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Short Analysis

Report on Turn-Based Prototype

The prototype is one that makes use of a simple state machine system and allows for the player to battle against a computer-controlled enemy in a turn-based manner, with the player and the enemy alternating in when they can take actions. It takes aspects of multiple other games such as some of the earlier Final Fantasy games (Square Enix, 1987) and Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition (Wizards of the Coast, 2014). The following report will take a look at the designer's intention when developing this prototype, the process in which the designer went about developing the prototype according to the intention, and a reflection on the prototype to assess whether it met the goals it was set to achieve.

The Final Fantasy games were used as inspiration in terms of the game's two-dimensional layout as well as the strategy element involved in which a player has to manage their available actions and decide when to perform certain abilities. This layout and play style is appealing to the designer as the overall feel makes sense and would work well should the prototype be further developed as it aligns with the vision of the designer and this will be explored further later on. Another inspiration was the D&D 5th Edition combat system for not only the variety of actions a player would have, but more importantly the aspect of chance that is associated with it. This is in reference to the system where the roll of some dice determines whether an attack is successful or not and how much damage is dealt to the enemy. The aspect of chance makes was appealing because the designer was interested in the tension that probability can create as a strategy may be well thought out but if the probability is not in your favour it causes the player to evaluate whether the strategy is one worth sticking to or if it should be abandoned for something new.

The prototype currently features one player and one enemy; however, the code and prefabs allow for multiple enemy to be included by instantiating or spawning them to specific positions. Should more enemies be implemented in future development, more of these positions will be enabled. The prototype currently allows the player to take 3 action: Attack, Heal and Flee. The flee feature is one that was added with future development which does not focus solely on the turn-based combat mechanics and with the Pokémon encounter system in mind (Game Freak, 1996) in which the player may randomly encounter enemies. Due to the nature of this system, a player's hp or hit points may not be high enough to fight and so the flee option allows players to safely regroup and possibly replenish their hp before fighting again.

The player and enemy attacks automatically lower hp, however the amount of hp that is subtracted is randomized. The range of this randomization is 1-15 points. The player has a maximum of 100 hit points while the enemy has a maximum of 130 hit points. The player can restore missing hit points with the Heal action, and this restores 10 hit points when used. Once the player uses an action to either heal, attack or flee, the enemy then takes over and attacks the player. After the enemy's attack, the player once again has control and can perform an action of their choosing.

The enemy should, mathematically speaking, last longer than the player as it has more hit points. However, with the addition of chance-based damage it's possible that the player may out-damage the enemy. The player is also given agency as they can choose between whether they want to sustain themselves by healing or if they want to damage the enemy and the choice here is important as it could determine whether a player wins or loses. The strategic aspect of Final Fantasy would come into play at this point as it is crucial for players to decide when they would like to perform each action.

The prototype as it stands lacks the variety seen in games like Final Fantasy and Dungeons and Dragons. A simple system was chosen for this prototype in order to demonstrate that it would work, however the designer can implement more actions for the player to take such as different types of attacks, ailments to the enemy, buff skills for the player and adding more actions to the enemies to make them more interesting.

References

- 1) Game Freak, 1996. *Pokemon*.
- 2) Square Enix, 1987. *Final Fantasy*.
- 3) Wizards of the Coast, 2014. .