

Produced By
Zoe Puno
Chloe DeNuto
Aury Fernandez
Naomi Gaylor

Life Tiles



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we are proposing

A Relevant Game About Life

an activity for high school students to manifest autonomy and develop their 21st-century skills.

We believe our best chance for implementation is through adoption from core English, social studies, and math classes. Where students are looking beyond the resources of their high school to explore college and work readiness

Recap

In our last design report, our problem statement was “How do we provide access to alternate education to high school-aged kids?” Our next steps focused on creating a modular classroom out of a shipping container for students to have a space to be creative and learn topics like STEM, entrepreneurship, and life skills. However, since COVID, school districts have been more concerned about security and are stemming away from portable classrooms separate from the school (Peg). Additionally, after interviews with educators, principals, and superintendents, we learned that classroom space isn’t the issue in high schools, it’s the curriculum (cite?). Even though a classroom may foster creativity and interest in students, a curriculum ensures students are learning the core information while being easily implementable to teachers. Therefore, we’ve pivoted away from a modular separate classroom and into an activity for students to learn through.

Pivot Summary

MARKET DISCOVERY: How Did We Get Here?



*While Interviewing High School Principals,
Superintendents, Curriculum Developers*

modular classroom idea

focus

curriculum

focus

soft skills

focus

implementation

focus

game idea

Curriculum

Throughout the k-12 curriculum, they focus on many of the main core subjects, math, science, English and history. While schools make an effort in these subjects they tend to neglect putting their students in environments where they would have the opportunity to develop some very important skills they will require in their future careers. After conducting interviews and exploring the consumer market, we determined that some of the major skill sets that young students lack are critical skills, financial literacy, and career development skills.

- a. Critical skills development
 - i. Social skills (21st-century skills)/soft skills/transferable skills
 - 1. Persistence and perseverance (Valerie)
 - 2. Failing and problem-solving your way out
 - 3. Self-awareness
 - 4. Time management
 - 5. Mental health
 - 6. Negotiating

We believe critical skills tend to be overlooked as a majority of schools expect their students to develop their proficiency in skills such as time management, problem solving and self awareness throughout their regular education or even at home. On the contrary, if schools put more energy into exclusively teaching about how students can be aware of how to control their own lives then it will allow students to be more confident when being independent.

- ii. Finances
 - 1. Budgeting/finances
 - 2. Loans
- iii. Career

One major help during concept generation was Peg Zokowski. She's the CEO of Curiosity, a company that creates kits for [age](#) kids to foster creativity and curiosity in STEM and entrepreneurship. After interviewing with her, we realized that 1) we were not qualified to teach STEM and entrepreneurship and 2) building a curriculum would take \$5 million in 5 years ([actual stats](#)). Therefore, we created an activity that teaches high schoolers universal life skills needed post-graduation.

Through other interviews, we narrowed down some critical skills that current curriculums lacked. These included

- 2. How to implement
 - a. Activity -> board game (card game will be discussed in Design Process)

User Statement

We defined our problem space to be “How do we provide access to alternate education to high school-aged kids?”. Even as we went through many different solutions, our intended users have always been high school teachers and students. We knew very early on that tackling an entire redesign of the school system would be impossible in the time constraints we had, so we knew we had to zero into a niche. Through our research we eventually found a gap in the system, teachers and students alike wished there were a way to expose students to “critical skills”.

Especially due to COVID-19, teachers have found that “student discipline has been more challenging. Students have difficulty in learning the norms and social cue of school. They have a harder time interacting with each other and getting along” (Suber). This effect is not only seen in schools, students entering the workforce have also found problems being able to efficiently do tasks they are assigned without proper supervision, some might say that some students are “too coddled” (Howell). Students don’t seem to realize that the skills they are taught in the classroom, like writing an essay with proper grammar are transferable to writing things like emails (Howell). Now employers are having issues with new hires, one employer had to provide hours worth of mentoring to a graduate student who felt less than capable of simple tasks like communicating with clients all by herself (Zokowski).

