**DES 212 Playtest Report**

**Designer:**  Jennifer Assid **Project Name:** Group Combat

**Date:** 3/7/22 – 3/20/22 **Project Version:** Prototype (v1.0)

**Playtest Goals**

Determine if the AoE skill is easily understandable and effective.

Determine if the enemies feel balanced both in group and multigroup mode.

Determine if the new enemy type feels distinct and adds something to the player experience.

**Playtest Notes**

**Test #1: Mason Kaschube (mason.kaschube@digipen.edu)**

*Upon loading the simulation, the player immediately commented on the area of effect (hereon referred to as AoE) signifier – saying that they enjoyed the visual aspect. They went on to comment on how they liked the additional descriptions to the abilities (i.e. Melee, Ranged, etc) and how each ability had their range displayed (though went on to say that he did not understand how they are in real time due to lack of visual support). In terms of the new ability / adjustments to the old ones, the player was a bit confused as to whether the Deep Breath healed you (saying that the +# blue was clearly power gained but wasn’t sure about the health – it would be beneficial to add another signifier here) and that the AoE did not last long which made it feel weak and not really needed. The player did, however, understand what the ability did without additional explanation. The player did also highlight that the Disappointed Look / Distract felt that they didn’t need to be used much and were wasted space, so a targeted rebalancing is suggested in this area.*

*In relation to the enemies, the player commented that all the enemies (when they were alone) felt very weak except for the Poison Hatchling and the “weirdly tanky healer” (this is a large issue that has arisen in multiple later playtests so this will need to be addressed). However, when the player entered the group combat mode – they became overwhelmed by the previously “easy” enemies (need to rebalance the “grunt” enemies to not be as overwhelming in the group setting). The healer was very distinct from the other enemies (mainly its size lending to the distinction – the player commented that it made it a lot easier to find and then target it in group mode). Player commented on how they enjoyed when the enemies became blacked out when they died.*

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

*When fighting the enemies individually, the player commented that each of them were very easy to complete and that they didn’t gain a lot of satisfaction from defeating them (given that the player didn’t put a lot of effort into it). The only exception to this was with the weirdly tanky healer but the player did not feel accomplishment but more annoyance because the enemy was taking so long but not fighting back as hard. The player was also confused on the range of the enemies (when they could or could not attack you) and could only deduce this through getting hit (which they didn’t enjoy). The player had a lot of interesting insights on each of the abilities with their focus being that many of them are not damaging (too fancy with little outcome) and that the names were misleading (melee attacks having names that imply them to be ranged). The abilities will have to be balanced and most of them renamed (further playtesting is needed on the names themselves). The player also commented that the Persuade ability should be a buff on the player instead of the enemy because he doesn’t feel like he is gaining anything from using that ability. The AoE attack was confusing for the player and wasn’t preferred due to its short duration and lack of damage output.*

*Regarding the new enemy, the player shared a lot of the same sentiments to the previous play testers with the tank-ness of the healer and the uniqueness of their design. This player commented that the healer felt annoying – but not because it was buffing the other enemies, just that it was annoying.*

**Test #3: Dillon Goicoechea (dillon.goicoechea@gmail.com)**

*As far as the UI on the screen – the player was happy with the amount (didn’t feel that it was too cluttered) and understood each of the purposes without explanation. The abilities themselves felt similar to past playtests but that the attack system was more useable than before. Unlike past playtests, this player developed a strategy as opposed to spamming whichever attack came up first. The player highlighted a few things about each ability: Talk – feels that it should do more damage and / or have a slower cooldown; Deep Breath – wasn’t aware that it was healing the player but the health / power restored is a little too low for how long the ability takes to cooldown that it doesn’t make a lot of difference; Persuade – useful in single mode but not in group mode, would much prefer just a general ranged attack; Disappointed look – good cooldown and damage dealt but the power cost seems a bit high; Distract – useful but not amazing, need to deal damage and / or last longer.*

