

Amaze Game:

Experiential learning of culture through playing an abstract video game

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USER NEEDS

With the number of international students coming to USA for higher education rising each year, there is an urgent need to address the problems faced by these students while working as teaching assistants in American classrooms and as a graduate student. A lot of international students are not able to perform the role of TA as expected due to the sharp contrast in the new culture and their home culture.

PLAYER PROFILE



Interntional students who are new to American culture, and feel that their classroom teaching performance is affected because of their inability to adapt and understand the new culture.

BRIEF GAME DESCRIPTION

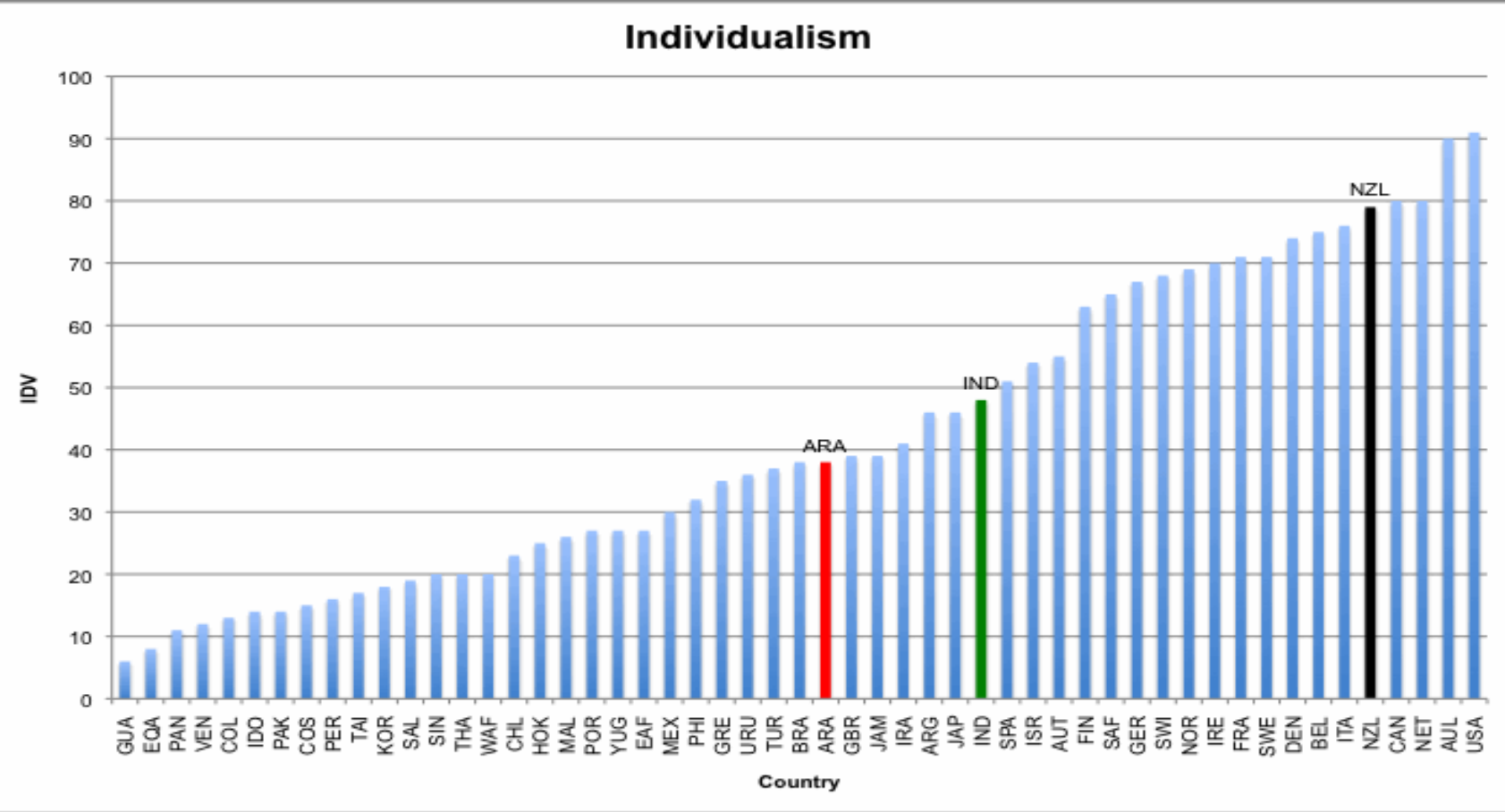
- The game revolves around a sythetic culture where each element in the player's surrounding is a metaphor for real life scenarios.
- The game begins with the player having a goal of taking native characters (the fuzzies) spread out in the maze back to their home space.
- The behaviors of fuzzies vary depending on their color and the player has to identify which fuzzy group belongs to which home space by identifying their characteristics.
- As the levels proceed the difficulty of the game play increases with monsters trying to disrupt the player in rescuing the fuzzies.
- In each level the player moves back and forth in two different worlds representing collectivist and individualist cultural values.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

