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

1. What types of challenges do you want to include in your game? Do you want to challenge the player's physical abilities, her mental abilities, or both? – I want my game to challenge my player with precise combat and some puzzles that will require strategic thinking and exploration.
2. Game genres are defined in part by the nature of the challenges they offer. What does your choice of genre imply for the gameplay? Do you intend to include any cross-genre elements, challenges that are not normally found in your chosen genre? – *Shadow Realms* could be defined as a metroidvania genre, which implies interconnected exploration and gradual power progression. I will also include cross-genre elements like RPG-style moral choices and leveling/equipment.
3. What is your game's hierarchy of challenges? How many levels do you expect it to have? What challenges are typical of each level? – I think a good goal to shoot for is 5-7 interconnected regions, each with its own puzzles, enemies, and a boss fight. Challenges escalate in complexity as the player progresses and unlocks new abilities.
4. What are your game's atomic challenges? Do you plan to make the player face more than one atomic challenge at a time? Are they all independent, like battling enemies one at a time, or are they interrelated, like balancing an economy? If they are interrelated, how? - Players will face interrelated atomic challenges such as solving environmental puzzles while managing enemy encounters. These tasks will often rely on the same core mechanics of player movement, combat, and timing.
5. Does the player have a choice of approaches to victory? Can he decide on one strategy over another? Can he ignore some challenges, face others, and still achieve a higher-level goal? Or must he simply face all the game's challenges in sequence? – I want the player to have options between combat and stealth in many areas to bypass certain encounters or challenges entirely. However, key objectives must be completed to advance the main story.
6. Does the game include implicit challenges (those that emerge from the design) as well as explicit challenges (those that you specify)? – Implicit challenges could be resource management during exploration, and explicit challenges would be boss fights.
7. Do you intend to offer settable difficulty levels for your game? What levels of intrinsic skill and stress will each challenge require? – No, I do not want different difficulty settings for the game. The different play styles may offer a different level of stress and challenge for the player depending on their own skill.

8. What actions will you implement to meet your challenges? Can the player surmount a large number of challenges with a small number of actions? What is the mapping of actions to challenges? – Core actions like attacking, evading, and shadow form abilities are versatile and used to tackle both combat and environmental challenges.
9. What other actions will you implement for other purposes? What are those purposes—unstructured play, creativity and self-expression, socialization, story participation, or controlling the game software? – Character creation/customization and interacting with NPCs for side quests will be the only planned creativity and self-expression actions for players (outside of how they choose to progress through the game itself).
10. What save mechanism do you plan to implement? – A checkpoint-based system will be used with this game. Death while exploring or in combat will return the player to this checkpoint with a penalty to their carried resources.