



From Zero to Hero: Visualizing Player Progression within UI/UX

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GDC

GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

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xama

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Disney

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#10YearChallenge



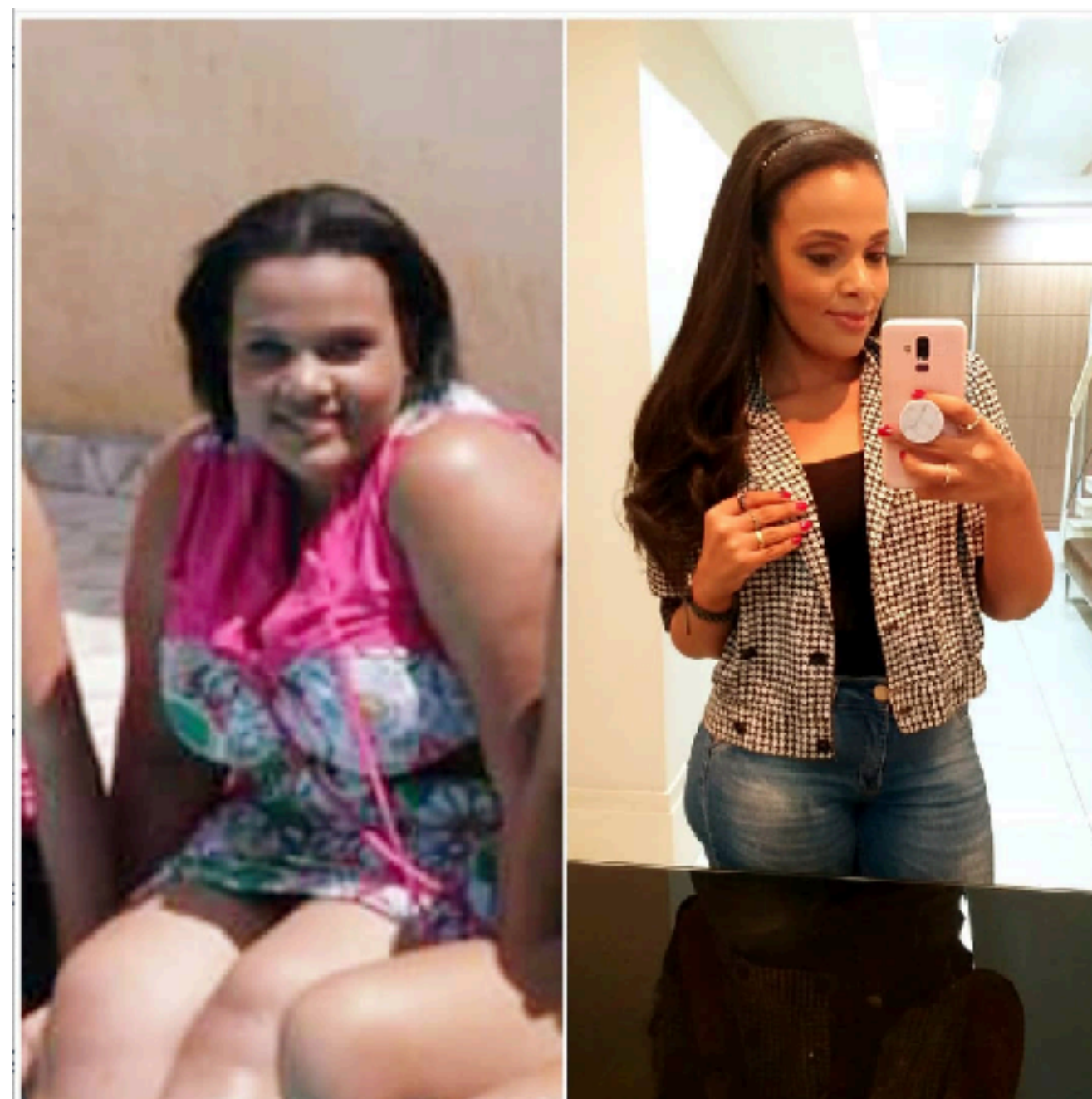
ZARYAB MALIK
@_zaryabmalik

God said he'd help me grow a beard if i stopped rockin white tees 😂 #10YearChallenge

13 4:49 AM - Jan 17, 2019 · Washington, DC

See ZARYAB MALIK's other Tweets

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89 likes

patysantiago_oficial 10 anos de muitas mudanças e realizações. (😭 chocada😭)
#10yearchallenge #gratidao #2009vs2019 #ebenezer
#obrigadadeus #naoacredito #topassada #choquei
#deusebom #tenhafé

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Gordon Ramsay ✓
@GordonRamsay

Some things never change on
@HellsKitchenFOX.....#10yearchallenge

11K 1:35 AM - Jan 16, 2019

1,502 people are talking about this

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Seeing is
believing.



