial to increase their affects slightly in preparation for the group modes – but that is a future development. Overall, barring the third ability, all abilities felt unique to the players (once their affects were explained an observed in game).*

*Everyone agreed that each enemy felt unique but there are improvements to be done. For one – it would be beneficial to also apply a range cone on each enemy to let the player know when they are in the attack range for each one. This would help further separate the melee enemies from the ranged enemies. And although the player can defeat all three enemies with a strategy (which seems to be a little to precise right now, margin of error needs to be increased) the enemies need to be revisited for the group mode (once again – that is a future development).*

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**Raw Notes**

*Dillon Goicoechea*

* Player didn’t understand to use the number keys (1,2,3,4) and had to be prompted
* Player didn’t seem to read the ability descriptions
* Initial tactic was to move as close as possible to the enemy and spam which ever ability was available
* Didn’t understand the Willpower v Power
* Player didn’t understand the overall goal
* Hard to read with the green text
* Strategy established as just spamming melee (wouldn’t qualify the established ranged ability as “ranged” since it doesn’t attack the enemy – it just limits their capability)
* Doesn’t understand what the enemy is doing (can’t really deduce what the enemies are doing)
* Halfway through playtest – tester was made aware of the relationship between Willpower v Power as well as the ability descriptions
* Talk - “Standard light attack”
* Deep Breath - Restore Mana spell
* Persuade is another spell (doesn’t really make sense why it is called ranged
* Disappointed look looks like a heavy attack but you can’t use it as often which inert it
* Each enemy is distinct visually but they aren’t separated gameplay wise
* All enemies feel the same
* The theme – I don’t really get the theme. All the naming make sense (Wyvern is supposed to be a dragon? I don’t think you can talk to a dragon)
* Falling numbers are a bit extreme (too many on screen – don’t think this is pertinent)
* Melee and Ranged – cannot feel a distinction (melee feels too far away | range implies an attack with how the language is set up)

Liam Sarett

* Liked the theme
* Liked the green text (indication that the ability is available) – knows when the use the ability
* Took the time read the abilities
* Mistook the red on the enemy as “Beast mode”
* Understood the difference between the melee and ranged
* I don’t want to use my health (Wait this costs health too?!)
* I don’t ever want to use the second one – I am scared that I will kill myself
* I don’t know how close I have to be
* Entered group mode (this is not possible at all)
* Ranged attack – I don’t know what this does. Damage reduction on me or him?
* I’m good at the game if I just bash the keys together

Is the feedback intuitive? Do you know what you have to do control wise – yea

Making the enemy damage yellow is confusing – wasn’t really paying attention. Color changing is really helpful. The blue patience meter (flying text) works good)

Does each enemy feel distinct – it’s so hard to tell with the framework. They feel distinct but purely by the distance. Ranged vs melee is present.

No strategy – when I tried I died but when I spammed it I did a lot better. I was really scared to use an ability that removed my health.

Ranged ability – I just can’t tell how far the ranged attack would go

Persuaded – didn’t know that affected the enemy’s – visual feedback wasn’t alright (a red makes me think they are doing more damage – change it to sickly)

The abilities feel different. 2 and 4 are distinct but 3 is relative. 3 didn’t feel impactful because it didn’t do damage. 1 is spam.

Mason Kaschube

* Player watched the last playtest so didn’t have to figure out the base mechanics
* Each enemy felt unique though agreed that the Beast Mode was a bit misleading
* Each ability gelt distinct and separate from one another but suggested that the Restore ability be placed elsewhere in the order since it felt weird going from attack to restore back to attack
* The ranged didn’t feel as impactful because of the lack of damage
* The UI was very much appreciated but the range of each ability felt weird
* The movement of the character got locked at one point – couldn’t move back or forward and player stopped a ways away from the enemy

What you currently / The max you can have