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**THE USE OF VARIOUS DESIGNS
TO CREATE A SENSE OF IDENTITY FOR A GAME**

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CHAPTER 1: PROJECT INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Motivation

Games are made to be fun and part of that fun comes from many various things, some of these include game mechanics, challenges, story, art, music or even game lore. At the start of this project we were hoping to create and bring something that's fun and challenging for the players to enjoy from all different perspectives. The project is a 3D tactical RPG that takes place in a high fantasy medieval themed setting, we initially titled it "Project Isekai" during development and later changed it to "Dawnspire Odyssey" to fit the game title.

The few of us that are working on this project all have different objectives and goals. Mine personally is to use this project to learn a bit more about creating and designing characters as well as the setting of the world and what it contains lore-wise.

In this project we have decided to go with a high fantasy styled medieval themed setting, the project will be using anime-ish artstyle on the character sprites.

1.2 Project Objective

The objective of this project is to create a fully functional and playable game demo in the span of 21 weeks in total. Something that is able to show what we have learned during the 3 years of studying game design. The role that I have chosen in this project is the Game Designer as well as the Game Artist (2D), some of my role responsibilities are game design, game balance, level design (level game balance, not to be confused with environmental design), narrative design, character concept art, VFX and UI design.

1.3 Research Topic and Scope

Each one of us taking part in the project will need to conduct research that is related or can be used in the game. The research that I've chosen is to research on "The use of various designs to create a sense of identity for a game". This research purpose is to make use of various designs to create a sense of identity for the game itself, be it small or big (For example, subtle hints of patterns/logo for the game world or boss design). Some of these designs can be patterns, lore or culture related ones, that can be used to help give the game a more unique identity. Some examples are the patterns on the attire of the game world, characters or UI design.

CHAPTER 2: Background Study / Literature Review

2.1 Background Study

Culture is a large topic and has a lot of sub topics to look into. To ensure that I don't get sidetracked or overwhelmed by this topic, certain restrictions have to be placed to scope down the topic that I will be looking into. The main designs that I am looking into are a mixture of both Malaysian designs and medieval designs together to come out with designs suitable for the game.

2.2 Game Analysis

Different cultures are constantly being used as inspirations for a lot of media nowadays. From realistic games such as Tomb Raider to full fantasy type games such as the Final Fantasy franchise, there is no shortage of different designs inspired by different cultures being used in the game.

2.2.1 Tomb Raider: Underworld (2008)

Take Tomb Raider: Underworld (2008) as an example, the game is set in a modern day and age setting just like any other Tomb Raider games, the adventures of the character Lara Croft often relate to different ancient cultures or history. In Tomb Raider: Underworld (2008), the theme of the game is nordic mythology mixed in with a bit of mayan culture as well, because of the gameplay of Tomb Raider games are often puzzle and action adventures, the way they present the nordic culture has a lot to do with the environment. One example is the use of popular and recognizable figures like Odin from norse mythology or mayan and aztec styled designs for their ruins.

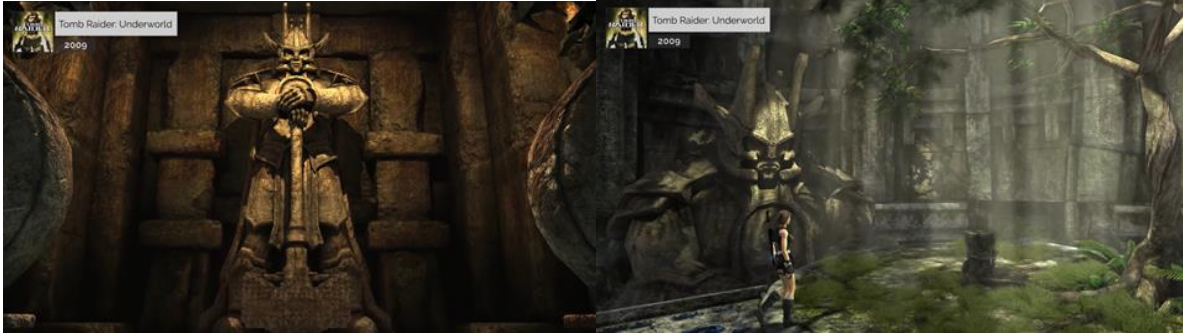


Image 2.2.1.1 & 2.2.1.2 Odin status located in the ruins



Image 2.2.1.3 Mayan Ruin

Image 2.2.1.4 Mayan Statue concept art

Another way of presentation that is also quite common in the series is through different forms of patterns. One of them are inscriptions, inscriptions are something that are inscribed with information related to religion or history oftentimes used to preserve said information. These inscriptions can either be presented in many forms, such as their language, patterns or even drawings. These are commonly found throughout the themed locales.



Image 2.2.1.5 & 2.2.1.6 Inscriptions on the wall using patterns

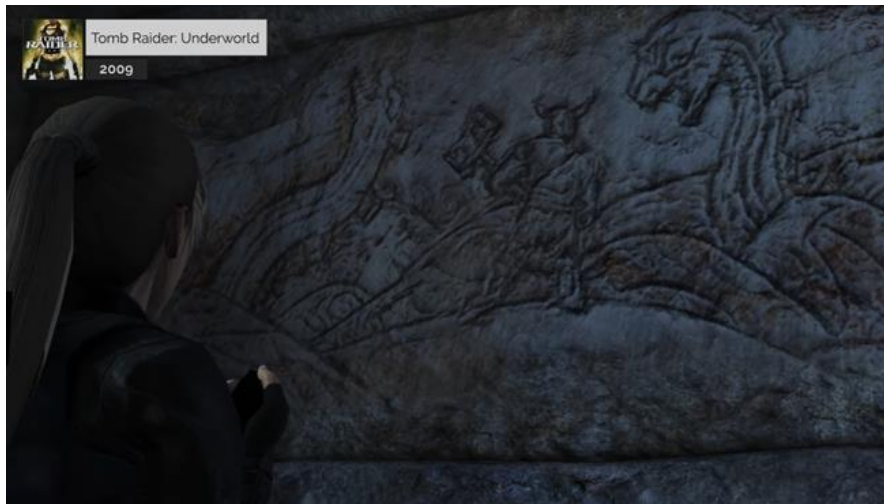


Image 2.2.1.7 Lara Croft examining a Norse inscription.

