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CS 1010 – Intro to Interactive Entertainment
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Module 8 – TIO: Design Discussion – Game Balancing

1. Is your game a PvP game or a PvE game? – *Shadow Realms* is intended to be a PvE game.
2. Are the relationships among the player's options in the game largely transitive, intransitive, or a mixture of both? – I intend for the player's options to be mostly intransitive. I want there to be a benefit to all class builds fighters may have an advantage over rangers, rangers over mages, mages over fighters. Using game design of this nature will encourage different play styles.
3. If the relationships are transitive, how will you balance them so that each choice remains viable? Do you employ direct costs, shadow costs, or both? What will these costs be? How, if at all, will the player learn what they are? Or will the transitive options simply be upgrades from one another with no need to be balanced? – Transitive options like ability upgrades have direct and shadow costs, such as resource consumption or time. Players learn these costs through in-game tutorials and trial-and-error.
4. If your game includes intransitive relationships, what will you do to make them more interesting for the player and not too obvious? – Intransitive mechanics, like choosing between combat or stealth, are made engaging by dynamic AI and environmental design, encouraging experimentation.
5. Do you plan to give the player a choice of units to control or control over a variety of units? If so, how will you differentiate them? Will each unit have a unique role to play, with qualities it shares with no other, or will the qualities of some units overlap? – The player will only control a single character and their shadow form.
6. Does the game contain any elements that the player might perceive to be unfair? – I hope that enemy AI feels challenging, but not unfair.
7. If yours is a PvP game, are the capabilities of the forces symmetric or asymmetric? If they are asymmetric, in what ways do they differ and how will they be balanced? By adjusting costs? By changing rules or probabilities to compensate? – *Shadow Realms* is not a PvP game.
8. Do the game's challenges increase steadily in difficulty, or are there peaks and troughs, or spikes, in the difficulty level? If so, where are they? – Difficulty will be set by the different types of enemies depending on where you are on the map and also may be increased upon completing key elements of the story for the world at large.
9. How do you plan to change the absolute difficulty of your challenges? Do you plan to increase the power you provide to the player to meet the game's challenges? Will the player's perception of the game's difficulty go up with time or will it remain relatively flat? – Players will unlock new abilities

and upgrades over time, increasing their power to meet escalating challenges, while difficulty perception rises gradually.

10. What mechanisms, if any, will there be for changing the game's difficulty level? Hints? Shortcuts? A difficulty setting? How will the difficulty setting change the nature of the challenges offered? Will it make the enemies tougher or weaker, smarter or more stupid? Will it add or remove challenges entirely? – I don't intend to add any mechanics to change the game's difficulty level.
11. Does the game include positive feedback? If so, how will you control it to avoid runaway victory for the first player who gets ahead? A time delay? Negative feedback? A random factor? – As a PvE game I do not anticipate much of a feedback loop.
12. How will the player know what to do next? What features does the game include to prevent the player feeling as if he is stuck? – Objectives are communicated through visual cues, NPC guidance, and a minimalistic quest log to prevent players from feeling lost or stuck.
13. To what degree is the player required to micromanage the game? Is the player obliged to look after small details? Are mechanisms available for the player to delegate some of these responsibilities to an automated process? If so, can the player be confident the automated process will make intelligent choices? – Micromanagement is minimal, focusing on strategic choices rather than the small details.