PHYSICAL CHALLENGE



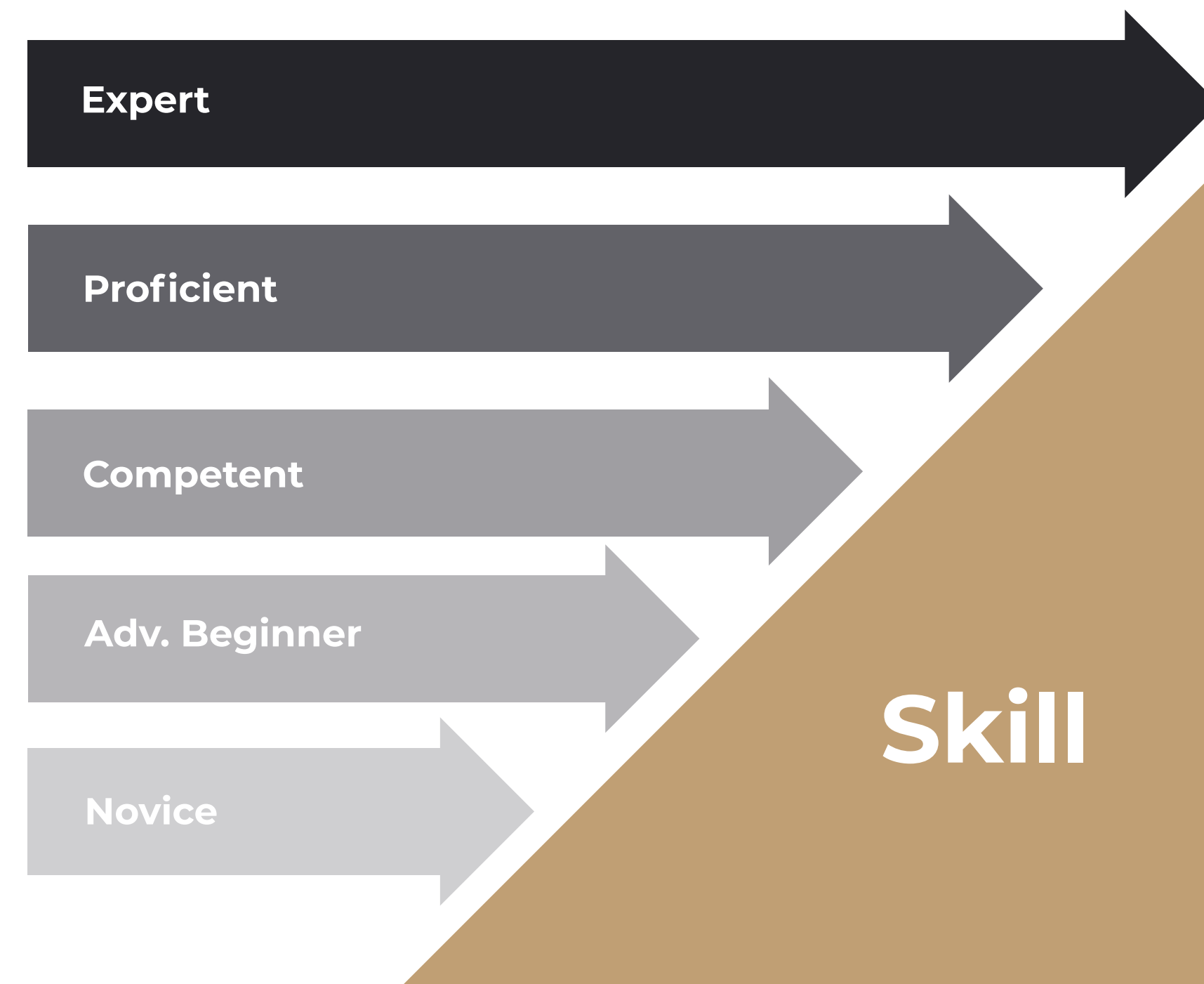
MENTAL CHALLENGE



DEDICATION

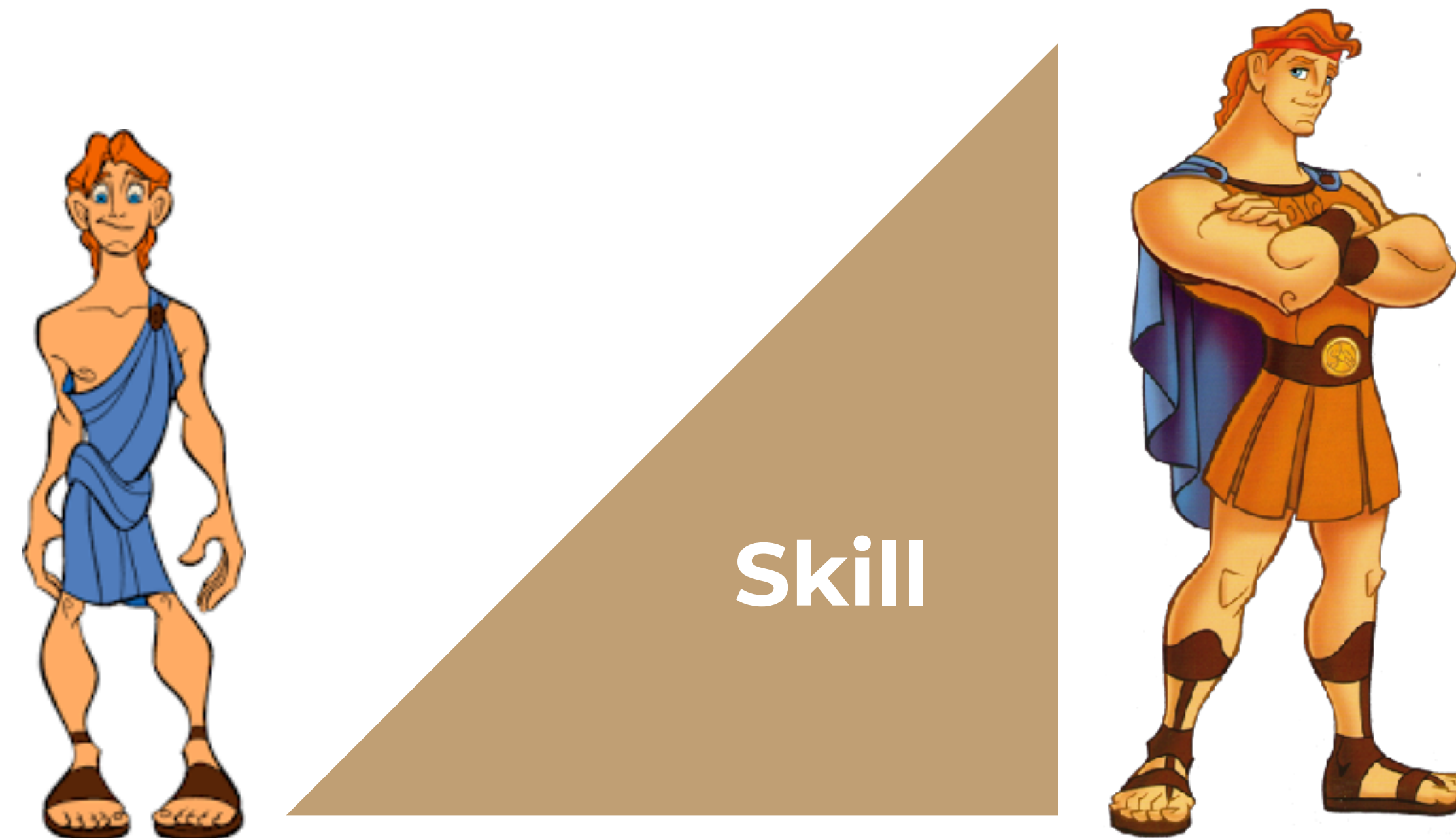
Dreyfus model of skill acquisition

8



Dreyfus model of skill acquisition

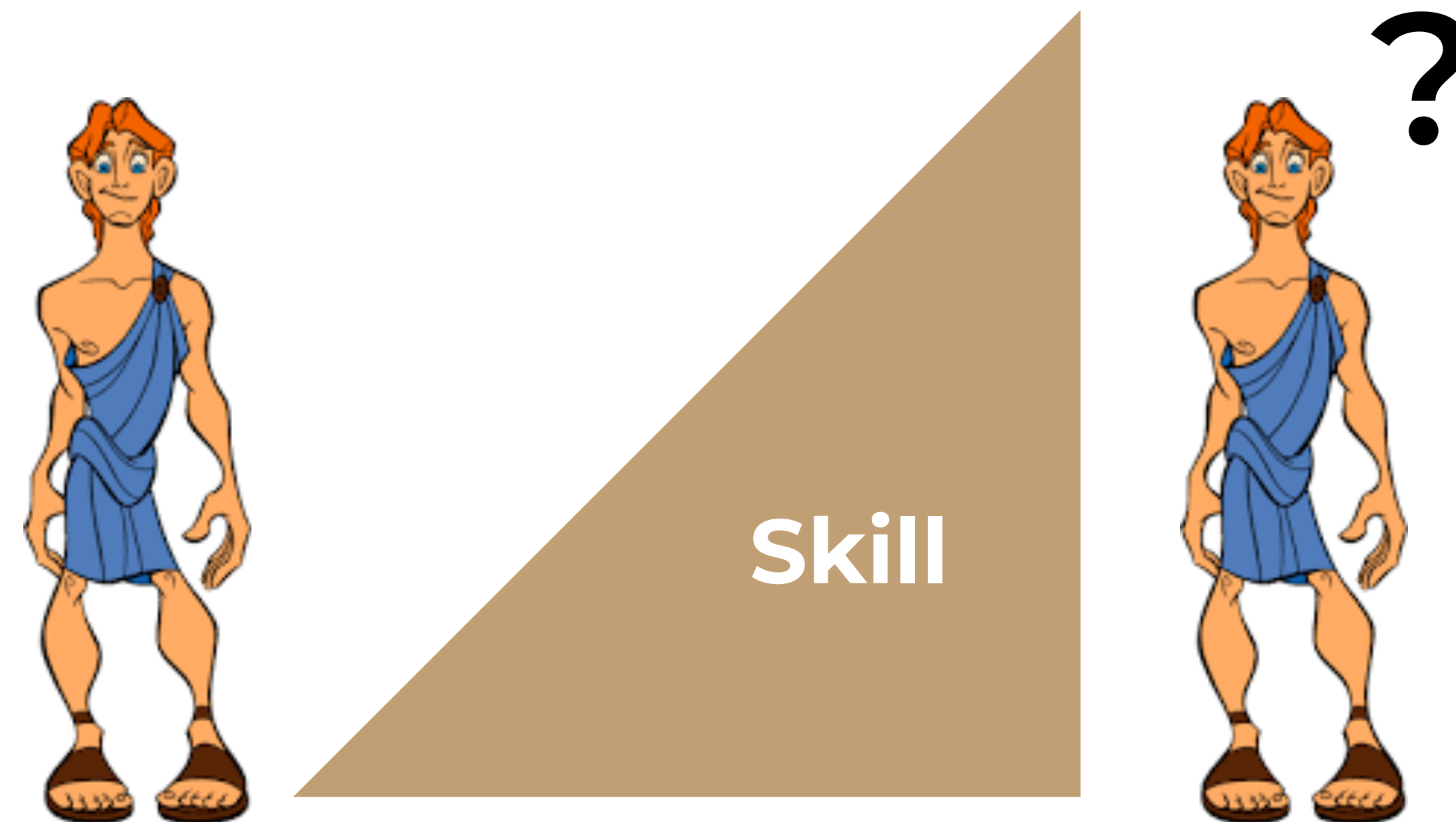
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**How do we apply this same feeling
of growth to a digital experience?**

Dreyfus model of skill acquisition

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Overview

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- 1 The Importance of Visual Progression in Digital Games**
- 2 Visual Techniques that Convey Player Progression**
- 3 Figuring out Which Technique Works Best for your Game and Team**

THE IMPORTANCE

OF VISUAL PROGRESSION

Visual Progression

What is it?

Visual techniques that display a player's growth and progress within a game in a strategic manner.



Offers the player a clear visualization of their ultimate goal or aspiration.



Reinforces a player's development through meaningful and relatable visuals.



Indicates how far a player has gone, where they are at the moment, and how much remains.

Good visual progression...



Educates and engages a player about their progress.



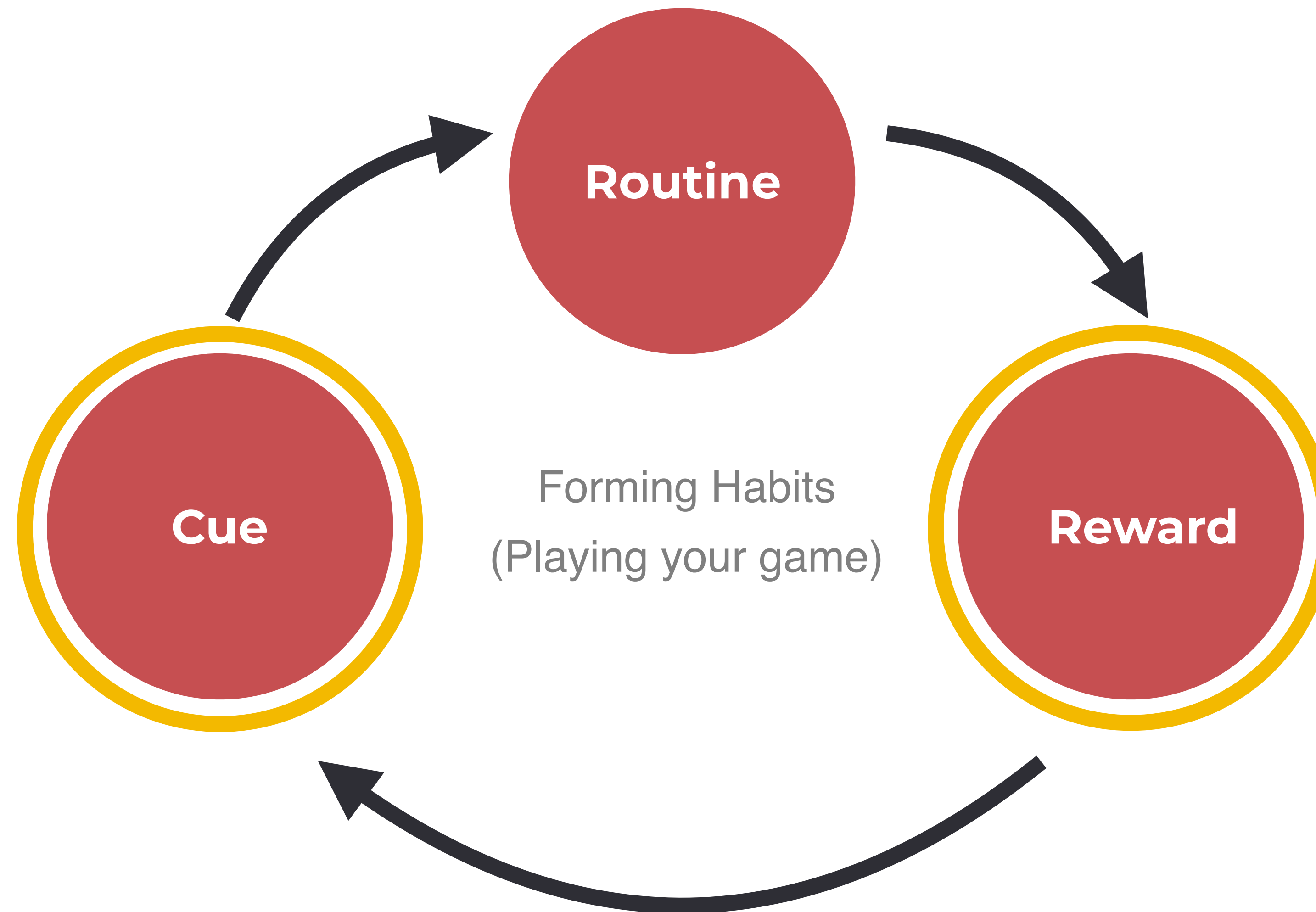
Promotes and rewards loyalty and dedication.



Convenient to share and desirable enough to show off.



Timed and displayed so player can recall how their growth came about.



