Play to learn: Using the Jeopardy game!

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ABSTRACT

Recent studies have discussed the need for accounting academia to incorporate active learning strategies to motivate students to learn the subject matter. Teaching using games is becoming an effective way to promote active learning. The well-known television game show "Jeopardy" can be used as a teaching strategy to review examination material for an undergraduate introductory financial accounting course. The objective of the Jeopardy game is to provide an interactive in-class learning activity to enhance the student's understanding of examination material using an engaging, nontraditional approach. Game based learning motivates students to actively take part in the learning process and thereby increases student performance. This case exercise integrates accounting concepts and principles into the Jeopardy game through the development of questions related to relevant accounting principles and concepts.

Keywords: games, active learning, accounting, pedagogy, student performance, Jeopardy

INTRODUCTION

The introductory financial accounting course is included in undergraduate business programs. Students enrolled in a baccalaureate degree program in business are required to complete at an accounting course at a minimum. This course is foundational and introduces the core concepts for principles of accounting. Regardless of their course level (introductory or business major), accounting can be a demanding subject for students (Moncada & Moncada, 2014). Accounting can feel like a foreign language at first, with its own set of terms and rules that need to be learned (Bradford & Ames, 2014). Accounting principles are initially taught from a corporate perspective. Accounting concepts can seem abstract for students who have not yet applied them in a practical setting (Rosli, Khairudin, & Saat, 2019) and thereby, students perceive accounting as boring and difficult to comprehend (Jaijairam, 2012; Rosli et al., 2019). The way students perceive accounting can create challenges when they need to learn specific topics for exams. It is important for students to understand the accounting material, not only to pass the course but because accounting is the language of business (Buffet & Clark, 2008).

For students to achieve academic success, they need to be motivated to participate in the learning process and engaged in the course. Poor student engagement and a lack of motivation are the key issues faced by faculty in schools (Lee & Hammer, 2011). Motivating students and providing them with tools to overcome learning hurdles are essential aspects of successful accounting instruction (Kirpalani, 2017). A pedagogical strategy used by faculty to motivate and engage accounting students in the learning process is gamification. Gamification borrows elements from games, like points, badges, and leaderboards, to make learning feel more dynamic and rewarding. (Apostol, Zaharescu, & Alexe, 2013). Early criticism stemmed from the fact that games were seen to be more for entertainment value than a learning modality (Boctor, 2013). The primary aim of gamification in learning is not to entertain but rather to motivate learners to develop skills or change behaviors through enjoyable experiences (Dicheva, Irwin, & Dichev, 2019). Gamification has become a new trend in learning in the 21st century, by utilizing technology with game elements to change behavior and support learning outcomes (Nurtanto, Kholifah, Ahdhianto, Samsudin, & Isnantyo, 2021). Gamification reinforces students' extrinsic (grades, rewards) and intrinsic (competency, goal orientation) motivations (Dicheva et al., 2019). Gamification is an active learning strategy that increases content knowledge, enhances students' attitudes, and improves student retention in academic programs (Gee 2003; Prince, 2004). When students actively participate in their learning, they tend to be more motivated to put in the effort. (Burney, Zascavage, & Matherly, 2017).

Adapting the Jeopardy game to review for an accounting examination helps students to bridge the knowledge gap. Students must possess some knowledge about the subject while being made aware of gaps in their knowledge (Boctor, 2013). Research by Bee and Hayes (2005) suggests that reviewing exams can help students identify key course material and focus their studying.

By creating the Jeopardy game as a pedagogical tool in an introductory accounting course to reinforce accounting concepts and principles, students are actively engaging in their learning process and as a result student's motivation and academic performance should increase.

Given the increased focus on teaching effectiveness in higher education, in part due to accreditation requirements, the topic of furthering pedagogical intelligence in faculty is relevant for many higher education institutions (Kirpalani, 2017). Both the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Pre-certification Core Competencies (AICPA, 2018) and

Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB, 2020) recommend educators include learning experiences that develop competencies related to the integration of relevant technology and actively involve students for their learning. To date, little research exists that addresses how to incorporate learning experiences in an introductory financial accounting course to support these competencies with the purpose of enhancing student engagement, increasing student performance, and achieving learning outcomes. This case study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on accounting education by presenting a Jeopardy-style game as a means of actively engaging students, improving learning outcomes, and increasing students' knowledge retention for an examination.

