

The Persona Engine

Challenge: Apply Interaction Design & Usability

Summary:

****Origin:**** Ask Pete (Capstone Project). This artifact is the 'Persona Engine' Design Specification. This design specification outlines the 'Persona Engine,' a character creation interface that rejects standard 'class pickers' in favor of a narrative-based diagnostic quiz. By integrating Jungian Archetypes with LitRPG mechanics, the design utilizes Cognitive Load Theory to function as an 'advance organizer,' simplifying complex decision-making while maximizing learner autonomy.

Reflection:

I addressed the challenge to Apply Interaction Design & Usability by applying interaction design principles grounded in Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) to solve a common usability hurdle: 'Choice Paralysis.' Standard RPG interfaces often present users with a 'Class Picker' list (e.g., 'Select: Warrior, Mage, Rogue'), which imposes high extraneous cognitive load by forcing the learner to evaluate abstract variables without context. I rejected this 'flashcard' model in favor of a 'Situation-Based Quiz,' a narrative interaction design that scaffolds the decision-making process. I operationalized this design by integrating Jungian Archetypes (e.g., The Sage, The Hero) as an 'advance organizer' for the interface. Instead of asking learners to select stats directly, the system presents narrative dilemmas (e.g., 'You see a bully... do you confront or observe?'). This interaction maps the learner's intuitive moral choices to complex backend game mechanics ('LitRPG Stats'). This approach ensures that the interface is not merely functional but 'psychologically ergonomic,' bridging the gap between the learner's identity and the system's variables without overwhelming them. Furthermore, this interaction design directly supports the project's pedagogical goal of Self-Determination. By framing the initial interaction as a 'Reflection Quest' rather than a setup menu, the system immediately validates the learner's autonomy and fosters 'Relatedness.' The 'Reveal' moment?where the system mirrors the learner's choices back to them ('Your answers reveal the heart of a Sage')?transforms a standard configuration step into a meaningful psychological anchor. This demonstrates how rigorous usability principles can be applied to transform administrative tasks into core learning experiences.

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