FANTASTIC PLACES, UNHUMAN HUMANS

An Online, Full Semester Literature Course For Brown University
Designed in collaboration by artist Matt Rockman, and Sententia Gamification Certified Journeymen
Brown University Professor of English Jim Egan and Instructional Designer Naomi Pariseault.

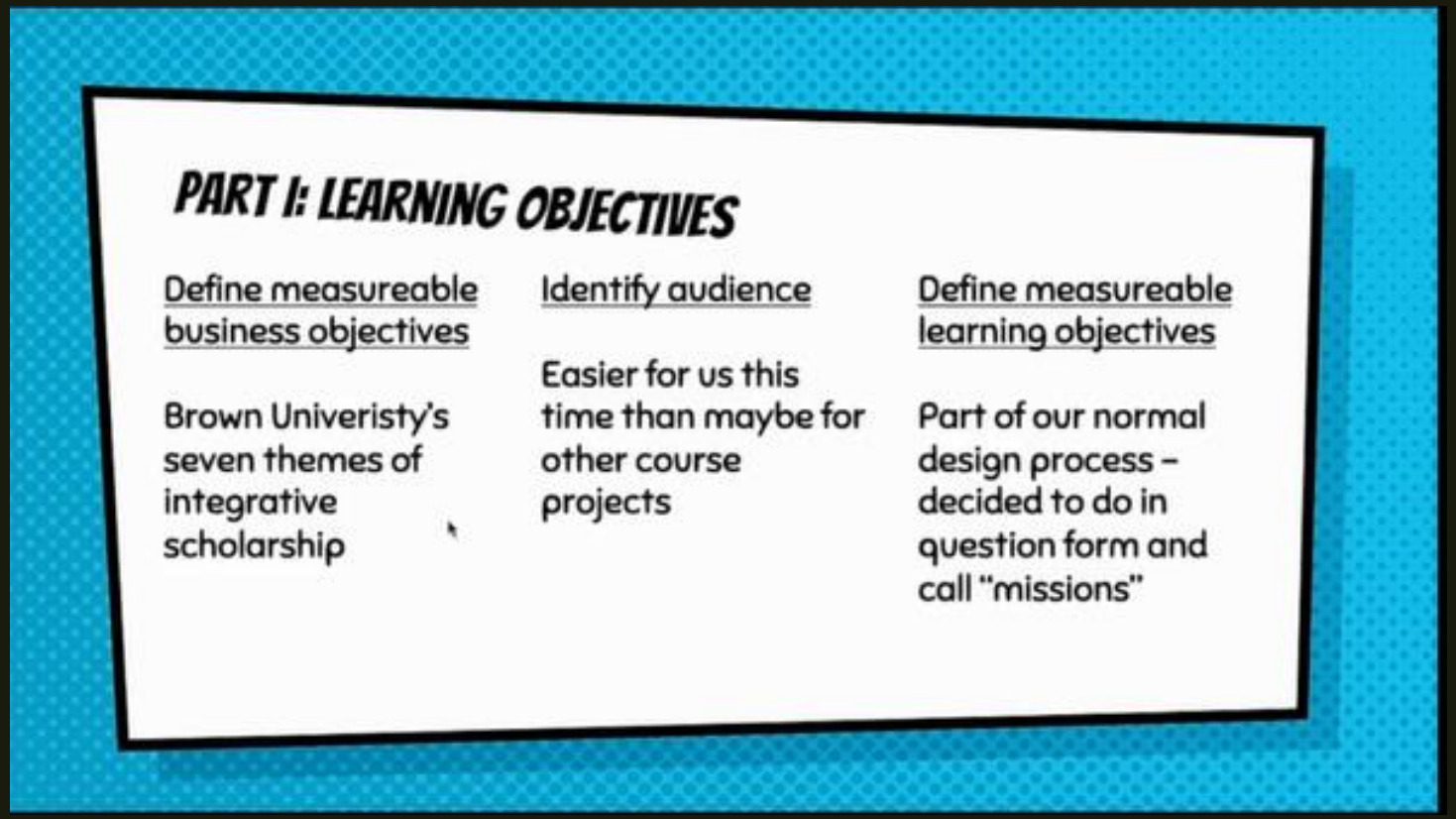
- A PUBLICATION OF SENTENTIA GAMIFICATION-

