



Isekai Manga

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Category 5-13

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1. Our Project Idea



What we want to create as a group for a project in Category 5, is to draw and write out a manga, together with a detailed storyline, character designs and a buildup, climax and a positive and satisfying ending. Here were some of the topics we took into consideration.

- Science Fiction
- School Life
- Aliens
- Dystopian
- Isekai

We eventually settled with Isekai, a specific genre of manga

2. What is Isekai?

Isekai is a genre of manga that revolves around the protagonist being transported into another world or dimension, unintentionally or intentionally.

In this new world, the protagonist will need to adhere to different rules, cultures and practices. It also frequently involves magic and mystical ideas.

異世界, or isekai has its roots in Japanese culture, and has been a very prevalent genre in recent years, with the advent of many famous animes and mangas such as Re: Zero and Tensura. Many times, the fantasy elements in these stories are widespread, and usually are central to plots. This is where Isekai gets its beauty: a writer has the full freedom to write whatever they please, right from their imagination.

An Example of an Isekai Anime & Manga <--



3. Why Isekai?

Our Message

We wanted to present a story of resilience, tenacity and friendship. Through writing and drawing an isekai, where the protagonist is drawn into a new unfamiliar world. Through the grit of the main character to adapt to his new environment, tenacity is shown. With the bond he has formed with his newly met group members, with adventurers, friendship is expressed. Finally, with the determination and dedication of the group's main destiny, to defeat the Demon King, they had to face many challenges and uphill battles, expressing the overall resilience of the group.

All these traits of the human psyche are intertwined into the storyline of the manga, where the details of the world and the events are up to our imagination. Coming back to the idea of the writer's freedom when it comes to writing Isekai, we believed that Isekai was the genre that was most suited for the category of "Creative Arts", emphasis on "creative". It allows us to exercise our own creativity and innovation to create different designs that are out of normal, that are otherwise unheard of. For example, many character designs are purposely eccentric in nature, in order to show the difference in culture between each world.



4. How have we used isekai to achieve our goals?

As mentioned earlier, Isekai is a very open genre that basically allows for endless possibilities and options whilst writing the storyline. We believe that this openness and receptive nature that readers tend to have towards isekai make it easier for us to think creatively and outside the box: after all, we were creating a whole new world just from our imaginations! Was this not using our imaginations to the finest? From isekai, we branched out to several different genres, such as fantasy and magic. Truly, it was the flame, the spark which spurred and inspired us to consider different genres instead of realistic drawings.

But, what would be the significance of drawing something so disconnected from reality? To this question, I say that it *isn't* disconnected from reality. After all, it is another world, with the same people, with the same emotions and thoughts; the only difference would be the supernatural environment around them and their powers. Deep down, our characters are all crafted to be... well, human. Isekai has enabled us to really connect with the readers, even if we wished to do a fantasy-style manga.