The enemies and living figures that are within these ruins are also themed accordingly. Their attire usually consists of easily recognizable parts that the culture usually wears. Nordic figures with horns and viking styled attire (wool and metal armor made of chainmail), and Mayan figures with the Aztec designs (carvings of animals, or history onto stone objects).



Image 2.2.1.8 Nordic Thrall

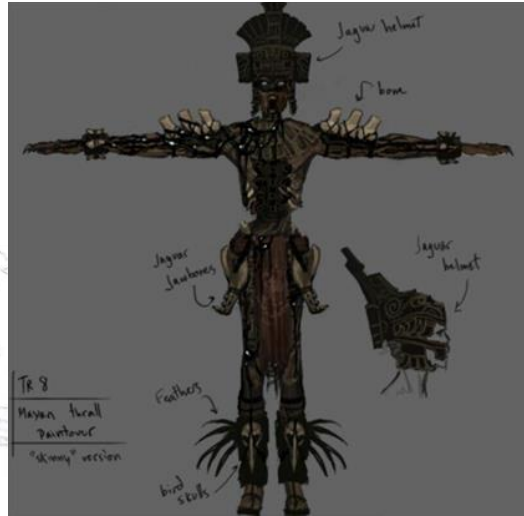


Image 2.2.1.9 Mayan Thrall

2.2.2 Final Fantasy XII

Just like any other Final Fantasy games, the world is huge and populated with different races, cultures and locales. One thing that stood out to me in Final Fantasy XII is how they designed their locales to establish a certain vibe within that locale. “Rabanastre” which is the first locale that the player is able to explore in, is a small city where merchants ruled the streets and the different races that are living there are among the lower and poor under the social hierarchy. The way the city is designed is colorful in a way that it shows what that city represents.



Image 2.2.2.1 & 2.2.2.2 Concept art for Rabanastre

The people living in the city of Rabanastre are often found wearing cheap and thin clothes, most of the time not fully covering their body and leaving skin to show. The patterns found within their jewelry and clothing as well as the color scheme makes it look and feel tribal, emphasizing on the vibe they wanted the place to give out.



Image 2.2.2.3 & 2.2.2.4 Attires of the people living in Rabanastre

2.3 Malaysian Pattern Design review

2.3.1 Floral Motifs

One of the patterns in Malaysia that I will be doing research on are the patterns found on batik blocks. Based on a research done in 2018 by Rabiatuadawiyah Mohd Kari, Mohd Azhar Samin and Rafeah Legino, Titled “Sustainability of Traditional Motifs in Malaysian Batik Block”, they stated that the designs used in previous batik blocks which represented traditional and local identities are no longer used and thus caused the batik blocks to lose their sense of identity. Some of these traditional motifs include medicine, ceremonial gifts, symbolism and decoration.



Image 2.3.1.1 & 2.3.1.2 Batik designs making use of traditional Malaysian motifs

2.3.1 Kelingai Motifs

On the other hand, the patterns used in Sarawak's tattoo, also known as "Kelingai motif" is supposedly the same as previous motifs mentioned, which is to represent traditional and local identities. These Kelingai motifs are done differently based on what information they wanted to show, these patterns can range from a wide variety of Sarawak based flora and fauna, and oftentimes used together in a single tattoo.



Image 2.3.2.1, 2.4 & 2.3.2.2 Various Kelingai motifs used in their tattoos

2.3.3 Wood Carving Motifs

Based on a research done in 2016 by Sumardianshah Silah on "The Structure of Malay Woodcarving Motifs in Craft Education Module", similarities are found with previous said floral and Kelingai motifs that Malay traditional wood carving motifs are influenced by nature and are rich with symbolism. These motifs have been and will continue to associate the Malay's way of life, culture, values and beliefs.

These wood carvings patterns can be found in many of our day-to-day lives, some examples are wooden doors, different parts of houses and even wooden bed frames.



Image 2.3.3.1, 2.3.3.2 & 2.3.3.3

Wood carving motifs used in doors, houses and decoration.

CHAPTER 3: System Specification & Requirements

3.1 Project Development Tools and Resources

These development tools listed below are used in developing this project.

Name	Description
Unity Game Engine	The game engine used to develop the project that we are working on.
Github Desktop	Software used to collaborate with other developers to work on the project.
Adobe Photoshop CS6	Software used to develop art assets for the project.
Adobe After Effects 2020	Software used to develop art assets for the project.
Autodesk 3DS Max	Software used to develop 3D models and animation that is used in the project.
Visual Studio Community 2019	Software used to write scripts that are used to develop the game.
Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2019	Software used to compose and edit the game trailer.
Discord	Software used to communicate.

