

# Contextualize Financial Literacy

How Rapunzl used gamification of the stock market as a project-based learning tool to increase student engagement and improve retention in GCE Lab School's Economics course.

## Background

GCE Lab School (Chicago, IL) is an innovative high school that delivers hands-on educational experiences designed to connect academic learning with real-world meaning. The curriculum focuses on relevancy to enhance student engagement.

Although financial literacy is mainly understood to cover personal finance, it also includes global finance - an understanding of how the stock market functions, how companies are funded, and the impact that market movements can have on jobs and our economy.

GCE Lab School teaches both personal and global finance in its senior class, *Econ: Risking Value*, but global finance was proving to be a challenge for students to master.

GCE teachers were struggling to find instructional tools that would make the stock market accessible and more "real-world" for their students. They tried multiple online, pay-to-access, stock-simulators but found the students disengaged. Traditional tools were over complicated and littered with financial jargon which made it difficult for students to contextualize their learning.

There was no engagement with the stock market or classroom material outside of class hours.

It was the very problem that Rapunzl was created to solve. **Because let's face it...**

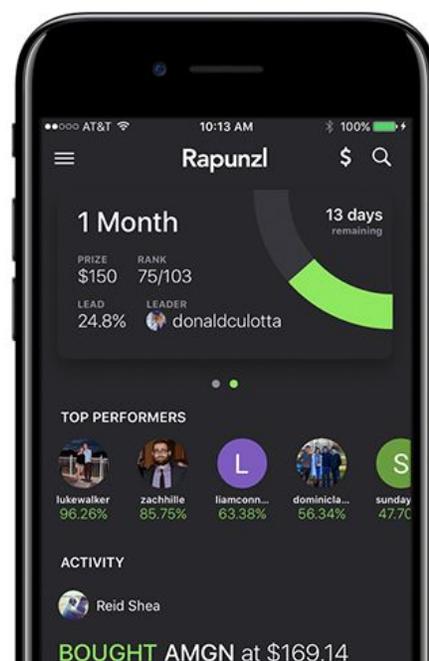
### Our Students

Will never understand the stock market through a textbook



### Our Teachers

Need real-world tools to contextualize students' learning



## Rapunzl is a mobile app that allows students to simulate the stock market in real-time and gives teachers an engaging instructional tool.

- \$ We demystify financial markets** by providing embedded instructional materials and live news feeds with personalized push-notifications.
- \$ We empower students to take ownership of their learning** with transparent portfolios that allow users to follow their class' trades.
- \$ We gamify the investing world** such that students track their progress against their peers and compete for weekly and monthly prizes on a community leaderboard.
- \$ We engage students outside of the classroom** with proven features such as commenting, liking, and direct-messaging foster collaboration and student-centered learning.

## Rapunzl and GCE Lab School joined forces on January 1, 2016 and piloted Rapunzl's stock simulation platform in GCE's Economics class.

### Students were provided with:

- \$** Individual sign-in accounts that were associated with a private "Investment Group"
- \$** \$10,000 in simulated currency to launch their stock portfolio
- \$** A 5-minute video to introduce the App and explain the concept of combining social media with simulated investing.

Students were then instructed to open the app and independently explore the platform. There were no handouts, nor was there a textbook or any pre-existing understanding of the stock market. All students were told is that Rapunzl combines social media with simulated investing.

The goal of this pilot was to assess whether the Rapunzl App would increase student engagement in using the stock market as a portal for understanding global finance.

Reactions were immediate and positive: 85% of students checked their portfolio twice-a-day. The instructor witnessed students engaging with the material and contextualizing stock movements alongside the class' curriculum.

**"Before Rapunzl, students saw the stock market as abstract and inaccessible. Now they're checking their portfolios during lunch and comparing stock pick strategies."**

**Aaron Moring-D'angier**  
GCE Classroom Instructor

### Conclusion

Gamifying global finance through a real-world stock simulation App enhances the learning experience for both teachers and students.

Rapunzl contextualizes financial literacy in students' lives and breaks down the invisible wall between high schoolers and Wall Street. The platform lets students understand the "why" behind market movements and fosters an engaged and attentive classroom. Rapunzl is a tool that transforms financial education from a graduation requirement to a lifelong skill.