Process & Decision Documentation

GBDA 302 - Side Quest Interactive Story

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Project	The Exam Week (p5.js interactive story)
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Project/Assignment Decisions

I built the story around a single visible stat (Mental Clarity) so that choices and endings stayed easy to understand while still creating meaningful consequences across scenes. After generating an initial version with a "sanity" label, I renamed the stat to Mental Clarity and made the display more prominent so players immediately notice changes and can connect their decisions to outcomes. I also experimented with random event popups to raise stakes, but removed them after testing because they distracted from the narrative pacing and created usability issues.

Role-Based Process Evidence

Role: Designer and Developer (individual work)
Responsibilities: narrative structure, decision tree design, stat and flag logic, scene implementation, UI feedback, and testing.

• **1) Planned the decision tree:** mapped scenes (days of the week) and ensured branches reconverge, with 4 endings unlocked by Mental Clarity plus hidden flags.

• **2) Implemented modular game states:** each scene lives in its own JS file, while a central router (main.js) handles setup, draw, and input routing.

• **3) Tuned consequences:** adjusted Mental Clarity and preparation impacts so the game communicates the trade-off between cramming, rest, and connection.

• **4) Debugged runtime issues:** verified script loading order in index.html and tested in a local server workflow (Live Server) to avoid browser restrictions.

• **5) Iterated on feedback:** improved clarity of the stat UI (more prominent bar/text) and added color-coded change feedback (green for gains, red for losses) to reduce player confusion.

GenAI Documentation

Tool used: Claude (Anthropic) for drafting and refactoring support; this document is based on the recorded chat history provided.
How it was used: (1) scaffolding the initial multi-file p5.js structure and state routing pattern, (2)

generating a full choice breakdown to validate stat changes and flags, and (3) assisting with targeted refactors such as renaming "sanity" to "mentalClarity" and improving on-screen feedback.

What I contributed (human decisions): choosing the theme (exam week and burnout vs balance), defining the stat meaning, selecting which features to keep or cut (ex: removing random events after testing), deciding thresholds for endings, and validating behavior through playthroughs.

Verification: I manually tested multiple paths to confirm (a) choices change Mental Clarity as intended, (b) hidden flags affect later scenes, and (c) endings unlock correctly based on final Mental Clarity and flags.

Using GenAI sped up implementation of boilerplate and refactors, but the final game still required judgement: balancing numbers, pacing scenes, and deciding which mechanics supported the intended experience. I treated AI output as a draft, then verified, edited, and integrated changes into a cohesive system.

Appendix

Claude chat share link (reference for GenAI usage and iteration history):
https://claude.ai/share/60ce12c6-d18c-49c5-a102-13fbeb743610