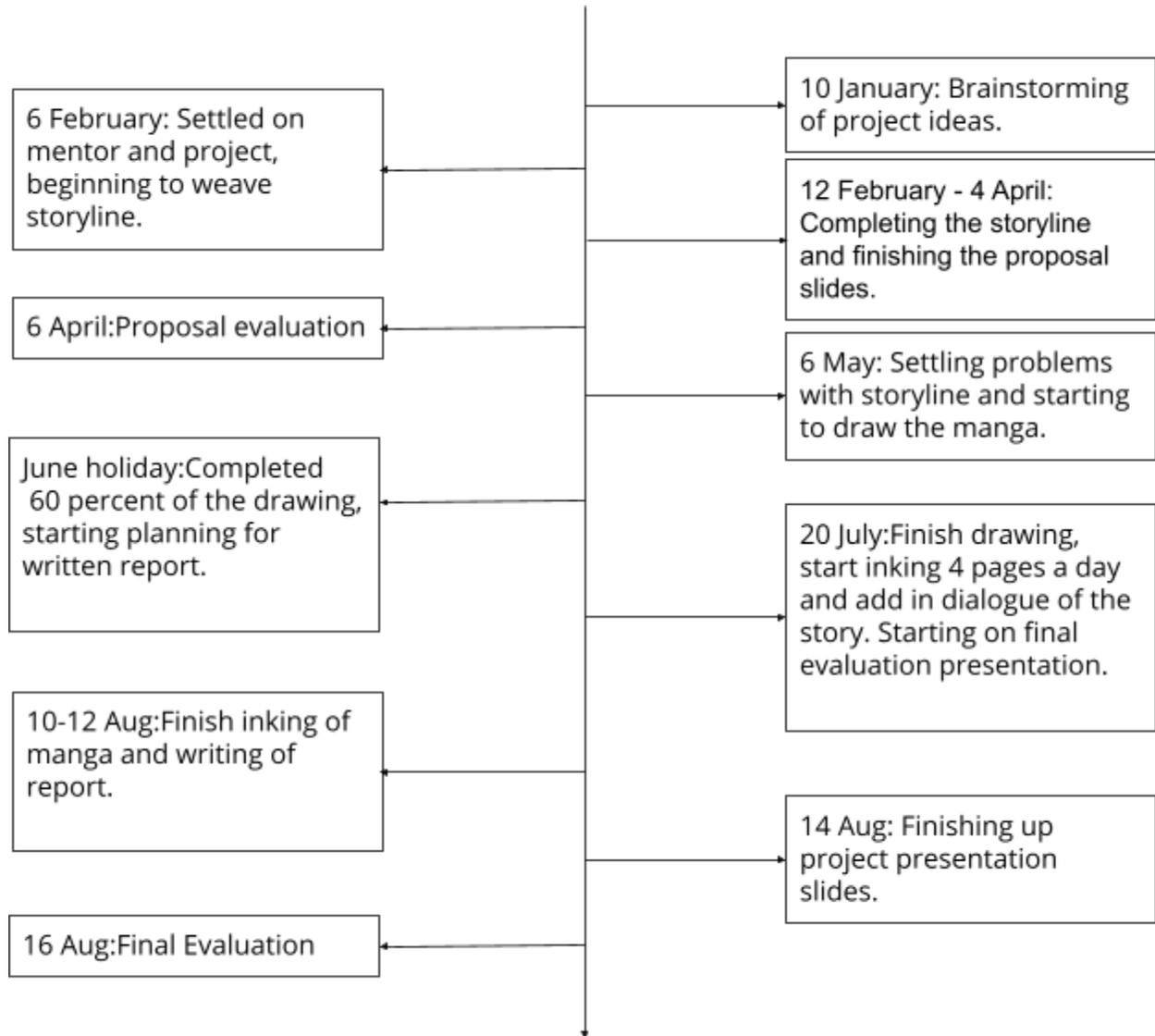


5. Roles of Members

Group Leader / Manga Artist - Aaron Meng
Manga Artist / Auxiliary - Tian Yu
Auxiliary / Slides designer - Wang Rui
Storyline Writer / Designs manager - Kuan Ray



6. Timeline



7. Main Plan

-We initially wished to do a 50 page manga, but because of the worsening of the COVID-19 situation and the shutting down of schools, we were unable to meet up as frequently, resulting in many mishaps. In the end, compromises had to be made and we shortened the manga down to 30-40 pages.

-We planned to do the drawing on digital software, partly because it was more convenient for our illustrators when they were shading. However, as the digital software was paid for, one of our illustrators did not wish to fork out so much money for the software. In the end, we figured that the drawer in question could simply draw it on hardcopy and scan it. Since he was more so in charge of backgrounds, the change in shading styles was less noticeable.



-We also wanted to include 1-5 frames in each page, which varied in each page based on significance.

-Certain pages would have the entire frame covering the page, emphasizing the scene's significance.