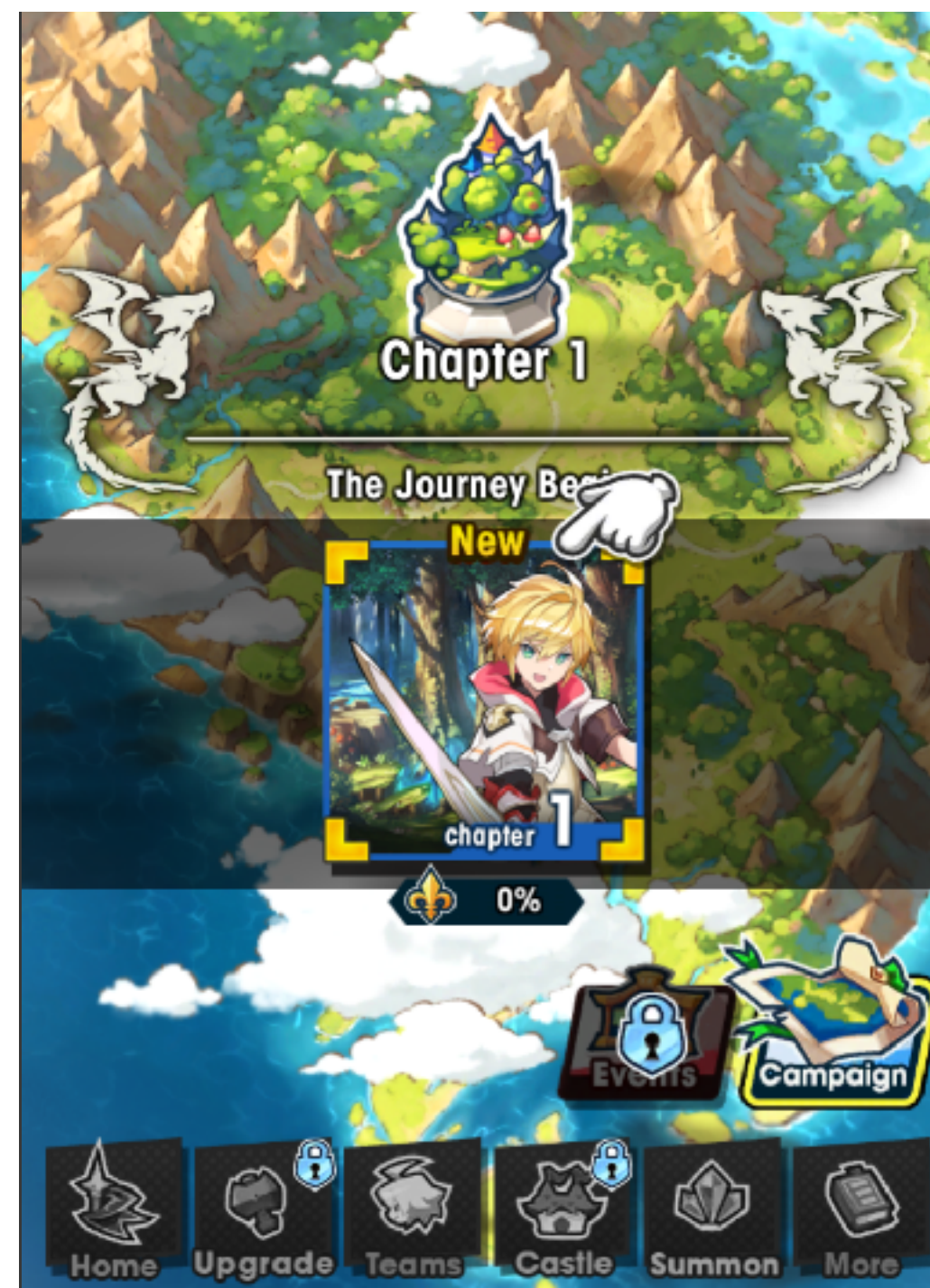
Visual Progression not only reflects player growth, but can promote **exciting anticipation**.

Short-Term Benefits

Displays aspirational goal for a new user to desire and pursue.

Guides and inform players as they grow and adjust to your game's required skills and strategy.

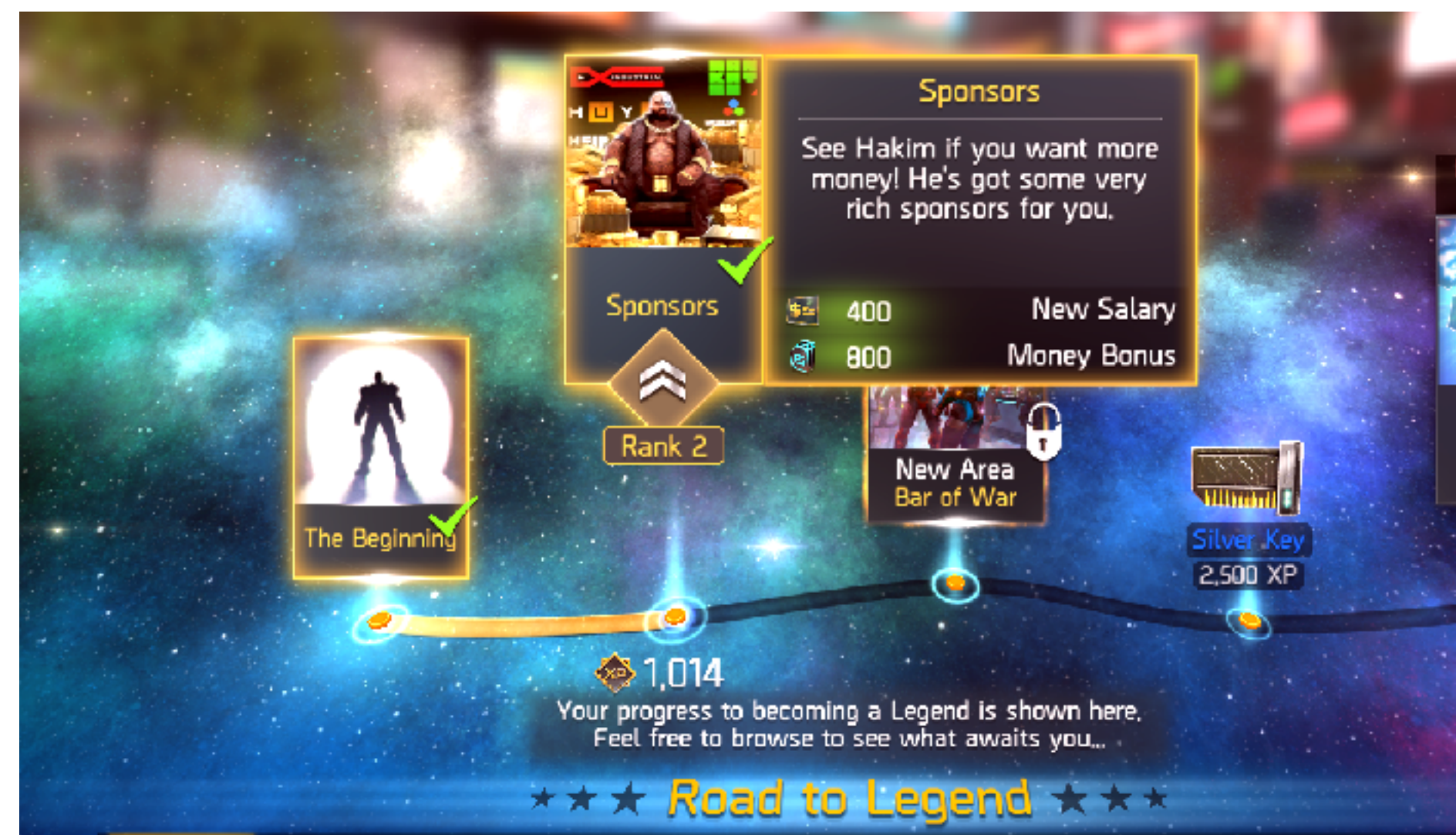
Provides feedback and actionable advice or direction that can lead to short-term improvement or progress in the game session.



Long-Term Benefits

Provides an **easy-to-understand visual for long-term engagement** that encapsulates the player's entire journey and progress throughout a game

Gives continuous motivation for your player by **signaling their ongoing growth/change and crucial milestones** they've achieved.

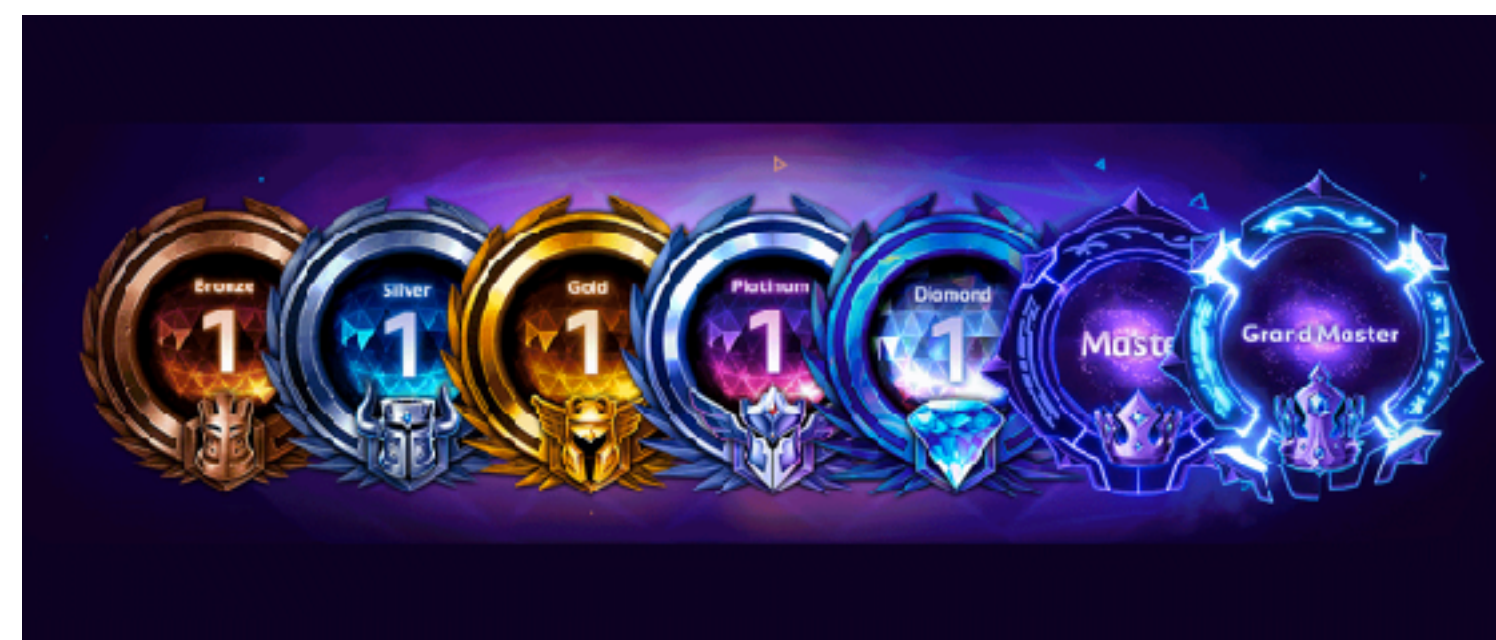


VISUAL TECHNIQUES

THAT CONVEY PLAYER PROGRESSION

No One-Size-Fits-All

Large variety of techniques, doesn't mean you should implement all of them nor mean they are the best solution for your game.