On the Leading Edge of Gamification Design in Higher Education

- What can the grotesque, monstrous, and even alien creatures found lurking in an extraordinary range of literature across many centuries reveal about the different ways humans have imagined what it means to be human?
- This is the first online introductory humanities course to be gamified at an American university or at Coursera or Edx.
- Watch the trailer here: https://www.edx.org/course/fantastic-places-unhuman-humans-exploring-humanity-through-literature

A Pedagogical Challenge

- How to take a traditional Introduction to Literature course and transform it into an online challenge?
- How to engage students in a way they weren't engaged before?



START WITH THE OBJECTIVES

IDENTIFY THE AUDIENCE VIA LEARNER PERSONAS

PERSONA: KAE HANSEN

"Ambitious
High School Student"

ACCEPTANCE

SOCIAL CONTACT

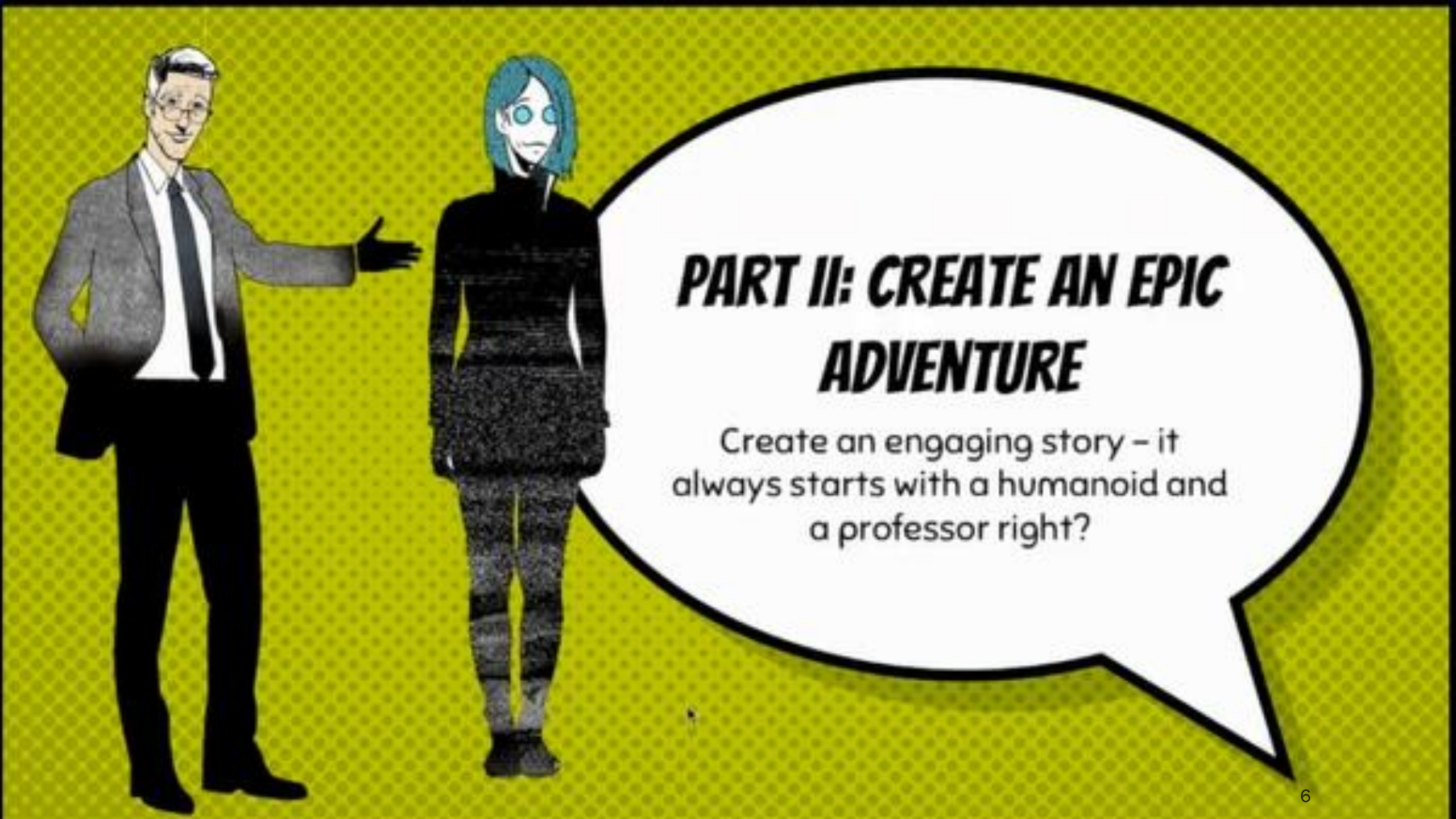
TRANQUILITY

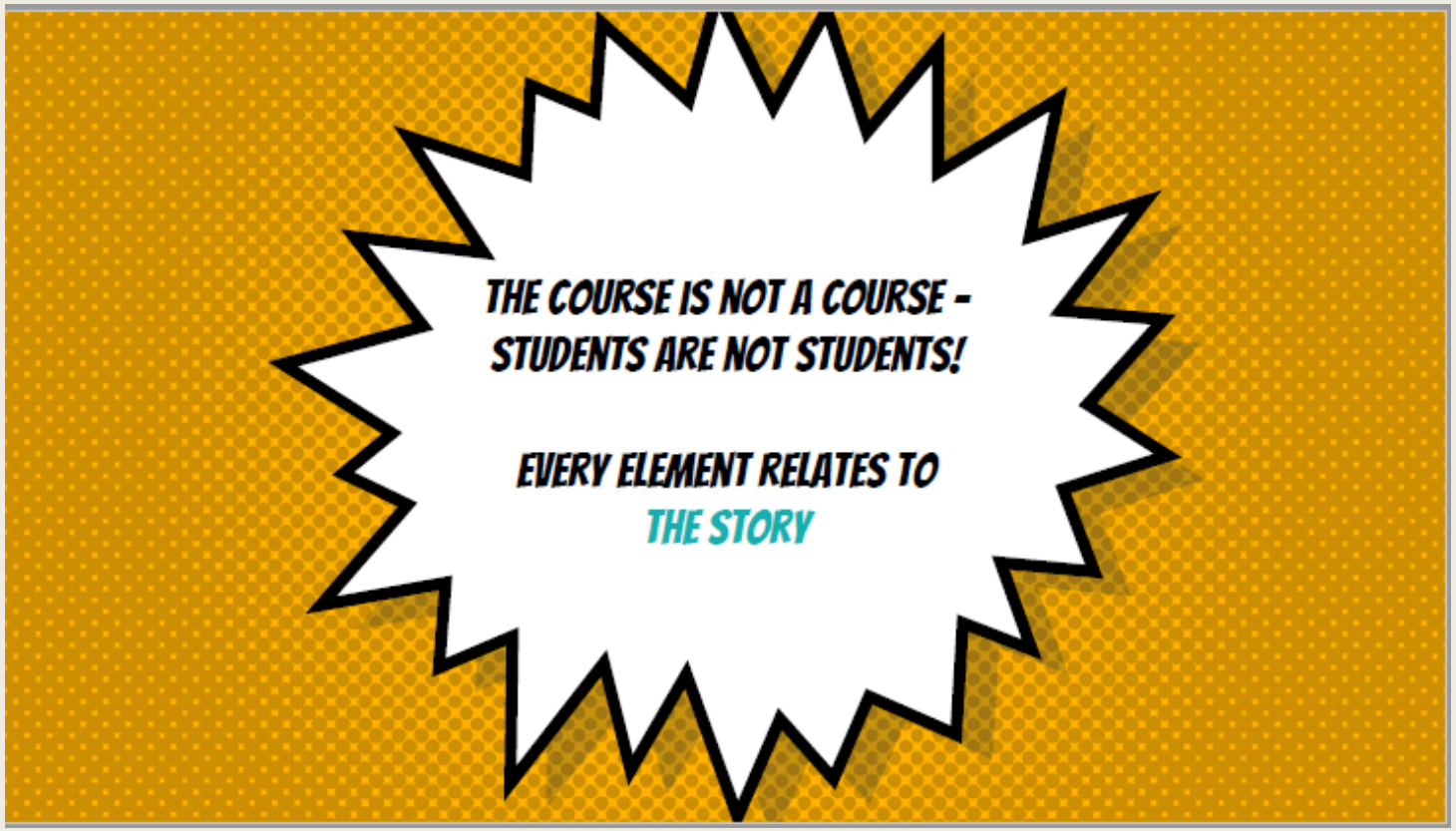
VENGENCE

Values fairness and ethical action
Needs to be challenged; stops task quickly when not sufficiently challenged
Day is filled with activities; too much to do in a single day; always overworked

Highlights

- Wants to change the world
- Loves to be challenged
