

Manipulated Monopoly

Description:

Barb Weidman of the Gateway Philadelphia urban project has been using an adapted version of the Milton Bradley game Monopoly with her urban project participants. (She got the idea from Carolyn Carney of New Jersey.) She says, "I don't know of another game that has given so much mileage in helping our students understand the connectedness of economics to opportunity, oppression, hopelessness, lack of options and anger. The parallels of this game to real life are endless." The following gives you the new, "manipulated" rules for the game, debriefing hints, and Barb's observations.

How to Play Manipulated Monopoly

The Manipulated Part

1. Let people pick their game pieces.
2. The shoe and the car get 300 dollars each for passing Go and are never charged for a utility or railroad. In fact, they get free passes. They can build as soon as even one piece of property is owned. They may build unevenly (that is, build a hotel on a plot before or without a house, and on any plot).
3. The dog gets 100 dollars for passing Go. The dog must have two of three (or one of two) of a set before building. The dog may build unevenly but can buy, sell or build only on its own turn.
4. The hat and the horse get 50 dollars for passing Go. They must have two of three (or one of two) of a set before building. They must build evenly (that is, one house on each plot of like property, then two, then three, and so on). They can buy, sell, etc., only on their own turn.

General Rules

1. No one may quit the game.
2. Loans. Any player may borrow up to, but not exceeding, 1,000 dollars from the bank. Every time a player who is in debt passes Go, half of the money he or she would otherwise have received goes toward paying off the debt. Do this until the debt is cleared. (The debtor may pay off the debt in one payment directly to the bank.)

Note: the banker must keep track of the debt. Loans of any amount may be transacted between players, with terms of repayment set by the lender.

3. Mortgage properties and buildings. Follow official Monopoly rules (that is, houses are torn down for half the price of purchase, properties are mortgaged for half their value, etc.).
4. Multiple buildings. More than one hotel may be built on a property; rents are increased accordingly.
5. Selling and trading properties. All sales and trades of properties are permitted.

Note: no player may sell or give away his or her last piece of property.

Running the Game

1. Researchers are the bankers, and their decisions are final.
2. The shoe, dog, car, hat and horse pieces must be used.
3. Play for at least one hour.
4. As the game starts, give no hint that special rules are being used; slowly reveal these as the game progresses. When the first piece of property is bought, explain that in order to speed up the game, only two of three pieces of property need to be owned in order to build.
5. Observe the “special pass” rule for the Shoe and Car when they land on a utility or railroad.
6. After several players have passed Go, tell everyone of the special building rules. You may, however, privately explain these special privileges to the appropriate players when they begin to build.
7. When you sense that the “oppressed” players are running out of money (or patience!), explain the special loan rules.
8. Be vague about the rules until you want to be clear.