

Programming Specialism Reflective Report

So with all four of my briefs completed with some including the extended versions, I can finally reflect on this module and what I have gotten out of it. Going into this year for specialisms I knew I wanted to do either programming or art, as I did design last year and it felt like I was having to write more than I thought. My reasoning between programming and art was due to my interest in 3D modelling, as I really enjoyed 3DM from the first semester and even did some casual modelling during semester 1 of this year. Choosing art would give me a nice opportunity to learn new skills within modelling as well as practise my current knowledge within Maya and other software. However, this didn't seem practical for me as I knew I wouldn't gain much from pursuing art specialism and programming definitely seemed more required at this stage in my game development timeline. My knowledge at the time wasn't all-knowing and I wanted to be in a place where I could in the future think of a game idea and at the minimum put together a mechanical demo of the working prototype, like this with my designer focused brain would make my future game creations a lot easier and independent to make, so with that, I decided I wanted to take programming.

As mentioned before I wanted to get more confident with programming in general, so I could create mechanical demos freely, this was because I am not a greatly motivated individual and I would have easily said to myself "I will learn to code over the Summer break", and as optimistic I may seem I'm sure any programmer would find that statement rather amusing. So to force me to learn it sooner, I took myself out of my comfort zone and put myself in a position where I had to learn it in some way shape or form to be able to progress, and safe to say now I am on the other end of the module it actually worked... kind of.

The main thing I liked about this module was how passionate not only the students on the specialism were but also Paul. If I ever had a problem with quite literally anything programming related someone was willing to help me. Everyone had this passion for problem-solving and it was really interesting just to see people helping people, it was really nice to experience that and eventually got to the point later in this module and other modules were issues I was having with my coding started to become apparent and I was able to figure them out independently and quicker as well, plus there was always a small buzz I got when fixing something that was broken.

The other part of the module I really liked was the accessibility to new starters, essentially a difficulty setting for each brief and I felt that was a really good inclusion to the module as someone like me who knows minimal code from the first year, was able to easily pick out the doable and near impossible briefs. Going into this module as well and scanning over the options for the briefs I recall saying in my journal I wanted to aim for doing 2 beginner briefs and either an advanced or intermediate brief. This is what most people would call an overestimate, I am not massively upset about meeting my aim for what briefs I complete as I originally only set out to move out of my comfort zone and become more confident with programming which I certainly feel like I have accomplished that.

The briefs I chose were FPS Counter, Radar, Instanced Scrolling Texture and SpeedOMeter. These briefs were four beginner level briefs, I completed the extended work for the radar and SpeedOMeter brief for extra credit which I knew I wanted to do to just give them an added function like the SpeedOMeter dial moving and the radar blips hugging the edge, I did this because they were beginner level briefs I felt like I needed to do extra for the time spent on them.

In terms of setbacks I had a few, my first one was with the radar brief, and after the first Show and Tell I showed off my old radar attempt which used a none coded way of creating a minimap which I was given constructive criticism for to give it another go to make it a true radar. With this, I went back to the drawing board and created the radar I ended up submitting, this feedback was helpful as it allowed me to go back and realise what I did wrong and work more within Unity to get a better understanding of multiple things within it.

Another setback I had was with a brief I never ended up completing which was the Rolling Roads brief. This required me to make an endless runner style map generation to have an infinite road appear ahead of the player. I understood that I would need to be instantiating prefab straight road and corner pieces which would be triggered by an invisible collider game object. However, it was the camera movement that was specific within the brief that threw me off the brief as I needed the map to move to simulate the player's movement. I am sure that I would be able to solve the issue I was facing but inevitably I just decided to leave it and move on to an easier brief to wrap my head around and potentially come back to it at a future date (which never seemed to happen).

Looking back on my progress for this module I can definitely see a difference from where I was to where I am now. I was able to write a full C# script to activate camera shake functionality by myself for another module which I am sure would not have been possible without me stepping out of my designer comfort zone as I knew I would need to learn C# coding at some point and I knew it had to be very soon other it would negatively impact my AGP for next year or at the very least cause significant stress. My problem solving for coding I would say has been the biggest improvement on anything over the course of this module and I can certainly see it as I used to just struggle on something and endlessly doom scroll through YouTube tutorials to find a meaningful and potential fix to my problem, but now I can easily suss out the more common errors like missing semicolons, incorrect spelling mistakes or even just incorrectly capitalised words. I will certainly be taking my programming further over the Summer and into my third

year to get to that aim I wish to be at as this module has got the ball rolling for me in terms of readiness to learn and solve within programming and I am very happy with how my briefs turned out.