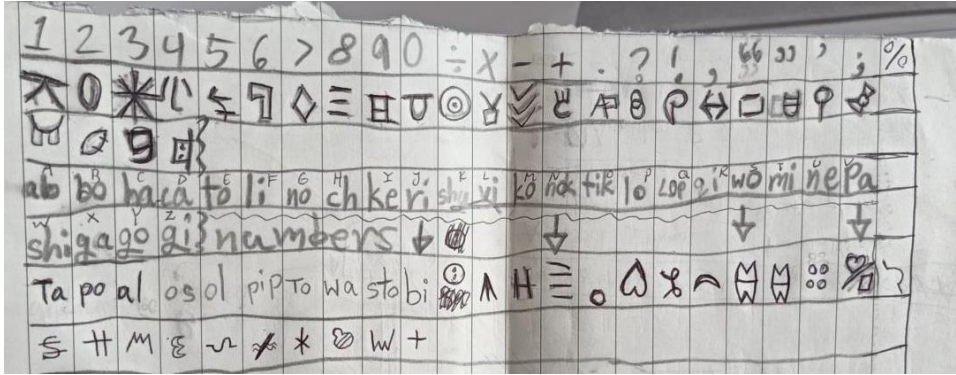


Personal Project Report

Planning



Inspiration

As shown in the image above of an imaginary language I made when I was 5 years old, I have been fond of linguistics since childhood. From the beginning, I've grown up in a multilingual environment with my Swedish-German father and my Japanese mother. I have also moved around the world allowing me to get a taste of different cultures throughout my life. Moving to Singapore – a country filled with immigrants – I had the opportunity to learn Chinese and French in my school and got heavily influenced by friends of various nationalities. My international journey continued onto Qatar a year later where the situation was kept fundamentally the same: a country busy with immigrants and studying at an international school. So now, the languages I learned accumulated to Japanese, Swedish, English, Spanish, and Arabic. While it would have been easier if these were all Latin languages, this set included 2 of the most complicated languages to learn, Japanese and Arabic. Hence, I had to figure out study methods, implement self-discipline, and retain an interest in these cultures to grasp them. This was not an opportunity many children got and there was also my pride in knowing them which sparked my pursuit to learn more languages. On top of these reasons, I genuinely enjoy Japanese culture including manga or anime, hence I decided on learning Japanese.

Learning Goal

My learning goal is to master an upper-intermediate level of Japanese including learning 600 kanjis. Upper-intermediate refers to the N3 level within the official 'Japanese Language Proficiency Test' standards, essentially the capabilities of a 5th grader. However, I will not be starting from scratch. My prior knowledge includes the N5 level (the most basic stage) which covers an elementary level of literacy and understanding. I plan to reach the N3 level through self-teaching methods such as active recall with flashcards and aural, visual, and verbal exposure to the language by December 20th, 2021. The reason behind choosing this topic arises from my interest in learning languages.

Product Goal

To show my capability in the Japanese language, I will write and illustrate a children's book in Japanese directed at children from ages 6-8 but even older audiences who are reading children's literature to study Japanese as a foreign language. With this product, I will be combining two more hobbies of mine: drawing and writing fiction. This book will be purely made through digital mediums such as *Fire Alpaca* and *Word* for both

illustrations and text and will be donated to the Japanese Embassy for avid readers. I plan to finish this book by January 15th, 2022.

Global Context

This project ties into ‘personal and cultural expression’ because I am expressing my hobby of learning languages as well as showcasing a global issue that I find important which is environmental sustainability. I will use a creative approach to express this message which is the digital art within my product goal. My chosen project will prove a very hard challenge to complete in the following 5 months because of the 600 kanji that I have to learn. However, I understand that it is manageable because in the past I have learned 50 kanji within a week.

