



## Risk and Reward in Gamification

### Description

Recently I have been playing a game called Punch, Punch, Kick, Punch (PPKP). It is a simple mobile game that only requires 2 buttons to play. One is kick, one is punch. As you play, you have to learn how to time the use of these buttons and the combinations that are most effective against certain foes. The reason I mention it is because it has one of the simplest examples of risk and reward in a game I have seen for a while.

What is risk and reward I hear you cry... or maybe not, but I'll explain anyway. It is the idea that if the more you are willing to risk, the higher the reward might be. For instance, the more lotto tickets you buy, the more chance you have of winning – but it costs more, the risk is higher as you have spent more.

In PPKP you take it in turns to attack and defend against a computer player. When it is your turn to defend you have three possible outcomes. You fail to press the defend button and get nailed. You press it nice an early and absorb a little damage, but a lot less than not defending or and this is the risky bit, you wait until the absolute last nanosecond and do a counter attack. Not only does that give you zero damage, it also hurts your opponent. However, there is a tiny window of opportunity for this to work. You have to figure out if you are skilled enough to predict the attack, or if you have enough health to absorb a little damage with an early shield. Watch the video below to see what I mean.

### Using Risk and Reward in Gamification

It's easy to see how this might be useful in “proper” games, but how can we make use of this in gamification?

One idea would be to allow people to *bet* on their answers in a quiz like activity. Think about quiz shows that allow you to play a joker card, where if you are certain you know the answers you can double your score. The risk is that you fail and lose that card as well as the points. The reward, double points for that round!

Another way would be to allow people to opt into harder activities for higher rewards. For instance, if

they are particularly skilled at an activity, they could opt to do a higher difficulty level, with more challenges. In return, they get more points. However, if they fail, they have to start again at an easier level.

How about giving people lives in your activity? If they fail they lose a life, but if they opt to take on a special quiz, they can get that life back?

## Balance

Whatever you consider doing, keep in mind that you need to balance the risk and the reward. If the risk is significant for the player, the reward needs to be pretty good. They don't want to risk losing half their points for the chance of earning just one! In PPKP the risk is getting hit, but when you have only 1 bar of health left, the risk may be high, but the reward is possibly defeating the opponent in one well-timed counter and surviving to fight longer!

There are plenty of options of how you can use risk and reward in gamification, what have you done in your projects?

Oh and if the game looks good, grab it on iOS (and no, not sponsored, I actually just like the game!!)

PPKP by SHIMADA TOSHIHIRO

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/ppkp/id1151287237?mt=8>

### Category

1. Gamification
2. Education
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### Tags

1. games
2. ppkp
3. reward
4. risk
5. timing

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### Author

andrzej-marczewski