Figure 3.1.1 Project Development Tools and Resources

3.2 Design Structure Flowchart

Game Start Flowchart

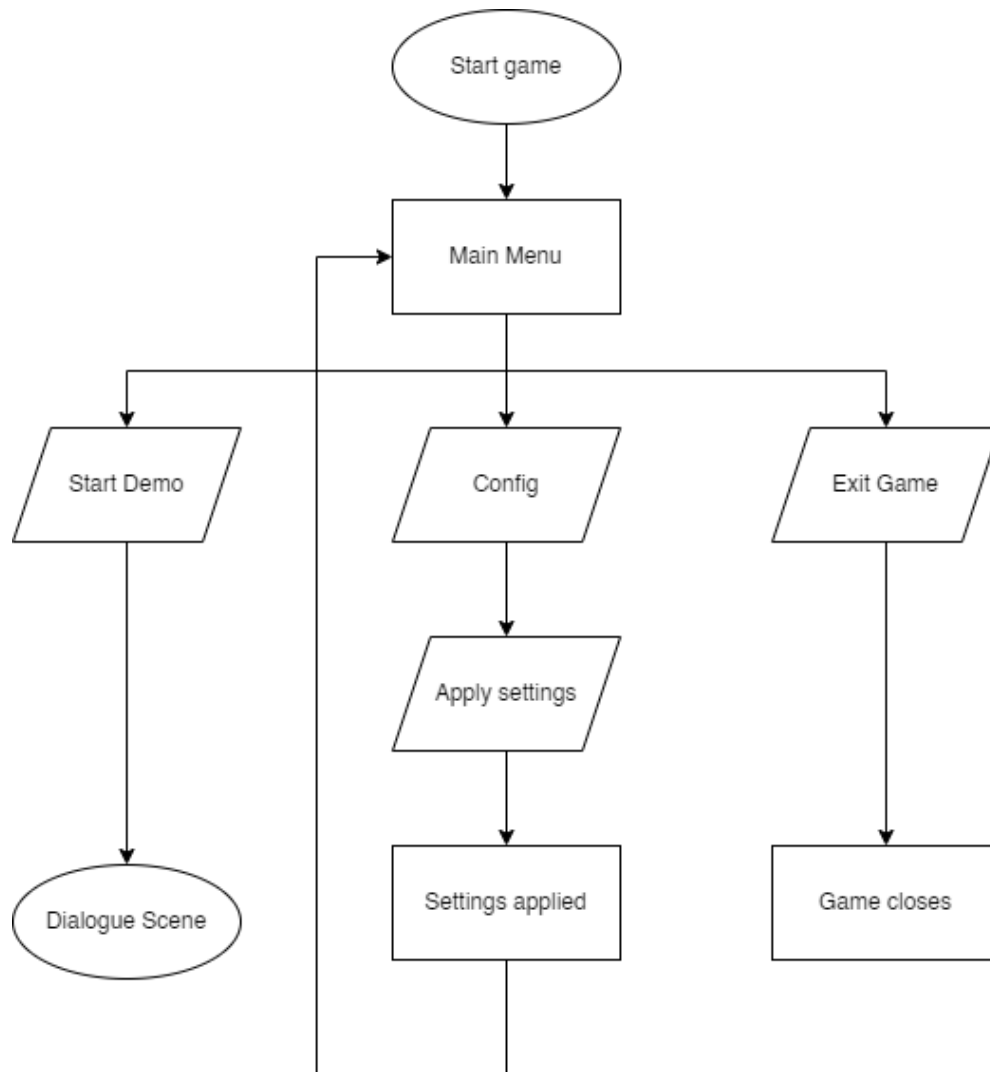


Image 3.2.1 Game Start Flowchart

Dialogue Scene Structure Flowchart

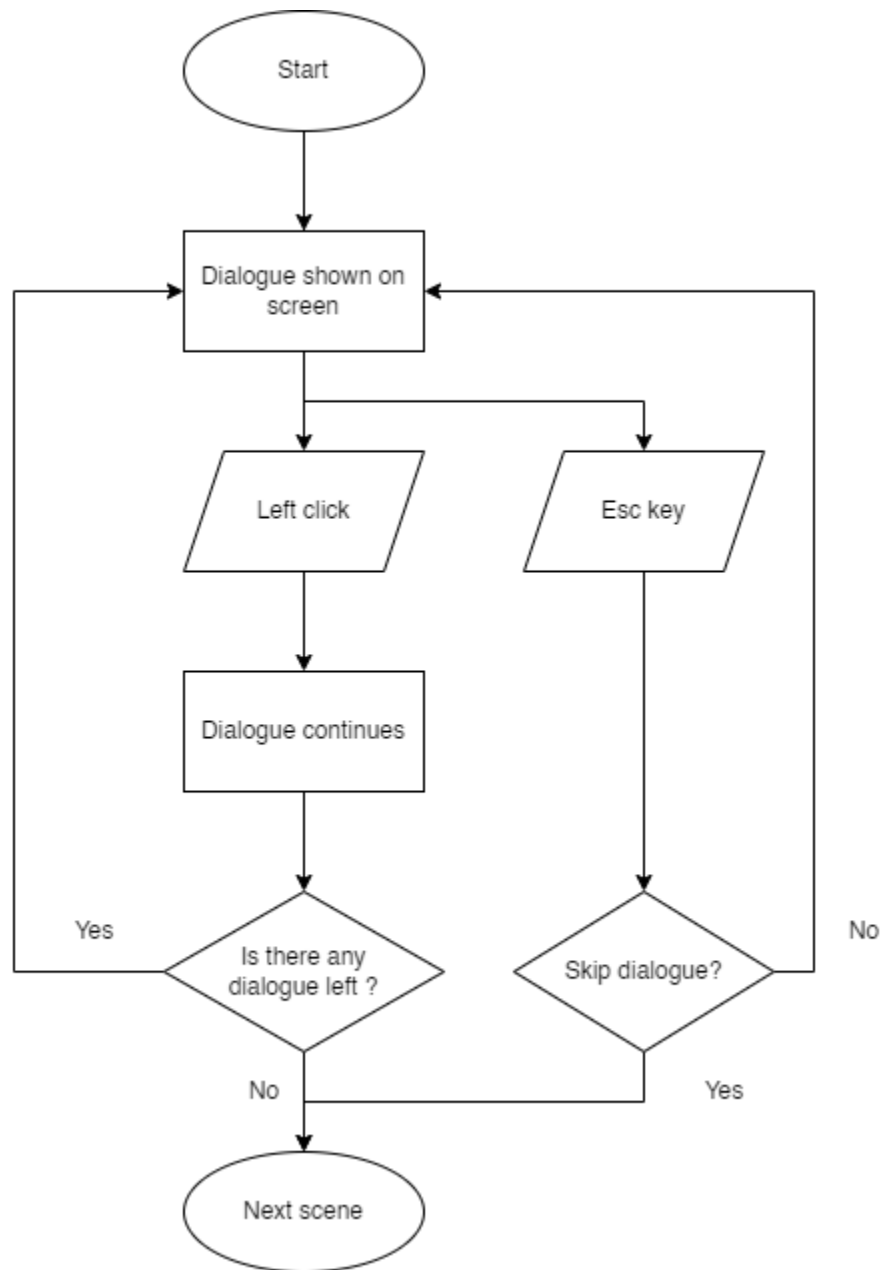


Image 3.2.2 Dialogue Scene Structure Flowchart

Gameplay Scene Structure Flowchart

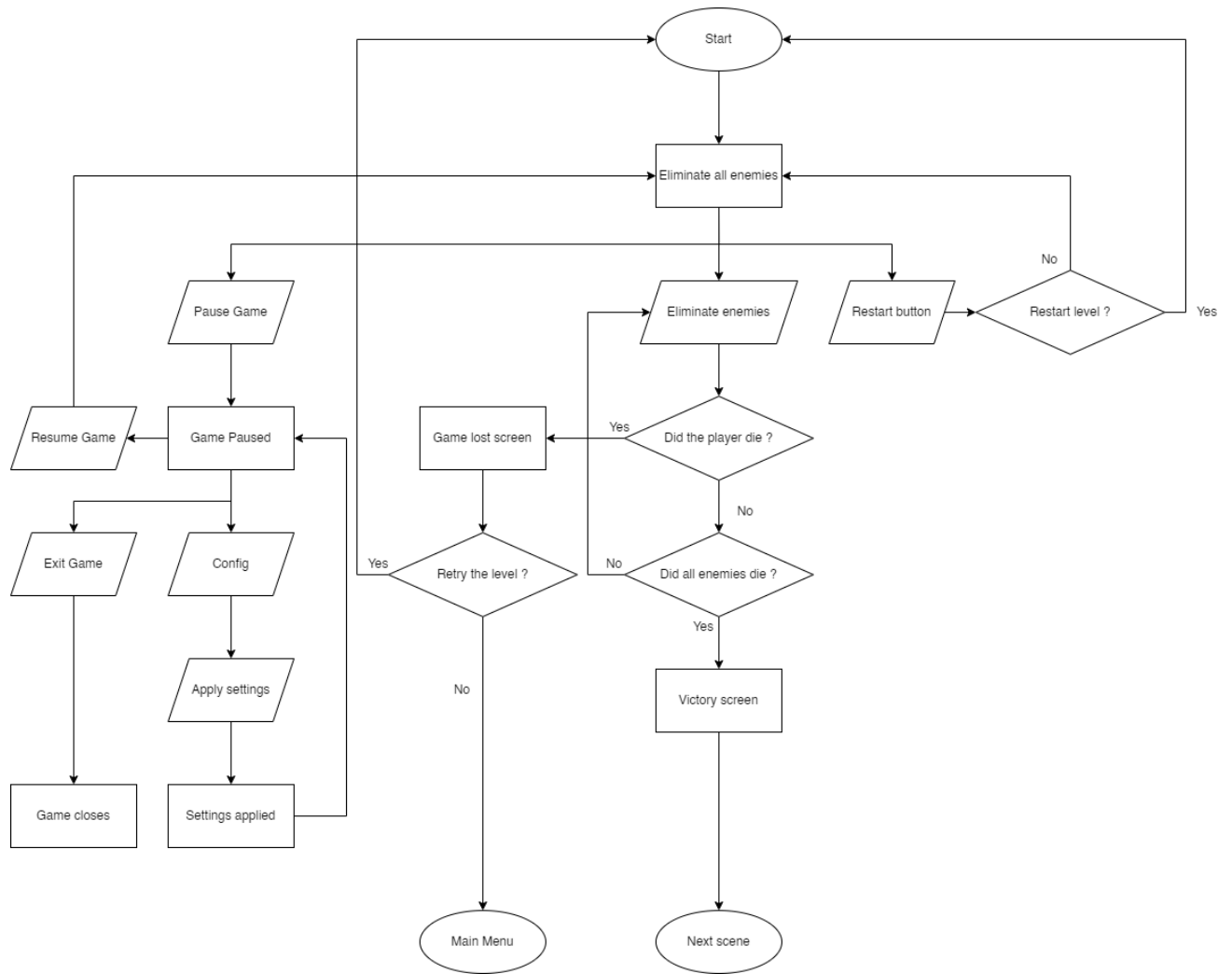


Image 3.3.3 Gameplay Scene Structure Flowchart

Hub Scene Structure Flowchart

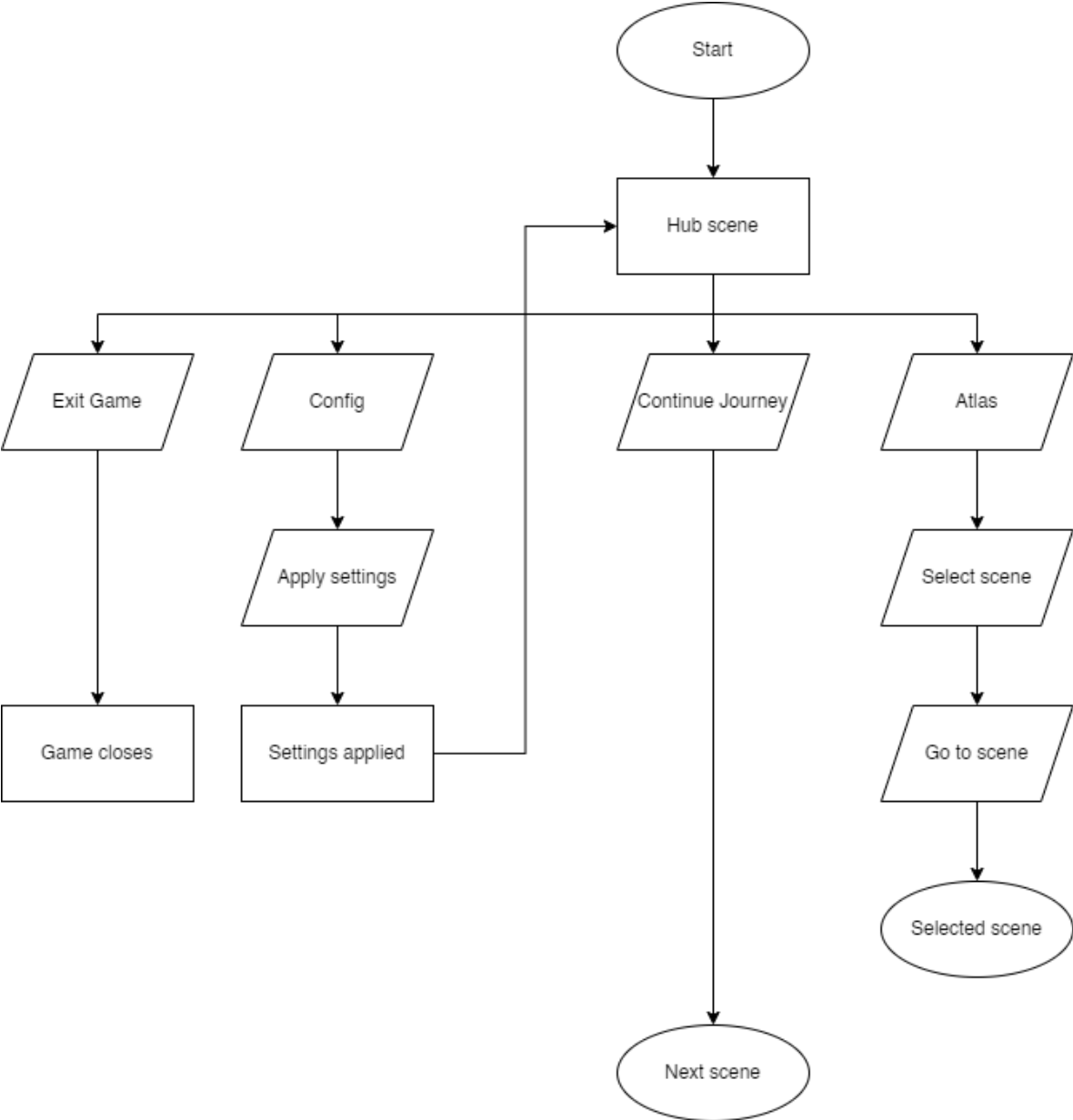


Image 3.3.4 Hub Scene Structure Flowchart

3.3 Hardware and Software Requirement

Listed below are the hardware and software requirements needed to run the game.

Name	Requirements
Operational System	Windows 7 or above
RAM	4GB RAM
Disk Space	1GB Free Space

Figure 3.3.1 Hardware and Software Requirements.

CHAPTER 4: Design and Implementation

4.1 Game World Setting

