Lesson 8: Teaching the Player

In this lesson, students will explore the importance of teaching game mechanics and storytelling in game design. Through analyzing different methods used in popular games, students will gain an understanding of how game mechanics are taught and how stories are introduced. They will also have the opportunity to design their own game concept that effectively incorporates both game mechanics and storytelling elements. By the end of the lesson, students will have a deeper appreciation for the role of game mechanics and storytelling in creating an immersive and enjoyable gaming experience.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the importance of teaching game mechanics and storytelling in game design.

- Students will be able to analyze and evaluate different methods of teaching game mechanics and storytelling in games.

- Students will apply their understanding by designing a game that effectively teaches game mechanics and incorporates storytelling elements.

Materials:

- Whiteboard or blackboard

- Markers or chalk

- Projector or computer with internet access

- Paper and pencils for students

- Examples of different games (video games, board games, card games, etc.)

Bell-Ringer Activity (10 minutes):

- Display a screenshot or image from a popular video game on the board.

- Ask students to write a short paragraph describing how they think the game teaches players its mechanics and introduces its story.

- After 5 minutes, ask a few students to share their responses with the class.

Introduction (10 minutes):

- Engage students in a discussion about their favorite games and what they enjoy about them.

- Explain that in order for games to be successful, they need to effectively teach players how to control the player character, engage with the game's systems, and understand the game's story.

- Introduce the concept of game mechanics and storytelling in game design, emphasizing their importance in creating an immersive and enjoyable gaming experience.

Direct Instruction (20 minutes):

- Define game mechanics as the rules and systems that govern how a game is played, including player controls, objectives, and interactions.

- Discuss the different methods game designers use to teach players game mechanics, such as tutorials, on-screen prompts, gradual difficulty progression, and interactive learning experiences.

- Define storytelling in games as the narrative elements that provide context, motivation, and emotional engagement for players.

- Explain how game designers incorporate storytelling through cutscenes, dialogue, in-game events, and player choices.

- Show examples of different games that effectively teach game mechanics and incorporate storytelling elements, highlighting specific techniques used.

Guided Practice (20 minutes):

- Divide students into small groups.

- Provide each group with a different game to analyze.

- Instruct students to identify and discuss how the game teaches its mechanics and introduces its story.

- Encourage students to consider the effectiveness of the methods used and any improvements they would suggest.

Independent Practice (25 minutes):

- Instruct students to individually design a game concept that effectively teaches game mechanics and incorporates storytelling elements.

- Remind students to consider the target audience, genre, and platform of their game.

- Students should create a brief outline or storyboard of their game, including how they will introduce the mechanics and tell the story.

- Circulate the classroom to provide guidance and support as needed.

Exit Ticket (5 minutes):

- Ask students to write a short paragraph reflecting on what they have learned about teaching game mechanics and storytelling in game design.

- Collect the exit tickets to assess student understanding and provide feedback.

Closure (5 minutes):

- Recap the main points discussed in the lesson, emphasizing the importance of teaching game mechanics and storytelling in game design.

- Encourage students to continue exploring and analyzing different games to further develop their understanding of effective game design.

- Preview the next lesson, which will focus on the role of player engagement and feedback in game design.

Common Core Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2: Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.