

A problem with 5e is how flat it can feel when rolling dice: try a skill and succeed or fail, and that's it. Attack and either hit or miss, with damage disassociated from the hit unless it's a Crit. In the vast majority of cases there is nothing approaching *degree* of success. I am less interested in the degree of failure; however, degree of success is what makes things interesting in combat and skill rolls. Additionally, there is little in the way of player options outside of the choice of moves or abilities, which are then based on binary success/failure, bringing us back to the first problem.

Inspiration in 5e is an attempt to address this and, to a small extent, it does. That it's tied to a character's story is a good thing, but as a mechanical option it's actually pretty weak as written: a player can only have one at a time, and all it does is provide ADV. Mechanically that's really limited and doesn't even push probability that far in the player's direction. Our table rule of being able to hold up to three INS as a player and bank up to six for the party has helped, as has our flexible options for how INS can be used - although we've never actually formalized that into a list.

2d20 offers Momentum as a currency with which players can impact the mechanics of rolls, and also shape their story options in an encounter or during skill rolls. I think we should add a modified version of Momentum (MtM), and make a change to the INS rules.

MtM: How It's Earned and Banked

For skill and save rolls, a natural 20 would provide one point of MtM, to either use immediately or add to the party pool. For every 5 (rounded down) above the DC would yield an add'l MtM, for either immediate use or for the party pool. Perhaps we could make all Crits "exploding" dice, like in WOD, meaning that even a low level character would have a chance to generate MtM from rolls - skill or in combat.

Buying MtM with Threat: players can buy INS by granting an equal number of Threat to the GM, plus 1. MtM gained this way cannot be banked by a player or in the pool - it must be spent right away.

Individual MtM is for immediate use and cannot be banked. The party pool, which can hold a maximum of 6, like Momentum in Star Trek, would bleed off by one at the end of each scene - not each combat round, as in Conan.

Earning MtM

1. Roll a 20 on a save or skill roll (1 earned)
2. Earn 1 per 5 rolled above the to-hit number on any d20 roll
3. Buy Threat: equals amount purchased (up to 3) plus 1 extra to GM

Spending MtM

Each player may only spend on the following menu, either from their personal INS pool or the MtM of the party, once per turn. Combined spends are allowed if a player lacks sufficient points in their own pool and wishes to dig into the party pool.

1. ADV: Spend 1 before a roll to enjoy ADV on it
2. Re-roll a single d20 after the results have been announced: spend 3 for this luxury
3. Stabilize from dying: 2
4. Reroll damage dice, and take what you get: 1
5. Add'l damage dice: 1 for the first, 2 for the second, 3 for the third (and last), adding one add'l die of the type for that weapon (ex: buying 2 extra damage dice for a longsword (d8) would cost 3)
6. Obtain Information (get more detail out of an investigation or interview or somesuch), in conjunction with a successful skill roll: 1
7. Save time: complete non-combat action in less time, situationally dependent: 1
8. Extra Action, must be taken immediately after a successful one: 3, with action being D+1 for difficulty
9. Grant personal MtM to another player: cost of amount given + 1 extra
10. Shape the Story: narrative insertion that has a mechanical effect, imposing ADV or DIS for the rest of the scene under specific circumstances (ex: knock over a wine pitcher to create a slippery floor; or,): 2

Earning INS

Story: personal INS can be awarded for good roleplaying, including playing one's character well. This would be awarded to an individual player, either by the GM or by the player group.

Awarded by other players or GM for good storytelling and RP (1 per incident). I like the idea of a post-session debrief structured around some questions. I've seen these in other games and will dig around; please find some and bring them if you are hip to this idea. My feeling is that this might result in a handful of INS per player to begin each session with, up to a limit of 3...that's my gut right now. These would be usable as MtM, from the menu above, but would be held by each player. What do you think of banking them up to more than 3? That is, there would be a limit of three earned per player per session, but a higher limit to hold them. On the one hand, I don't like the idea of an earned then lost resource; but having a lot bank limit would also encourage you all to use them.

What About the GM?

2d20, and other games with action point/story point economies, provide them to players and the GM. Conan calls it "Doom," while Star Trek Adventures calls it "Threat." I'll call it "Threat" and I intend to start each session with a pool of 1 point per PC, and I will add to this pool when players purchase MtM from me. I don't want to do more bookkeeping than that.

The GM would be able to spend Threat in the same manner as players can spend MtM, choosing from the 10 options above.

Closing Thought

I'd like to make the game more dynamic, but not by adding complications to it. I'd like INS to be a more fluid and frequent instance, to be used up and gained again with regularity - usable in ways that have meaning and encourage interesting play, but can also come at a cost. I think this will fit well within Eberron, too, given its stated 'pulp' and 'noir' vibe, which calls for my cinematic, creative, and heroic actions by players.

I'm good with these ideas. We can make adjustments on earning and spending as we go along.
-Sean