

# **Schell's Design Lenses**

## **Lens of Chance - Chantal**

*What in my game is truly random? What parts just feel random?*

*Does the randomness give the players positive feelings of excitement and challenge, or negative feelings of hopelessness and lack of control?*

*Would changing my probability distribution curves improve my game?*

*Do players have the opportunity to take interesting risks?*

*What is the relationship between chance and skill in my game?*

Randomness in the game is also found through the interaction of players with each other, as it can be hard to predict what another player will do. This is aided by the 'randomisation' of the damage each player deals - though the damage of each weapon is not truly random, each weapon will be programmed to deal a range of damage, so that the outcome of each game is not set as the player cannot truly predict how many hits are needed to kill somebody. Players have the opportunity to take interesting risks through their strategic use of weapons, abilities, and the environment.

The 'Chaos Orb' is the main programmed source of randomness, as the player could receive a very beneficial effect or a harmful effect. Though there is a higher chance of getting a damaging/disadvantageous effect, the positive effects on the characters' special abilities will still incentivise players to take their chances on the orb, as those special effects could give them a great advantage in the round. If they get the disadvantages, it will just be a momentary obstacle for the player - though it could affect the chances of them winning, it will not decide the outcome of the match. This is to ensure that players do not see it as a rigged object that is not worth pursuing.

## **Lens of Time - Chantal**

*What is it that determines the length of my gameplay activities?*

*Are my players frustrated because the game ends too early, or bored because the game is too long?*

*Setting a time limit can make gameplay more exciting. Is it a good idea for my game?*

*Would a hierarchy of time structures help my game?*

There is a time limit on each round of the game - the host player can select either a 10 or 20 minute time limit. A time limit is required because there are fewer competitors in this game compared to other multiplayer games with similar capture the flag gameplay, so players will find themselves in direct opposition more, which could mean the flag changes hands more often and scoring will be harder. If the limit is much shorter however, the player will not be able to execute any interesting strategies or use their special abilities more than once or twice. Multiplayer games can move very quickly, so the cooldown time between ability uses also determines the length of

gameplay activities, as it ensures that players are not simply spamming their ability, but are also using the weapons, or escaping.

There is also a hierarchy of time structures within the game, as a 'match' consists of two rounds, each with a limit that can be chosen by the host player. The short break whilst the next round is loading will help give the players a chance to breathe in between the action and gameplay sequences, and help them formulate new strategies for gameplay.

## **Lens of Competition vs Cooperation - Sameeksha**

*If "1" is Competition and "10" is Cooperation, what number should my game get?*

*Can I give players a choice whether to play cooperatively or competitively?*

*Do my audience prefer competition, cooperation, or a mix of both?*

*Is my team competition something that makes sense for my game? Is my game more fun with team competition, or solo competition?*

The players can choose to play cooperatively or competitively as there is choice of play modes. The play modes of the game support both competition and cooperation. The "team mode" is the perfect example of how the game utilises both competition and cooperation. Although you are competing to catch the flag, there is still a need for team cooperation to reach the goal. The other mode, free to play, does not require any cooperation because every player is on their own. Since there is no cooperation in free to play mode, the game as a whole should get a number around 3-4 leaning more towards competition, where the extra cooperation only comes from team mode.

Audiences that enjoy the competition are bound to enjoy this game and the cooperation detail adds a nice change to regular competitive environments. The team mode creates a twist to the regular capture the flag game, which usually just involves vigorous competition. Having a team member to rely on can create a huge difference in how the game is perceived. This mode brings in a sprinkle of cooperation while still keeping the competition aspect. It definitely makes the game more exciting than just solo competition.

## **Lens of Punishment - Raiyan**

*What are the punishments in this game?*

*Why am I punishing the player?*

*What do I hope to achieve by it?*

*Are the punishments fair?*

*Is there a way to turn punishments into rewards and get the same, or a better effect?*

*Are strong punishments balanced against strong rewards?*

There are two main punishment systems in the game: the first is dying and the second can be by using the mystery item. When a player dies there are many different systems in place to punish the player. First, the player will have to wait until the respawn runs out, if they have any buffs active, they will lose them, and they will lose any extra ammo they have earned. These punishments will force the player to improve their skill, revise and improve their strategies, give players a sense of consequence for their actions, a sense of accomplishments when they will, and finally a sense of exhilaration when they narrowly achieve victory.

The mystery item is a high-risk high-reward system. The mystery item can give an almost game winning advantage, or a severe handicap. In this case the player must choose if the risk associated with the item is worth the reward.

## **Lens of the Obstacle - Katerina**

*What is the relationship between the main character and the goal?*

*What are the obstacles between the character and the goal?*

*Is there an antagonist behind the obstacles? What's the relationship between the antagonist and protagonist?*

*Do the obstacles increase in difficulty?*

*"The bigger the obstacles, the better the story": are the obstacles big enough? Can they be bigger?*

*Great stories often involve the main character evolving in order to overcome big obstacles. Does the character evolve?*

Each player is put into a magical arena and must fight against the other players in order to win their freedom. The player must use their innate abilities to fend off enemies and grab the flag and return it to their side. The obstacles in the game are the enemy team, who have their own innate abilities that will be used against the player. They all have the same goal in mind, whether they are playing solo or in a team. A magical wizard is holding all the players in this arena for their own amusement. They will only let the players who win leave. The players do not increase in difficulty but may use different weapons each round. Since each player/enemy is a human, they bring their own decision making to the game for each round. This is better than having an AI make more predictable decisions in the game. The character does not evolve further than having their own innate abilities and choosing different weapons for each round of the game.