Product Success Criteria

Category	Criteria	Details
Story	Writing in a language which is appropriate and understandable for young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Japanese syntax and diction which is learnt by the age of 6-year-olds.
	The story’s length should be easily readable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 pages, give or take.
	It should have a catchy beginning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the climax happen within 3 pages.
	The story should leave the reader with a meaningful message or moral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address how humans take trees for granted and should take better care of them. The importance of honesty.
Aesthetics	Illustrations should frequently appear.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One per two pages
	The graphics should have a sense of simplicity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does not have to include background
	The font should be easy on the eyes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Around size 16
	The book should not look plain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not have too much text on a page Make the overall appearance colorful
Manufacturing	It should be created through a digital medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options include Word for story and FireAlpaca for illustrations
	It should include all the components of the average children’s book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a cover page with illustrations (p.1) Second title page with simpler illustrations (p.2)
Function	People from the embassy should be able to have easy access to it online.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One option is to display it on the official website.
Finalization	My product is finished on time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finished by January 15th
	My product is donated to the Japanese Embassy in Qatar.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By mid-February

Product Action Plan

Success Criteria	Action	How?	Date	State
Story	Research tips on writing a children's book.	Search the internet for tips on writing children's books.	November 2021	Done
	Analyse the Japanese children's books I have at home.	Compare the similarities and differences in Kaguya Hime, Guri to Gura, The Ugly Duckling, and the 7 Goat Kids.	November 2021	Done
	Think of the morale of the book/fable.	Brainstorm global issues I find important for kids to know about.	November 2021	Done
	Write 1 st English draft.	See research document for how to write children's books by BookFox.co.	December 2021	Done
	Write final English draft.	Edit according to research/tips from the children's books I analyzed.	December 2021	Done (Late)
	Start translating.	Use prior knowledge.	December 2021	Done (Late)
	Check translations with someone else.	Ask for feedback from Mom in terms of grammar and spelling.	December 2021	Done (Late)
Illustrations	Practice animal anatomy (because the characters are animals).	Watch youtube videos for guidance. Make sure that I specifically practice <i>cartoon</i> animals, so the shapes won't be proportional to real life.	December 2021	Done (Late)
	Plan what illusts to do for what page.	Draw a storyboard and decide which visuals are crucial for explaining the story.	January 2021	Done
	Draw cover page illust – souffle and syrup.	Follow the same routine of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rough sketch 1 - Rough sketch 2 - Outline - Base coloring - Play with hues - Add shadows - Final edits 	January 2021	Done
	Draw end page doodle – just a hedgehog posing.	Follow routine above.	January 2021	Done
	Draw page 3 – glowing maple tree.	Follow routine above.	January 2021	Done

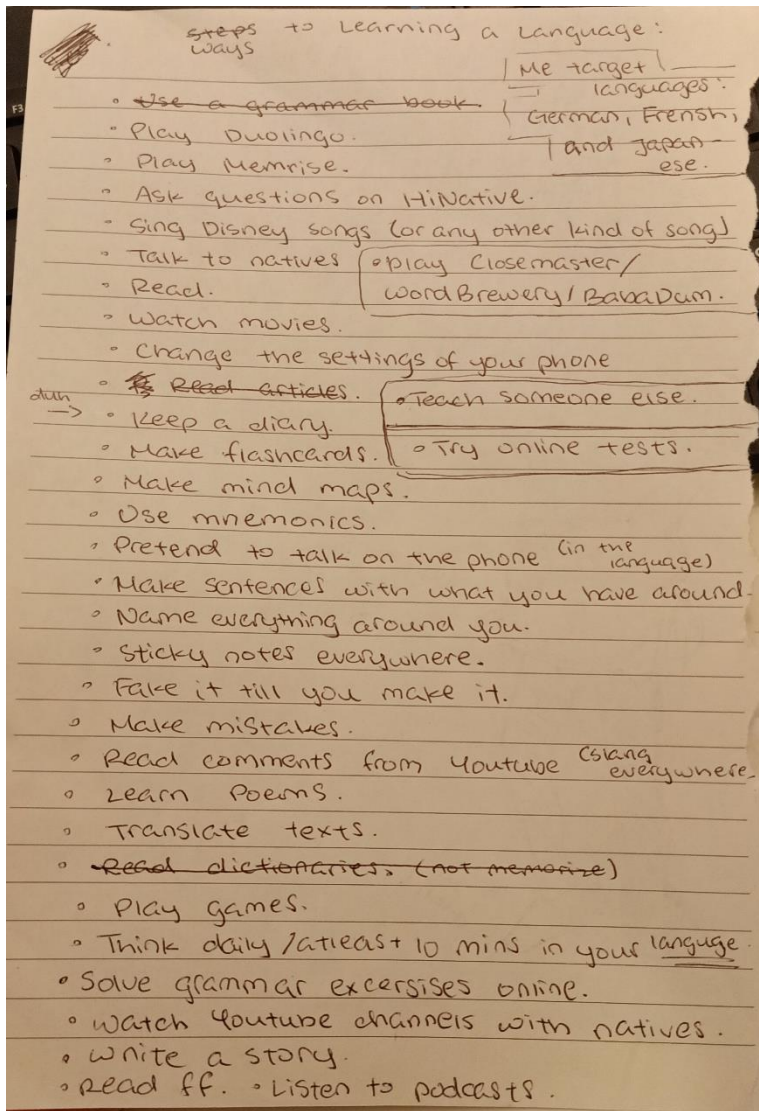
Manufacturing	Find software for putting together the book.	Ask peers that are experienced in creating ebooks.	January 2021	Done
	Format the book.	Draw a rough sketch, deciding what part of the story or illustrations goes on what page.	January 2021	Done (Late)
	Combine the illustrations and story into the software.	Follow a youtube tutorial in case I need assistance assembling the book.	January 2021	Done (Late)
	Donate it.	Ask my mother to contact the Japanese Embassy if I can donate it for visitors who want to use it to learn Japanese or actual kids.	February 2021	Not done