After many pivots, we landed on a card game in the style of a conversation game. We provide information on things like personal finances, sending emails, and cooking food. In other words we are providing students with resources to practice their adulting skills in a no risk environment. Teachers have the added benefit of having a game in a box, it is easy to set up and all materials are provided for them. Though we wanted to be able to provide a way for teachers to better evaluate qualitative skills, our card game has become more quantitative in evaluating for skills. And as always, we can never predict how attentive and welcoming students will be to any activity. Even though, we hope that we are able to impart some knowledge onto our fellow Gen Z peers.

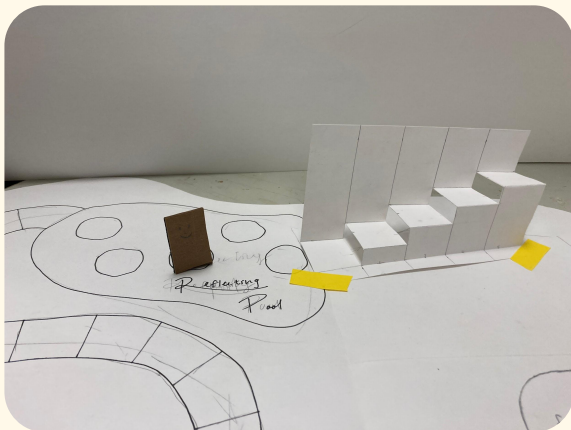
Design Process

Board Game

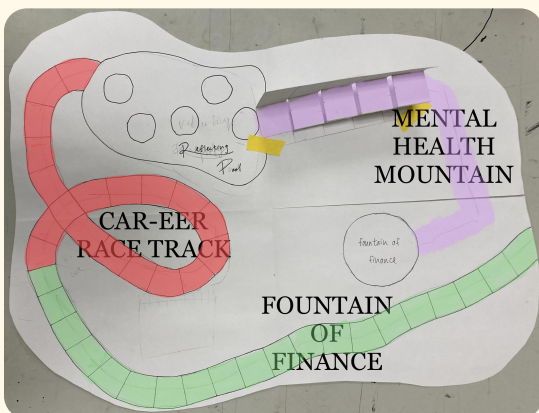
Our first iteration of the game was a 'DnD meets Game of Life'-type game, with a map, die, and game pieces. The players would move through each subject (finance, career, and mental health), and answer corresponding questions per tile they landed on.



First Iteration made by Aury



Paper Prototype, trying to get a feel of a 3D board



The basic idea of the 3D board game with its different sections:

