SKYLIGHT

OPENING REMARKS

Hello again everyone! These first two weeks have been quite busy for the team. We met with Dr. Todd Keruskin of the Elizabeth Forward school in order to get a crash course on our platform, discuss project goals, and clarify client expectations for our deliverables. After our meeting, we began individually brainstorming ideas on cool game mechanics that could be used to fulfill the learning objectives of our client.

Over the course of our second week, we've begun the process of mapping out our development cycles for the semester, discussing logistics in order to maximize our efficiency, and producing our brand/marketing materials to promote our project. We've also been investigating the technical challenges that we currently face, and may encounter as our development cycle moves forward. To that end we've consulted ETC faculty and alumni.

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

As stated in the opening remarks above, we met with representatives of the Elizabeth Forward school. During our time at the school, we were able to experience and interact with the SMALLab platform as they have implemented it. We got to test out past student projects for the platform in order to understand their strengths and weaknesses. This will allow us to better design our own games this semester and exceed client expectations.

Our clients requested a system that allows teachers to tailor game content for grades 2 through 8. They would like to have the capability to modify variable elements used in the games such as numbers, arithmetic operations, musical notes/combinations, etc. to target specific grade levels and lessons. They also stressed the importance of visual and aural feedback to increase student enjoyment and strengthen their sense of accomplishment. Lastly, they want games that encourage multiple players at a time, ideally an entire class.

WEEKLY CHALLENGES

This week we faced technical challenges as we researched the SDK (software development kit) for SMALLab and the code of past projects. Past teams used auto-generated XML forms in order to change the parameters of their game on the fly. The drawback to this approach is that the generator script is rendered non-functional every time Google updates their scripting system. We plan to approach this challenge by incorporating adjustments within the games themselves via input mechanisms like fields, toggles, and switches. Additionally, further research is underway to address these issues.

In the meantime, we are continuing to brainstorm internally on game mechanics and systems that we think will fulfill our project goals best. We have consulted with a member of faculty, John Dessler, in order to determine a best approach to this project. Our next team meeting will be a session dedicated to fleshing out several ideas to pitch to our client.

Some things to consider as we move forward with our project are: feasibility of expected deliverables in the expected timeframe, restrictions and limitations on the SMALLab platform, coordinating and executing multiple informative playtests throughout our development cycle, and defining our metrics for success. We have a lot of work to do ahead of us and compressed timeframe in which to do it. We will approach each step on our path to success with logical procedures designed to tackle each challenge, collaboration with our client in order to validate our design decisions, and the energy of creativity that drives each of us forward. We are team Skylight; and you'll hear from us again next week.