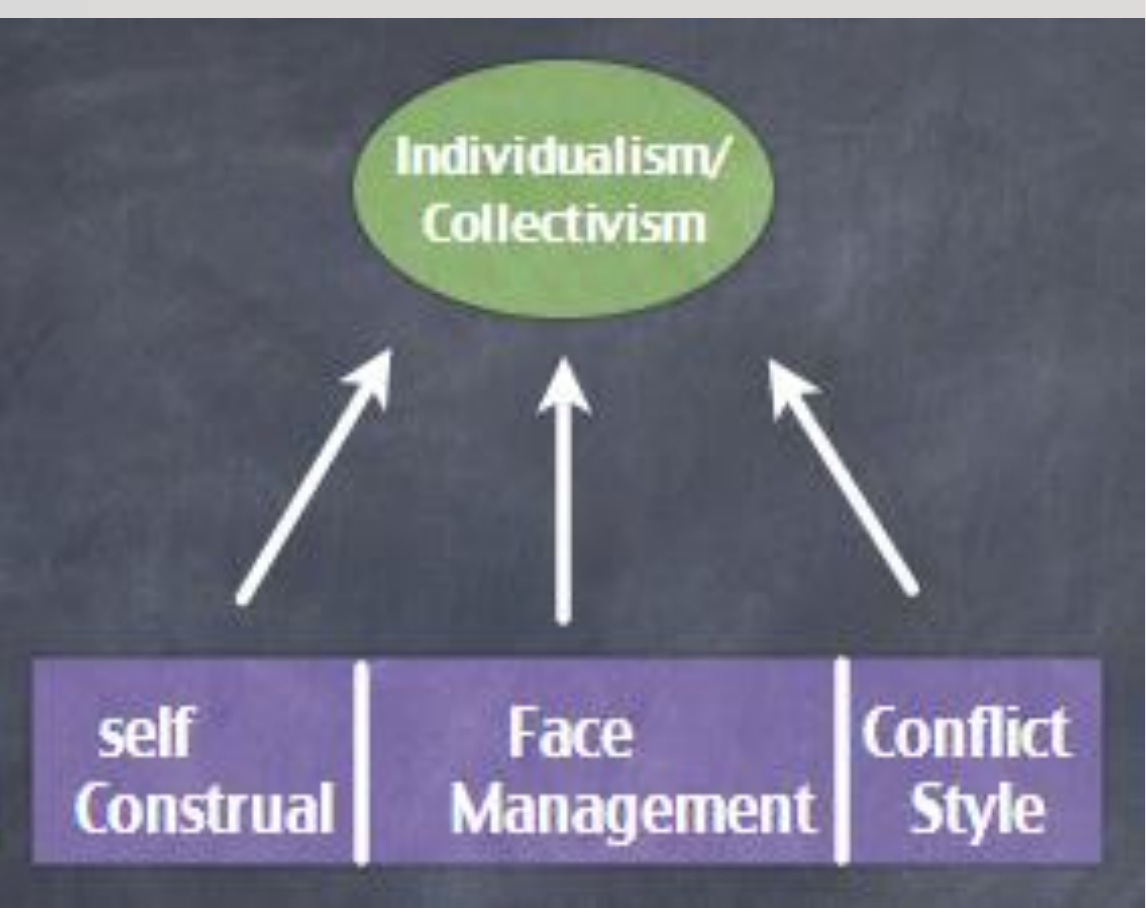
Skills: To improve the players ability to identify different cultural aspects of collectivism and individualism.

Knowledge: To make the player understand what collectivism and individualism mean in different contexts.

Attitude: To make the player realise that different cultures have different attitudes towards collectivism and individualism and neither of the two approach is right or wrong, but just different.

