

Title of Session: uBoost
Moderator: Lia Woo
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Room: uBoost Group

JeffC joined the room.

LiaW: Hi Jeff!

LiaW: Welcome.

JeffC waves

JeffC: you might have some trouble getting teachers here now... since school is still in session in most states.

BJB: it's not the best time of day...it's 3pm for me...not even out of school yet

LiaW: Ah, makes sense... are you a teacher?

BJB agrees with Jeff

JeffC: but I've been to uboost and wanted to learn more about it. I'm on helpdesk here.

LiaW: Ah, great.

BJB . o O (my principal gave me some time off to participate in your discussion)

LiaW: Well, let's discuss uBoost!

JeffC . o O (Bj is going to have a *lot* of time off soon!)

LiaW: So, BJ have you visited the site?

BJB smiles happily about time off. I visited very briefly.

LiaW: Ok, well let me start with some background...

LiaW: We developed uBoost as a way to engage and motivate students...

LiaW: we tried to combine the whole virtual worlds, social networking components in an educational context

LiaW: so, kids earn points for their academic achievement which can be redeemed for cool things or be donated to charities

LiaW: what did you guys think of the resource?

BjB: I was concerned about the "cool" things...punished by rewards?

BjB: . o O (as you can see, I know very little about uBoost!)

LiaW: Heh, yes, lots of discussion about rewards - as a form of bribery

JeffC hasn't earned any points yet.

LiaW: we've done extensive research on motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic - and found that research says a blended approach is most effective

JeffC: like the dozens of sites I'm registered at... I haven't gotten very involved with uboost yet.

JeffC agrees

LiaW: so, we've combined rewards (actual merchandise) with recognition from parents, peers, etc.

LiaW: we're also developing a parent communication widget that will sit on parent's desktop and deliver immediate feedback on their child's progress and performance in the system

LiaW: incentive programs are the buzz right now.

JeffC: interesting

LiaW: are you familiar with all the cash-based programs across the country?

JeffC: no

BjB: from schools?

BjB: I've read a little about schools that are offering cash rewards

LiaW: lots of districts - NY is a big one - are paying students to attend tutoring, paying for achievement on tests, paying for attendance in schools, etc.

JeffC: wow

LiaW: Yes, it's very interesting.

BjB nods. How do the districts get the \$\$ to do this?

LiaW: Private donors or non-profits

LiaW: Stanford's CREDO just published a study that found that incentive programs are effective in bumping reading scores

LiaW: but not math

LiaW: uBoost is different because we offer a variety of rewards... and students can use their points to donate to charities.

BjB : ah, yes, I do remember seeing that option

BjB . o O (charities)

JeffC: what percent donate to charities?

LiaW: I like it because it shows that them that their intellectual 'power' has value

LiaW: good question, Jeff.

LiaW: right now, it's about 13%

JeffC: a little higher than I'd expect in our "me first" society.

LiaW: yes... it's very interesting

LiaW: you know, most community outreach opportunities for kids involve physical activities like beach clean up...

LiaW: so, this is a nice way for kids to contribute based on intellectual achievements

LiaW: our partnership with Weekly Reader is great for teachers and students, too

LiaW: free access to ALL of their editions online...

LiaW: and then quizzes based on reading comp and vocab

BjB : have you offered rewards that would benefit areas devastated by natural disasters? Like China and Myanmar?

BjB : or the tornado stricken places in the US?

LiaW: we're actually working on that right now - we've surveyed folks and are looking

into more relevant, or should I say, current needs - when it comes to donating resources

BjB : cool.

LiaW: there's obviously a whole educational opportunity there as well - to share more information with the kids about the area, needs, etc.

BjB nods...wonderful opportunities!

LiaW: yes, it's quite exciting!

LiaW: were you able to check out the additional educational games/activities?

BjB : not in depth

JeffC: I'm multitasking so... don't wait for me to get back from anything in uBoost.

LiaW: our plan is to grow this section - to focus on those subjects often neglected in classroom curriculum - i.e. fiscal literacy, visual literacy (perfect for you BJ!), health, etc.

LiaW: but, we have a ways to go...