Short-Term Progression

Visually displaying goals and actionable advice to users to strategize and aspire to.

Goal Posting

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Hay Day | Supercell



Visualize “Before & After” by establishing aspirational goals early on for the novice as motivational cues.

Goal Posting



Kim Kardashian: Hollywood | Glu Mobile

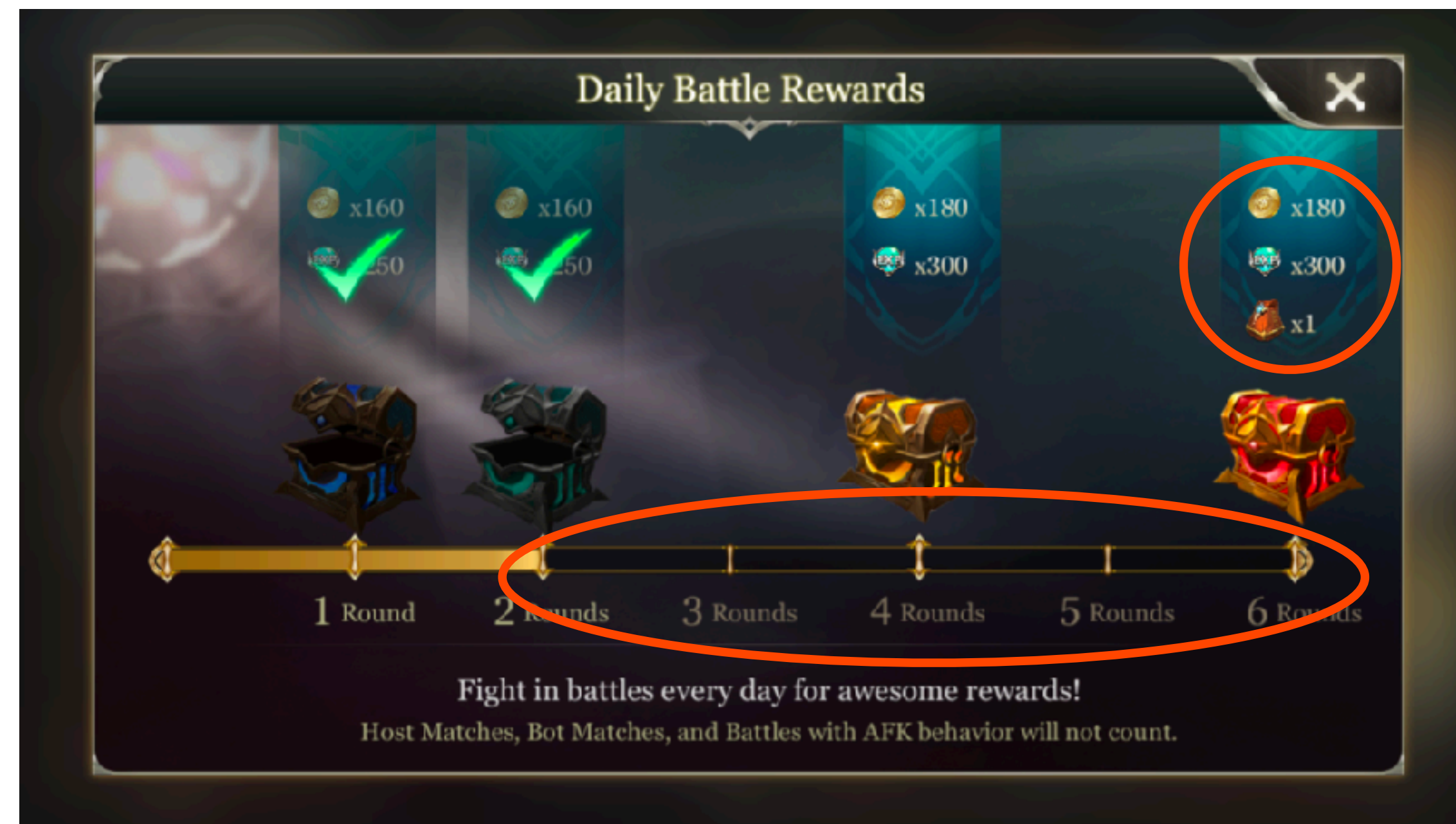
Visualize “Before & After” by establishing aspirational goals early on for the novice as motivational cues.

Game Play Progress

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Disney Emoji Blitz | Jam City



Arena of Valor | Garena, Timi Studio Group



Sailor Moon Drops | Beeline Interactive

Visualizing requirements and progress towards a reward provides players with direction and ideas for strategy.

Consecutive Logins

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Lineage 2 Revolution | Netmarble

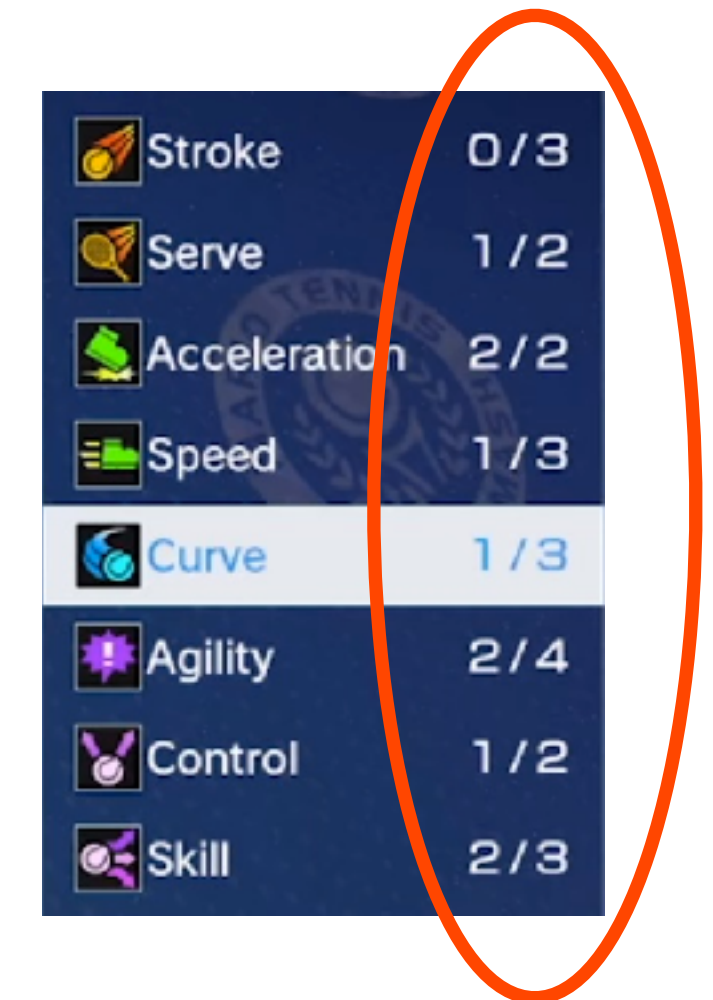
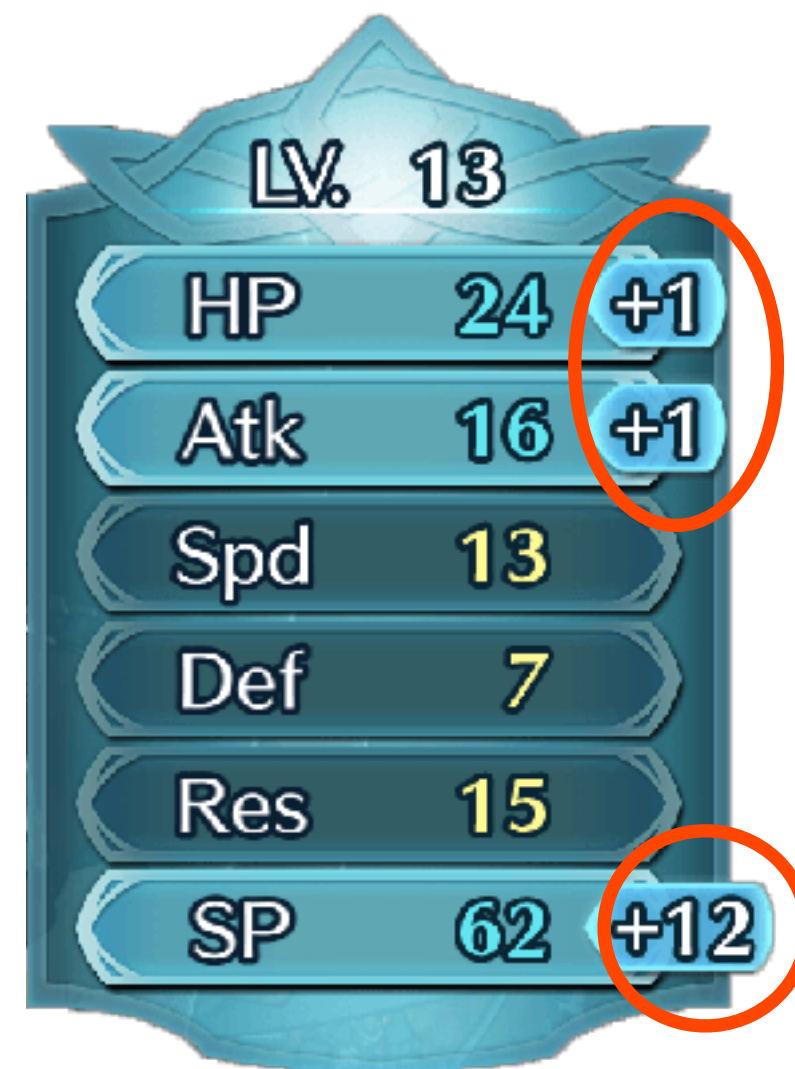


The Sims Social | Playfish

Using familiar imagery we affiliate with time, allows user to visualize and strategize their progress.

Stats & Measurements

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Use color, numbers, and iconography strategically to display player growth.
Context is key with how you display player development.