1. *Fountain of Finance*
2. *Car-er Race Track*
3. *Mental Health Mountain*

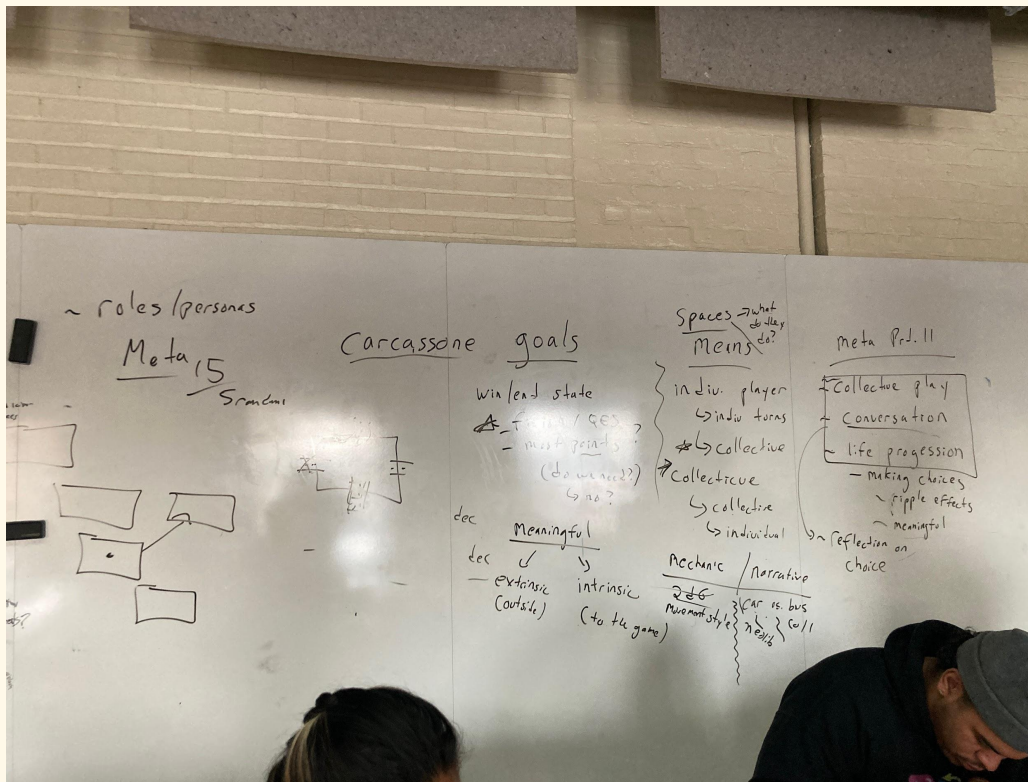


Other variations of the board game, simplified to a grid board with a 6 sided dice

Design Process

Feedback from Jim

However, after a meeting with Jim Malazita, we pivoted the game from a physical board to a card game with a die. This would allow players to have more chances of answering each topic. It also changed the ending of the game from finishing the board (which would entice players to go through the game as fast as possible) to whenever each player drew X amount of cards.



Design Process

User Testing 11/10

For our first in-class user test, we tested card content, the type of discussions the cards incited, and the engagement of players when it was not their turn. The group played until each player gained 5 cards. The cards included guiding questions about the given topic, tip cards, and general conversation starters. We noticed that users were not engaged with the tip cards, usually reading the cards, acknowledging the tip, and moving on. General conversation starter cards mainly centered around the player (ex: 'What would you say you have too much of?') and not the rest of the group. Questions for the given topic ranged from vague (expiration dates of food) to specific (write an email to your boss about going to a conference) questions. Specific, guiding questions kept the group more engaged, but it was noted that some scenarios (like talking to your boss) differed per person. Feedback from the users was to: 1) include a reward system, 2) include a 'stumped' deck for confusing questions, and 3) keep the activity discussion-based (to keep the game moving).

What has been
the best day of
your life so far?

What made the
day so good?

You want to go
to a conference but
can't afford it.

Write an email to
your boss to
sponsor you.

What would
you say you
have too much
of?

goal setting
list the top three
things you want to
accomplish in the
next 15 years.

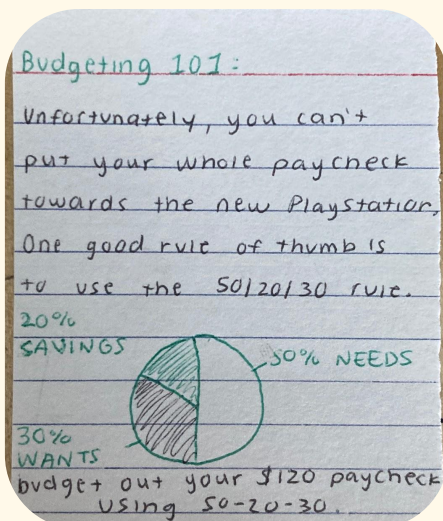
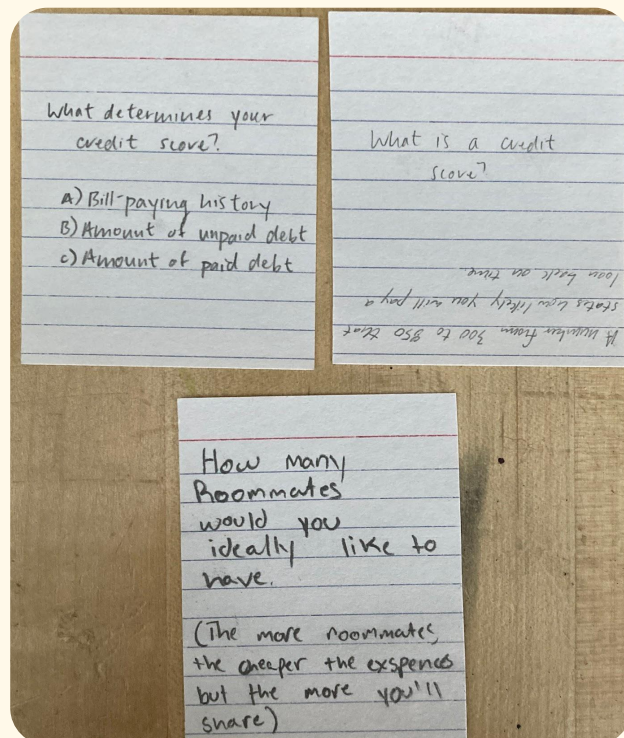
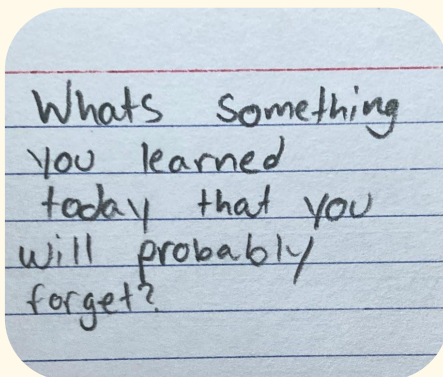
What new skills or
qualities would help
you accomplish your
aspirational goals?