BACKGROUND

Education-applied gamification has led to new ways of teaching, allowing students to experience more stimulating classes with greater motivation and interest than those provided by traditional methods (Westera, 2019) as well as provide them with substantial knowledge (Silva, Rodrigues, & Leal, 2021). Studies have shown that by using a gamification approach in students' learning can boost student interest, perseverance, and thinking skills (Fratto, 2011). A growing body of research across various disciplines backs the power of active learning (Michael, 2006).

Yet, there are also studies pointing to the opposite conclusion as regards to this type of educational resource, highlighting that in accounting, they do not improve learning (Silva, Rodrigues, & Leal, 2019) and stress the need for more research that can test their usefulness beyond doubt (Carenys, Moya, & Perramon, 2017).

Review of previous literature in accounting education revealed that there is lack of academic studies that stressed the effect of gamification and its benefits (Rosli et al., 2019). Only a limited number of studies have established their efforts in adopting active learning and teaching strategies using games in accounting education (Fratto, 2011; Moncada & Moncada, 2014; Rosli et al., 2019). After a systematic literature review of articles with a 2011-2017 timespan, Pelser-Carstens, Preston, & Blignaut (2017) noted only one article linked to accounting education concerning games for learning, engagement, and active learning. Active learning strategies with games have a long history in accounting education, even predating classic board games like Monopoly®! According to Moncada & Moncada (2014), Elizabeth Magie's "The Landlord's Game" (patented in 1904) was an early example, designed to teach economic principles through gameplay. This game is the precursor of gamification in accounting education.

Jeopardy is a popular television game show created in 1964 involving contestants answering different questions from distinct categories to earn money. Benek-Rivera and Mathews (2004) recommend the use of a modified version of the Jeopardy game as a favorable active learning technique. Researchers observed positive students' learning outcomes after applying the Jeopardy game in disciplines such as nursing (Boctor, 2013), construction (Leathem & Tatum, 2012), English (Sepyanda, 2021; Werdiyani, 2021), management (Benek-Rivera & Mathews, 2004), and information systems (Simkin, 2013). The Jeopardy game was implemented as a component of educational conferences to review general surgery topics. The results of the study correlated the game with improved American Board for Surgery In-Training Examination (ABSITE) exam scores, and over 80% of residents thought the game format helped with retention of knowledge (Hancock, Klimberg, Williams, Tyler, Radhakrishnan, & Tran, 2021).

There has been limited research in the field of accounting (Cook, 1997; Bee & Hayes, 2005) employing the Jeopardy game as an active learning technique to motivate students. Cook (1997) applied the Jeopardy game to teach the Revenue Reconciliation Act of 1993; whereas Bee & Hayes (2005) used the game to teach accounting information systems. Building on this tradition, the Jeopardy format itself has a long history in accounting education. Early versions, as documented by Cook (1997), relied on overhead transparencies and even Post-it notes! Thankfully, technology has made things easier for educators. By the time Murphy (2005) and Bee & Hayes (2005) came along, instructors were utilizing PowerPoint and Excel to create Jeopardy games in the classroom. As Bee and Hayes (2005) point out, these games effectively boost student interest, combat boredom, and solidify their grasp of accounting concepts. Results of findings from research studies suggests the utilization of the Jeopardy game can be an effective review tool for an introductory financial accounting course with the intention of reinforcing accounting topics in preparation for an examination in a fun and engaging way.

CASE APPLICATION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Currently, the AICPA and AACSB recommend educators develop competencies related to the integration of relevant technology and actively involve students in their learning. This case is designed for students to actively participate in their learning process by utilizing the Jeopardy game. The game challenges students to rely upon themselves and/or fellow classmates to recall accounting topics previously learned from the textbook, faculty lead lectures, and graded assignments in a fun and engaging environment. The game can be easily adapted to accommodate different educational levels, different academic disciplines, and educator's preferences.