*As for the enemies, the player went through the single combat easily (once again, the healer was noted to be weirdly tanky). However, when entering group mode – the player couldn’t defeat the line up with all the enemies doing drastically higher damage to the player and the player not being able to compensate for that. The multigroup mode was much of the same though the player lasted longer and developed quite a few strategies when dealing with the different line ups. The healer was understood though the player pointed out that the healer was healing more than the enemies were getting damaged – making the already difficult enemies that much harder. Player also asked that each enemy type have their own color to further distinguish them from on another in group / multigroup mode.*

**Playtest Analysis**

*Across all playtests the UI and current feedback was well received with only a few tweaks in regards to their appearance (i.e. changing the color of the abilities and adding a backing to them to separate them from the playing field); the AoE signifier was especially appreciated by the players. Movement and player interaction (ability manipulation / targeting) went well with no comments from the players one way or another (which is being taken as a plus since not noticing something as simple as that means it is working well). All players agreed that each ability felt distinct from the others and that each ability has to be revisited with a focus on increasing their damage dealt and adjusting their cooldowns. The AoE ability, in particular, was a point of discussion across all playtests with the conclusion being that although the concept is interesting and can be useful, the lack of damage dealt and the long cooldown makes it inert.*

*The following changes will be made to the abilities: each ability name will be revisited to better reflect what they do (melee v range); Talk will have a damage increase but have the cooldown remain the same for the next playtest; Deep Breath will have in increase in resources restored and a signifier placed on the player to notate that Willpower is getting restored (floating number); Persuade will act as both a debuff on an enemy and buff on the player (when Persuade is active – the player will gave a damage increase while the enemy receives a damage decrease) and the cooldown will be adjusted accordingly; Disappointed Look will take less patience; and Distract will have an increased cooldown (prolonging the effect) and deal a little damage to the enemies within the circle (possibly having it that the closer an enemy is to the center – the more damage they receive).*

*The new enemy type was, across the board, incredibly too tanky. Thus, it’s max health points will be lowered to make it more of a “glass cannon”. Other than that, the players understood what the dragon was doing (healing other dragons) and tended to target it first. Majority of players liked how the healer dragon was smaller then the other dragons, giving it a very distinct look. All enemies will get rebalanced once again as far as their damage goes to make group combat more feasible for the player to succeed. Each enemy will also be given a different base color to help further distinguish them from one another.*

**Raw Notes**

**Mason Kaschube:**

* Likes the text underneath the ability name
* I like the ranges but I don’t really know how they tie in
* Like how they have the circle thing – thinks it is a melee / range
* Does Deep breath health you? (Need some feedback for the player healing)
* Healer doesn’t feel interesting by itself
* Enemies feel easy when not in groups – except the boss
* AoE doesn’t become available a lot – didn’t really know to save patience
* Liked the AoE feedback with the circle
* The boss was challenging by itself (felt good)
* The gray text on the brown background is hard to read (maybe a backing for the abilities)
* The AoE did like nothing - did like how the ability stopped them
* Wasn’t doing a lot of damage compared to the group combat mode (felt like they weren’t going a whole lot)
* Liked how the enemies’ changed colors when they died
* (LIAM – liked how the healer is so small)
* Healer feels very tanky (too much health? Is it somehow healing itself?)
* AoE – I feel like it definitely could have last a lot longer because I didn’t have enough time to really counter
* Understood what the AoE actually did – Liked how it actually affected the surrounding enemies
* AoE should maybe due some damage (closer to the center – more damage given)
* Enemy balance – I feel like there were at some points it was overwhelming (Fire dragons) – adding a bit more of a multiplier if you are in group mode – it works well when alone but in group you get overwhelmed.
* Making some changes while in group mode?
* New enemy type – weirdly tanky | like how it is smaller – gives it a distinct look from the others (very beneficial in manual auto) – the heals aren’t too overpowered (the cooldown is good and it isn’t rapid fire)
* Rebalancing the ability cooldown (used the first three abilities more than the latter two) – reducing resources used?
* Disappointed look / distract not really used as much (get more patience faster)