If you had an
extra hour in the
day what would you
do?

Design Process

User Testing 11/14

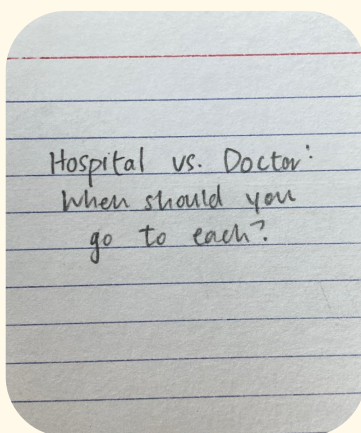
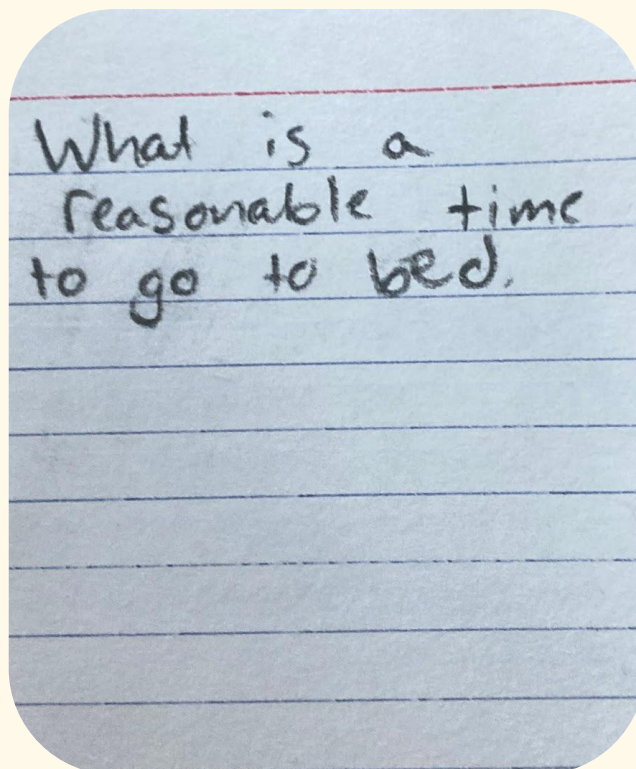
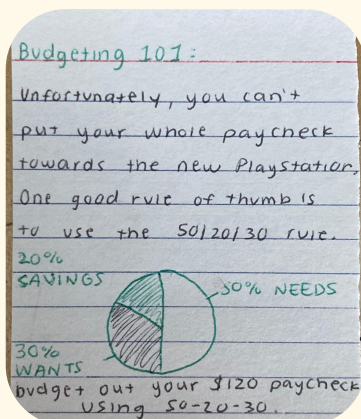
For the second in-class user test, we tested card content and the pace of the game. This was played with four players and a six-sided die, each drawing 3 cards plus one self-reflection card. We found that the discussion-based questions were the most engaging; however, vague, situation-based questions were confusing as the 'correct' answer varied per person. Tip cards were also not engaging group-wise but they were found helpful. Since we were using a six-sided die with four topics, players over-drew finance and career cards, leading to discontentment. We also learned that each person averaged 90 seconds per turn. From this test, we decided to change some tip cards to more action/discussion-based cards.



