Focus Test I Summary   Spring 2016
CMS.611 Project #4: Ghess
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A. Pre Focus Test: Preparation

1. What is the goal of this focus test? What do you want to learn? (Question, data, etc.)

● The **Goal** of this Focus Test is to take our original paper prototype and experiment with renovating/expanding some of our original game play elements such as new characters, larger boards, new capacities for characters, number of actions per turn, timed turns, etc. We are aware that with a digital version of this game, there will be much more clear visual and audio cues and faster feedback for the players so we want to expand the mechanisms and scope of the game while maintaining the fun for both the players and spectators.

● **Players**
   ○ Was the game challenging enough? Too little? Or too hard?
   ○ How did they feel about the options they were given? (moves they could make, characters available to them)
   ○ Are players making strategic, thoughtful moves? (In other words, how much random guesswork are they doing and how much control do they feel they have about the outcome?)
   ○ Are the identities/abilities of newly introduced characters communicated well?

● **Spectators**
   ○ What might make the game more exciting or interesting to watch?
   ○ How much value is there in spectator-spectator and spectator-player interactions?
   ○ Does adding new gameplay elements make the game harder to follow?

● **For those who have played the paper version (from Project 1)**
   ○ For both spectators and players, what about your experience has changed and what has stayed the same?
   ○ What improved? What got worse?

2. *Attach a copy of the testing survey, interview question list, observer sheet or other testing documentation used to gather & allow analysis of testing data. Could be a print out of a Google form.*

B. Post Focus Test: Observations & Intended Actions

1. Number of testers: ___2___   Who were they:_ (Parker, Lisa)

2. Summary of results (should be supported by data gathered by testing.)

● Test 1: Neither players have played Ghess before, 7x7 board, adding in swordsman, javelin thrower, and pikeman, and 3 moves per turn. (Previously, it was 5x5, only knight, archer, and soldier and 2 moves per turn)

- ○ Lots of clarification questions on where characters are, what they can see, where they can attack. Noticeably more than in the previous paper prototype. With more characters, the players had more to remember in their head (capabilities of 6 distinct characters, bigger board).
    - ■ "Learning curve is high - a lot of characters to track" - something noted by both the player and the spectators.
- ○ As a spectator, *much* harder to figure out a player's strategy, therefore less interesting to watch. Once you lose the direction of the game (look away for a few turns), it's harder to grasp what's happening again.
- ○ "I know where they are but I can't do anything." - player seems frustrated knowing it will take multiple turns to be able to act on the information. Later he added on that it felt very limiting to be able to move one square at a time and to have to use up a turn to rotate before being able to move in that direction.
- ○ "I think [the turns] should be timed" - player commented that the game progresses too slowly. This was interesting because the other player really placed a lot of importance on taking her time to strategize, guess her opponent's position before making moves so she did not really feel the need for timing the turns. However, for a less strategic player, it could be very boring to wait 1-2 minutes before the turn updates.
    - ■ Same for the spectators - it was boring to wait for the turns to update.
- ○ "Some of these characters seemed very similar" - player did not find some of the characters to be dynamic enough, and this also added to the challenge of remembering each of their unique characteristics.
- ○ "Strongly skewed to defensive strategy, first player has huge disadvantage" - This has been a challenge since the first version of Ghess. We will have to do more focus testing on this with the digital version.
    - ■ We were also surprised that the players did not comment on changing their strategy to adapt to their opponent's game play patterns should they play a next round with the same opponent but only specified offensive vs. defensive strategy.
- ○ "Play around with other person's pieces'" - The player who enjoyed strategizing really liked the ability to have physical pieces that she could move around on the board to try to guess where she thought the opponent was.
- ○ "I like the javelin thrower" - this mechanic of being able to attack a few squares ahead seems to be popular. Make sure to keep this in the next character iteration!

3. Intended actions/changes to design:

- ● Include detailed character stats for selected character in the digital version which will hopefully remove the need for the player to memorize their different capabilities.
- ● Possibly test timed turns in the next focus test. We're currently thinking around 30-60 seconds per move OR give each player a "time pool" from which the player could decide how they wish to distribute the time throughout the game. (spend a lot of time strategizing in the beginning then have to make faster moves toward the end, etc.)

- It possibly seems that having all 6 characters per player is too many. Test giving players the option of selecting their own team of 3-4 out of the 6 (this will probably be around 10-12 by the next round of testing) to play in the game.

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Interview Questions List:

- Players
  - Before starting the game, did you strategize? If so, how and did this strategy morph at all during the course of the game?
  - If you were to play another round, would you change your strategy? If you were to play the same player again?
  - What information about your enemy did you feel that you're gathering as you progressed through the game?
  - Do you feel the characters provided to you were adequate for an interesting game play?
  - What information (besides location of your enemy pieces) would have been helpful to you during the game to either better follow the progress of the game or to adapt your strategy to the current situation of the board?
  - What made you feel limited? Surprise?

- Spectators
  - At what points in the game did you get excited? Were there points where you got bored?
  - Did having other spectators around to communicate with (or not having other spectators) influence your experience of spectating in any way?
  - With the characters having extended capacities, how easy was it to follow the players' strategies or the game play in general?