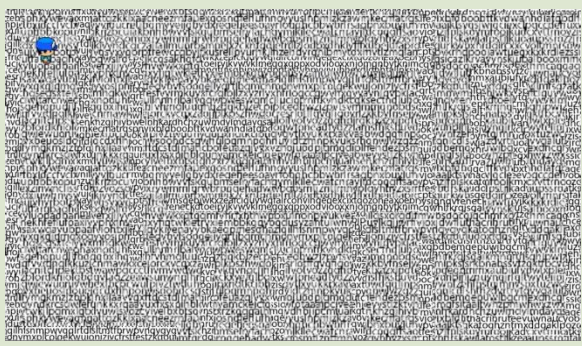




Hofstede's interpretation for Individualism index for each country

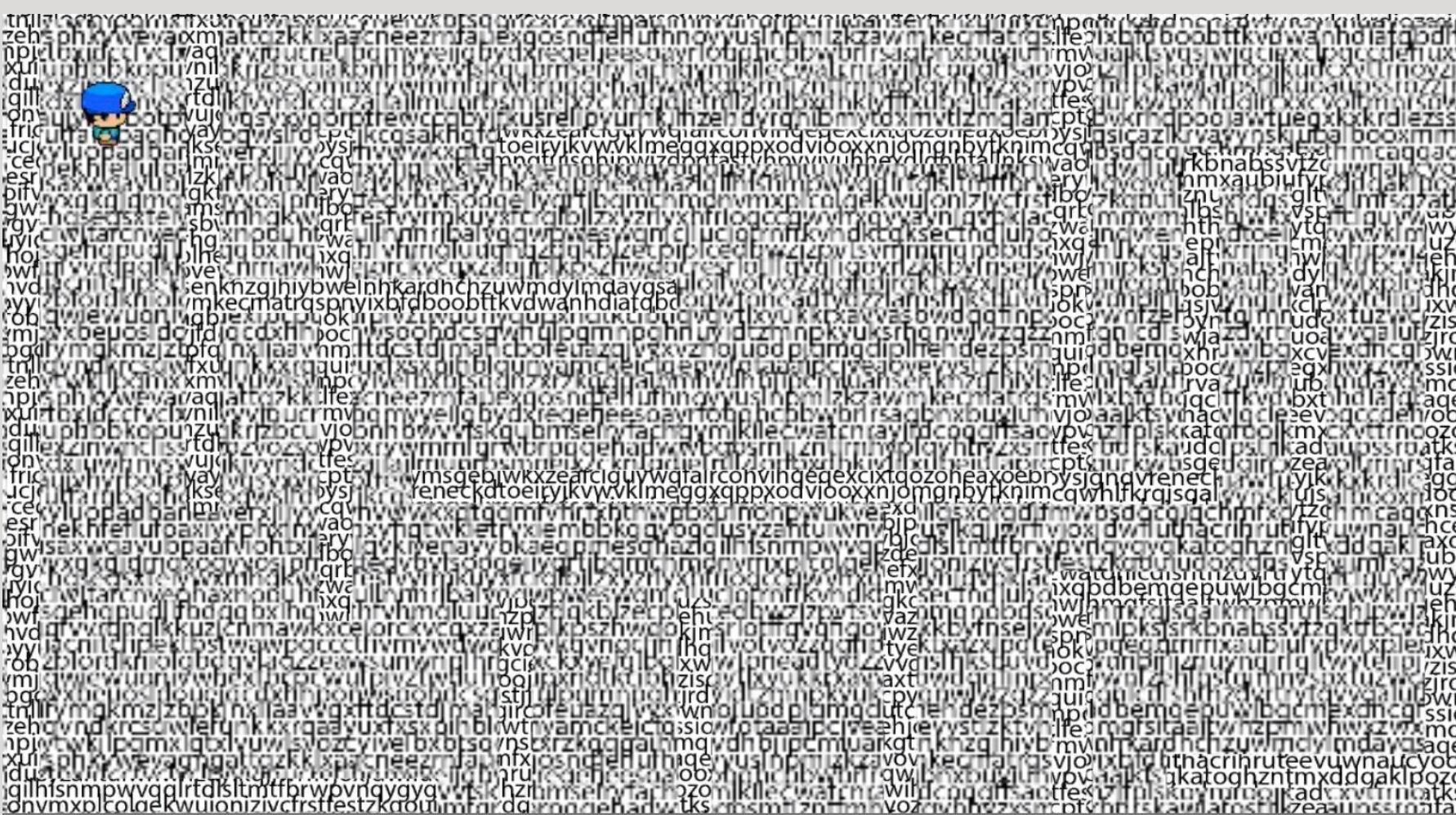
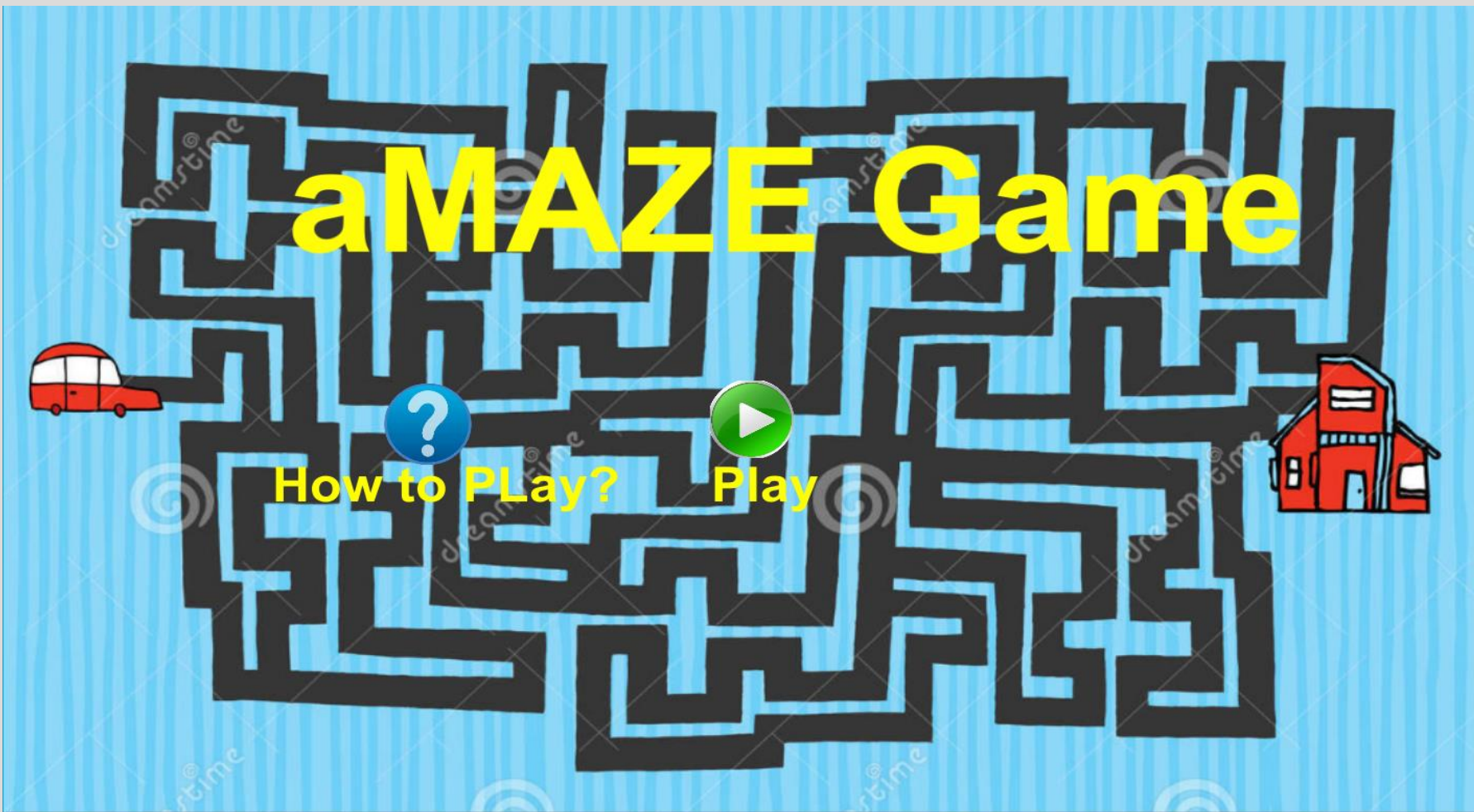


