# Post Reflection Essay

As a third-year student taking this class, I came into the course thinking I wouldn't learn anything new and be unmotivated to work on the assignments and projects. I've completed multiple internships, have taken all OOP classes at Concordia, and am nearing the end of my studies. Despite this, I still found things to learn and topics that interested me throughout the course. I have never really coded in JavaScript/p5 and this being my first experience in class was a great first one. I was able to review my core coding concepts (although not really needed but still good) and was able to put my creative mind when creating the mini games/projects to work. I already had extensive knowledge of basic programming concepts such as if/else statements, for/while loops, variables, objects, arrays, etc. During my OOP classes I've learnt about abstraction, inheritance between classes, polymorphism and on top of that have done a data structures and algorithms class as well as an operating systems class which have taught me most of what I know about coding big projects and challenging ideas.
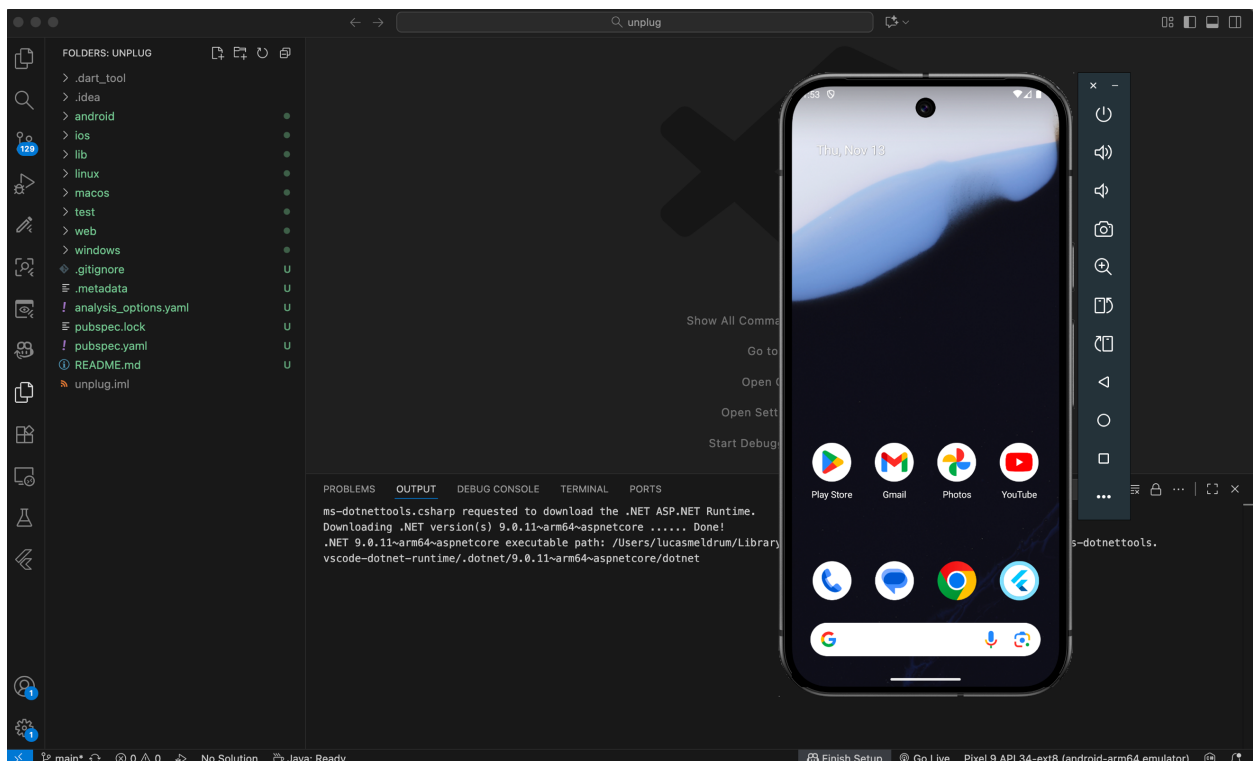
Despite all this previous knowledge, I think the most significant change that I added to my workflow was the constant commits to GitHub. Usually, I code and then commit at the end but when working on these assignments I prioritized constantly committing and pushing to main. Although I've used GitHub for almost all my projects and classes this class helped me focus on keeping this habit and being consistent.