Stats & Measurements

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PUBG MOBILE | PUBG Corporation

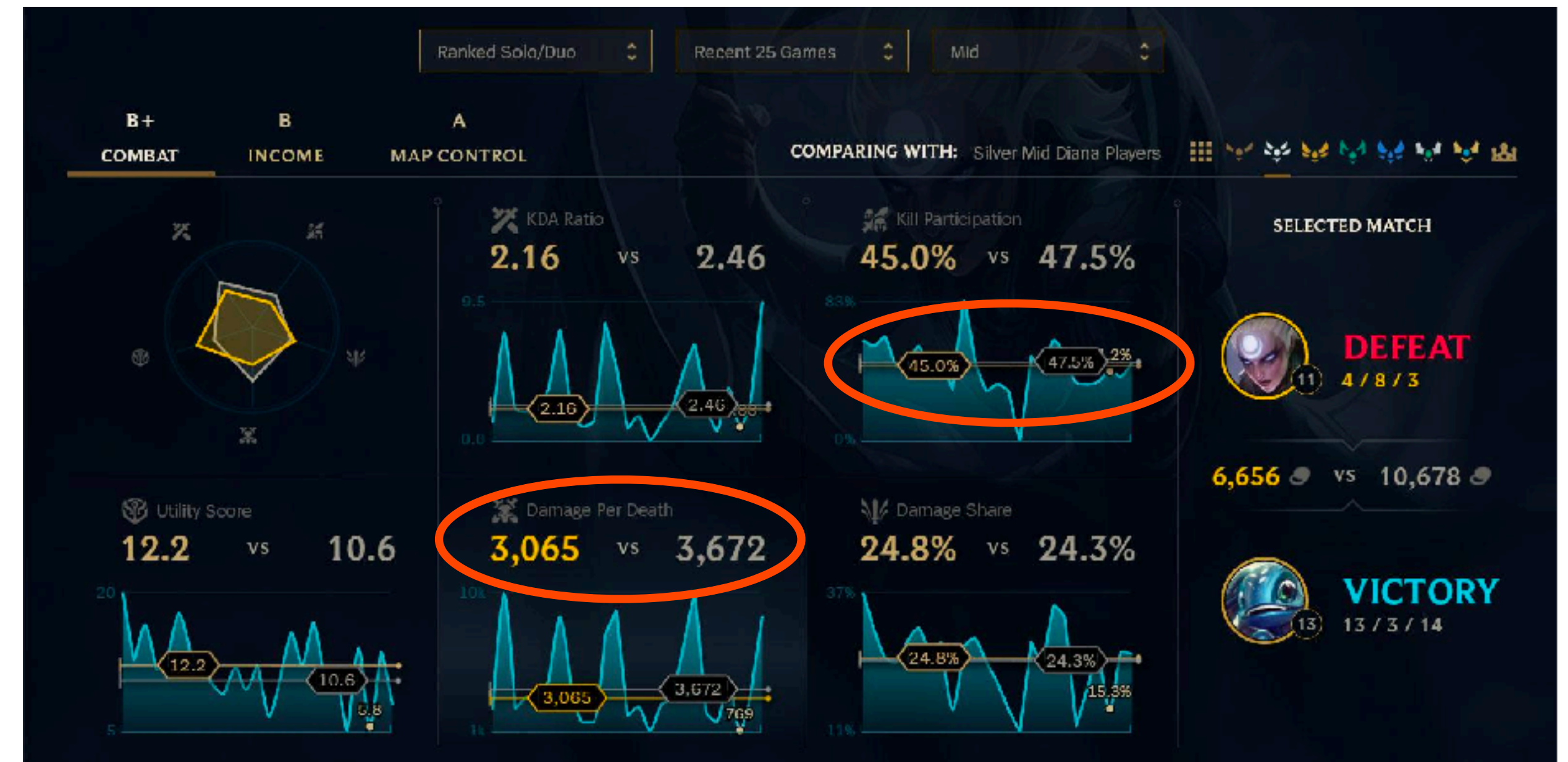
Emphasize the relatable novice stats through visual hierarchy.

Stat Comparison

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Gardenscapes | Playrix



League of Legends | Riot Games

Top performing players vs. the Player's performance gives me goal and an indicated metric to focus on.

Short-Term Recap

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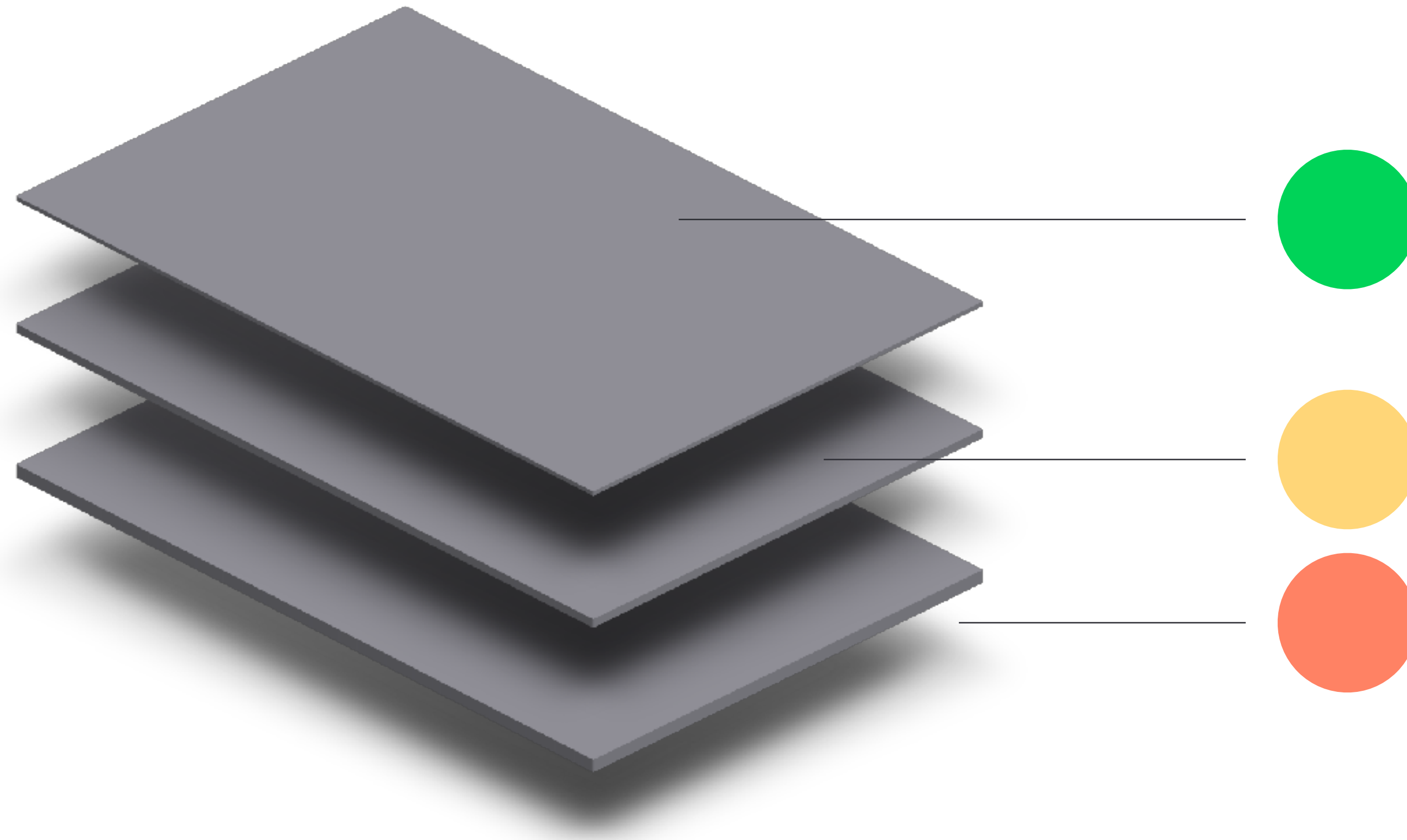
- **Establish visual aspirational goals early on** for the novice as motivational cues through visualizing your character or space's "before and after".
- **Clearly outline "cues" and "rewards" for on-going tasks.** When the user contributes to their task, use animations right after to simulate growth.
- **Take advantage of Familiar and relatable imagery** like calendar grids helps the player visualize and correlate their journey as clear distinct steps.
- **Use visual hierarchy to emphasize and compare stats** for a user to their own performance or others.

Long-Term Progression

Encapsulating the player's growth through the entirety of the game.