Criteria B: Applying Skills

Learning goal: *Mastering an upper-intermediate level of Japanese including learning 600 kanjis*

Thinking Skills (Transfer Skills)

Throughout my personal project, I utilized transfer skills and prior knowledge in order to complete my goal of persistently practicing Japanese until I make my way up to becoming an intermediate reader, writer, and speaker. The first way I demonstrated transfer skills is when I used my knowledge of how to learn languages in general and applied it to Japanese. As I mentioned in the 'inspiration' part of the report, my international life has stirred me to want to learn languages, hence I had created a list of 40 methods one can study a language which greatly facilitated the research phase on how I could study efficiently and in a fun way.



From this list, I utilized ideas including singing and listening to music, talking to natives such as my violin teacher, using mnemonics, translating, and changing the language within video games. A bit later when I was studying the N5 (easiest) level of Japanese, I also created a habit of learning 5 kanjis a day through an app called “手書き漢字ドリル1026” which is shown below. The method proved effective, so it became the main method which I studied Japanese for the personal project.



Self-Management (Affective Skills: *Perseverance* and *Self-Motivation*)

What stood out most to me as a person learning Japanese at an intermediate level was the perseverance that was required. Perseverance can be loosely defined as consistently putting effort despite facing difficulties, but to me, it meant sticking to my routine of practicing the kanji and my general literacy in Japanese nearly every day. Two examples of exercises I did are as follows:

Example 1: Kanji Learning App (“手書き漢字ドリル1026”)

Every day, give or take a few such as during holidays, I practiced 5 kanjis which piled up to 600 by the end of my personal project. This took a lot of perseverance however it was much more motivating when I had easy access to this app through my phone as I could pull it up anytime such as waiting in a line, on public transport, and more. To break down how the app works, there are 6 grade levels to choose from and after clicking one, the respective kanjis for the selected grade are divided into groups of 5. This meant I could just tick off one row per day. The exercise within each block was simply filling in the missing kanji.

Example 2: Translating 'everyday' sentences

He finished reading the book.	I'm in London, where are you?
かれは本を言読みきりました。	私はロンドンにいます、あなたは
彼 終わりました。	どこですか？
	にいますか？
Whose idea was it?	
だれのアイデアでした？	
誰 アイデア か	
My mother is busy cooking dinner.	
私 私の母は忙しい晩御飯の支度です。	
忙	
I don't like windy days.	
風が強い日は嫌いです。	
の強 好	
What do you need this money for?	
この金が必要は何のために？	
お金 のために必要	
Horses are useful animals.	
うまは役に立つ生き物です。	
馬 役に立つ生き物	
She appears to have many friends.	
かのじょはたくさんのおともだちがいるように見えます。	
友達 が いる ように	
Unlike your sister, you study nearly every day.	
おねえさんと違って、あなたは毎日ほとんど勉強しますね。	
は or 姉が ほとんど て	

Translating everyday sentences was for general literacy including grammar and vocabulary. This particular exercise employs the hypercorrection effect. The idea is that when I get feedback that goes against what I expected to be the answer, I pay more attention – in other words, I become more motivated. Another aspect that makes this exercise useful is that the language used is for everyday use, hence very crucial. Getting answers wrong made me more alert than other boring exercises because how else would I communicate with my Japanese acquaintances which I see weekly? Using motivating activities as the two above, I was able to pull through and persevere throughout the Japanese part of the personal project.