This case study case enables students to:

1. Identify various accounting concepts and principles.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of accounting terminology.
3. Understand the financial information contained within the financial statements.
4. Foster collaboration and teamwork

OVERVIEW

The authors developed a game-based-learning approach to teaching accounting concepts and principles to undergraduate students in an introductory financial accounting course with the intention of enhancing student engagement and increasing student performance. By using the Jeopardy game as a review tool for examination preparation, students are more likely to be motivated to participate and engaged in the learning process. Additionally, educators can facilitate discussion and clarify misconceptions (Glendon and Ulrich, 2005).

Students play the game prior to taking the exam. The game can be played in teams or individually, depending on the size of the class and educator's preference. The game consists of questions related to examination topics. The students answer the questions in a Jeopardy-style layout. The questions for the game can be conveyed in a multiple-choice, true/false, or short answer format. The questions and answers for this case are based on the textbook, *Accounting: Tools for business decision making*, seventh edition, Kimmel, Weygandt, & Kieso, John Wiley & Sons, 2018. Other introductory accounting textbooks can be utilized to develop the content for

the Jeopardy game. The delivery of the Jeopardy game is viewable during the entire class session.

Requirements

1. Computer that uses Windows PC, not Mac.
2. Projector
3. Access to Microsoft PowerPoint software newer than 2008 for sound effects to work (Google slides, keynotes, etc. are not supported).
4. Jeopardy Board (PowerPoint template from Dr. Wendy Tietz, CPA, CMA, CSCA, CGMA that was created by Reid Powell; Available at: https://accountingintheheadlines.com/2017/04/06/introductory-managerial-accounting-jeopardy-game-for-end-of-semester-review/
5. Access to an accounting textbook

Classroom Implementation

Steps for implementing the Jeopardy game into the classroom.

1. Choose the accounting topics students need to review for the exam. The educator prepares an outline of the accounting topics to be covered in the game. This outline assists the instructor in determining the categories for the game and the resulting answers to the questions.
2. Create thirty questions (hereinafter clues) with the associated answers based on the accounting topics chosen for the exam. The clues should be designed to assess the students' knowledge of the accounting topics selected by the educator. The clues must range in difficulty levels to promote cognitive thinking and should be phrased in the form of an answer by which the students respond with the correct question. For example, this principle requires firms to record assets at their cost. The answer is "What is historical cost principle?" Additionally, the clues should be challenging to make the game competitive and engaging.
3. Organize the thirty clues into six categories. Each category has five sections related to the category subject. Each section is labeled with varying dollar values. The dollar values are in ascending order ranging from $100 to $500. Behind the dollar values are clues that are distributed on the Jeopardy board based on the degree of difficulty of the clue within the category, i.e., a $500 clue will be more difficult to answer than a $100 clue. Sample clues and answers by category are in the Appendix.
4. Create a Jeopardy board using software such as PowerPoint, Google slides, or an online Jeopardy generator. Figure 1 depicts the appearance of the Jeopardy board game, and it replicates the television version of the game. The authors used an electronic Jeopardy game from Dr. Wendy Tietz, CPA, CMA, CSCA, CGMA that was created by Reid Powell. The specific Jeopardy board the authors used can be retrieved online at https://accountingintheheadlines.com/2017/04/06/introductory-managerial-accounting-jeopardy-game-for-end-of-semester-review/

   Tips to use electronic Jeopardy Game

   - Due to the links to the Jeopardy board, you cannot add and/or delete slides.
   - The PowerPoint file will need to be closed and re-opened to reset the links on the main board back to yellow.

- There is no built-in scoring process so keeping score is done manually.

5. Divide the students into teams or individually depending on the class size and educator preference. The teams or individuals will compete against each other to earn dollar values from the Jeopardy board.
6. Select a moderator. The educator can serve as the moderator of the game, or the educator can select a student to be the moderator of the game. The duty of the moderator is to read the question. The contestant can only answer the question after the moderator has finished reading the question. The moderator will also confirm whether the team's or individual's answer to the question is correct or incorrect. If the answer is correct, the moderator will reveal the answer on the board. If the answer is incorrect, the moderator will allow another contestant the opportunity to answer the question.
7. Select a scorekeeper. The educator must assign a scorekeeper, or the educator will function as scorekeeper because there is no built-in scoring mechanism.