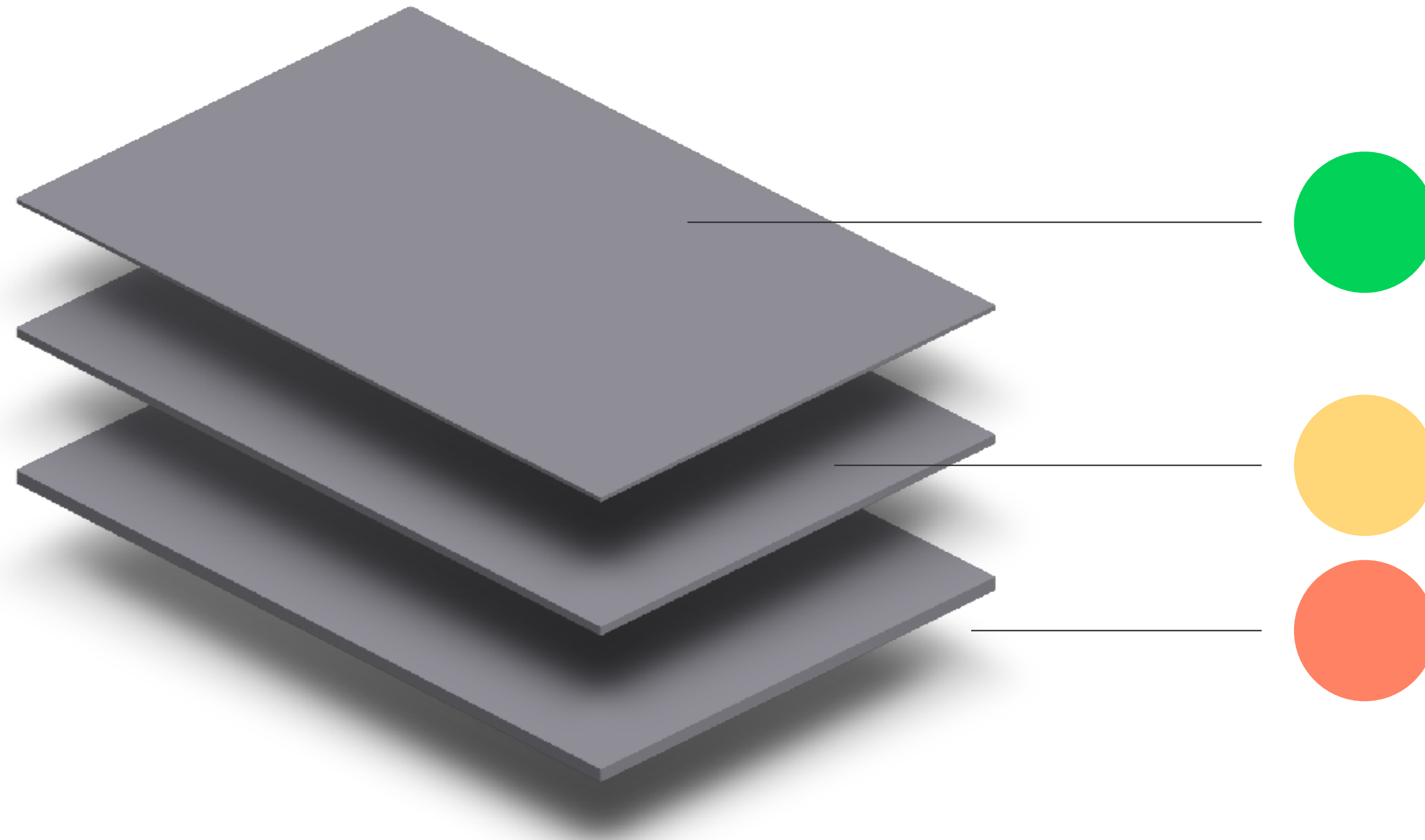
Surfacing

Make sure this long-term progression is surfaced at a convenient location for the user to easily view and enjoy.



Surfacing

Beware of burying your progression.



Character Design

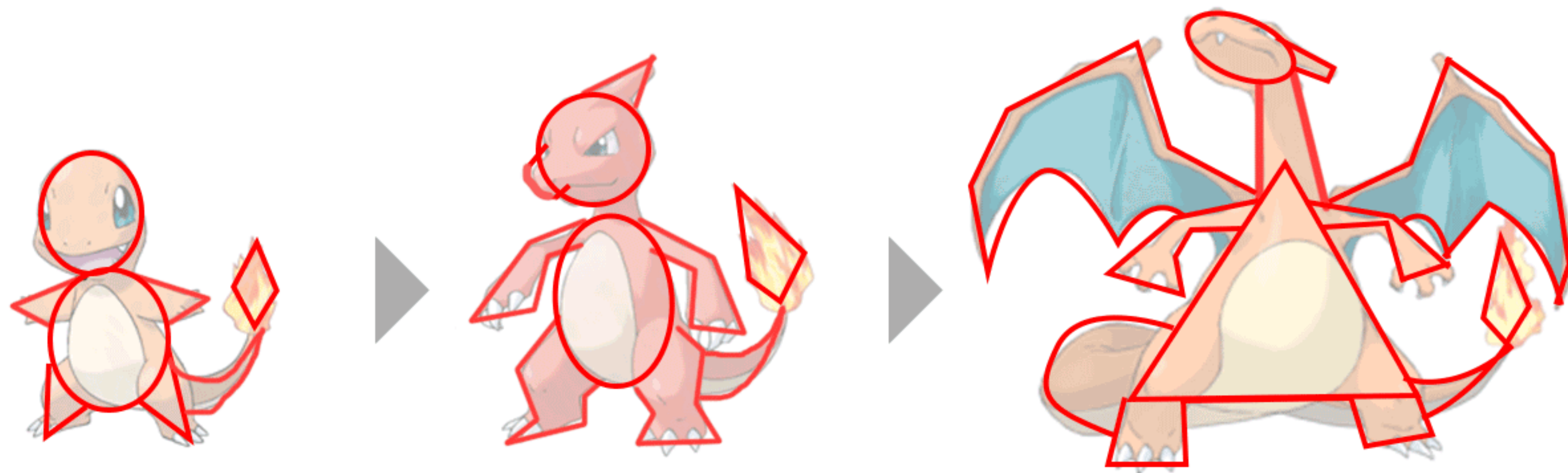
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Be strategic on how you set your visual range. Each transformation should be **noticeable and significant**.

Character Design

35



Be strategic on how you set your visual range. Each transformation should be **noticeable and significant**.

Character Design

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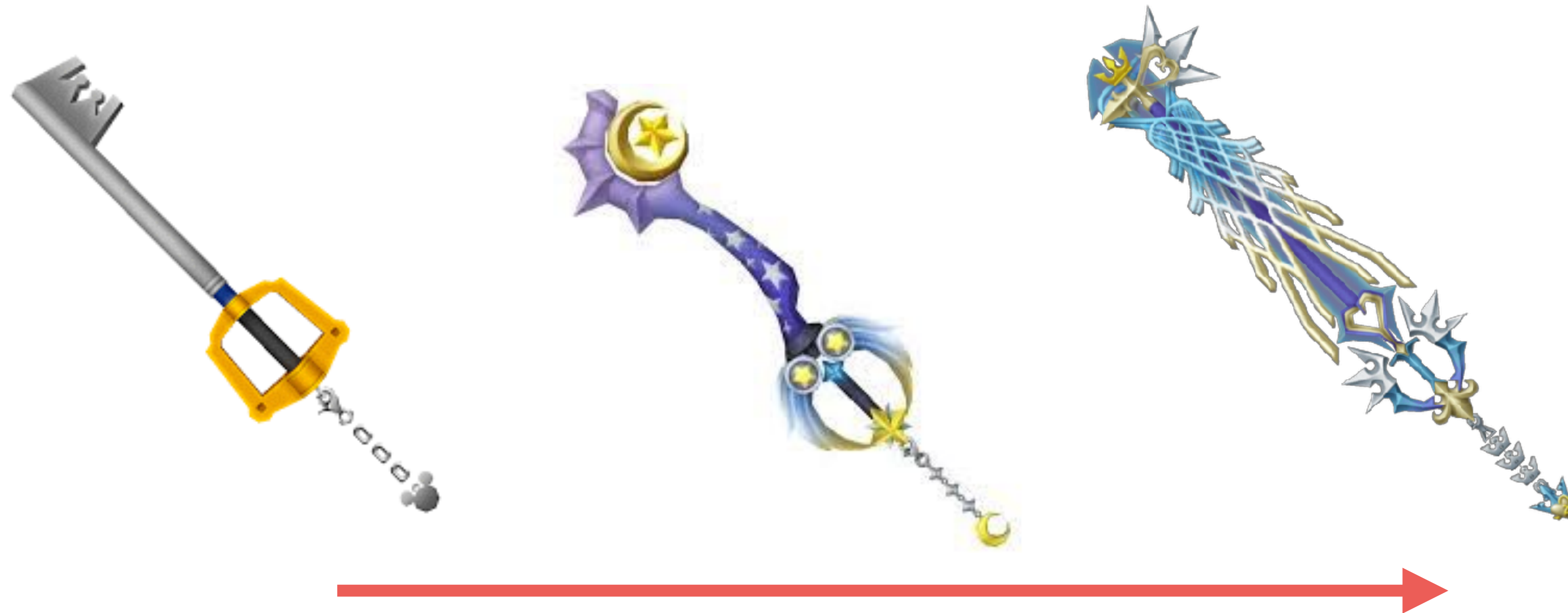


Brave Frontier | Gumi

Be strategic on how you set your visual range. Each transformation should be **noticeable and significant**.

Weapon Design

37



Kingdom Hearts 2 | Square Enix

A combination of **silhouette**, **color value**, and **complexity** to build and convey player's accomplishment and transformation.

Ranking Visuals

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League of Legends | Riot Games

Recognize how the **game's narrative** can influence your visuals to successfully feel integrated.

Map Exploration

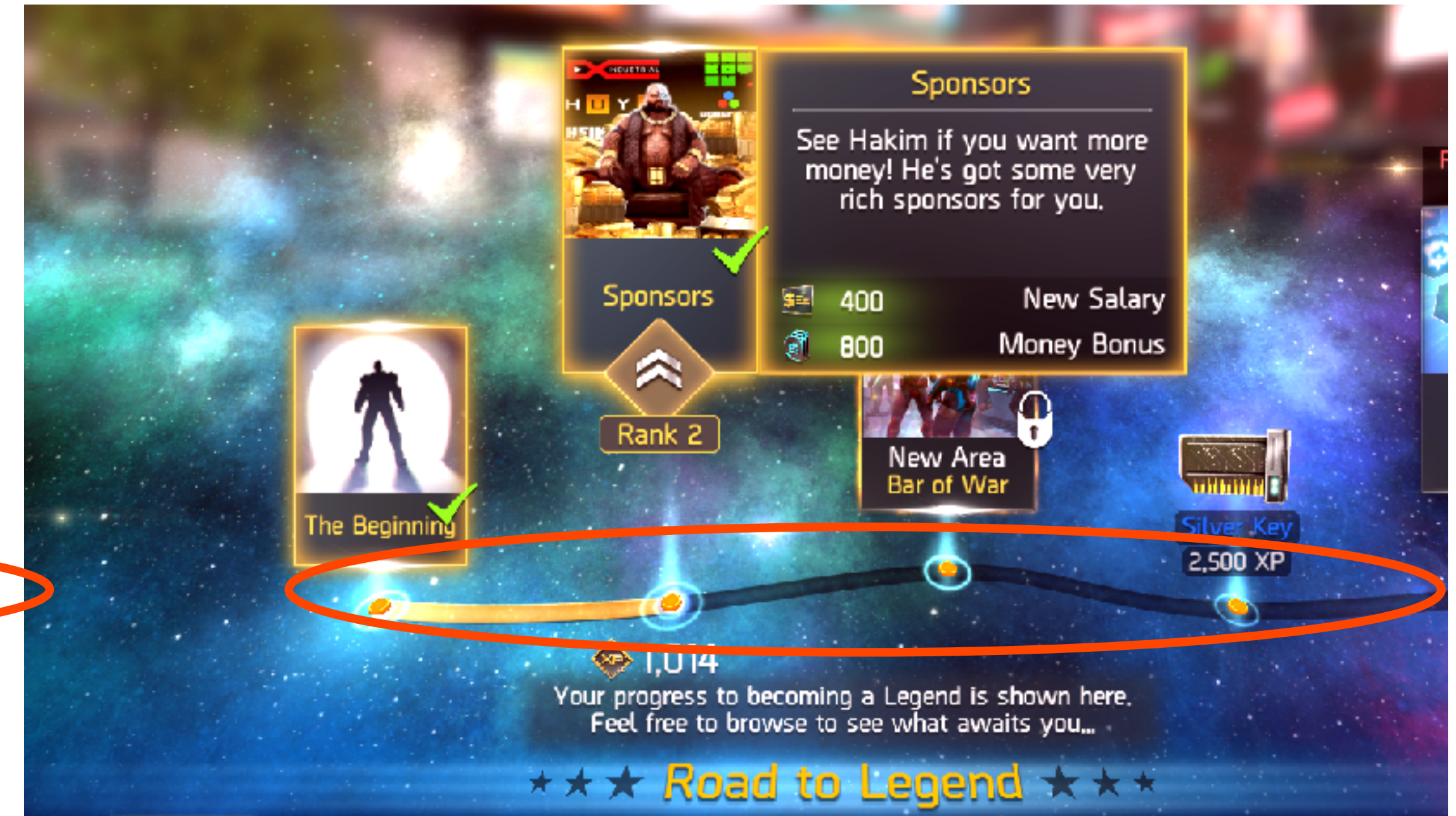
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The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild | Nintendo

A map and a marker: A clear indicator of where the player has explored while **giving actionable advice on where they can explore.**

Achievement Roads



Abstractions of your player's journey can be even more direct through simple UI graphics that can capture **progress and milestones**.