The last example where I exhibited motivation as well as perseverance was when I met the sub-goals that I had created for myself. Firstly, I challenged myself to pass the official JLPT N4 exam which tests beginner level literacy including 100 kanjis which should've taken place on December 5th, 2021 but was cancelled. Nevertheless, this short-term goal (in comparison to how long the PP is) helped me keep on track with my language studies. The second sub-goal before mastering N3 (conversational level) was entering a Japanese poetry competition hosted by the Japanese Embassy in collaboration with the Qatar Poetry Center. The poem I wrote was submitted through the comment section on an Instagram post.

المسابقة الشعرية لشهر نوفمبر ٢٠٢١ باللغة اليابانية
日本語の詩コンクール
2021年11月

الشرط: كتابة القصيدة في أبيات أسفل الموضوع في انستغرام
 応募方法: テーマに合わせて日本語の詩を下記コメント欄へ投稿してください。

تاريخ الإعلان للفائز: 2021-11-25
 تاريخ الإنتهاء: 2021-11-15
 تاريخ الانطلاق: 2021-11-1

ملاحظة: هذه المسابقة تخص فقط اليابانيين المقيمين في قطر أو في اليابان
 注: 参加資格は、カタールまたは日本に在住の日本国籍保持者に限りです。

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ツンとした鼻に風が心地いい
17w 1 like Reply

lunayamagata しんなりしたフライドポテト/昨日のマックの残り/どうやったって/もう美味しくないよね/すてちゃろうか/弟のサッカーの試合/暑いけどがんばってるな/応援してる自分も/さすがに喉かわいた/あ、水売ってる/ペットボトル/ごみ箱にシュート/友達の誕生日/カンイホウソウって言葉/知ってるけど/さすがに誕生日プレゼントだもん/今日はいいよね//学校でいつも環境のこと/いいこといっぱい/プレゼントかしちゃってる/でもやってること/ちがうじゃん、あたし/ためじゃん、あたし
17w 1 like Reply

atama_desert ゆらぎそうな時こそ うしろは振り向かない
げんじつは毎日来るから
じっと耐えて こんな事もあったよねと うたえるようになりたい
17w 2 likes Reply

takako1010 「大地の有言実行」
重く扉を閉じた冬に射す一瞬の陽光
顔を上げて
まだ春は来ないよと頬をきる風
/追る闇にため息をつき 思うことは
地は動き また日が高くなると云うこと
/息を溜め ひたすらに生活を行う
17w 3 likes Reply