-We decided to try something different. We sought of did a half light novel half manga, with parts of some pages using light novels to express while some is drawn out. We wanted to make our "manga" special and not follow the traditional kind

8. Inspirations

Keiji Mizoguchi



We chose Keiji Mizoguchi as he greatly influenced the artist team's style (mainly the eyes for their characters). His way of drawing his characters' hair also influenced them a lot as his

way of drawing hair makes the hair look very soft and flexible. We learned a lot from him because the way both our artists drew their characters' hair last time looks very stiff and unnatural.

Masahito Watari

We also decided to choose Masahito Watari as his style also influenced me as well. I took some reference from 'Konosuba'(the manga he drew)for my own characters. I tried to learn from his way of drawing his characters.



Wataru Kubota

I chose Wataru Kubota as his background design is very realistic and aesthetically pleasing. Just in this design alone, the shading is very realistic and is reminiscent of that of a black and white photograph. He inspired us to do a pretty background, and for an isekai manga, this is extremely important as we need to establish the atmosphere and setting of the place very well; without a good background, this was almost impossible.



9. Storyline

Honoka Takahashi wakes up to find himself in a world filled with magical powers and vastly different cultures to that of Earth's. He is, of course, at first excited at the prospect of starting life afresh and anew; but quickly, he finds himself disillusioned. Systems in the new world were completely different, and as such, it would be obvious that cash in the new country would be vastly different to that of Earth's. He painfully finds this out after he had painstakingly scrounge for a food store and set the money on the table. His stomach pangs and moans in agony, starving his whole body to survive. On the fifth day, he faints but is healed by some passers-by. They seemed to be well-meaning, friendly and hospitable with our protagonist. However, they seemed to be chattering a little too much about our soon-to-be hero...

Their hospitality extended further when two of the supporting characters, Hoshiko Kitiara (a knight), and Kazuri Mari (the mage), invited him to eat. This serves to pacify Honoka, but also is a good introduction to our characters (those traits will be explained later on in our report) and their personalities.

Honoka breathed a heavy sigh of relief after finishing the meal, and felt indebted to their party. To be brutally honest, this was what the party had intended to do all along. But for what purpose? Well, their motive was to make him join the party to fight monsters in order to protect the nation. The party's hospitality and the prospect of being able to earn money from their adventures was enough to convince Honoka to join the party.

The party goes on several expeditions and commissions, defeating slimes, trolls and the like. Honoka tries, to his best ability, to assist the party in picking off a few; but he can't seem to find his groove. He was neither adept at the sword, nor precise enough to aim an arrow, and his magical capability seemed to be close to none; he had no education in magic, after all. In his first expedition, he was astounded by their power. It was an utterly overpowered team! He goes on to befriend many of them and forge relationships with them.

It was a year after when the message came. Honoka faints during a mission and falls into a deep slumber. He wakes up, facing the silhouette of a... woman? No, this silhouette was far greater, far more monstrous than one of a mortal. It spoke with a booming voice, and adopted a cold tone in its speech. Flames the size of hellfires crackled, surrounding him and the silhouette. Fear crept into Honoka's heart as she turned...

"I've been watching you."

This is where our story cuts off, and we intend to end it on a cliffhanger here. (We plan to include a sequel next year! :))

10.Character Design & Traits



From left to right:

Sei Mizuhashi - Archer

Kazuri Mari - Mage

Honoka Takahashi - Protagonist

Hoshiko Kitiara - Knight (Swordsman)

Seiko Matsushita - Healer (Priest)

Mizuhashi - 水橋

She's the archer of the team! Sporting a bubbly personality and a friendly demeanor, she's a friend to all. She's the mediator whenever there's a conflict (usually between Mari and Kitiara) and is well-respected by everyone.

To Honoka, she treats him the same as all of her friends and welcomes him to the party warmly. The team, with all of their quirks, makes Honoka believe that Mizuhashi is the most normal and sensible out of the group.

She is also very laid back and does not like being forced to do something she doesn't.