Collections

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Animal Crossing: Pocket Camp | Nintendo



Super Mario Odyssey | Nintendo

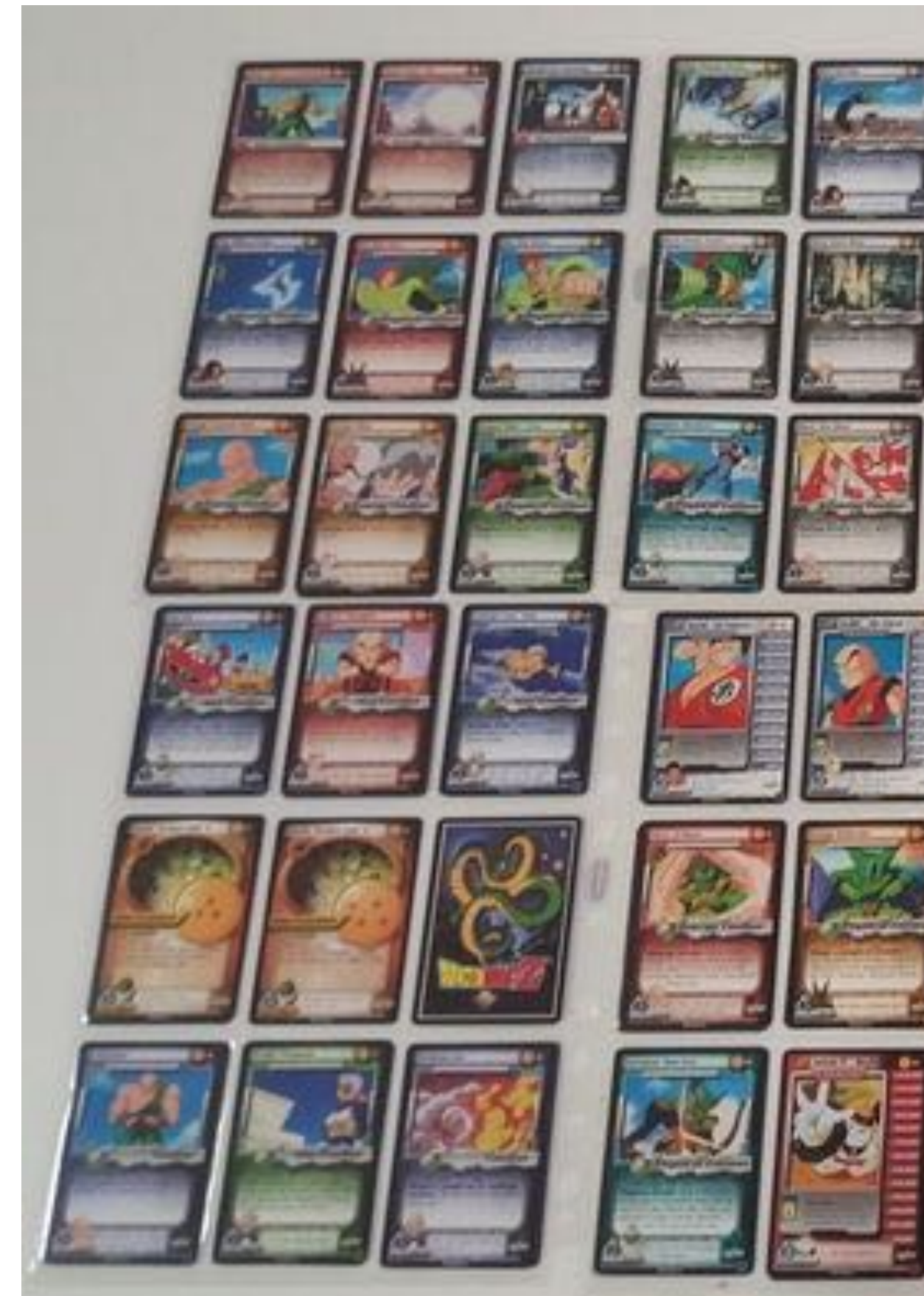
Diegetic ways to show off your collection is familiar and highly relatable.

Collections

42



Puzzle and Dragons | GungHo Online



Scrolling lists with thumbnails can also be a great feeling too.

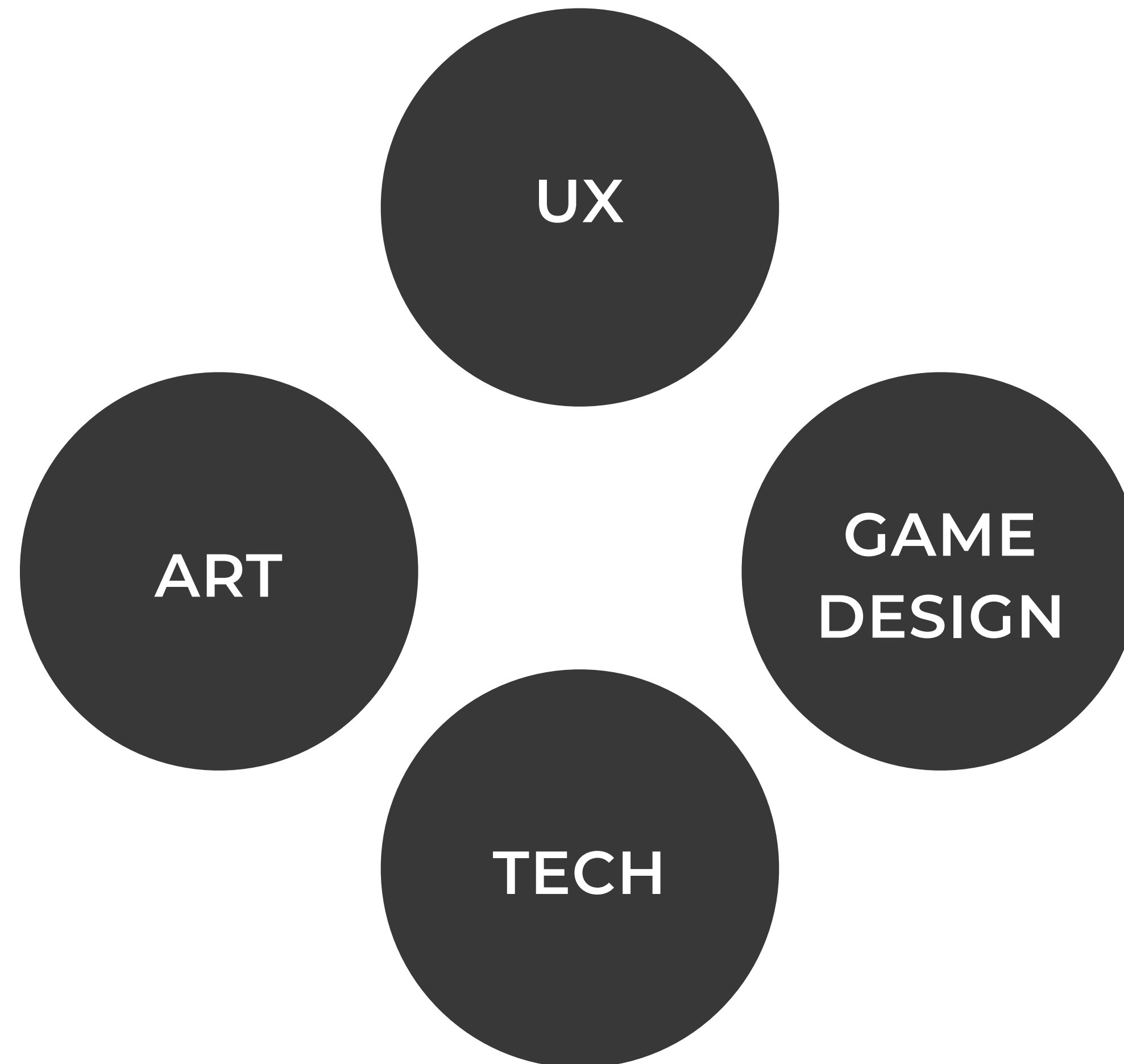
Long-Term Recap

- Set the stage for your long-term progression and have it be **conveniently accessible** to the user. Don't hide it in sub-menus!
- Be strategic on how you set your visual range. Each transformation should be **noticeable and significant**.
- **A combination of silhouette, color value, and complexity** to build and convey player's accomplishment and transformation.
- **Recognize how the game's narrative can influence your visuals** to successfully feel integrated.

WHICH TECHNIQUES TO USE?

AND THE PROCESS OF FIGURING IT OUT?

