**Overview (with relevant design decisions)**

Once we thought up the initial idea for our game, we jumped straight into the Lens of Infinite Inspiration. Although a lot of the inspiration for our game came from other games, such as Mass Effect (dialogue/meaningful choice) and Journey (moving story), we also decided quickly to pull inspiration from our own experiences. We thought that if we had common experiences as kids, players would also have the same experiences (or at least similar ones) and be able to connect/empathize with the story more. Empathy enables the player to project themselves onto the boy and give the advice they would want to receive, so we tried to work that in. An idea for allowing the player to choose gender/features to enable projection even further was introduced, but that involved a LOT more work and was discarded pretty quick.

While designing the aesthetics, we considered the Elemental Triad. Our story was most important, so we wanted to graphics to reinforce that. I think we managed to get a creepy vibe with the boy’s appearance, even if we didn’t get to include the subtle changes that reflected his state of mind.

**Comparison to original proposal**

Our final product was extremely close to what we originally proposed, all things considered. The amount of detail we initially wanted to include was reduced significantly and the story was shorter than planned, but our core game is what we envisioned in December. We decided to keep the story a bit shorter because with multiple endings, a shorter game is easier to replay with different choices. The exclusion of the more subtle details in the end were a result of running out time, regrettably.

Probably the biggest change between our proposal and our final game is that we switched to Java after the midterm. When we were working with Game Maker, every time we solved one problem there would be another one that would take even longer to figure out. I think that for the kind of game we were making (primarily based on a dialogue system), most of the tutorials and help were directed at more advanced users and incorporated into RPGs. When we did eventually switch to java, our game started progressing *much* faster.

**Successful design decisions**

**Failed design decisions**

**How our design would continue**

If we were to continue developing our game, we would probably switch again to another game engine (be it Game Maker, Unity, whatever) but take the time to fully understand the basics of the engine and gain some experience working with that engine. We would finish the story, keep the diverging then converging format we have right now, but possibly end the game at different times based on replies the player chooses. We’d also include more detail in the graphics (such as posters, possessions, and changing colours) and improve the animation; for example, the boy currently jumps around the room and we’d enable him to walk across the room.

An idea that we’d like to implement is to do some research into personality typing. We would edit the dialogue to apply more towards different personality types, and add a pseudo-psychological angle to the player analysis at the end. Of course, it’s a bit hard to pass judgement after a short game with fewer choices, so that ties back in to extending the length.

**What would we do differently?**

I think in our next project, we’d be less stubborn. If we had accepted that Game Maker wasn’t the optimal program for us a bit sooner, we might have been able to add in the details we wanted, or extend the story a bit more.