- Interested in science, history, literature
- Enjoys programming; challenges patriarchy
- Manages "to dos" from an app on phone


PART II: CREATE AN EPIC ADVENTURE
Create an engaging story – it always starts with a humanoid and a professor right?



The Process

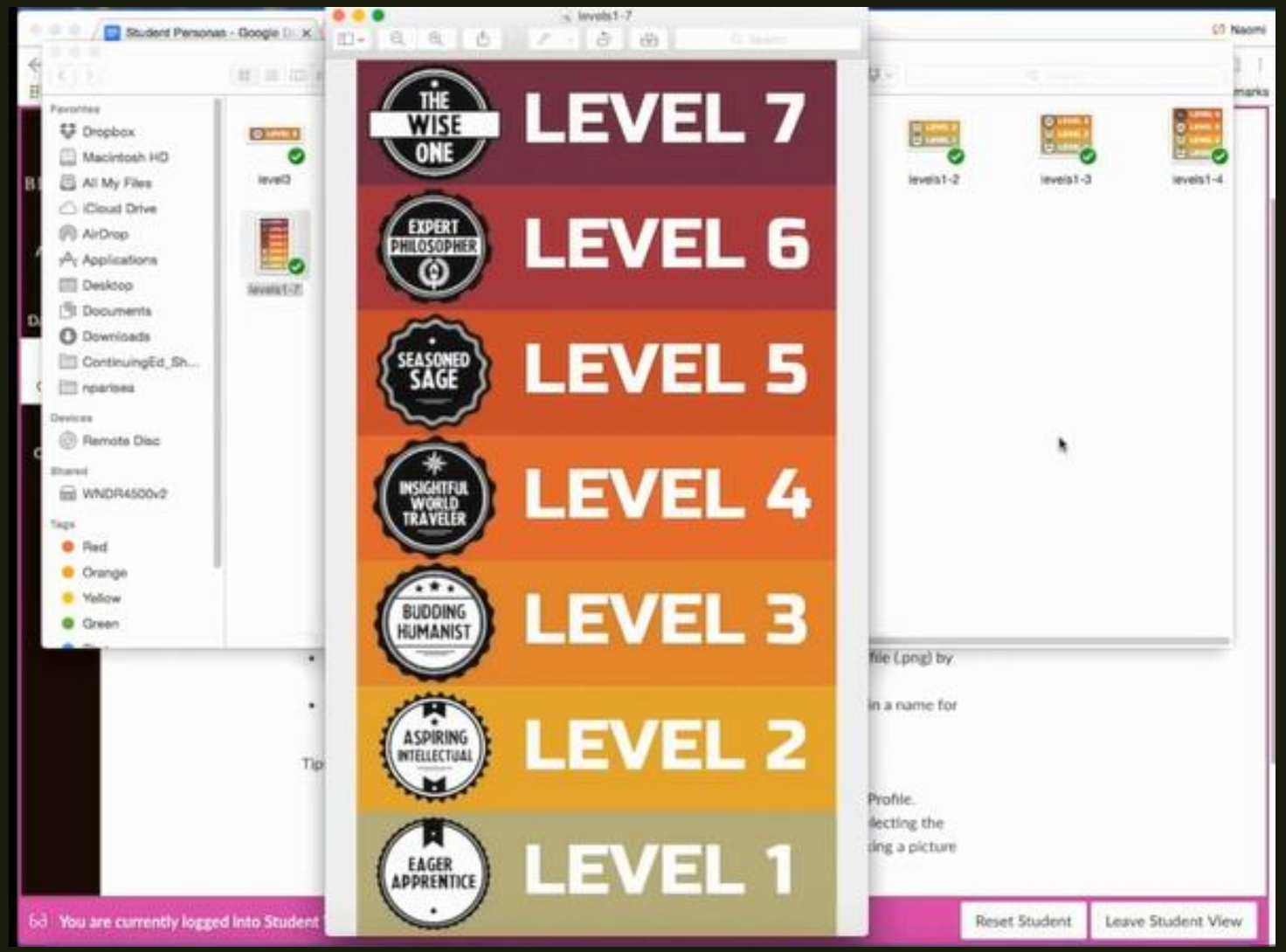
- Transform a course into an immersive experience through story narrative
- Conduct audience analysis and create personas to pinpoint motivators
- Choose the most effective game mechanics for what you are designing
- Leverage prototyping and playtesting to make design decisions early in the process.