The game world takes place in a high fantasy medieval themed setting. The narrative of the game makes use of two places. One realm where everything is normal and the other realm where the world is corrupted.

The player plays as an Instructor commanding his students into combat to survive the obstacles thrown onto them when they accidentally get transferred into the other realm. The story takes them through the corrupted versions of the world as well as their various locales such as the City Outskirts, within the City as well as the City Sewers as they find out the truth about the strange phenomenon.

4.2 Character Design

4.2.1 General Design

The general design that is used in the project is a mixture of both medieval designs and Malaysian designs. Taking inspiration from both we came out with a design for the attire that the people in the world would be wearing on a daily basis. Since the characters are from the city outskirts, the materials used are very cheap and basic, enough to survive normal living conditions. The color as well as the tone of the attire is inspired by Malaysian traditional attires where the attire color is mostly one color but made up of different tones coupled with different patterns.

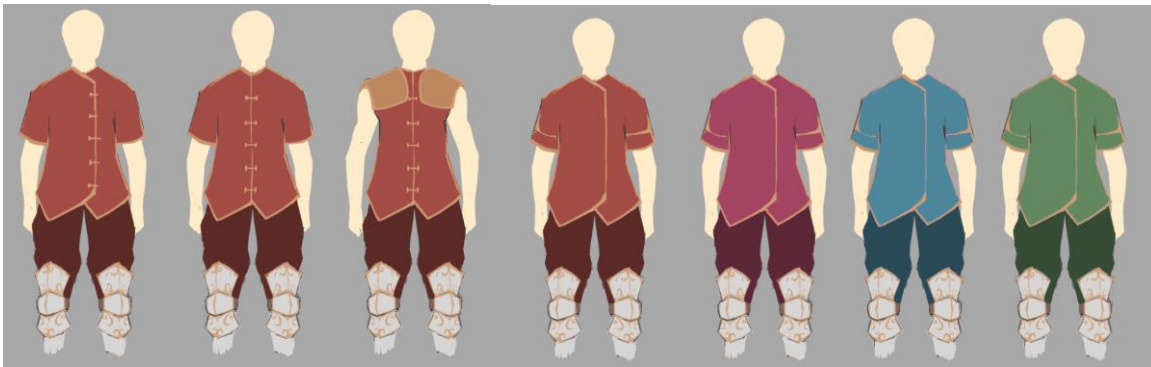


Image 4.2.1.1 & 4.2.1.2 General attire for the people living in this world



Image 4.2.1.3 & 4.2.1.4 General attire for Helena / Cecillia

4.2.2 Gladiator / Xanther's Design

Xanther's design is built from the general attire design where multiple accessories are attached to the general attire. Xanther's role in the game is a gladiator which specializes in close combat, which is given more armour. To emphasize on the poorer lifestyle they had, the size of the armour given is smaller and covers less area.