LiaW: uBoost is very new

BjB : new is good...lots of opportunities :-)

LiaW: BJ, you may be interested in the white paper uploaded

LiaW: covers all research related to motivation

LiaW: please don't feel like you guys need to stay with me here... I'm sure you're quite busy.

LiaW: maybe I should try and schedule another uBoost session at a better time?

BjB : I'll check it out from home...school firewall isn't letting me see it

JeffC: absolutely Lia

LiaW: ah, ok

JeffC: I think that you should have one every month... of course... the summer means that you won't have to compete with school hours.

BjB : most sessions are scheduled after 6pm EDT///12 noon for you

JeffC: I have a thought for uboost as well.

LiaW: ok, that sounds like a good plan

JeffC: in regards to charities, the festival, etc.

LiaW: great - I'll shoot for after noon here

LiaW: yes, would welcome an idea!

JeffC: what if you partnered with some sites like <http://www.takingitglobal.org> and <http://www.nabuur.com> to make it easier for students to make the decision to donate to charities?

LiaW: great idea - I'm familiar with taking it global but not the second. let me check it out!

JeffC: those are two excellent sites where project based learning goes on (more at TIG) and help for poor villages around the world (nabuur).

LiaW: excellent resources and great suggestion

JeffC: and... since it's all about "me" in this country... what if you had a way for the students to give to charity and have a matching donation program, and/or a way for the students to get additional credits for giving to charities (credits which could be used for further charity donation).

BjB: and if you can participate in one of the global project based lessons events in Tapped In

JeffC: and... let them know that donating to charities looks really good on college apps (always feeding into the "me"!).

LiaW: true!

LiaW: yes, I saw the global project based events... will participate

LiaW: iearn.org is another great resource for global projects

LiaW: Jeff, your comment prompted a thought - we should provide certificates for donating to charities - to help with college apps and such things

JeffC: exactly

JeffC: yes... iearn and iecc

JeffC: also epals (for email projects)... there are quite a few. if uboost started pushing some of these sites... maybe charity donations would rise... students could then really start questioning their own motives.

LiaW: yes, and we've discussed building in 'group' or 'class' goals - where a group of kids can work together to achieve a bigger goal related to charities

JeffC: another possibility would be for students to be able to automatically donate, say 20% of their earnings to a charity of their choice (as part of registration) so they don't have to make the choice each time they spend their rewards.

LiaW: yes, we've discussed that, too! good idea!

JeffC: also perhaps work out ways to combine with their churches (for those who are active).

LiaW: That really promotes the commitment.

LiaW: Ah, so localize the charity piece more?

JeffC: have a "charity board" with those who donate the most, as well as where they're donating to inspire others.

JeffC: right... that's just another idea.

JeffC: notice I'm good at coming up with ideas for kids to give away their rewards!

LiaW: yes, recognition tied to charity is built in, in the form of badges

JeffC: I think that Bj and I have donated about 50,000 hours to Tapped In.

LiaW: we have a number of different badges that students can earn

JeffC: . o O (rough guesstimate)

BjB smiles...give or take

LiaW: Wow! you guys are great!

LiaW: so committed to this wonderful learning and collaboration space

JeffC: we're nuts

BjB: or passionate about what Tapped In has to offer :-)

LiaW: How do you fit it all in?!

BjB : no sleep

JeffC: human cloning

JeffC: and no sleep

BjB grins

LiaW: Ha!

LiaW smiles

LiaW: (just did my first emotive:)

BjB cheers for Lia

LiaW: is that what they're called?

JeffC likes the term "emotive" ... we call them emotes.

LiaW: Ah, got it.

LiaW: Jeff, where are you located?

JeffC: Oregon

LiaW: cool

JeffC: type: /showprofile **JeffC** (to see my profile)

BjB : Lia, do you want to continue this conversation or email me with another date and time?

LiaW: Great to see your face, Jeff!

LiaW: How about I email you with another date and time... don't want to keep you guys.

JeffC: hehe... well... it's a lot greyer now!

LiaW: Appreciate your support!

JeffC: you're welcome

LiaW: Thanks, I'll email you BJ!

LiaW: You guys have a great day...

BjB : thanks, Lia....I think with a little publicity this can be a pretty dynamic group

LiaW: I agree.

JeffC: yup

LiaW waves goodbye

BjB : try sending notices to people outside of TI for next time

BjB waves bye and heads home