Praxis Paper

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The board game, “When Life Gives You Lemons”, is based on the application of mathematical knowledge and skills which are expected to be taught and acquired in the Ontario mathematics course Foundations for College Mathematics in Ontario. This game is an application of the personal finance unit, and serves to enable students to “design, justify, and adjust budgets for individuals and families described in case studies, and describe applications of the mathematics of personal finance” (Ministry of Education, 2007).

Students will have already learned these mathematical skills in the classroom and practiced problems relating to real-world applications. This game serves to enhance student learning, reinforce key lessons and to connect mathematical knowledge to realistic life experiences. The game is colourful and creatively designed, creating an entertaining space for students to practice mathematical content with classmates and friends.

Before the student’s start playing the game, the class will take part in a Vocabulary Self-Collection activity. In small groups the class will work together to come up with a list of financial terms they learned in the personal finance unit. As a class, they will compile a master list of these terms and provide small definitions of each term. The class will then move on to the board game.

“When Life Gives You Lemons” takes the participants through four stages of life, called “Getting Started”, “the Real World”, “Mid-Life Crisis”, and “Over the Hill”. These stages start off at the beginning of a young person’s life, followed by entering society as an adult and making real world decisions, the middle stage of life, and finally the stage of retirement. Progressing through these stages demonstrates the various financial decisions that participants will have to make in adult life. It also provides a snapshot of how the stages of one’s life are all interconnected and even similar in terms of financial matters.

At each stage, participants must consider the effects of familial matters, employment, and housing. These life events, such as having children, or being promoted at work, are either randomly selected, or are results of the decisions that participants make during the game. These events give participants a glimpse at the fortunate or unfortunate life events that many individuals deal with daily. One goal of this game is to increase the empathy of participants towards members of society who are unfortunate in their given circumstances.

As the students progress through the game, they must gather information and compare all of their options before making a decision. It is important to note that “the information is not simply acquired, but is used to accomplish a task, make a decision, satisfy a curiosity, or be stored as general background for later application” (K. M. Feathers et al., 1987). Hopefully, by the time the students have finished the game, they will be more prepared to exit the comfort of adolescence and enter adulthood and all its financial difficulties with confidence.

References

K.M. Feathers et al., Meeting the Reading Demands of the Real World: Literacy Based Content

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