Brainstorming Warm-Up: blue-sky concepting and stakeholder curveballs (60-90 minutes)

- In this exercise, students split up into random groups (or maybe project groups if they've already been formed) and come up with any
digital concept that's feasible on currently existing platforms.
- Open with a brainstorming exercise (10-15 minutes) where groups have to decide on a set of constraints & design values to inform their
work (can use Macklin & Sharp for design values, Zimmerman also discusses in some of his work). They shouldn't decide on too many
details of things like story or exact gameplay, just general principles. Use this to practice brainstorming "best practices" like "no buts, only
ands" and "go wild with ideas, then narrow it down and get less wacky in the process."
- Go around and have each group give a short pitch.
- Then, explain that the stakeholders for the game (could be a studio head, an investor, a publisher) have shifted plans or are trying to
realize new opportunities, so there are some additional factors they have to consider. Introduce these "curveballs" one at a time and give
groups 5-10 minutes to react, document their decisions, and report back. (Don't have to report back after every single curveball.)
  - The game now has to have an original IP of some sort (either "any IP" or could be limited to particular genres) so that it can be
leveraged for transmedia properties, sequels, etc. What's the story, the main characters, the action? Groups must write a logline.
  - The game now has to appeal to a particular audience (tween girls, retirees, active military service members, etc.) Best to avoid
extremely difficult audiences (like kids under 5)
  - The game now has to have multiplayer features or a particular kind of multiplayer, such as shared-world co-op building (because
Minecraft is so popular, of course) or team competition (because Overwatch is so popular) or social sharing, etc.
  - The game is now going to launch on a specific platform, such as the Switch, Apple Watch, an in-flight entertainment system, an
interactive exercise bike, etc. etc. (To make this easier, it doesn't have to be the sole platform, a smaller platform could involve a
"companion app.")
  - The game now has to have product placement for a particularly odd product (my favorite is the Sonicare facial sonic cleansing
brush, which has been showing up in a lot of teen dramas lately)
  - The game now has to use microtransactions as a major source of revenue
- Powerpoint slides (last half concern this exercise): IntermediateGameDesign.2017-Week11-Concepts.pptx
  - These include particular versions of the curveballs and particular characters as stakeholders: Mike (a somewhat clueless but
eager/anxious studio head) and Walter (an older and more clueless trend-happy investor)