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Assignment 1

EPSY/INFO 590

Teaching Money Management

Learning how to invest your hard earned money can be a challenging thing to learn. Moreover, the topic of saving and investing is usually taught in high school, when the last thing students want to think about is saving. Schools typically teach the topics of investing and saving through worksheets and searching the Internet. The worksheets I found to teach about savings and investment had students read an introduction about a variety of saving and investing topics (including investment, mortgage, loans, savings, etc.). The students would then have to perform calculations about the amount of interest on the loan or how long it would take to pay off a mortgage with a certain amount of income.

While learning how to properly manage money is an important task to learn (and can be very interesting), worksheets and discussions on this topic are too dull to grab a student's attention. Moreover, the worksheets present students with a scenario that students cannot truly relate to as none of them would be thinking about

I decided to model my game on *The Game of Life* and a classroom scenario that my class played out in middle school when we were learning about ancient Japan and the Samurai system. The class was split up into teams that each had some number of territories in Japan. Our goal was to gain as many territories as we could by the end of the unit. We were given Samurai as our team completed certain tasks that we could use to attack the other teams. This type of classroom scenario that lasts for an entire semester can be used to keep students engaged over a long period of time and is particularly suited for topics like money management where to experience the benefits, you have to think long term.

For this topic, I target high school students (grades 9-12). The objective of the game will be to have the highest reputation in the class as well as the most savings. The game would

start out by having each student have a certain amount of savings and a weekly salary that they can use to buy things in this virtual world. Students will start out by renting a home (a certain amount of the week's salary). Students will have to pay their bills weekly including rent and transportation. Students have to save up in order to buy upgrades that increase their reputation. Upgrades include buying a house, buying a car, or buying other items that increase a student's reputation. These items are usually an upgrade to an apartment, house, or car. Once a student buys these items, they also have to pay for maintenance fees. Students can buy items, cars, or houses that they don't have enough saved for if they take a loan. Students can also get credit cards that will unlock certain items to increase reputation. As a student's reputation level increases, their salary also increases. Students can also earn extra money/reputation points by completing lesson modules that provide extra information about topics related to money management. It would also be interesting to add in an investing aspect of the game to allow students to buy and sell stock to earn more money (not shown on mockup of homepage).

The learning aspect of this game comes into the choices students take when they decide to buy or upgrade their house/apartment/car and their choices in loans and credit cards. When students are given choices of credit cards, they will be given a selection of credit cards with different benefits (reputation grows by some amount every week, or cash back option) and different fees and APRs. They will have to read the fine print and choose the best card. If the student does not choose the best card, the student will lose some amount of reputation points/money that they will have to regain by completing an extra lesson module. Students will also have to manage their bills and make sure they are "living" within their means.

If this game is implemented in a digital world, students in a class could all live in a "neighborhood" where they can walk around to see their classmates' houses and reputations. This brings in an aspect of competition to the game where the students want to do better than their classmates. This game design would also allow students to customize their own homes and cars to create something of their own design. So ultimately,

the game allows a student to build the ideal possessions they would want in their life, but only if they live within the means of the game.

As it is, my design does not connect emotionally with the players except in a slightly competitive way. However, the game would impart a sense of ownership to the students as students buy items that they “earned” in some way. Students who enjoy collecting and comparing status with their classmates may enjoy this game better than students who enjoy action. Adding a component of a stock market into this game could make the game more enjoyable for those who like to experiment and take risks.

Another thing my design does not do is utilize the community. All of the students are pitted against one another. It would be interesting to bring in a way that students can help one another out. Perhaps students can give gifts to one another to bring a sense of community and working together.

I believe that this game will be engaging to students over a long term because it teaches the idea of money management not over just a few hours, but over weeks. This game is also not too slow, because students are being given weekly wages, so student's can live out months in just a short time period. Pitting students against their classmates creates a healthy sense of competition, as students want to design their homes and cars in such a way as to impress their classmates. It also allows students to design their own ideal life which gives students a sense of ownership over their world.

Homepage:

Savings

Pay Bills

Manage Loans

Credit Cards

MY REPUTATION: xxx

Leaderboard

1. John Doe: xxx
2. Jane Doe: xxx
3. Steven Hawking: xxx

Buy/Upgrade
House

Buy/Upgrade
Car



Enter Home

Look around the
neighborhood

Go to the store