Collaboration is key



Process



**Brainstorm and
Research**



Available Resources

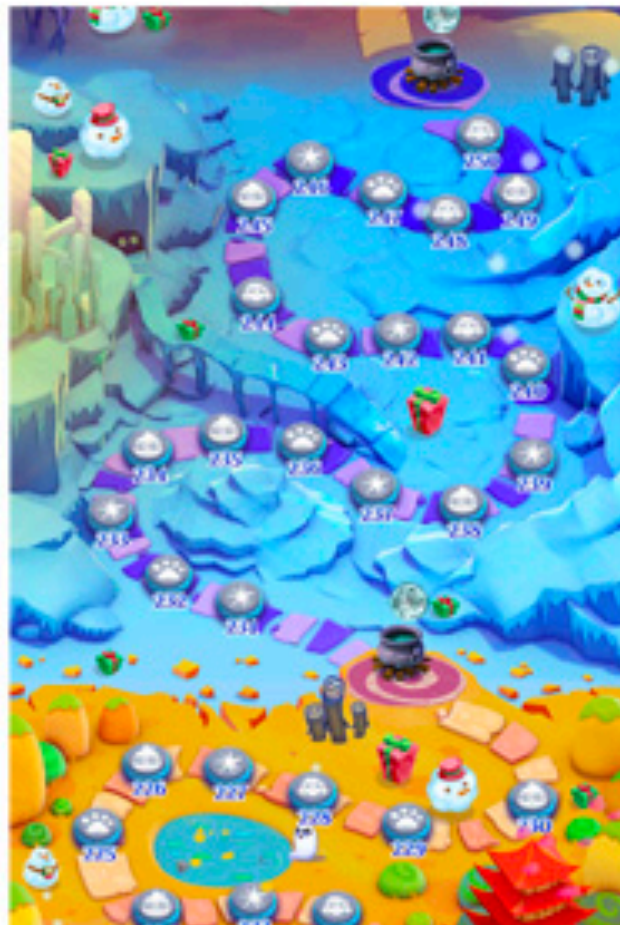


**Measuring Success
& Iterating**

Visual Progression Checklist ⁴⁷

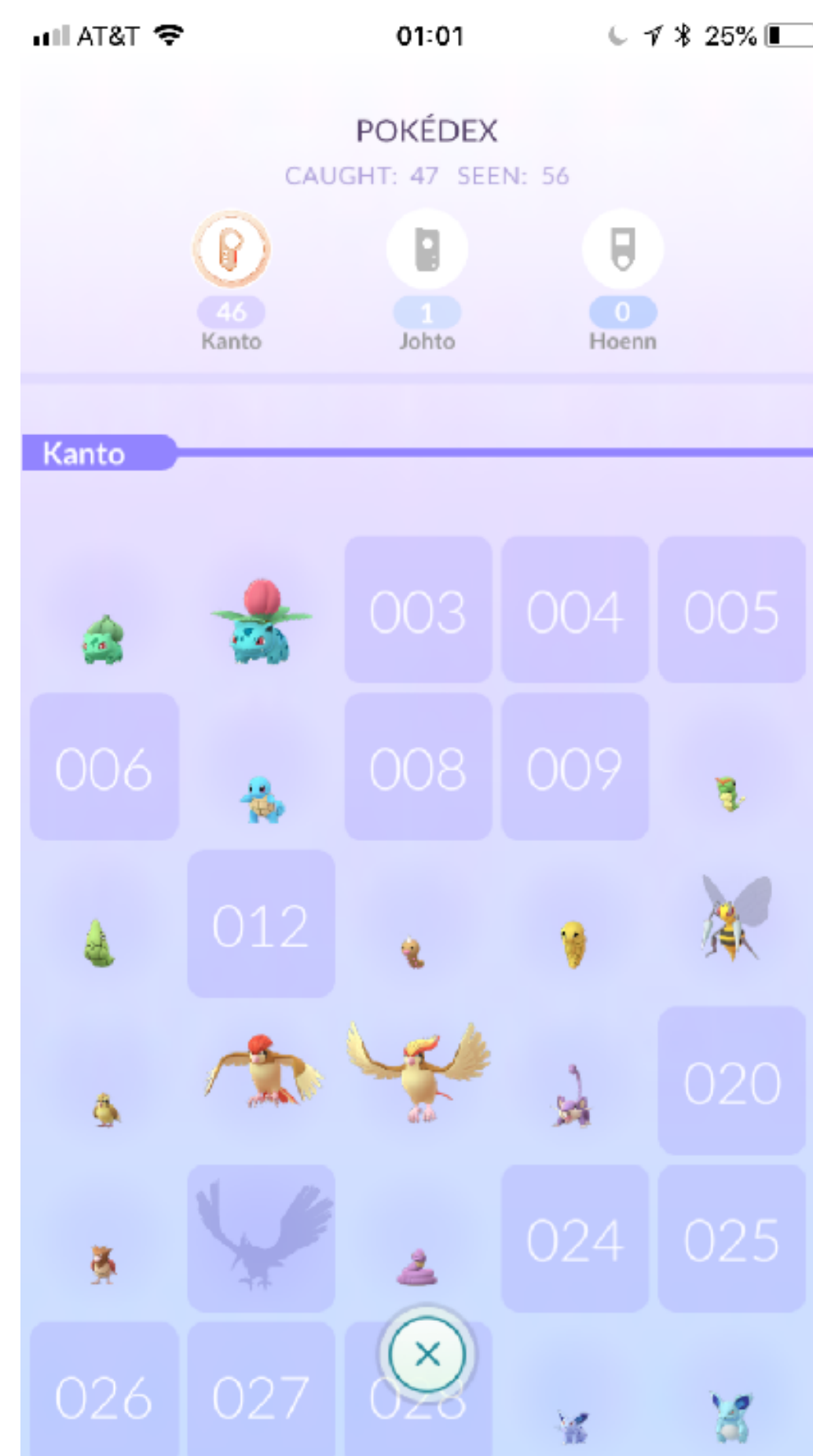
- ✓ **Do the visuals communicate the player's progress within the game's theme?**
Connect your genre and theme to the cue and reward of your game.
- ✓ **Is the progression easily surfaced and accessible to the player?**
How low-friction is it to experience these visuals? Would I need to dig around the game to surface my collections? Or is it something I can easily see when I first get into the game or right after
- ✓ **Do you have the resources to pull off executing the visual system?**
One artist? No Artist? AAA Art Team? Be aware of the rate of your content treadmill and the ROI of it.
- ✓ **Can the player easily show off and share their visual?**
Sharing functionality, screenshot-ability of the player's glow up.
- ✓ **Could the visuals have significant stages of transformation between themselves?**
Distinction of what a novice would see and experience versus what an expert would experience.
- ✓ **Can you measure the success of the system?**
How do you know if your visual system is influencing and working?

Available Resources



Available Resources

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Available Resources

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Resources vs. ROI

Measuring Success

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- Sharing & Word of Mouth (In-Game Shares, or Social Media)
- High participation and/or completion rate
- High traffic to specific visual progression screens
- Number of play session times
- Sustaining DAU and good retention?*

Recap

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No One-Size-Fits-All Solution

Context is key when deciding what kind of visualizers to use.

Need to ask yourself “When would this content surface?”

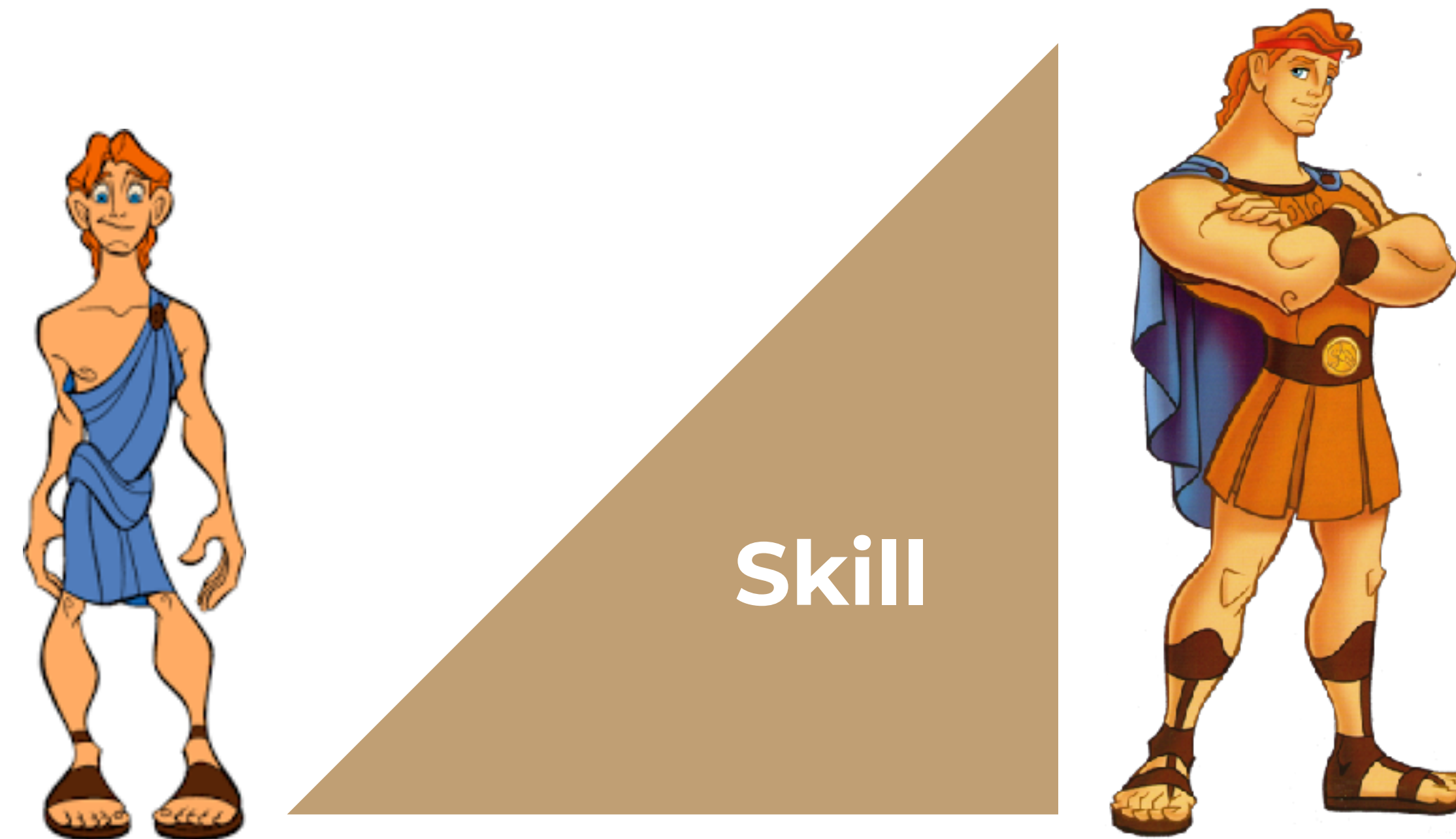
How does this then affect the way you portray the visualizer? (simplified vs. granular)

Visual Progression Checklist

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| ✓ | Do the visuals fit the theme of your game? | ✓ | Can the player easily show off and share their visual? |
| ✓ | Is the progression easily surfaced and accessible to the player? | ✓ | Could the visuals have significant stages of transformation between themselves? |
| ✓ | Do you have the resources to pull off executing the visual system? | ✓ | Can you measure the success of the system? |

Seeing is
believing.

Dreyfus model of skill acquisition



THANK YOU



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xamacreative.com