However, that side of her vanishes completely when in battle. Honoka notes that Mizuhashi (or Mizu for short) seemed supremely scary whenever she took her stance. Towards monsters, her eyes seemed merciless and cold as she calculated her shots to perfection. Each one of her arrows are never wasted. In fact, Honoka can count the number of times she's missed throughout the one year with her: Zero.

This side of her, though seen to be heroic and valiant by Honoka, scares Honoka greatly.

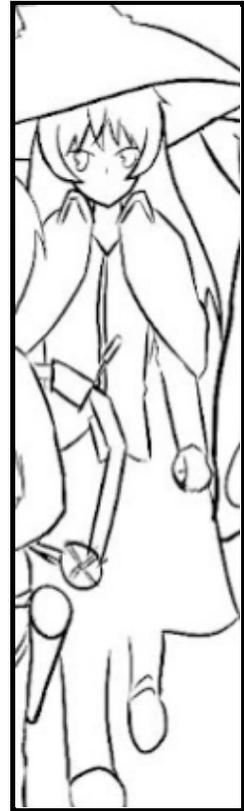


Kazuri Mari - カズリ・マリ

She's really a kind person at heart, and she displays this when it counts. She would pretty much do anything for her friends, and especially for Seiko Matsushita, who is her best friend. She often bickers with Hoshiko Kitiara, the knight, because she finds him very over-the-top. But in actuality, Mari is pretty loyal to Hoshiko because of a favour that he did for her. This "favour" is not mentioned inside the story, and Mari seems very keen to avoid talking about it.

Mari is obsessed with reading her books and says that "it's part of her training". Her books all seem to be spell books as said by the cover, but Honoka notes that Mari has been caught by her teammates swapping out the spell book cover for a story book cover. She whines and whines about her being framed, but no one really believes her.

To Honoka, she's seen as smart but petty. She's also left a deep impression on Honoka from when she devoured a whole bucket of fried chicken by herself, while Honoka only had the stomach to finish eating three of them despite him starving for 5 days beforehand. Even though Honoka thinks her to be a glutton, Honoka thinks her to be underdeveloped at her age and jokes to her about it, to which she will either be flustered or angry, depending on the mood.



Honoka Takahashi — 穂香・高橋

The star of the show! Honoka Takahashi is a teenager originally from Japan and was transported to his new world through a river. He criticizes how this method of bringing him into the isekai world was worse than being hit by a truck and being reincarnated by a god or something along those lines.

Although he has attended school a collective 0 times in the last 2 years, he proves himself to be quite an intelligent person, analysing people quite well and is quick to pick out their weaknesses and their strengths. (In the sequel, we intend to put in more instances of Honoka's intelligent planning.)

Honoka is seen to be quite negative in his thoughts and seems to think of the worst possible scenario whenever a situation arises. His pessimism, though seen to be a source of comedy at the start, is made use of by the main antagonist later in the story.

Honoka is not very comfortable with speaking his mind to his friends, but his emotions do sometimes get the better of him. Incidentally, it is also because he opens up to his friends about his thoughts that they begin to get closer to him, and allows Honoka the space to get more comfortable with the party members.



Hoshiko Kitiara - 星子・吉荒

"I am the mighty Kitiara, whose sword doth shake the world with one sole swing! I am as adroit as lightning, as powerful as an explosion! One very swing from my blade shall make even your soul be rent asunder, cracking the hemisphere open and rocking the world! Kneel, as you gaze upon the sheer power that emanates from my body! My aura, it seems, has engulfed you! Never the mind, for your insolence shall be forgiven as I!"

He's way too obsessed with superheroes. Hoshiko thinks of himself as a powerful and divine being and fools absolutely no one with his words, save for himself.

However, after getting to know him, he shows that he's a friendly guy who can act normally too, just that he prefers to show off to gain attention. He's often the first one that people associate with the party (perhaps unfortunately) and is evidently the most memorable person of the team. His extroverted personality comes into good use when he assists in introducing Honoka to the rest of the cast.

His nicknames include "The Northern Star", "The Comet of Justice", "Excalibur's Star" and so on.

