The creation of my digital bibliotherapy visual novel began as a way to combine my three areas of study (English, Secondary Education, and Counseling) for my senior capstone project. I decided to use a digital medium for better accessibility. A digital format allowed for various language settings both in text and audio, audible dialogue for students with visual impairments, and geographical accessibility for students in different regions and environments.

When designing the characters, I focused on the *identification* element of bibliotherapy. The protagonist the player/reader assumes the role of has no discerning characteristics other than the name chosen by the player/reader. You never see the protagonist in the game and the supporting characters never refer to them in gender-specific ways. This was done to allow the player/reader to better identify with the main character and create an immersive experience. The other characters were designed as humans in the Japanese art style known as chibi. They are drawn in diverse manners to mimic people the player could encounter in real life. It was important to avoid using anthropomorphic characters so I could create a realistic experience.

I created character designs in ProCreate before transferring my designs into a character-generating system known as Ooyoo Gorae to create the sprites used in the visual novel. This allowed me to design original, diverse characters while also being able to adapt new sprites with different facial expressions quickly. I chose the chibi style as an homage to Japan, which is where visual novels and chibi art originate. I kept this same concept in mind when selecting backgrounds throughout the visual novel. I used royalty-free, stock backgrounds designed by Gakan Sozai. When selecting my backgrounds, I made an effort to choose ones that maintained the Japanese design element while appearing similar to Western classrooms. Maintaining a more Western classroom appeal was important because the current demographic for my visual novel is

the United States. The distinct differences between American and Japanese classrooms could have impacted the immersive experience for the player/reader.

When designing the visual novel, I originally intended to completely build the world using Unreal Engine. However, given the time I had to create my project, I concluded building in Unreal Engine was unnecessary for creating a storyboard. I chose a visual novel design app known as Kocho. Kocho was selected for its ability to let me create various chapters within one visual novel, its ease of use, and the amount of time it took to create and edit full chapters.

I needed to create a world where any student could jump in and feel connected to the protagonist and identify with the world they see. To that effect, identification with the world in the visual novel was vital to amplifying the experience of social anxiety to challenge the player/reader to actively learn and experiment with the anxiety reduction methods taught. This would later be tested through the knowledge test and follow-up assignment conducted at the end of each chapter.