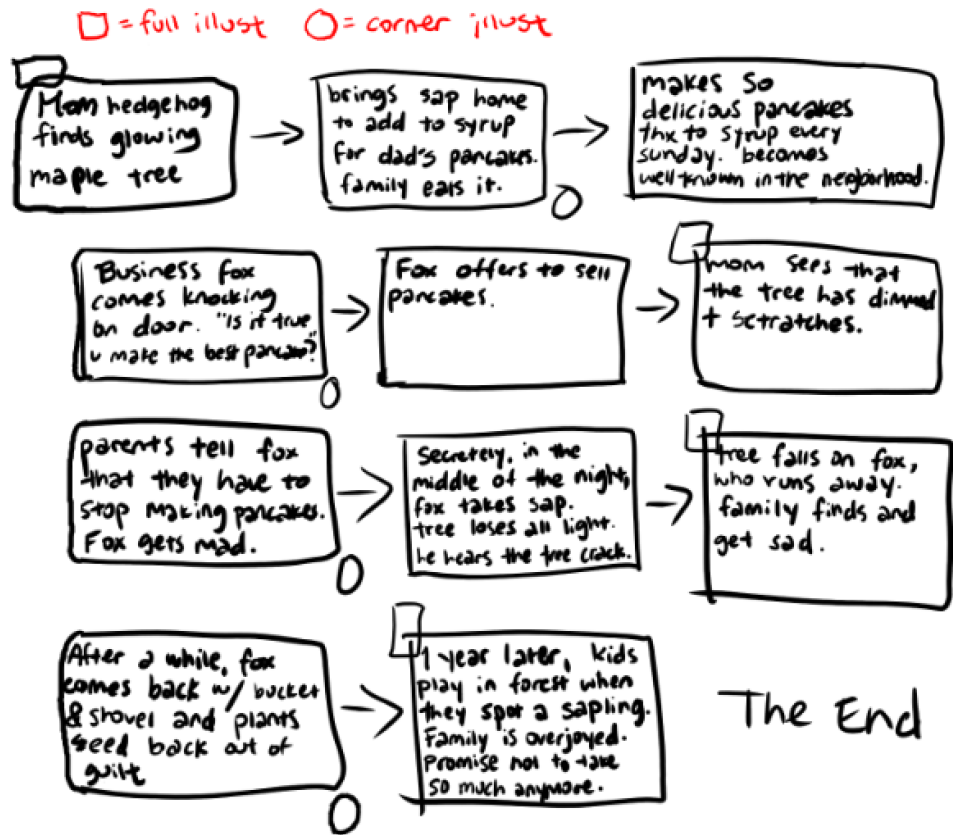
negitorousagi 今はまだ濡れそうにありません
かじかむ手にかかる冷たい朝の水も
日向を追いかけて寝転ぶ猫も
Liked by japanemb_qatar and 25 others
NOVEMBER 1, 2021
Add a comment... Post

Product goal: Writing and illustrating a children's book in Japanese directed at children from ages 6-8.

Thinking (Creative Thinking Skills)

This skill was mainly involved during the story building and illustrating. Firstly, I used visual diagrams such as storyboards to help me get a grasp on the stories structure including what part goes in what page. My goal was to make a layout that was easy and pleasant for small kids to read which meant that I had to have frequent drawings in the book as well. In the picture below, I divide and sort the story in a coherent matter as well as locate where it's best to have illustrations.

Secondly, I had to think like a small child to come up with my morale which involved answering questions such as: "What's a relevant but simple global issue that can be understood by young kids?" and "What is a message that is important to me which I can express through my book?" To come up with these new ideas, I also had to create visual diagrams such as mind maps or draw rough sketches to see if I could visualize the story so that the message is clear. The most important step was making the characters – which were going to be animals – cute and appealing for children of the specified age and so I brainstormed ideas of what the characters would look like with rough sketches as shown here:



Another thing this project taught me about creativity is the importance of sticking to one style of drawing for it to not look disorganized. At the beginning of the drawing phase, I was very creative and experimented with different styles – soft, rough, sharp to name a few. Here I practiced flexible thinking and developed multiple opposing arguments, albeit I realized I had too many varying styles which made it look incoherent. Playing with



different styles, however, taught me to create my own brushes or design improvements to existing ones to attain specific textures, another form of creativity.

Research (Media Literacy Skills)

Whether it's a normal book or an e-book, in today's world, the first place you would go is the internet. Therefore, it requires digital literacy to be able to correctly format and produce the book in an online medium, in my scenario a children's book which includes illustrations. The variety of media I used to compile my book was Word for text, FireAlpaca for illustrations, and PowerPoint for the final product. Although Word and PowerPoint were easy to maneuver considering I use them for school, I

found it difficult to draw online.

Before this project, I had very little experience with digital art but after roughly a month, I managed to grasp the different features available and use them to my advantage. A few such features were 'Protect Alpha', 'Clipping', and 'Lock' which improved my drawing speed after I grasped them because they were not realistic abilities which I could do on paper. Aside from illustrating, I used digital literacy skills when locating, analyzing, and using information from online networks to aid the story writing process. For example, BookFox is an organization founded by John Fox in which there are a myriad of resources for writing fiction, even specifically children's books. It helped me decide on the length of the book, how fast the climax should occur, and how to build an appealing main character. All in all, the media literacy skills I employed helped me to communicate my ideas effectively to multiple audiences through my e-book, shown below as the PowerPoint version.