Honoka, despite his initial shock at the knight's personality, soon grows to like the knight (like everyone else before him) because of his kind demeanor and his caring nature. His sense of justice is also unparalleled and he would even sacrifice himself in order to uphold it.



Seiko Matsushita - 征子・松下

She's quiet.

Honoka really only has that to say about her. She is the epitome of shyness, only choosing to confide in her best friend, Mari.

Still though, she's a joy to have around. It might not look it, but once you get close enough to Seiko, it's almost a guarantee that she'll find a way to mess with you and



11. Progress of one of our drawing

1st stage: Planning the Layout & rough sketches



The first stage of our drawing is the planning of layout and sketching of the characters. The sketch tells us what the characters are doing in the particular frame.

2nd stage: Drawing of the characters over the sketch



We drew the characters over the sketch and we made the colour of the sketch blue for clarity.

3rd stage: Inking of the characters



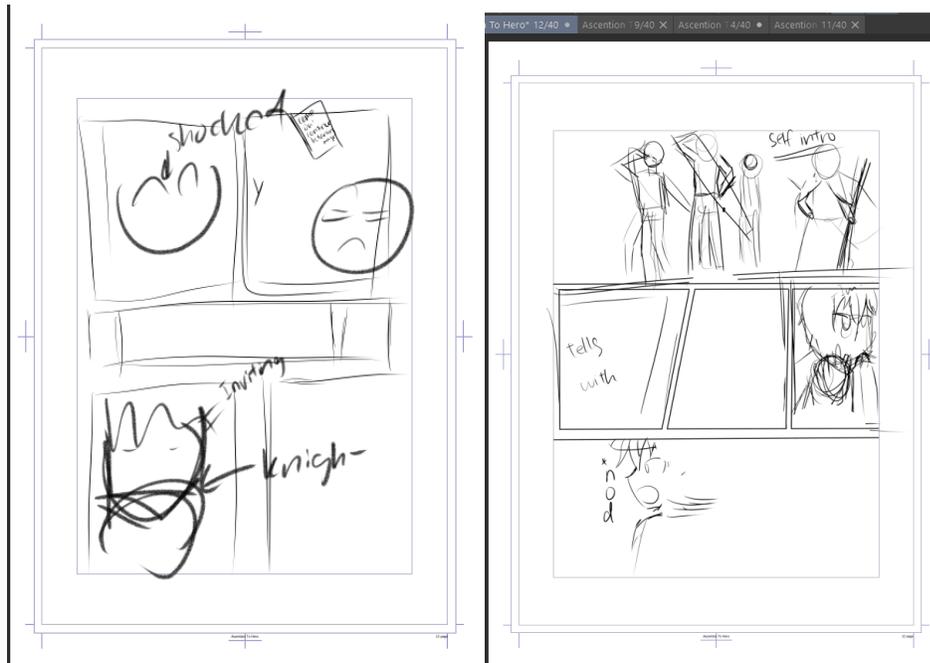
This is the process of adding different tones of greys to each of every of our characters and inking the eyes of our characters bring more life to them.

4th stage: Drawing of the background



We added in the background that we drew and added in some more tones

Sketches VS Final Products: Sketches



Sketches VS Final Products: Final products



13. Difficulties we faced:

- The first difficulty that we faced was getting to know each other's strengths and weaknesses.

→ "How about we do a website?"

"But in that case, how would we lay it out? How can we design it? And most of all, who is capable in our team to even make it?"

"Or what about a light novel?"

"C'mon, you already know that some of us aren't great shakes at languages."

"Wait, actually? I didn't know..."

At the start of the year, these were our (grossly simplified) discussions. It was a period for us to find out what each of us were good at, and to find a category and topic that all of us were equally invested in, and had the means to do. For example, take the suggestion of the website. We had no experience in web-publishing save one, and we didn't wish to burden that particular person too much. As such, we had to scrap the idea of creating a website despite it being one of our main ideas.

