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Applying technical abilities through playful and engaging game design: Pre reflective essay

Programming as a whole has been a challenging and exciting path, while the more languages I grasp and understand the more I see the immense prospect to incorporate creative narratives game design. In my present engagement with programming, I find myself drawn to its ability to transform abstract concepts into tangible, interactive experiences in all different mediums. The ability to unite designing and sketching with programming invites mixed media thinking. These basic concepts motivate me to seek deeper knowledge on the fundamentals of mastering these programming languages in order to achieve a greater scope of what I am capable of through harnessing and trusting my technical skills, all while finding a balance in abilities. Creating creatures that have never been fathomed before and bringing their stories to life through game design has always inspired my programming, though my struggle through the technical application can hinder my creative flow. One of the key aspects that make programming a creative endeavor is the limitless potential for creating something divisive and new by uniting old concepts while creating a new experience. Those potentials only become limitless when it is truly understood, so refining my programming knowledge through specific aspects could play into how easily my creative ideas are executed.

Coding enables individuals to explore new ways of thinking and problem-solving, while integrating carefully selected stylistic choices that transform the ideas into a visually stimulating experiences that captivates the viewer because of its attention to detail and balance. From a programming perspective, making a 2D platformer is easy, but making a good 2D platformer is very difficult, and that is where the difference lies in my skill gap towards the programming world. Having an in depth understanding of that knowledge allows you to instill trust in your creative flow and process, while coding becomes a second language that you're speaking. I personally believe this balance is what allows truly good concepts to be born, finding the balance of engaging games amidst a sea of extremely difficult bosses or games that are far too easy or were only meant to be engaging for a short period of time. Programming that has truly

inspired me for example, are the combat features adaptations made in the creation of Undertale, where Toby Fox created a turn based combat system with real time shooter elements. Inspired by the bullet hell genre, he did not want the combat to be as difficult to allow for a more pleasant gameplay and a wider demographic. The balance and thought he put in every aspect of the seemingly simplistic game was what made it so deeply enriching.

Looking ahead, the future of programming as a creative form of expression holds exciting possibilities. As technology continues to advance, programming languages and tools will likely become more accessible and will perhaps allow for an even more immersive creative process. I truly want to start at ground zero and learn as much as I can through this process surrounded by likeminded creatives. Learning how to create games through a more in-depth knowledge of collision detection, creating fletched out game map files, and sprite animations would really round off the base knowledge I have of uniting the visually stimulating animations with the interactive abilities of a well fletched out platform game. Finding the balance of technical understanding and free form creative execution will be a challenge to explore throughout this semester.