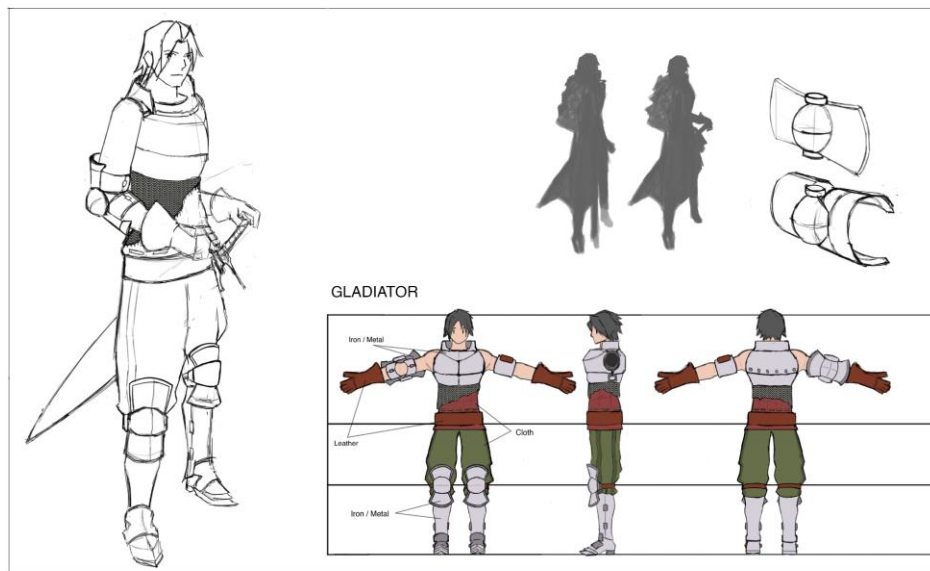


Image 4.2.2.1 Gladiator / Xanther's Character Sheet

4.2.3 Archer / Helena's Design

Helena is an archer who also came from the same area as Xanther. Helena is also given the same attire treatment where the materials are cheap, but instead of armour she receives more clothing as protection to suit the nimble archer archetype.

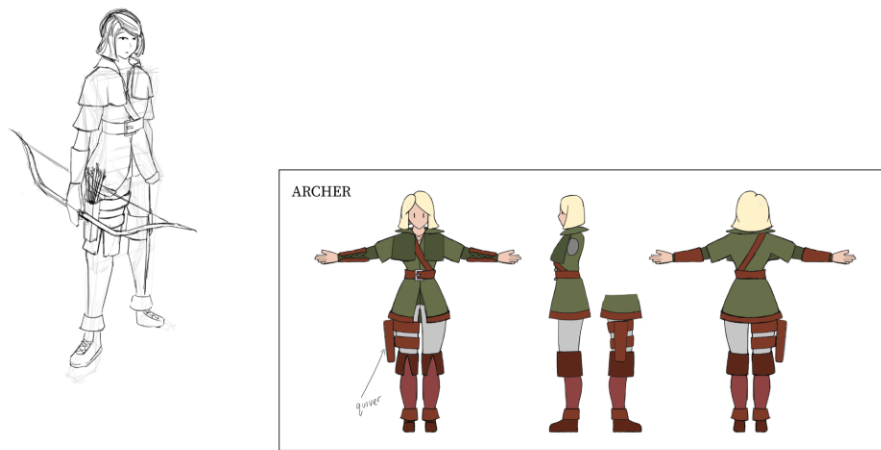
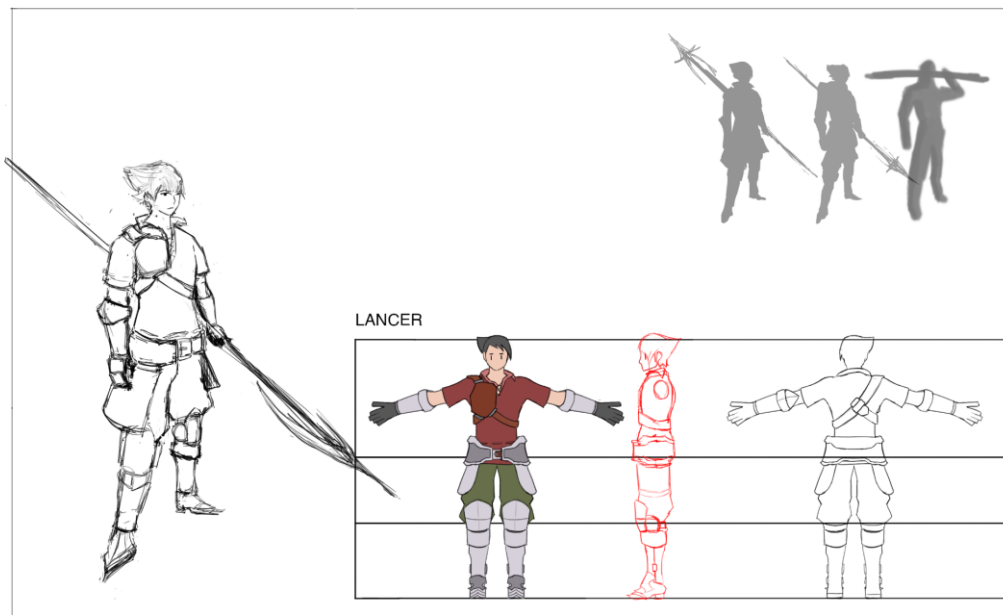


Image 4.2.3.1 Archer / Helena's Character Sheet

4.2.4 Lancer / Levin's Design

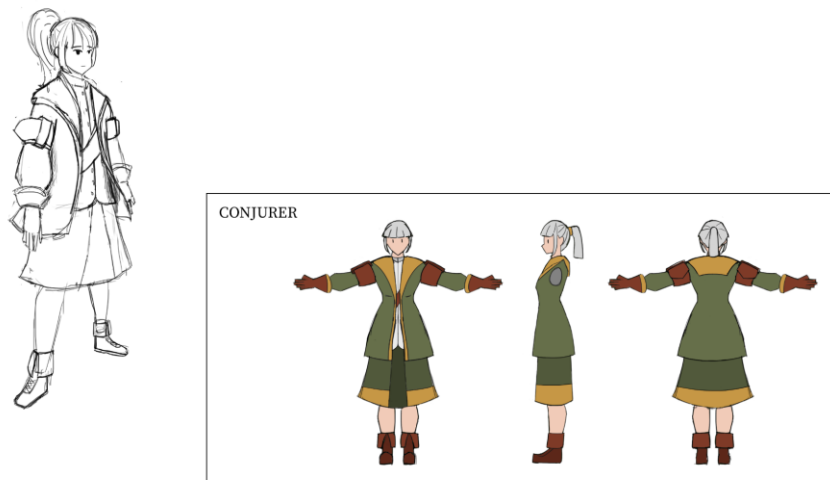
Levin is the last member of the group of students that came from the same area. Levin's role in the game is a close ranged attacker that can also take a bit of hitting, somewhere in between Xanther's and Helena's role. Levin is given less armour than Xanther but more than Helena to emphasize on his role.