- The next difficulty that we faced was being able to come up with a storyline and genre that both the illustrators and writers were familiar with.
→ This one was solved pretty quickly, considering the fact that Isekai was a genre that all of us were already very used to.
- Communication was also a big issue, especially in the later stages, when the COVID situation worsened.
→ We had to converse using online platforms, which not only distracted us (because of technical issues or even just social media), but also made room for many miscommunications and mishaps. Even with the mentor, we had misunderstandings between him and our team. For example, in the slides, we assumed that our mentor wanted us to write the storyline in a paragraph and scene-by-scene format, but he later noted to us that he instead wanted us to write in a point form format in order to ease reading for the judges. This wasted valuable time and our effort at that, too.

- Hard for us to devote much time to doing our project, leading to overwhelming stress at the later stages.
→ because of our examinations being scheduled for virtually every single week, and with each of our teammates having various commitments and CCAs, we found it hard to arrange time to do our project.

14. Group Reflection

As a group going through the project work, many of us had to step out of our comfort zones and venture into new and foreign areas, since some of us had little or no experience in writing or illustrating a manga. Through many adversities and disagreements, we have gained much valuable experiences. One thing we have learnt is to always address questions early on. This would be a lesson as while preparing the proposal slides, we did not fully address all the concerns we had. Therefore, some last minute changes had to be made, which caused unnecessary panic and predicaments.

Another valuable experience we have gained is that it is essential to prepare early. Spreading out work into many sessions throughout a long period is better than cramming it all at the last second. This can be seen as the creation of the manga was strategically divided between the days of the week in a flexible schedule that did not clash with studies, and fit in well with daily activities. Thus, the manga was able to be completed with maximum effort and efficiently.

It is also paramount, as we have realized, to build upon one another's weaknesses and strengths. For some of us, we have not had much experience in drawing; however, we found our strengths in writing and planning. After all, what is a manga without dialogue? What is a manga without a plot? These were what the writing team was delegated to do: to assist the artist team in the carrying out of the story, to make it seem interesting. Similarly, what is a manga without drawings? マンガ, or manga, in Japanese, is adapted from 漫画 in Chinese. Without the 画 in our manga, how would we be able to call our finished product a マンガ? This was where the writing team came in, who were tasked with translating our words and ideas into beautiful frames, and compiling it all together to create the world, with all its ambience, and with its characters, in an alluring manner. This was, as we would later come to realise, teamwork. Yes, through this experience, it was evident that we were able to use our teamwork to overcome the various challenges that we were faced with. And

though we may have had our falls, our struggles, our disagreements, we always, as a team, pulled ourselves up, helping one another in times of crisis.

(Please add in more, this is more or less my personal experience)

15.INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION:

Meng Si Cheng:

This year was a tough one for me as there were a lot of restrictions like being unable to meet up with my groupmates to discuss. There was also a lot of stress as I am the only one drawing the product. I always felt that I don't have enough time to finish the work. There were also a lot of misunderstanding as we were not able to meet face to face and have to resort to calling and messaging each other. For example, one time me and one of my group members interpreted the storyline wrongly and have different opinions on how the story will flow like. His role was to write the dialogue for the story and mine was to draw the comic, so our dialogue and drawing did not match up and thus it was very troublesome there

I also felt a lot of stress as there were exams also but I still have to draw around 4 pages a day in order to complete the product, thus I felt like I didn't have enough time to revise and normally gets very frustrated. I then reflected on why I didn't have enough time and realised that I didn't make good use of the June Holiday to finish my project as planned. Thus, I learnt that next year I had to make good use of the June holidays and don't procrastinate. I also learnt how to better manage and communicate with my group members from this project.