**Liam Sarett:**

* Single fights: Fire / Ice completed with over 50 health remaining
* Was confused at how much range the enemies had
* Was confused as to what the AoE does
* Melee attack for the player is hella weak
* Healer still felt very tanky
* Liked how the “persuaded” enemy is gray
* Didn’t feel like I kicked his ass (fire hatchling)
* The healer is weirdly tanky
* Disappointed look is way too close (It’s called “look” – you gotta call it something else)
* I feel like you have too many fancy moves
* Talk – Does not do enough damage (feels like I am wasting my time and talk isn’t melee?)
* Deep Breath works good – the placement of it feels weird?
* Persuade – feels like it doesn’t do anything (rather have a buff on my self as opposed to debuff on the enemy)
* Disappointed look it fine – the name is confusing (feels like a ranged name vs a melee name) (feels the most balanced)
* AoE – it uses too much power for what is actually does (either has to last a lot longer or do some damage)
* AoE – understood what it was doing but it doesn’t feel impactful enough
* Enemy balance – one wasn’t feeling more overpowered or another – still no definite tact per enemy type
* New enemy type – weirdly tanky | the most annoying – basic range using melee feels dangerous | feels fast and doesn’t feel like I can get in their with melee | didn’t notice that the healer was healing enemies
* Don’t feel like you have enough damage moves

**Dillon Goicoechea**

* The abilities seem to be pretty similar to past playtests – though it does feel like the attack system is more useable
* It doesn’t feel like an overwhelming of input on the screen
* Healer character – player uses the Deep Breath to accumulate power and then other attacks (strategy changing)  
  The healer took the player the longest time though their body language wasn’t tense – more just repetitious
* The boss enemy caused the player to further engage (most engagement out of all the enemies)
* Need to adjust the edges of the screen where the player and the enemy stop (health bars kinda of disappear)
* Single combat – no one enemy stuck out
* “I don’t understand how this works” in regards to the group combat
* The fire dragonlings group mechanic resulted in a lost (hard lose)
* Used the AoE without explanation when fighting the fire dragonlings
* Fire dragonlings group – They do too much damage and I do too little damage (don’t have any attacks that fight all of them – need to recalibrate the AoE to do damage)
* AoE – I thought it was a damage thing at first but it just kind of stops them which doesn’t make a lot of sense – AoE should do damage – It would be useful if it lasted longer since it uses so much patience
* Couldn’t deduce what the healer enemy was doing in single or group
* Understood the targeting system after a little bit
* Fought the fire – healer – boss and destroyed the fire / boss with stategry (moving backwards – gaining patience – etc)
* Deep Breath cooldown should be a bit shorter because I have the abilities to take them out but not enough power to use it (and I don’t do enough damage)
* New enemy type – Could deduce it was a healer by the name but not really by its ability (need to make this somehow more apparent)
* Healer hatchling feels like I can’t kill it – weirdly tanky
* The healer heals more then you can attack
* Didn’t know that Deep Breath is restoring the health (only restores 5 of the health which is nominal when the enemies do that much damage)
* Distract – the healer seems to also heal (need to make it so that the abilities are “disabled” until the AoE is over)
* Understood that AoE effect and why it is changing colors
* Talk – Standard melee attack though it shouldn’t have such a long cooldown and do so little damage
* Deep Breath – Didn’t even realize it restored health (both are really low for how long the cooldown is)
* Persuade – eh – feel like it sort of makes a difference outside of group mode)
* Disappointed look – its cooldown is good and damage dealt is in a good spot but the patience needed is a bit high
* Distract – It is useful but it is not amazingly useful. It would make more sense if it did damage of some kind or if it lasted longer
* Each ability feels distinct and separate from the others
* Layout – no? But it is really weird having to use the number bar at top
* The UI feels good – it doesn’t feel as weird
* Color on the hatchlings would help a lot more with the enemy distinction (“I mean look at Pokemon”)