Rules for playing the game.

1. Choosing a clue. The educator decides the student or team that will pick the first clue based on a random selection process. An individual or team will then choose the first clue. Regardless of which contestant chooses the clue, all contestants have the right to answer the clue. However, a clue can only be attempted once by a team or individual. After the moderator reads the clue, the first contestant to raise their hand will answer the clue. In the television version of the game, the contestants use a buzzer. The contestant has 10 seconds to answer the clue. The moderator will confirm the accuracy of the contestant's response to the clue. If the answer is correct, the associated dollar value will be applied to their score, and the contestant will select the next clue. If the contestant answers incorrectly, the associated dollar value will be deducted from their score and another team or individual could answer the clue. If another contestant answers correctly, the associated dollar value will be added to their score, and they will select the next clue. If the contestant answers incorrectly, the associated dollar value will be deducted from their score and another team or individual could answer the clue. This process will continue until a contestant answers the clue correctly or no one wants to answer the clue. If no one wants to answer the clue, the moderator will reveal the correct answer to the clue and the contestant that selected the unanswered clue will select another clue. The dollar value will disappear after the answer to the clue has been revealed. Once the dollar value disappears, the clue cannot be shown again. The game will continue until all clues are revealed within the six categories.
2. Applying the Daily Double. Within the categories, there is only one Daily Double. When a contestant selects the Daily Double, they are the only contestant that can answer the clue. The contestant must wager a dollar amount before answering the clue. The minimum dollar amount to risk is $5 while the maximum dollar amount to risk is the contestant's current score. The moderator will read the clue after the contestant has submitted their wager. If the contestant answers the clue correctly, the dollar amount that the contestant risked is added to their current score. If they answer incorrectly, the amount wagered is deducted from their current score. Regardless of whether the contestant answers the clue correctly, they will choose the next clue on the board.

3. Playing the Final Jeopardy clue. The last clue of the game is the "Final Jeopardy" clue. Only contestants permitted to compete in the Final Jeopardy round for dollar amounts are the teams or individuals with a cumulative positive score. In Final Jeopardy, the contestant can wager any dollar amount including zero dollars wagered not to exceed the contestant's current score. The dollar amount wagered must be in whole dollar denomination. The contestant's wagered amount reflects the contestant's confidence level about their exam preparation and whether they are risk takers or risk averse. Each contestant will have 30 seconds to respond to the final Jeopardy clue. The contestant with the correct response will have the wagered amount added to their current score. Any contestant that answers the clue incorrectly will have the wagered amount deducted from their current score. The contestant with the highest score wins. If there is a tie, each contestant is announced as the winner of the game. The winner receives five additional points on the exam as a reward.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are many advantages for utilizing games such as Jeopardy in an educational context. The game is easy to develop and a fun way for educators to challenge students and provide immediate feedback so students can assess their own comprehension and, consequently, their need for further study (Glendon & Ulrich, 2005). Using accounting concepts and principles in a game-like format in preparation for an exam reinforces previously learned concepts in a manner that is memorable and interactive. Students are more likely to be motivated and interested in the material and thereby improve students' understanding and knowledge retention. Another benefit of using Jeopardy in the classroom is that it can promote teamwork and collaboration. As students work in teams to answer questions, students develop valuable skills such as teamwork, oral communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking. It is important to consider the potential drawbacks of using games for learning. This approach may not be suitable for all students as it depends on the characteristics of the individual student based on their learning style, educational needs, and personal interest. Educators can maximize the effectiveness of exam review by keeping student diversity in mind. Some students, such as those with learning disabilities, may require different approaches to grasp key concepts. (Bee & Hayes, 2005). Additionally, there is a risk that students may focus more on the competitiveness of game to receive the additional points for being the winner than the material being reviewed for the exam. Educators must also consider the amount time involved in preparing the game based on their academic obligations because creating the game can be time consuming. Further research to determine the efficacy of using the Jeopardy game as a review tool for exams is needed. The next step will be to review scores from sections not using the Jeopardy game as a review tool with the sections that do. An analysis of scores, particularly in the categories addressed on the Jeopardy board, should allow for a measure of how effective it worked for student learning outcomes.