MECHANICS THAT SUPPORT LEARNING

The table below maps various objetcs that form the game's synthetic culture to the real life objetcs. Since the game talks about culture in a very abstarct way it ensures engagement by putting forth a challenge of conquering a maze and taking the fuzzies to the rooms they belong, which would require the player to identify the fuzzy behavior and handle different fuzzies and monsters in different ways.

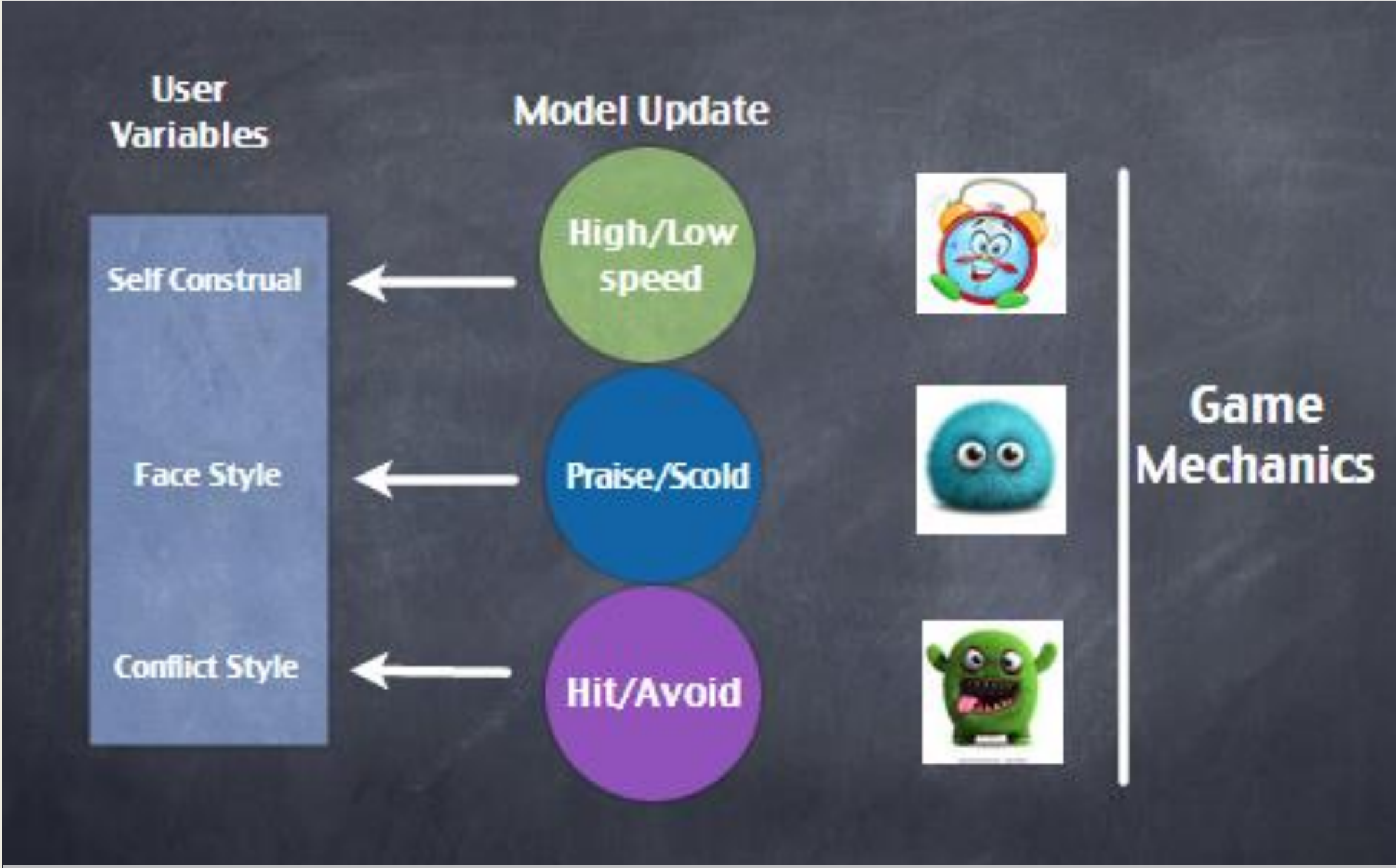
Image	Metaphor	Interpretation
	Illusionary environment	New environment that is hard to understand
	Fuzzy	Culturally different personalities
	Monster	Obstacles in the new culture

SCREENSHOTS



PROPOSED EVALUATION

- The evaluation is aimed at determining how far the player relates to the metaphors simulated in the game and maps it to his new culture.
- Also what changes have come about in his self construal, face style, and conflict style.



1. Bruschke, J. C., Gartner, C., & Seiter, J. S. (1993). Student ethnocentrism, dogmatism, and motivation: A study of BAFA BAFA. Simulation & gaming, 24(1), 9-20.
2. Oetzel, J. G., & Ting-Toomey, S. (2003). Face concerns in interpersonal conflict a cross-cultural empirical test of the face negotiation theory. Communication research, 30(6),
3. Gick, M. L., & Holyoak, K. J. (1983). Schema induction and analogical transfer. Cognitive psychology, 15(1), 1-38.