Introducing gameplay concepts is a vital part of any game. Without proper introduction the player might end up feeling completely lost of abandoned (which might be desired in some cases as well). But some gameplay mechanics aren’t exactly difficult to figure out. If you introduce a spawnable block gimmick + buttons which can be stood then it won’t exactly be the hardest task to deduce which direction the game will be headed in the near future. For a total beginner it might be necessary to take these things slow. But for someone with more experience this approach can easily feel like handholding. Also, focusing too much on the technical side of gameplay introduction can take away investment in the world as it starts to feel gamey and disconnected from the bigger system that is being shown.

For example; the world the game takes place in is brutal and unforgiving. Having an easy gameplay mechanic introduction out in the wild doesn’t really make sense because the wild is not friendly territory. The gameplay introduction would have to take place in some sort of inactive area that threats keep away from for it to be consistent with the world. A concrete example would be:

A bunch of characters visit an alien planet. They need to scavenge the wild for sustenance. But the wild is filled with dangerous creatures. In order for the world to stay consistent with this premise, the tutorial for how to execute the basic movement could take place in a crude training simulation created by the space ship’s AI. Since the AI isn’t super advanced it cannot create accurate enemy simulations, so here the player only gets introduced with how to move around. Then they can leave the spaceship with their newly acquired basic knowledge and start observing the creatures movement patterns or some shit.

This is an example of a difficulty curve that makes sense with the game’s fictional world. And this is something I wish to at least consider when I make The Great Seeker Ascension.

The game’s progression is something like this (terrain wise):

1. Snowy mountainous terrain
2. Underground fiery maze
3. Mountain with platform wheels and soaring curse
4. Crazy gimmick clocktower building on gimmick from part 3
5. Crazier gimmick in space building on gimmick from part 3 further

In the demo I’ll be focusing on part 3

The player already needs to be familiar with the base gameplay mechanics as they’re introduced in part 1 and challenged in part 2. Now I need to introduce the platform wheels and the curse for the generated scrolling section. An introduction that ignores the game’s world’s context would just take each individual thing about the platform wheel and introduce them in the most comfortable order possible over the course of a few levels to familiarize the player with the gimmick. But this is the mountain that has a curse running up it so we’d want to have that be part of the challenge as well. Still, throwing the curse and the wheel at the player at the same time from the get go would be a bit harsh. So we’ll compromise by having the player start in a cave section past the fiery maze that isn’t yet cursed territory. This way we can have a few levels where the player is just being challenged on the wheel front of things.

What parts of the wheel can we introduce?

* How the player can add momentum to the wheel
* How the player can most efficiently add momentum to the wheel
* Down dashing onto the wheel to add / remove angular velocity quicker
* Gaining jump height from the wheel by jumping off it

Including the path we have the following elements as well:

* How much in a direction the wheel moves
* How jumping off the path can give more velocity
* Changing directions on the wheel can change the path it moves on
* It might be necessary to jump off the wheel while it moves into threcherous territory

If we have enemies as well we could introduce:

* Various ways of killing them (jumping on them and shooting them)
* How jumping on them gives you more jump height
* How shooting them gives you an extra jump in the air
* The pattern of how they follow you and attack

Having an introduction section before the generated section gives us the opportunity to cover valuable tutorial-esque ground so that we don’t need to make it easy / uninteresting for seasoned players.