ETC Playtest on April 28th

On April 28th, we held a playtest for Beanstalk at the ETC. We had 4 users, ranging from ages 6-11 who played our game. This version had the new tutorial, voiceovers, UI, and level progression that was recommended at our Soft Opening. The changes we made to this build were very well-received by all players. The tutorial felt more natural and the kids understood how much water they had left. They also understood the mechanic of removing flowers to get water back. There was an issue where the users wanted to remove flowers immediately after growing them, as they realized they had grown the flower in the wrong place. We decided to remove that UI element when it was no longer available, as a way to help the users wait to see the result of their experiments. We also improved the layout and design of the HCII question portion. In previous builds, the player had to hear the question, and wait to hear all the answers before making their choice. In this build, the player hears the question, and all the answer bubbles pop up at once. To hear the answer, a player must hover over the bubble. We found that this worked much better than previous builds, and resulted in children actually stopping to think about their answer, rather than clicking just to get out of the question.

Propel Playtest on May 3rd

On May 3rd, we held our last playtest this semester for Beanstalk at the Propel School. This build incorporated a few more changes since our April 28th playtest, such as removing UI elements from the level space once the game reached a "win" or "lose" state. We had 12 kids, comprised of 1st and 2nd graders. This was our most well-received playtest at the Propel School. All of our playtesters exclaimed when they successfully solved a level and proceeded to the next world. A few players were able to complete the game in the time allotted and were even more ecstatic about returning the teddy bear. Some kids found the game too easy, which may be due to prior exposure to balance experiments in the classroom or at home. Our new tutorial worked very well, as did our UI changes since our Soft Opening. HCII also administered paper pre and post tests to the kids as a way to see if the kids were actually learning from their playtime. There was also logged data for each user that will be analyzed by HCII. We look forward to the results from this playtest and what it means for the next semester's team working on polishing Beanstalk.

Final Presentations

On May 7th, we will have our final presentations for the SCI-FRI project. We will discuss our process this semester as well as our deliverables. After our presentations, we will post the SCI-FRI project's final build of Beanstalk on our project website for users to download and play. It has been an exciting semester and we look forward to seeing what the next team does towards the ENGAGE project's objectives.