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Sentential Gamification Case Study
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Space Odyssey: A Wellness Quest Game

Learning Problem

Changing responses to stress by means of various stress reduction strategies.

Business Objectives

Measurable objectives:

1. Improve employee retention.
2. Reduce health insurance costs.

Intangible objectives:

1. Improve employee morale & job satisfaction.
2. Improve workplace psychological safety (encourage employees to bring their authentic selves to work)

Learner Persona

The design basis learner for this course is an individual contributor in the Sales department. The learner's primary motivations are:

1. Status
2. Adventure (Low Tranquility)
3. Expedience (Low Honor)

Learning Outcomes

1. Summarize strategies for workplace stress reduction.
2. Select stress reduction strategies most likely to work for you.
3. Match selected stress reduction strategies to common workplace situations.

Game Narrative

- **Inspiration:** The *Odyssey* of Homer…in spaaaaaaace!
- **Setting:** Centuries in the future in a star system with several planets inhabited by unusual species of intelligent aliens. The alien inhabitants of each planet are physically and culturally different from the trader but are psychologically similar enough to humans that their personalities can be measured on the Big 5 scale. Some alien species will be based on characters and creatures from Homer's Odyssey (sirens, lotus eaters, cyclops, etc.)
- **Character:** A starfaring entrepreneur stranded in the star system, far from her home planet.
- **Challenge:** The player's starship has been damaged by a meteor storm and needs repairs and fuel to return home in time to prevent a hostile takeover of her business. The player must persuade several species of aliens to help her supply and repair her ship. To do this, the player must recommend strategies for each group of aliens to cope with the stresses impacting them on their planets.

- **Motivation**: If the player succeeds, she will be recognized as the bravest, most enterprising free trader in the galaxy (= status gain. If the player fails her life's work, career, and reputation will be ruined (= status loss).
- **Obstacles:**
  - Lack of information: Player must discover where parts, fuel, and skilled helpers can be obtained.
  - Stress challenges: Player must choose workable strategies to help aliens overcome stress, else they will be unwilling or unable to help.
  - Limited time: Player has a defined amount of game time available before the hostile takeover occurs.
- **Climax:** Once the player repairs and fuels her ship, she's not yet home free – she must defeat the rival who aims to take over her business. This will be a surprise to the player, revealed only after she overcomes all the challenges listed above.
- **Outcome:** The successful player earns admiration from her peers, gratitude from the aliens she helps, and skills to overcome workplace stress.

Game Mechanics

- **Avatar:** Players can choose name, species, gender, and appearance of an avatar who will be animated in game screens
- **Exploration:** Players must visit unknown worlds and discover facts about alien civilizations
- **Puzzle solving:** Players must assemble and organize information to achieve game objectives.
- **NPC interaction**: Players must communicate with aliens and recommend strategies for overcoming their societies' stress-related issues.
- **Progress**: Players can increase their ship's capabilities (speed, range, sensors, etc.) and must do so to succeed
- **Easter Eggs**: Players can uncover hidden reward objects, cut scenes, etc.
- **Side quest:** Players can take on additional challenges for unique rewards but must be mindful of the time limit.
- **Countdown**: Players have limited time to discover and overcome the obstacles to success
- **Hints:** Players can receive partial information and hints from Penelope, an AI located on their home planet, who also reminds them of the time remaining.
- **Cheating:** Players will have opportunities to obtain needed parts and fuel without helping the aliens with their stress-related problems but will suffer penalties if they are caught.
- **Boss Battle:** Players who attain the capability to return home must face down a powerful business rival to achieve final victory.

Emotions

Exploration, puzzle-solving, and interactions with NPCs will create cycles of tension and catharsis. Players will be encouraged to use stress reduction strategies to improve in-game performance (metagaming).

Aesthetics

Along with the beauty and wonder of space exploration, graphic design and media will emphasize the strangeness and stress-inducing qualities of alien words and time pressure.