Design Process

User Testing 11/16

Our third user test was done with one college freshman and two sophomores. We continued testing card content. Regarding a card with multiple questions, testers didn't know which question to answer. Testers also wanted more structure to cards, like practicing budgeting and writing emails. They enjoyed the adulthood cards as they were "good things to keep in mind" and "more relevant to kids going to college." On the other hand, the finance cards were "good things to know but aren't something that first-year college students are going to want to know." From this test, we're going to reevaluate the card content to more 'doing' cards and add background information.



Final Concept

Our final concept for 'LifeTiles' is a 2-6 player discussion-based game centered around a deck of cards and a d4 die. The cards are separated into 4 distinct topics—career, finance, self-care, and adulthood—with a final self-reflection deck played at the end. In a clockwise motion, players roll the die, choose the card with the corresponding color, and read it aloud for the group to discuss. Cards are also indicated to be discussion, tip, and action cards.

The LifeTiles Game Rules:

Game Materials:



Deck of cards



d4 die

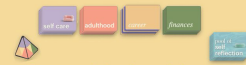


2-6 players



optional notebook

Game Set Up:



- Career and check you inbox cards are in one stack
- Have a notebook on hand to take notes on insightful cards

Instructions:

1. Have one person roll the die and pull a card from the deck indicated by the dice roll
2. Then, read the card aloud to the group. If the card has a



It's a **discussion card**. Everyone in the group should actively participate in the topic of conversation.

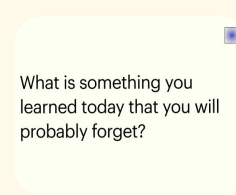
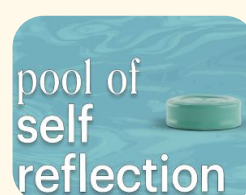
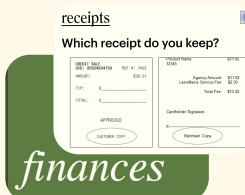
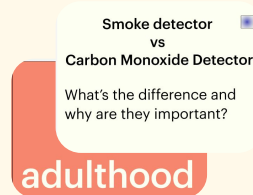
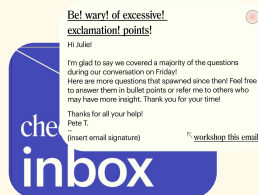


It's a **task card**. The person who drew the card has to do the task. However, the task is open for anyone in the group to do the task too.



It's a **tip card**. These have useful facts about life that are good to take note of.

3. When the group reaches a consensus, the player keeps the card.
4. The player to the right goes next (clockwise motion). Repeat steps 1 and 2.
5. Once every player has 10 cards in their stack or the time runs out, go around one more time pulling one card from "The Pool of Self-Reflection" each.



Next Steps

For our next steps, we plan to improve our cards by reaching out to teachers/curriculum creators and user testing. We also want to reach out to game designers to make the game engaging and learn about the business side of game development. With this knowledge, we'll create a game manual. We also intend on continuing i-Corps and attending an education conference in the spring semester. This will help us with card content and give an administrator's point-of-view of the game, instead of users/students. Since this game is intended to be played in classrooms, we'll also test it within classrooms and create a rubric for teachers to grade their students. Evaluations can be done through oral evaluations from students after the game, observations while the students play, or using the cards as a pop quiz test (oral or written).

Like UNO, we also have spin-off ideas to hone specific skills. Similar to Dungeons and Dragons, each player gets a 'character sheet' to help students put themselves in other people's shoes. This builds self-awareness and consciousness of others, a problem voiced in our initial research. With given set goals, students have a new outlook on scenarios and can answer questions with a new point of view.