Lesson 6 - Guiding the Player

In this lesson, students will explore the concept of guiding players in a game level or world. They will analyze different approaches to guiding players, such as open-ended and directed approaches, and discuss the impact on player experience. Through direct instruction and examples, students will learn about various techniques used by game designers to guide players, including visual and audio cues, level design, non-playable characters, and narrative elements. In guided practice, students will design their own game level using a template and incorporate the guiding techniques discussed. They will then present their designs to the class for feedback and suggestions. Finally, students will reflect on their preferred approach to guiding players and justify their choice with specific reasons.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the concept of guiding players in a game level or world.

- Students will be able to analyze different approaches to guiding players in a game.

- Students will apply their understanding by designing a game level with a guided player experience.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or blackboard

- Markers or chalk

- Handouts with game level design template

- Computer with game design software (optional)

Bell-Ringer Activity:

1. Display an image or video clip of a popular video game level.

2. Ask students to think about how the game guides the player through the level.

3. Have students share their observations with a partner or in small groups.

4. Select a few students to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Introduction:

- Explain to students that in today's lesson, we will be discussing how game designers guide players through game levels or worlds.

- Emphasize the importance of guiding players to ensure an engaging and enjoyable gaming experience.

- Mention that game designers have different approaches to guiding players, and we will explore some of these approaches.

Direct Instruction:

1. Define the concept of guiding players in a game level or world.

2. Discuss the two main approaches to guiding players:

a. Open-ended approach: Allowing players the freedom to explore and choose their own path.

b. Directed approach: Providing a specific route or sequence for players to follow.

3. Present examples of games that use each approach and discuss the impact on player experience.

4. Explain that game designers use various techniques to guide players, such as:

- Visual cues (e.g., arrows, lights, signs)

- Audio cues (e.g., music, sound effects)

- Level design (e.g., obstacles, pathways)

- Non-playable characters (NPCs) providing guidance or quests

- Narrative elements (e.g., dialogue, cutscenes)

5. Discuss the pros and cons of each approach and the importance of balancing player freedom with guidance.

Guided Practice:

1. Divide students into small groups.

2. Provide each group with a game level design template.

3. Instruct students to choose an approach (open-ended or directed) for their game level and design it accordingly.

4. Encourage students to incorporate different techniques discussed in the direct instruction phase to guide players through their level.

5. Circulate among the groups, providing guidance and answering questions as needed.

Independent Practice:

1. Have each group present their game level design to the class.

2. After each presentation, facilitate a brief discussion where students provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

3. Encourage students to consider the effectiveness of the guiding techniques used in each design.

Exit Ticket:

- Distribute exit tickets to students and ask them to write a short paragraph explaining their preferred approach to guiding players in a game level or world. They should also justify their choice with specific reasons.

Closure:

- Summarize the main points discussed in the lesson, emphasizing the importance of guiding players in a game level or world.

- Remind students that game designers have different approaches to guiding players, and it is essential to consider the impact on player experience.

- Encourage students to apply their understanding of guiding techniques in their future game design endeavors.