

- A PUBLICATION OF SENTENTIA GAMIFICATION -

Using SOP Strategies to Demonstrate Engagement

A California Core Practice Model Game



About the Program

At the [Academy for Professional Excellence](#), a program of the San Diego State University School of Social Work, our purpose is to revolutionize the way people work to ensure the world is a healthier place. We provide exceptional learning and development experiences for the transformation of individuals, organizations, and communities.

This project is ultimately about developing a learner-centered experience that does not spoon feed the learner with knowledge but allows the learner to test their own knowledge in a fun and entertaining way.

It minimizes organizational impact by providing the experience in an online format vs classroom format. It also increases critical thinking through coaching and feedback.

It was also developed with flexibility in mind in a way where learners can learn on their own or in teams, depending on the desires of the organization.

This game was developed to advance the Academy's vision for excellence, and was recognized as a Training Magazine Award finalist for *Excellence in eLearning or Web-Based Gamification Design* at [GamiCon](#) 2018.



The Need

Using SOP Strategies to Demonstrate Engagement TRANSCRIPT EXIT

Donna's Case

Donna is a single mother with 3 children. She has two previous referrals to CPS, one was for neglect and substance use and the other for domestic violence. Both referrals were unfounded but her experience with the previous social workers was not positive. Donna felt that her first social worker did not help her identify supports to help her obtain affordable housing and day care so that she could move into a place of her own. The second social worker she felt was judgmental and was threatening and she was worried that CPS was going to put her children in foster care due to no fault of her own.



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Child protection is extremely complex work because social workers manage the needs of the families they encounter every day, as well as a set of uncertain policies and often competing community priorities. With very little guidance, there is often a barrage of system improvements driven by well-meaning politicians, community stakeholders, and government agencies.

This backdrop makes it difficult to make impactful learning experiences.

In response to the need for quality and accessible professional development, Ventura County embarked on a practice improvement using a set of skills and strategies named Safety Organized Practice.

At the same time, the State of California was endeavoring to develop a unified framework for practice in child welfare across all 58 counties.

Ventura asked the Academy to develop an innovative learning experience for their staff that help them integrate the two practice strategies in a seamless manner.



The Design Process

We based our design process on previous experience in building interactive eLearning programs, and we also entered a new design space for this project where we created a custom interactive game specific to our content about best practices in social work.

We had to think outside the box in order to align the complex content with a direct, engaging, and straightforward design, which is gamified to enhance the learner's retention and the replayability of the game.

Our subject matter experts (SMEs) conducted research to develop the content and the scenario around which we built the game, and we had testing phases up-front to help inform how to best tailor and improve our game.

As a result of these tests, we switched from a third-person to a first-person point of view throughout the game. We simplified and enlarged the visuals throughout to help give the user a feel of talking directly to people in the game.

We also added scoring to encourage users to play more than once to try to improve their score, thus deepening their learning.



The screenshot shows a congratulatory message for a user named Laurel. It states: "CONGRATULATIONS, Laurel", "You have completed Using SOP Strategies to Demonstrate Engagement", and "You earned a total of 150 out of 160 points." A large circular badge with the number 150 is displayed in the center, surrounded by stars. The background features the California Child Welfare logo and the text "CORE PRACTICE MODEL".

SPOTLIGHT

"This was a fun way to learn new skills with no right or wrong answers, just advice on what I could do next time."

- A Ventura County Social Worker



Behavior: Listen to family and show you care about their thoughts and experiences Question 1 of 8

Your First Visit

You arrive at Donna's home at 4:30pm, and you are off at 5:00pm. You knock on the door and ask if you can come inside. Donna answers, "I guess" in a low voice and stands aside to allow you to enter. You both sit down in the living room.



Laurel, what would you do? Choose a response, then click **Submit**.

You begin by saying to Donna, "I'm here, because we received a call with some worries about your children's safety. Let's start with you telling me what's going well in your family. Then I'd like you to tell me about your worries about your family."

You begin by saying to Donna, "I'm here, because we received a call alleging there was an altercation between you and your boyfriend. Tell me about that."

You begin by saying to Donna, "I saw that you had two prior experiences with the Department of Children and Family Services. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being not good at all, and 10 being the best possible experience, how would rate your prior experiences? What could have been different to move up by 1?"