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APPENDIX

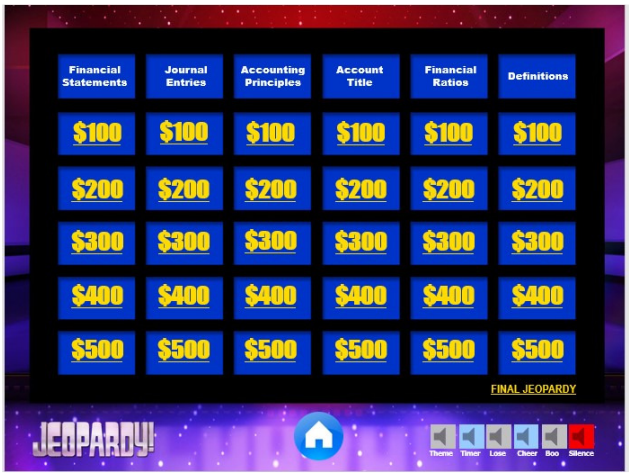

Figure 1: Jeopardy Board

Sample Jeopardy Questions

Category: Financial Statements

- This financial statement shows revenues, expenses, and net income for a specific period. Answer: What is the income statement?
- This financial statement shows assets, liabilities, and stockholders' equity as of a specific date. Answer: What is the balance sheet?
- This financial statement shows the uses of cash for a business for a specific period. Answer: What is the statement of cash flows?
- This financial statement mirrors the accounting equation. Answer: What is the balance sheet?
- This financial statement shows changes in retained earnings for a specific period. What is the retained earnings statement?

Category: Journal Entries

- This account type increases with a debit and is on the balance sheet. What is an asset?
- This account type increases with a debit and is on the income statement. What is an expense?
- This account type increases with a credit and is on the income statement. What is revenue?
- This account type increases with a credit and represents amounts owed to creditors. What is liability?
- This journal entry is done at the end of the period to transfer net income and dividends to Retained Earnings. What are the closing entries?

Category: Accounting Principles

- This principle requires firms to record assets at their cost. What is the historical cost principle?

- This principle requires firms to disclose all relevant information so users can understand financial statements. Answer: What is the full disclosure principle?
- This principle requires expenses to be recognized with the revenues they help to generate. Answer: What is the matching principle?
- This principle requires firms to use the same accounting principles & methods from year to year. Answer: What is the consistency principle?
- This principle recognizes revenue in the period in which the performance obligation is satisfied. Answer: What is the revenue recognition principle?

Category: Account Title

- This is an obligation a company is to pay within the next year or operating cycle, whichever is longer. Answer: What is a current liability?
- This is an asset that does not have physical substance and yet it is valuable. Answer: What is an intangible asset?
- This is an asset that a firm expects to convert to cash within one year or its operating cycle. Answer: What is a current asset?
- This is an asset with long useful lives used in operating the business. Answer: What is a fixed asset?
- This is an obligation a company expects to pay after one year. What is a long-term liability?

Category: Financial Ratios (The authors usually display the clue in a mathematical format)

- This ratio is computed as current assets minus current liabilities. Answer: What is working capital?
- This ratio is computed as current assets divided by current liabilities. Answer: What is the current ratio?
- This ratio is computed by dividing total liabilities by total assets. Answer: What is debt to assets ratio?
- This ratio is computed by dividing net income by net sales for the period. Answer: What is the profit margin?
- This ratio is computed by dividing net sales by average total assets during the year. Answer: What is asset turnover?

Category: Definitions

- This is the amount by which revenues exceed expenses and on the income statement. Answer: What is net income?
- This is legislation passed by Congress to reduce unethical corporate behavior. Answer: What is Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX)?
- This is the process of allocating the cost of an asset to an expense over its useful life. Answer: What is depreciation?
- GAAP. Answer: What are Generally Accepted Accounting Principles?
- Assets = Liabilities + Stockholders' Equity. Answer: What is the accounting equation?