4.2.4.1 Lancer / Levin's Character Sheet

4.2.5 Conjurer / Cecillia's Design

Cecillia is a conjurer that uses magic as her weapon, she joins the main cast after a certain point in the story. Cecillia is on the higher part of the social hierarchy different from Xanther, Helena and Levin, thus she is given more layering of clothing and uses more colors than the others.



4.2.5.1 Conjurer / Cecillia's Character Sheet

4.2.6 Knight Design

The Knights are the guards of the city, roaming from both the outskirts and deep within the city covering all grounds. They are given more armour to emphasize their role. Two versions of the knight are used in the game where the first version is the normal knight uses normal animation in the tutorial scene. The second version of the knight is the corrupted knight where it has a aura around themselves and the animation is changed to give off unnatural/zombie feel to the players,

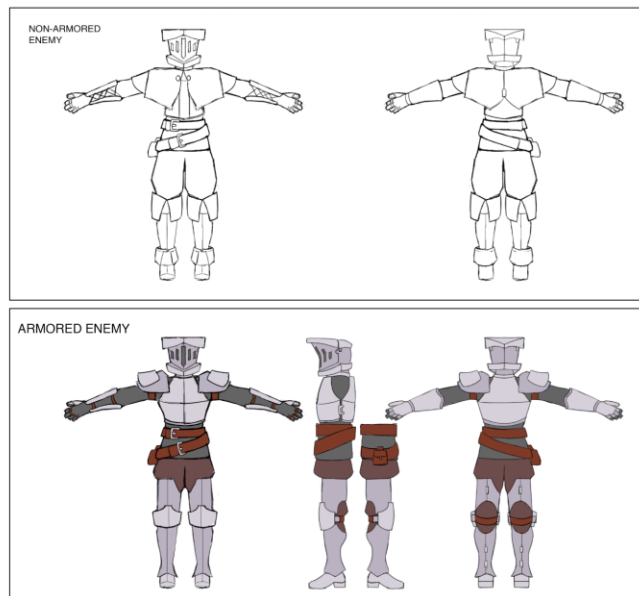


Image 4.2.6.1 Knight Design

4.3 Patterns Design

The Kelingai motifs make use of a lot of sharp edges, allowing patterns that also make use of sharp edges to easily borrow its style. Kelingai motifs also make very good use of the gestalt principle (showing of lines without actually drawing out the lines) with the black and white color scheme that they use.



Image 4.3.1 Medieval ornament pattern applying some Kelingai motif design

Concept mixing medieval and Malaysian motifs on character attire to fit in with the setting.



Image 4.3.2 Using Kelingai and wood carving motifs to detail character attire



Image 4.3.3 Using 30/70 or 40/60 rule to compose detailing on the character



Image 4.3.4 Archer / Helena's attire with floral and wood carving motif

Used a bit too much space on the floral motif, so I decided to tone it a bit down so it is less overwhelming on the attire.

The UI makes use of two different bases to differentiate each other from being controllable through interaction or non-controllable through interaction. The one that isn't controllable through interaction makes use of the abstract designs used in wood carving together with a wooden themed background to give the feeling of a traditional wooden board.



Image 4.3.5 & 4.3.6 Wood Carved-like background for UI



Image 4.3.7 Subtle detailing within dialogue UI

CHAPTER 5: Result and Evaluate

5.1 Testing and Feedback

During game testing, not only we have to ensure the game is running fine from the start to end, but also bug free if possible. Over the course of the 21 weeks of developing the game, our supervisor has given much needed feedback on how the game looks and feels. Near the end of the development, we also provided a few coursemates and friends and family members to test out the game and give feedback. We were able to change much of the problems other people were pointing out, such as game balance, noticeable bugs as well as certain visual clarity during gameplay.

5.2 Troubleshooting

Game design-wise some of the problems that we found during testing was during the build version of the game which led to the game being unplayable from start to finish. This caused some last minute overwork for the game programmer to fix up the remaining issues. This issue can be easily settled had I finished setting up the overall game scenes and tested the final build in its built state 1 week before submitting.

5.3 Issues and Constraints

5.3.1 Issue with art design workflow

Different parts of the game art design workflow is wrong / messed up. Could have planned this better at the start of the project or use the extra time (semester break) to tidy up loose ends as well as to prevent misuse of time.

5.3.2 Issue with concept art workflow

Lack of experience / practice in character sheets made me unsatisfied with the sheet itself. Should have spent extended continuous time on it instead of working on a few different tasks at a time. Own speed in doodling / creating concept is acceptable but translating it to character sheet is very poor.

5.3.3 Issue with UI creation and testing workflow

The UI wireframe at the start of the project is quite different to the final version. It was around Week 13 onwards that the wireframe and UI assets were only starting to reflect the final version. Could have done a better job at the start of the project detailing overall game design including UI and level wireframes to avoid too much of change in the future.

5.3.4 Issue with general role responsibilities

Generally happy with the roles and tasks chosen and done, but overall would be much happier if I locked myself a bit more to certain parts of the roles to make sure that certain parts shine through instead of keeping everything on pace (For example, having everything on done on mediocre is going to be presented mediocre-ly, whereas focusing on certain task while keeping other parts on the same pace can have that one part shine out and hopefully cover a bit of the mediocre work). Not only that but the overall planning of the game's design should be more fleshed out at the start to avoid adding stuff near the end which might cause more time needed to test / fix bugs if any are found.

5.4 Game Bugs

Majority of the game bugs are found during development and are fixed before the final build is built and submitted. Some of these non game breaking bugs still exist in the game but are hard / a bit weird to recreate, as well as fixing it, one of these bugs are skill Area of Effect not damaging the enemy. There isn't enough time near the end to go through intensive game testing and debugging, so I'm sure there might be still a few that are left out. Overall, very satisfied with the built condition of the game.

