1) What is the name of your interactive storytelling project (the core concept articulated in the Mid-Term Project), and what are the names of all the students in your group?

Project Name: Recall
Group Members: Tina Huynh, Alejandro Garcia, Rageeb Ashekin

2) Please write an updated version of your Core Concept Statement (the one you developed for the Mid-Term Project) in the space below.

"Recall" is an interactive website hypertext for any lovers of single player story-driven games, single player RPG's where the player can influence the story, or simply stories of survival, that puts you (the audience) amidst the outbreak of a pandemic outburst. You explore the life of the character you choose and the options of what to do is up to you. Will you survive? How will you do it? The choice is yours.

3) Which Option (1 or 2) did your group choose to pursue for this Final Project assignment? Why did you choose this option? Why was it the most appropriate choice for your group and/or project?

We decided to go with Option 2 because it was the one we were most interested in doing and what would be easiest for us to do. From the beginning, we already decided what kind of interactive story we wanted to do and what platform we would want to do it on. So, we had a good idea and vision of the overall interactive story and the features it would have. We figured out what skills we have and because we have someone with knowledge of how to make a website already, we thought it would be most appropriate to actually build the prototype because we wouldn't have to spend time learning HTML and we had prior knowledge.

4) If you chose Option 2, which aspects of your Mid-Term concept did you focus on developing when you created your interactive story (and which ones did you choose to leave out or downplay)? Either way, why did you choose to focus on these elements instead of others? What was your rationale and motivation?

We decided to focus on developing meaningful interactivity and visuals for this interactive story. We chose these elements because we believe them to be the most important for an interactive story and that it is the core of an interactive narrative because we want the audience to feel like they have a big impact on what happens in the story while also enjoying the story and seeing interesting visuals. It would be boring if the story was simply just text with a few colours and we wanted the plot to change in drastic ways because if the decisions had no influence on the plot, then the audience would be quiet passive.

5) What artistic medium did you choose for your Final Project artwork? (i.e., If it was a digital project, what platform and/or authoring tool did you use to create the artwork?) Why did you choose this particular medium to create your artwork? Please explain your rationale and motivation.

We chose a digital project- an interactive website that is essentially a hypertext. The website was created using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript and hosted using GitHub. We chose this medium to create our project because one of our members already had past experience and knowledge making websites. This meant that we wouldn't have to spend time learning HTML in a short span of time. Websites are also a good interactive tool because it is accessible from a reader's personal computer and clicking on links is an easy way to allow interaction. It was also easy to allow for multiple different endings because we just had to create different pages that the audience can end up on.

6) In what ways is your project interactive? How does this interactivity impact the story that is told and/or how the audience experiences this work? Is this interactivity meaningful? What does it add to the experience overall?

This project is interactive because the audience has an impact and influence on the story they are experiencing. It allows for the reader to click on or hover over objects to gain more knowledge on the story

world and the reader can also make decisions regarding the story by clicking on links that will redirect them to a new page which is a new path in the story. This interactivity impacts the story by allowing readers to learn about the environment, actually shape the plot and influence what is happening with their actions. This makes the interactivity meaningful because it has such a significant impact on the ending a reader can experience. It adds a sense of decision-making to the experience overall and provides a sense of agency that makes the reader feel more involved and motivates them to get the "good" ending.

7) How would you describe or reflect upon the experience of creating an artwork that is interactive? (For example, was it rewarding, illuminating, or painful?) What did you learn from this experience? What challenges, realizations or shifts in thinking did you encounter while creating this work?

We found the experience of creating this artwork rewarding because we had an actual, physical copy of my interactive story (the prototype) at the end. We got to see it with our own eyes and share it with everyone to try out. We learned how to time manage well, and figure out how to prioritize which elements of the story to focus on. For example, a challenge we faced in creating the website was how to include other ways for the user to interact with my story other than choosing options. We had to figure out how to add other simple interactions to make the story more active and participatory.

8) What elements or details of your interactive artwork would you most like to draw attention to and/or highlight for the instructor? What do you think is most interesting or important about this piece?

We would like to highlight the details of the artwork and the interactivity placed around the website. The artwork is important because it offers pleasing visuals of where parts of the story take place and provides more immersion because it puts the reader in the environment rather than them just reading text. We think this is interesting because it is a subtle addition, so if the audience were to just simply focus on making decisions blindly then it may be harder to get a "good" ending. If you interact with the environment, it may give you clues as to how to end up with a better result. It also makes it more fun for the reader because it is like a game where you can find these hints to learn more.

9) How effectively do you think the artwork that you created illustrates, demonstrates or expands upon the original ideas that you articulated in the Mid-Term Project? Did the artwork turn out the way that you expected it to? Or did the process of actually making it cause you to change or refine your ideas and/or ambitions along the way?

