The design cycle in action: In class exercise

So we know the steps of the design cycle and what they consist of, let's see how it works in solving a real life gaming problem.

THE SETUP:

Teacher - you are the owner of EA (Electronic Arts) one of the world's biggest game development studios and you want to design a new game – an educational game for kids 8-12 years old with a memorable, marketable character.

Have your groups walk through the steps of the design cycle to come up with a solution – a game – for you.

EXERCISE INSTRUCTIONS:

#1. Break the students up into roughly even sized, manageable groups.

#2. Tell them who you are (EA owner) and what you want them to create.

#3. **Discovery**

- Give each group 3-4 minutes to come up with questions they would ask to help them determine a plan.
- Examples might be: does it matter what type of genre? Do you want certain colors? How expensive should it be? Does it matter if the main character is a boy, girl, animal or something made up? How difficult should it be?
- After a few minutes go around from group to group and have them ask you a question. Each group should take notes on the questions and your answers.
- After a few times around, turn them loose to come up with a complete plan for your game.

#4. **Design**

After they have received information from the discovery phase, have them plan and design the character & game on paper.

- The design should include a description of the game (puzzles, adventure, mazes, etc.), a description of the main character and other objects or characters and the goal of the game. And of course include anything else they may have learned from the discovery questions like color preferences, etc.
- They can draw pictures, use text or a combination to come up with their plan.
- Have them evaluate their plan against the info they have received from the discovery phase – are they hitting everything you need them to do? Are they on track to build an educational game for 8-12 year olds with a memorable character?

#5. **Develop**

In the next unit we will start programming and actually designing games. For now, have them think about the tasks that will need to be completed to build your game.

- Have each group list the jobs and tasks that will be necessary to build this game. This should include jobs like: programming, graphics, sound effects, voice over recordings (if needed), writing instructions, project manager, customer support, etc.
- Have them evaluate their team and plan. Do they have every task listed? Will this produce the game you want?

#6. **Deliver**

They have their idea. They have the tasks assigned. They've been evaluating all along. Now have each group deliver their game.

- Go around to each group and have them present their game & character concept to the class. Their presentation should include what types of jobs need to be done and how they see their game being used (i.e. within schools, online, Play Station, WII – and why.