Japanese Childrens Book - Personal Project - PowerPoint

山縣瑠奈

パンケーキの木

SLIDE 1 OF 10 ENGLISH (UNITED STATES) 119%

Japanese Childrens Book - Personal Project - PowerPoint

一年後、ハリネズミの子供たちが森で遊んでいたとき、彼らは輝く苗木を見つけ、叫びました。「光るカエデの木だよ！」家族はとても幸せな気持ちになり、一生懸命木の世話をし始めました。そしてもう二度とむりやり蜜を沢山とらないと誓いました。おしまい。

SLIDE 9 OF 10 ENGLISH (UNITED STATES) 119%

Reflecting

Impact of the project on myself

After finalizing the product and looking back, I can see that my project has shaped me for the

better in many ways. Starting with, a better understanding of the Japanese language and its intricacies. Throughout the project and my continuous daily practices, my learning has amounted to being able to partake in casual discussions and understand conversational level kanji, since my grammar and listening skills were already honed from my half-Japanese upbringing. In total, I am able to recognize and write nearly 600 kanji which will be a great help when interacting with the few Japanese people around me as well as forwarding my journey of learning many languages. On this journey, I was also able to grasp a handy skill set for drawing as I studied the core skills including shading, coloring, and anatomy which make up the base for beginner artists like me. A noticeable feature on my drawings is the lack of perspective used, which leads me to decide my next goal in drawing: perspective, which would have made the story more realistic and dynamic for the children reading.

While I was able to persevere with my Japanese studies, I couldn't keep up my motivation for writing the report and hence I ended up having to do most of it in the last few months. However, to tackle this, I pinpointed the reasons which caused me to lose motivation and figured out solutions. The first reason I wanted to back out was due to the heavy workload of writing 15 pages of content. I realized I wasn't putting the task into context and that I will eventually have enough content to write about after completing my process journal. Instead of being scared, I divided the report into much more manageable tasks such as 'write the first paragraph' or even sometimes 'write the first sentence'. Another bottleneck in my progress was my learning style which, throughout this project, I came to realize was verbal learning and working. I recognized this pattern after seeing myself taking mental notes through a video of me explaining more often than writing it down. An effective solution to this was working together with some friends on calls to make it more motivating for a verbal learner like me. In terms of self-discipline, I realized I must be more realistic with my goals, specifically long-term ones. This is evident in how I marked a lot of steps in the action plan as 'Done (Late)'. This will be important to improve on because it will be a crucial skill in handling long term assignments which will be more prevalent during the DP years as they will require a lot more self-discipline with less guidance from teachers. As a solution to this, I would practice planning my schedules monthly and trying to meet more frequent long-term goals.

With the help of this self-directed project, my communication has also improved in various ways. Firstly, a very valuable lesson I learned from this project was presentation skills which I developed during the PP exhibition. As I presented the same information over and over, I slowly started to present better after noticing a few things. The first was how tired people were, which meant I had to make my talking concise as well as take breaks to let the information soak in. Other points I considered after a few presentations were my talking speed and eye contact. This was to make the huge load of information being presented more amusing and understandable for the audience. However, the audience varied from 5th graders to adults so depending on the people, I learned to regulate my presentation which involved the tone I spoke in – playful or educational, the amount of detail I included, the vocabulary I used, and making personal connections if it happened to be a person I knew. Lastly, I noticed improvement in writing fiction. I had to focus on making it appeal to 6-8 year old's which turned out to be a more difficult task than I anticipated. This was because the climax had to occur within the first 5 pages, only 3-5 sentences could be on a page, and the story had to relay an important message according to my success criteria which was based on both primary and secondary research. Nevertheless, by the end of the writing phase in my project, I was able to grasp both how to make the story captivating and the specific diction used in most Japanese children's books. To understand the art of fiction, I did more careful observations of the most popular Japanese children's books such as:



Analysis 1: Kaguya-hime

Main character: girl, elegant, witty, pretty

Storyline: a girl is born out of a bamboo tree → grows up to be the prettiest lady → challenges men to find a non-existent item if they want to marry her → eventually has to return to the moon where she belongs.

1st page: her dad finds glowing bamboo tree.

Morale: no definite message

Guri to Gura



Analysis 2: Guri to Gura

Main character(s): girl and boy, kind, creative

Storyline: they are looking for ingredients → find a big egg → bring over cooking tools to it → one tries to break egg with fist → they hit it with a rock and it breaks → mix all ingredients and cook it → shares the result (castella) with forest friends.