VISUAL DESIGN AND AESTHETICS

CREATE YOUR OWN AVATAR

95% of the students created and uploaded their avatar

Learning Activities Tied to the Story



- ASSIGNMENTS WERE CALLED QUESTS
- STUDENTS COULD CHOOSE THEIR QUESTS
- USE OF UNLOCKS AND LEVEL UPS TO ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE A BIGGER RISK – TO CHOOSE THE UNCONVENTIONAL

EXAMPLES

LEVELS

UNLOCKING

Rave Reviews

“Amazing," “Fantastic," and “Outstanding"

“Format of the course (akin to a video game with levels, different worlds, unlocked quests) made for an extremely engaging experience."

"As much as I loved literature before, I think after this course, I have a newfound value for reading, analyzing, and thinking."

Award Winning

- Winner of a 2018 Training Magazine Gamification Award
- Overall Outstanding Use of Gamification for Learning

About Professor Jim Egan

- Jim Egan is Professor of English at Brown University. He's interested in the ways we tell and read stories in the digital age, the pedagogical opportunities to which the online world has given birth, and everything having to do with the 1974-75 Golden State Warriors.
- He was trained as a scholar of American literature before 1800, and he has published, among other works, Authorizing Experience: Refigurations of the Body Politic in Seventeenth-Century New England Writing (1999) and Oriental Shadows: The Presence of the East in Early American Literature (2011).

About Naomi Pariseault

- Naomi Pariseault is an instructional designer for the School of Professional Studies at Brown University.
- As with many other instructional designers, it was a fortunate happenstance that Naomi stumbled into the field and has been happily inspiring student learning since 2011.
- She loves to experiment with new design approaches.
- Growing up Naomi loved playing classic video games and could be found playing Atari Asteroids with her dad or Super Mario 64 and Kirby with cousin.
- Naomi has earned both the Level 1 and Level 2 Certifications from Sententia Gamification.

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