CALIFORNIA STATE SCIENCE FAIR
2016 PROJECT SUMMARY

Name(s)

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Project Number

36162

Project Title

The Effect of Perceived Risk on the Video Game Performance of Middle School Players

Abstract

Objectives/Goals

The objective of this project is to study how the amount of risk a person perceives in a situation affects their performance of a task in that situation.

Methods/Materials

A laptop computer with a simple video game I programmed on a visual coding site. 27 middle school subjects played the video game, believing that they had either one try, three tries, or infinite tries. However, all subjects actually had only one try to complete the game.

Results

The percentage of each testing group that finished the game in one try was recorded. No players in the one-try category finished the game, 14.2% of the three-tries category finished the game, and 28.5% of the infinite-tries category finished the game.

Conclusions/Discussion

The more tries players thought they had, the more likely they were to finish the game. This result shows that smaller amounts of perceived risk improve middle school students' performance at a task. This experiment implies that teachers can help students do better on tests by downplaying the test's difficulty or importance.

Summary Statement

I found that a smaller amount of perceived risk increases performance of a task.

Help Received

I received no help on this project, designing and running the experiment on my own. I programmed the video game used in this experiment myself.