You begin by saying to Donna, "Thank you for inviting me inside. How are you today?"

Submit

< PREV ▶

Wow this shows how these strategies can positively alter a difficult conversation to improve people's lives! ☺☺

Question 2 of 8



she loves her kids a lot

20 Excellent. You earned 20 more points.



The Results

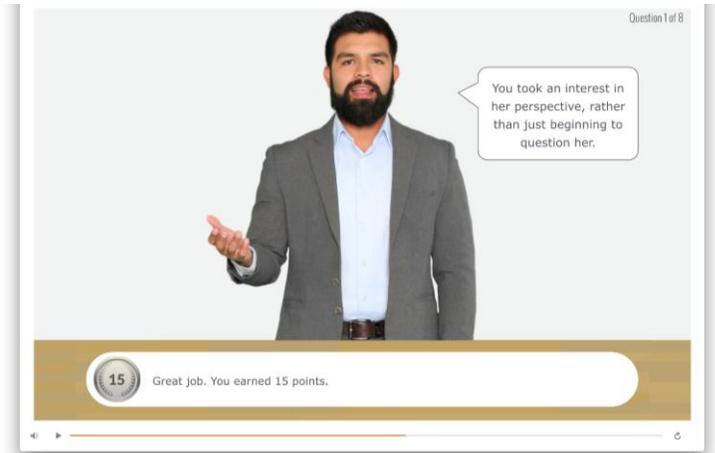
Ventura County decided to use this game in teams. Each unit of social workers played this game together.

The goal was to reach the top score. When teams reached the top score, they were provided with an incentive identified by their manager.

The decision to do this in this way was to increase conversation among teams.

This would further boost thoughtful connections between the practice principles as well as augment transfer of learning.

The game was well received in Ventura and has also started to garner attention Statewide.



This is a training tool that can be valuable to view more than just once, and provides a great opportunity for discussion in a team setting. And a little healthy competition!



The Design Team



Amy Jaffe

Amy Jaffe joined the Academy for Professional Excellence in 2014 to support the training of child welfare staff in Southern California. She is currently a County Consultant for the Child Welfare Development Services Program. Moved to improve the quality of life for vulnerable populations, Amy became a Social Worker in 2003. She has over 15 years of experience in Child Welfare with roles ranging from direct services, to management, and now training and consulting.

Amy's focus while at the Academy has been on developing and delivering high quality learning experiences using multiple modalities including in-person training, eLearning, Microlearning, Simulations, and Coaching.

Amy holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from California State, Los Angeles and a Master's degree in Public Administration from University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She currently lives in Los Angeles County.



Laurel Rohlf

Laurel Rohlf is a UX designer with over 15 years professional experience in gamification, illustration, user interface, graphic design, animation, and desktop publishing with a focus on educational products.

Laurel has been able to bring her significant design experience to the Academy for Professional Excellence, developing high quality online learning experiences for a wide range of human services agencies in Southern California.

She has a Bachelor's degree in Fine Art from University of California at Santa Cruz. When not designing, she likes getting outdoors, outrigger paddling, and spending time with family and friends.



Valerie Ryan

Valerie Ryan is the Learning Experience Design Manager for the Academy for Professional Excellence, with over 20 years of diverse experience in instructional design, project management, marketing, technical and creative writing, and video production. Val has developed and managed interactive training programs, educational videos, and eLearning courses for a variety of industries, including the Department of Defense, major for-profit corporations, and health and human services professionals.

Since joining the Academy, Val has designed and developed more than 150 hours of online courseware for child welfare, adult protective services, and behavioral health staff. Val also designs and produces mobile applications and webinars, and has presented at training conferences on eLearning design and development, mobile application development, and curriculum design for online distance education.

Val has a MA from SDSU in television and film production and a BA in communications from American University.



Level Up your corporate learning and development programs, employee onboarding, training, or adult classroom with gamification – a cutting-edge strategy to motivate and engage employees, customers, and students.



Hosted by Monica Cornetti, CEO of Sententia Gamification and Gamemaster of GamiCon.

Monica's guests include L&D Professionals, Adult Educators, and Platform Providers who give you tips, tools, and techniques to add immediately to your training, talent development, leadership, and employee engagement toolbox.

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