We believe this artwork effectively illustrates and demonstrates the original ideas articulated in the Midterm Project because it captures our main goals of a hypertext, the user having an impact on the plot, the general plot of a pandemic, and the option to choose between different characters that lead in different stories. It turned out somewhat what we expected, although if we had more time we would flush out more details. The process of actually making it and seeing how much time and effort goes into making just one page was not what we expected so we had to cut back on some of our previous ambitions. For example, we wanted multiple interactions for each page however due to a time constraint we could only place a couple in our prototype.

10) In what ways did this Final Project assignment allow you to explore, illustrate and/or deepen your knowledge of specific concepts related in this course on interactive storytelling? Name at least 3-5 ideas or concepts from the course that your interactive artwork illustrates, and briefly explain why.

Our website is essentially a **hypertext** as parts of the story are given on a page (lexia) and linked to other parts of the story with hyperlinks that are disguised with images and decision text. So, this assignment allowed us to illustrate this concept. Our story has an **arborescent structure** because there is branching to multiple different possible endings that the audience can experience depending on their choices. There is no main plot that everyone must follow. So, this assignment allowed us to explore making a story with an arborescent structure. There is clear **agency** in our project, as the outcome and content of the story vastly differs based on the input and choices of the player. This makes the interaction to be meaningful, and gives a sense of fulfilment to the user playing through. So, this assignment allowed us to illustrate and explore the concept of agency for the audience.

Interactivity is all about the back and forth interaction, so there is also clear **participatory affordance** in our project because the user has to actively click through the lexia to go through it. He is not passive; he is an active participant. He can see the impact of his choice when the resulting story is displayed. This assignment allowed us to illustrate this type of affordance. For our assignment, we also tried to explore and illustrate the concept of **immersion** for our audience. We wanted to make them feel like they were actually a part of the story as the character they chose. That's why, it is a first-person perspective and there are background scenes so they reader gets a visual of the environment. We tried to include sounds and things to interact with to make it seem like they are actually there.

11) Interactive storytelling is mostly a collaborative form of art where creatives from different disciplines work together. If you collaborated with other students to create your Mid-Term and Final Project assignments, what was it like working with your peers? What were the benefits and challenges of collaborating on a creative project? What was the balance of work like in your group?

Working with peers required total communication. If there was none, nothing would get completed and misunderstandings can occur. Within our group, we would assign each other tasks to finish and we would combine everything at the end. Benefits consisted of having another set of eyes to look over each other's work to make sure we were on the right path with any concepts learned in class or for the project in general. We also each had different skills that made up for each other's weaknesses. Alex was good at writing the storylines and Tina was good at making the artwork. Everyone thinks differently so that's good, and everyone thinks different which helps us build ideas off each other because everyone thinks differently and no one thinks the same. Challenges when collaborating is coming up with an idea everyone agrees on and incorporating individual styles to make a unified and cohesive project. We all have different drawing and writing styles, so figuring out a happy middle ground was a bit of a challenge. Also, everyone has different work ethics (like some people do better under pressure and closer to the deadline versus others who like to be done early) and being able to compromise is important. Work was balanced in two ways: writing and creating the artwork/website. Two out of the three members are Computer Science students so they were of course assigned the coding portions.

12) What was your favorite part of completing this project? What was your least favorite?

Our favourite part of this project was brainstorming ideas. It was fun to think of the different plotlines we could do for this story because we started with something so general (a pandemic). This meant that we could go into many different possibilities depending on the character. It was interesting seeing the different ways we could have someone die and the ways we could have someone survive. It's hard to pick a least favourite part of the project because everything was fair and the project was very open ended and flexible. But if we had to choose, our least favourite part in the creation of the website and formatting images and words to be legible for all audiences. It is nowhere near perfect, but for a prototype it is pretty good. The reason this part is so challenging is because computer monitors and laptop screens all differ in sizes so it is hard to format each page to be good for viewing on all sizes. Therefore, there may be some positioning errors and sometimes the black text will appear over something black and be illegible. It was frustrating to try to position the images and words perfectly for each page. There are still some kinks, but for the time we had it was enough.

BONUS QUESTION: Is there anything else that you would like to add here to reflect upon your experience of completing this project and/or taking this course on interactive storytelling?

Taking this course on interactive storytelling has given us insight on the deeper elements to stories and video games. We never really looked deeply into the video games we play or the other interactive narratives we've encountered online. We've simply taken them as games to be played or stories to experience. We learned about the structures they can follow (like String of Pearls model to Amusement Park Model), elements that all of them contain (agency, affordances, etc.), and details between a story and the audience that we never realized. We broadened our scope of the many different forms digital interactive narratives can take, from video games to interactive documentaries, and we were able to appreciate everything that goes into creating an interactive story. It was also a really enjoyable course overall and we loved taking it. Thank you!