Assignment 3: Level Design Analysis

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Intention

This report documents the level design process for the turn-based combat prototype. With the main focus being level design, the designer decided to create two different unity scenes. The first scene being one that gradually teaches the player how to use each mechanic, by doing this the designer hoped to reduce the sensation of being overwhelmed, that players have previously experience when playing the game in previous prototype versions. With the second scene, once players have learned how to use some of the mechanics, the designer hopes to allow the player to use these mechanics against a stronger enemy. The designer hopes that by doing this, it will allow the player to develop certain strategies using the mechanics provided and give rise to new dynamics the player is comfortable with using. Overall, the main implementations the designer hopes to focus on is as follows: a method to gradually teach mechanics, new and stronger enemy, new environment and environment buffs.

Process

Gradually introducing mechanics

Starting with the implementation of teaching the player to use each given mechanic. The designer decided to deactivate most of the buttons. The designer wanted the player to be introduced to each mechanic once at a time so that the player can take their time to understand how they work.

To help with this, the designer placed a new panel in, that would act as a one-way communication line between designer and player. This would help the player understand how the mechanics work through simple explanations. Along with this new text, the designer also added in new dialogue texts further trying to guide the player to make certain choices.

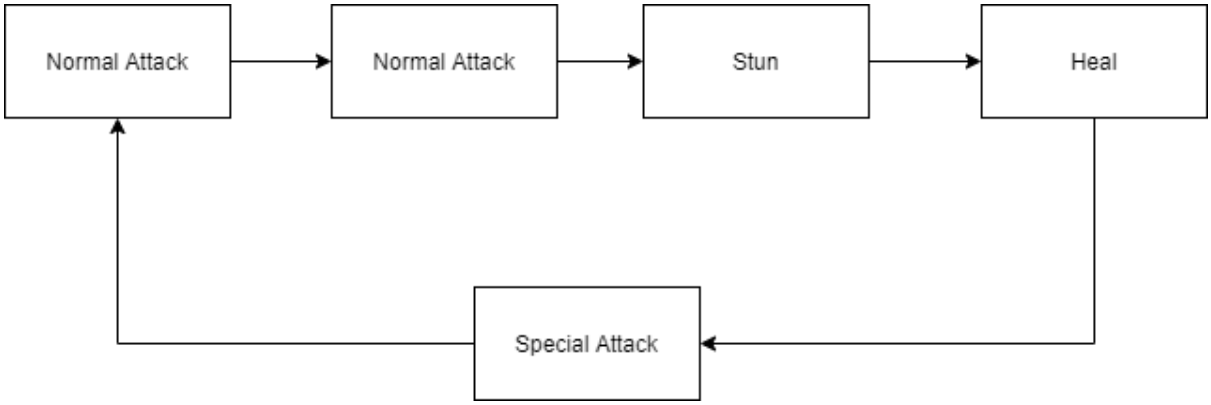
Once the first mechanic (Normal Attack) has been thought and observed by the player, the next mechanics are activated. With each mechanic activation the texts are changed accordingly to explain the mechanic. The main focus of this implementation was figuring out which mechanic to release first and then what follows after. With this being said, the following are used and revealed to the player as follows: Normal Attack, Heal and Stun, Special Attack and finally the buff mechanic. The buff mechanic was revealed last, because it incorporates some of the functions of the previous mechanics.

Stronger Enemy

Once the player has been thought how the mechanic work the player is then tasked to finish the enemy off. Once this enemy has been dealt with, a new unity scene is loaded. In this new scene the player will encounter a new stronger enemy, with a completely different data set from the first.

With everything now at the players disposal, the designer decided to create a new challenge for the player. Unlike the first enemy that would just use the attack action against the player, this new enemy follows a specific move pattern. This pattern would include all the four basic moves provided to the player (excluding the buffs). The pattern is also not to complex, allowing the player to learn how the enemy makes moves, this helps them create strategy around the enemy's moves.

The pattern used is as follows:



Reflection

As an assignment revolving around level design, the designer found it to be challenging developing a level system in a turn-based combat game. After reviewing the lecture videos twice, the designer finally came to the conclusion of what was discussed above. Although the designer knows that more could have been implemented to improve on the level design system.

The designer believes that the aim of implementing the "Gradual introduction of mechanics" was successfully obtained, for the following reason:

1. Players understood how to play the game, taking them a short period of time then previous prototypes.
2. Players asked less questions regarding the buffs.
3. Players felt less overwhelmed once all mechanics were available, and more comfortable with the display of all the information on the screen.

The downside to the playtests observed, was that some players would not read the text hints available. Some of them would also spam the attack button which would eventually lead to a problem in the system, eventually causing the game to crash. The designer found this to be frustrating, as some players just refuse to follow instructions and live to break down video games.

A few things the designer learned in this project was: Communication design serves a vital role when doing level design, especially when players need to learn how mechanics work, visualizing their actions makes it better and easier to understand.

Overall, the designer believes that the prototype implements level design on an appropriate level.

Recommendations

Implementing more levels, with better and stronger enemies would be a great improvement in terms of level design. The enemy's strategy could also be further enhance making fighting more complex and forcing the player to consider and carefully think about their next move.

The original intention the designer had about new environments would be a great addition to level design. Where each level would either serve as an advantage or disadvantage to the player or enemy character.

To keep the player occupied and more engaged with the game, the buff mechanic could be changed to a pick-up type mechanic. Where enemies or different environments would drop specific elemental buffs accordingly.