Basic Pattern Exercise

Step 1: Name a design element.

Weakness/Resistance exploitation system

Step 2: Name ten games that use that element—the more different ways the games use it, the better.

- Persona 5
- Pokemon
- Octopath Traveler
- Shin megami tensei 3: Nocturne
- Final Fantasy 7 Remake
- Casette beasts

Step 3: Describe how each of those games uses the element you chose. Try not to look for a pattern yet. Focus on accurately describing the way each game uses the element you identified.

- Persona 5;
    - Enemies have hidden elemental weaknesses that must be discovered through trial and error.
      Hitting a weakness knocks enemies down and grants "One More" (an extra turn), enabling the attacker to act again.
      The system works both ways; enemies can exploit player weaknesses too.
- Pokemon;
    - Each Pokémon has 1-2 types creating a rock-paper-scissors interactions.
    - Weaknesses deal 2x damage, resistances 0.5x, with some immunities at 0x.
    - Pokemon with multiple types that are effective to one and weak to others cancel each other out
- Octopath traveler
    - Enemies display shield points and weakness icons in-battle, but not which weapon/element specifically works. Breaking the shield stuns the enemy for a full turn
- SMT3:Nocturne
    - The game uses a press turn system, although very similar to persona how it handles weaknesses (trial and error), hitting a weakness instead gives you another “press turn”
    - The game has a press turn combat system where you have 4 action tokens that can be split amongst your whole party, passing allows for some characters to act again. Missing an attack/landing a critical hit/weakness remove/gain extra press turns.

- Final fantasy 7: Remake
    - Enemies have a stagger gauge that fills up over time with attacks, enemies have weaknesses that fill up the gauge significantly. Some skills in the game are purely focused on dealing extra stagger damage and aren't strong unless enemy is fully staggered.
    - Upon being staggered enemies health bar is significantly weaker to all sources of damage until stagger is restored
- Casette beasts
    - Elemental attacks don't straight up deal double damage but instead either inflict a buff/debuff depending on which element has hit which monster elemental type. Pokemon style-adjacent but focusing on buff/debuffing
    - Attacks cost "turn points" (similar to SMT3) but are gained and lost and can build up between turns, making players decide between waiting a turn to unleash a big attack or a more spam heavy build that relies on cheap attacks.

Step 4: What design problems do the games use the element to solve? Some games may use the element for one purpose, while others use it for another. Many games use the elements in more than one way. Describe the problems solved by your element for each of the ten games listed in step 2.

- Persona 5
    - Risk/Reward; Player can take care of fights much quicker to not die themselves, but if they equip the wrong persona they can get hit for weakness as well
    - Discovery; Unknown weaknesses will force the player to try out all types of attack to discover weaknesses of enemy.
    - Team building/Fusing; To get new persona's that are resistant/have a wider skillset that covers more elements players have to keep acquiring new demons and fusing them together, making the player be aware of who they bring to a fight and make sure all bases are covered

- Pokemon
    - Team building; Like persona, player wants to get as many pokemons with wide movesets to cover as many weaknesses as possible, and can prepare accordingly based on who they have to face next.
    - Mastery; Player learns type effectiveness over time and allows player to almost always (when mastered) know what the next most effective move will be, making player feel very powerful and tactical.
- Octopath Traveler
    - Pacing; Since this is more a traditional jrpg, it is important to pace the player and make sure they don't steamroll everything by having these

"shield" icons, ,making the player adapt their strategy to beat the next encounter.

- Shin megami tensei 3: Nocturne
    - High stakes/Resource management; All actions matter, especially (de)buffs. A lucky critical hit can lead into another hit from the enemy and that is game over. Health and MP are scarce and it costs money to restore them, so player is incentivized to use the least resources to get rid of the enemy as quickly as possible.
    - Team building/Fuse; Like persona, (since that's a spin off from this game) player needs to upgrade/fuse new demons throughout the game to keep up with the pace of the stronger enemies they encounter.
- Final Fantasy 7 Remake
    - Hybrid combat system; Stagger systems make sure player thinks about skill usage instead of button mashing.
    - Skill management; Breaking stagger bars is very important making player carefully pick between covering elemental weaknesses to break stagger and strong raw damage moves for when their stagger gauge is broken.
- Cassette beasts
    - Strategy; Since you cannot hit for "weakness" you are instead forced to focus on the best move set that allows you to set up and buff your monster up as much as possible to take care of the enemy, especially boss fights which are very prevalent in this game.
    - Resource management; As stated before, some much stronger moves require more action points, action points are gained by getting hit by certain elements or passing, making players carefully think about when to defend to strike back with a much more powerful attack or use a weaker move to kill an enemy quicker that might kill them.

Step 5: Look at steps 3 and 4. Are there patterns in the ways the games use the element, and how do those relate to the problems they solve?

1. Team building (All games)
    - All games have you form some sort of team that covers various strengths and weaknesses your team needs to fill out.
    - Some are more traditional like octopath/ff7(having a healer, mage etc), but others have a specific "build" (moveset) where you have each party member to do a specific task like buffing/debuffing or having a specific elemental type creature that dishes out massive damage for their respective element. (Pokemon, Persona, SMT)

2. Problem solving/Trial and error
    - In a more abstract way, all of these games have a weakness(“interaction” in the case of cassette beasts) that the player has to figure out on their own.
    - Similar to solving a puzzle, the player has to try different types of skills and elements to figure out the weakness (“solution”) to complete the battle.
    - Some games make it easier to remember by reminding the player what weakness was effective if they face the same enemy again (Pokemon, Persona) to make it more accessible and not have players remember every type matchup, which makes the entry level a lot lower for new players.

Pattern Template

That seemed to work quite well!



Design Problem

As a designer I want to reward the player for choosing the optimal strategy to reinforce learning the combat mechanics.

(Pattern) Description

Designers can create very interesting combat systems that have lots of complex interactions with other elements in combat but may scare away players that are new to certain genres.

My example games specifically cover (j)rpg’s that have elemental weakness /interactions. Some of these games include direct assistance to help remember the player what worked last time, other games highlight the best viable option/point out the strongest asset in your arsenal. This pattern aims to highlight how important is it to reinforce good usage of the intended system and make it easier for players to

achieve this mastery of player experience by guiding/reminding them how to use it properly.

Example games:

Pokemon:

- From generation 8 onward after hitting a opponent pokemon with a super effective move, this will be registered to the game's system.
- Next time this super effective move would be selected it prefaces "Super effective!" under the attack letting the player know that attack is known to be super effective now

Persona 5:

- Similar to pokemon, once a enemy has been hit with a element that hits their weakness it updates the game and next time the same element skill would be used it displays "Weak!" to signify it would be super effective
- Since player can encounter multiple enemies at once, once the player has to choose who to use the skill against it shows what enemies are weak to said skill individually
- Upon hitting weakness, players get a "One more!" to incentivize hitting weaknesses and letting the player take another turn

Shin Megami Tensei 3: Nocturne;

- Unlike previous games stated it does not directly tell you what the enemy is weak to
- Upon hitting a weakness it doubles the damage and shows a "Weak!" popup alongside the damage number
- The press turn system updates and lets you take another action (similar to "one more from persona")
- Player can use the "Analyze" skill on an enemy to show their whole moveset and all affinities/elements it is weak to.

Takeaway:

- It is important to inform the player whether or not their strategy was effective to enforce the strategic player experience found in these games
- Reminding the player what worked last time helps new players to the rpg genre/returning players that haven't played in a while and reduce the entry level to play the games so they can keep being engaged.