Page 1: short monologue introducing themselves — they like to cook.

Morale: don't give up easily. hard work gets rewarded.

My Product

My final product was a 20-page Japanese children's book consisting of 6 illustrations, directed at children from 6 to 8 years old. The book shows the journey of a maple tree which provides the best maple syrup in the world but starts dying when it gets exploited too much by locals. The story ends with the locals

feeling guilty and planting a new magical sapling which relays the morale of how important it is to be environmentally sustainable. I used the global context as inspiration to create a book that shows a personal story of a group of animals taking care of nature; not overusing the resources provided by our planet for profit.

Evaluation of product against success criteria

Success Criteria	Was it met?	Why?
Writing in a style which is appropriate and understandable for young children.	Yes	All the vocabulary and the kanji that I used matched the capabilities of a child that is 6-8 years old and even has 'furigana' which is a reading aid consisting of smaller letters that indicate the pronunciation of a kanji. After having the story proofread by 1 Japanese adult as well as a beginner at Japanese, I received the same feedback that the wording used was appropriate for children.
The story's length should be easily readable.	Yes	The story is 20 pages long which is within the recommended length of ~25 pages. This is mainly based on the observations of Kaguya Hime, Guri to Gura, and other Japanese children's books I had at my home.
It should have a catchy beginning.	No	The climax did not occur within the first 5 pages and instead on the 8 th page. Despite this, there were elements which made the story catchy from the get-go such as the main character encountering a glowing maple tree along with a vibrant illustration on the very first page.
The story should leave the reader with a meaningful message or moral.	Yes	According to feedback from people during the exhibition, the moral of the story is clear and predicted to be impactful for children who read it. Environmental sustainability is one of the most pressing problems in the world, therefore I believe it is important for kids to learn about it from a young age.
Illustrations should frequently appear.	No	My book did not have an illustration every second page as per the success criteria and only had 3 in total, excluding the front and back covers.
The graphics should have a sense of simplicity.	Yes	The style of art which I opted for in my book is soft including simplistic shapes, colors and no shading. For example, my representation of the magical maple tree can be described as a red cloud with branches and a glow from behind. Moreover, I have made the limbs of the animals into simple nubs sticking out of the body.
The font should be easy on the eyes.	Yes	The font I used is Yu Gothic – size 24 – which is a standard sans serif type family designed to be highly readable and is a very common typeface for any Japanese text.
The book should not look plain.	No	It looks plain due to the lack of illustrations. This illustrates how starting the drawing phase in December was too late since it didn't give me enough time to practice the fundamentals of drawing. Even though I could have put backgrounds for the text, I thought it looked better without.
It should be created through a digital medium.	Yes	For text, I used Microsoft Word, for illustrations: FireAlpaca, and for the final product: Microsoft PowerPoint. I believe I adequately employed media literacy skills for both finding

		usable software and using them to their full extent. This was especially evident in the drawing such as utilizing the hue bar, alpha lock, clipping, and more features to give my drawings a clean finish.
It should include all the components of the average children's book.	No	My book had the front cover, inner cover, title page, and back cover. It is missing the copyright page as well as the official publishing tags at the end of the book, hence it did not fulfill the criteria. I decided not to include those pages because there was simply no copyrights or publishing information to put.
People from the embassy should be able to have easy access to it online.	No	As it was never donated, many people do not know of its existence and do not have access at all.
My product is finished on time.	No	It was not handed in on time and the reason for this is because I started the drawing part in December which was too late since it didn't give me enough time to practice the fundamentals of art.
My product is donated to the Japanese Embassy in Qatar.	No	It was never donated. To solve this, I could've printed a single copy of the book with a QR code redirecting it to my eBook and donated that instead.

Conclusion

In general, I believe the product could have been improved to be of much higher quality through handling my time better and enforcing better self-discipline. Nevertheless, completing this personal project taught me a host of things that will prove useful skills to have in the future. Firstly, reaching the upper-intermediate level of Japanese will provide many opportunities for me in terms of finding work since multilingual people are becoming increasingly valuable with rapid globalization. Secondly, my digital literacy has vastly improved after creating an eBook using over 3 software which is another valuable skill to have in our modern, digitalized world. I have been able to extend my knowledge both on my topic and global context having expressed my personal story through illustration as well as fictional stories in the language I love.