CHAPTER 6: Future Work and Conclusion

6.1 Future Work

There is a lot more that can be improved upon the current version of the game, both on game design-wise and game art-wise. Ensuring the game has a unique selling point is essential to put the game on the market as well as to compete against already established and future competitors. Having more depth to the game mechanic wise can greatly help make this game stand out from other generic titles. Incorporating more newer mechanics such as better gameplay system, better progression system, boss fights or adding other RPG elements is a good way to start. Art-wise better and faster concepts, designs, sprites as well as UI is a must, not to mention to include the implement the research ideas into it as well.

Planning and designing the game from the start could have been done better to make efficient use of time. Changing workflow to prioritize certain tasks better as well as focusing on 1 task at a time before moving to another is probably going to allow me to work with a clearer image in mind as well.

6.2 Conclusion

Over the course of these 21 weeks, I am very proud and happy of my team's work in this project, and also very satisfied with the final build of the game. There are still many that Dawnspire Odyssey could improve on as well as change. Personally I am okay with my overall performance in this project but I do wish I could have put more effort to deliver better results both in game design and game art.

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Appendices

Appendix A


Project Paper Consultation Logbook	
Project Title	Project Isekai
Student Name	Loo Kai Shen
Student ID	1800060
Year/Semester	Y3S2
Supervisor	Mr Kevin Tan Han Keong

WEEK 01	
Comments:	Supervisor signature:
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 02	
Comments:	Supervisor signature:
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:

WEEK 03	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Think a bit harder on the contents of the research topic, see if anyone has done it before and if they did see what can I do that makes it different and unique from others.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:22/6/2021</p>
WEEK 04	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Skill balancing can and should include risk and reward management.</p> <p>Enemy AI behavior – choosing targets – using different types of actions.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:29/6/2021</p>
WEEK 05	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Tutorial level balancing – tutorial level separation – prevent from affecting connected mini levels when other mini level change.</p> <p>Change or adapt the story around the assets made to make efficient use.</p> <p>Ensure game mechanics are fun and have meaning to use.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:6/7/2021</p>

WEEK 06	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Needs more oomph in the vfx – intergrate it into the combat system.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:13/7/2021</p>
WEEK 07	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Needs more indication to direct player on different actions - green for move, orange for choosing target, red to attack or see affected tiles on attack.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:20/7/2021</p>
WEEK 08	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Need to finish playable character sketches for 3D modeller</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:27/8/2021</p>

WEEK 09

Comments: Area of Effect needs to further balance, surrounding damage should be weaker than than the selected target or else it makes no sense (unless there is a suitable reason for it.)	Supervisor signature: 
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Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:3/8/2021
--	----------------------

WEEK 10

Comments:	Supervisor signature:
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Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
--	--------------

WEEK 11

Comments: Work on advanced AI behaviour next - run away - change target - when to use what skill Change some colors / details on model to make it not blend with background. Change and use some assets in the game to represent how the final version will be.	Supervisor signature: 
---	---

Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:17/8/2021
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WEEK 12

Comments: Take future mechanics into consideration when updating / making new VFX.	Supervisor signature: 
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Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date: 24/8/2021
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WEEK 13

Comments:	Supervisor signature:
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Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
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WEEK 14

Comments:	Supervisor signature:
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Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
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WEEK 15

<p>Comments:</p> <p>No access to pause menu – wrong keybind / can't access exit game.</p> <p>No settings – Need to add it in.</p> <p>UI looks very flat – Suggest adding textures, polish.</p> <p>Polish the character sprites or use 3D models to touch up.</p> <p>Double check the character design is the same as the model.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:22/10/2021</p>

WEEK 16	
<p>Comments:</p> <p>Try not to add anymore things - just finish what we have right now / tweak it.</p> <p>Try to add flashy VFX.</p> <p>Double check UI menus / buttons to make sure that there is a use for it (both in gameplay and in hub) - remove unnecessary ones.</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p> 
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date: 29/10/2021</p>

WEEK 17	
<p>Comments:</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p>
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date:</p>

WEEK 18	
<p>Comments:</p>	<p>Supervisor signature:</p>
<p>Progress (please circle the feedback)</p> <p>1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Poor Satisfactory Good</p>	<p>Date: 29/10/2021</p>

WEEK 19	
Comments: Merging branches and game testing. Game balancing.	Supervisor signature:
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 20	
Comments: Fixing last minute bugs and game testing to make sure that the final built is working from start to end. No game breaking bugs Promotional materials – Poster, Namecard, Brochure/leaflet, Game Trailer	Supervisor signature:
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:
WEEK 21	
Comments: Finish up research paper and do turnitin check before submitting.	Supervisor signature:
Progress (please circle the feedback) 1 2 3 4 5 Poor Satisfactory Good	Date:

Appendix E

Final Project Title Form

Fill in the information below as detailed as you can after confirming project title.

Project Type:

Product Based Project

Research Based Project

(tick the appropriate box)

Student ID	Student Name	Email & Contact no
1800060	Loo Kai Shen	Kaison69@1utar.my
1900071	Tan Chee Sang	tncesg@1utar.my
1702844	Teh Kheng Yee	kyteh9925@1utar.my

Supervisor: Mr. Kevin Tan Han Keong

Project Title: Dawnspire Odyssey

Project description:

Dawnspire Odyssey is a 3D tactical RPG. The players play as an Instructor in the game carrying out his everyday life, when one day a strange phenomenon cast you and your students into an unknown realm. Follow the story to find out why you were sent there and how to find your way back as you command your students to fight in the other realm to defend themselves from their unknown challenges.

Student name	Individual Project Scope
Loo Kai Shen	Game Design, Level Design (Game Challenge /Balance), Game Balancing, Character Concept Art, UI Design, Game Tester, Game Trailer, Game VFX, Game Narrative.
Tan Chee Sang	3D Modeler, 3D Animator, 3D Artist, Environment Design, Environment Lighting, Game Poster, Group Name card, Game Tester, Bug Tester.
Teh Kheng Yee	Game Programmer, UI Implementation, Game Tester, Bug Tester, Game Brochure /Leaflet, Version Control Management, Debugging.