Wang Rui:

Going through this project year, I have picked up many useful and beneficial skills, as well as valuable lessons that will always be relevant and stick with me throughout the 21st century. As I have encountered numerous challenges, I have gained much valuable experience. One such experience would be the importance of communication. Without understanding the group thoroughly and addressing all opinions and thoughts, we would never be on the same train and coordination would be poor. An example of this trouble

would be the time when I decided to write a part of the storyline on my own, without any discussion with members. This only resulted in confusion and disarray among our group members, and wasted time and effort, when we could have woven out the part together and discussed to keep everyone on the same page and manage everyone's needs or suggestions. Thus it is always essential to communicate within a group.

Another lesson I have learnt is to stretch work over a period of time, and avoid procrastinating. The ultimate enemy to productivity is laziness, and laziness festers on the false perception of an extended deadline, which is the illusion provided by this year-long project. To combat this contemplacy, I have learned to establish a schedule and constantly remind myself to strictly follow it. It was only through this method that I was able to slowly progress by spreading work through extended periods of time, so that the project duties would not interfere with daily tasks.

All in all, there were a lot of valuable experiences that I had picked up through this project experience. It has truly enlightened me in terms of how to improve progress as a group, and accelerate individual work.

Zhu Tianyu:

As I had not drawn in a long time, it was quite hard at first as the assistant artist, I had problems meeting deadlines as I had to redraw a few times. There were a lot of exams and hence a lot of time had to be spent on revision. However, I still managed to catch up. Working together as a team was tough and it really taught me about the importance of teamwork and perseverance. Planning the layout of the manga was very interesting. Despite reading manga everyday, I had never once thought of how the artist uses special techniques to make the manga look more appealing. As I rarely draw, it was no surprise that I lacked certain essential materials needed for the project such as paper and a good pencil. Thankfully Aaron lent me these materials. I learnt that teamwork is extremely important. I had to plan the layout of the pages and give it to Aaron. If I did it a bit later our whole group's progress would be affected. Previously, I would complain about the fact that manga artists take a very long time to draw a chapter but through this project I learnt that a lot of time and effort is needed to draw manga. It also requires focus and perseverance which was a slight problem for me. Drawing manga for the first time in my life was a fun experience and I look forward to doing it again.

Lee Kuan Ray:

It is obvious that this year has been a challenging year, what with the multiple cancellations of meetups with our mentor, what with the hindrance of our discussion by the closing of schools, what with the miscommunication that ensued due to ineffective communication online. As one of the writers, this hit especially hard for me. I remember how I felt my jaw drop as Aaron, our main illustrator, showed me what he had drawn the earlier night, and unfortunately not in awe. He had drawn something vastly different from what I had written. However, seeing as Aaron had spent countless hours producing that scene, I knew that it would be too unrealistic to try and convince him to go change it. I was angry. I refused to write for a whole day after. But I realised that I was exhausting the other writer, and hindering the progress of the whole project just because of some miscommunication. I knew that I had to pull myself back together, and focus back onto writing the story. Perseverance was a necessity to ensure this project's success. This was something that I learnt through this experience.

Of course, in this example, had it not been for my teammates, I also would not have been able to pull myself back up to my feet. Teamwork, it seemed, was also another important aspect in our project. Because of the stress from doing an arguably ambitious project, each of us compromised, and were considerate for one another. We, as a party, extended our helping hands to one another whenever we fell. We had, in short, learnt of the essence of teamwork.

Even with these things that I've learnt, I have some regrets about the Project Work. For example, I believe that if we had more time to think of a plot, I could have come up with ideas even better than the one that we ultimately ended up deciding on. Initially, the writing team had many great ideas and premises for our plot, such as a reverse isekai. But because we could not think of a story surrounding this premise that was extremely captivating, we had to drop it reluctantly. In recent weeks, I had finally crafted the 'would be' plot that we could have used in my mind; but, obviously, it is too late now.

16. Our final product

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wAXMISx4UiTfTIfPng0HhyyFANA SLqtdej6rCjsdN9A/edit?usp=sharing>

17. Citations

Page 3(lightbulb) : https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Simple_light_bulb_graphic.png

Page 3 :

https://wall.alphacoders.com/by_sub_category.php?id=221175&name=No+Game+No+Life+Wallpapers

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