Another change I felt as I progressed through the class was my creative flow. Usually, I don't prioritize my creative mind and focus on mainly getting the task done but this class allowed for that side of my mind to flow. At my internship and where I currently work (Matrox), I am always put into highly mathematical and problem-solving situations where my creative mind does not get to flow/perform. This class really opened my mind and allowed me to do things that I WANTED to do.
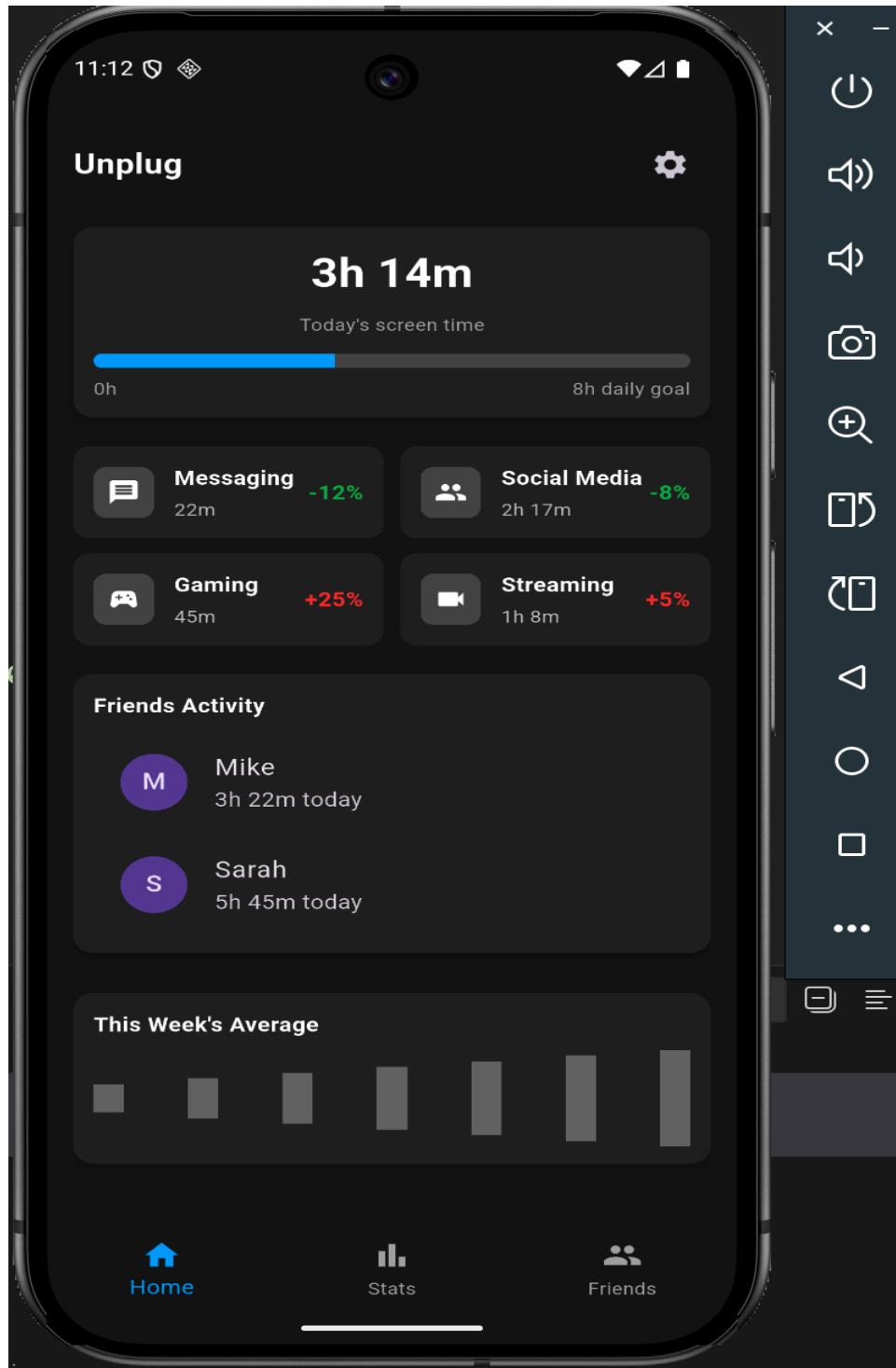
With this new creative mindset, I want to prioritize doing something fun and artistic in my projects. I am a big fan of UI/UX design and games, and I want to maybe create projects surrounding

those ideas. I want to also help people in the future but do it in a way that is creative and new which is challenging for me. It is very difficult for me to find new/unique ways of doing things such as coding, developing games, and making things. The line: "What can you do now as an artist who codes?" seems almost inverted to what my experience is. I almost feel like a coder who wants to adopt art into my projects not the other way around.

 Currently, to follow this idea of creating an artistic and code heavy project, I have been developing an app to help people with addictions. One is for screen time since we are all addicted to our phones and the other (that I haven't started yet) is for gambling addictions. I think these two apps fall under the conjunction of creativity and coding. For my screen time app, I have been following the principles of design thinking while attempting to make a modern and visually pleasing UI. The app's main idea is to track screen time and compare that to your friends to gamify the idea of trying to reduce it. I believe it encapsulates both creativity and coding since the idea itself and the UI come from an artist point of view while the actual implementation is all code. Initially, I had to set up an emulator to emulate the app on a Google Pixel:
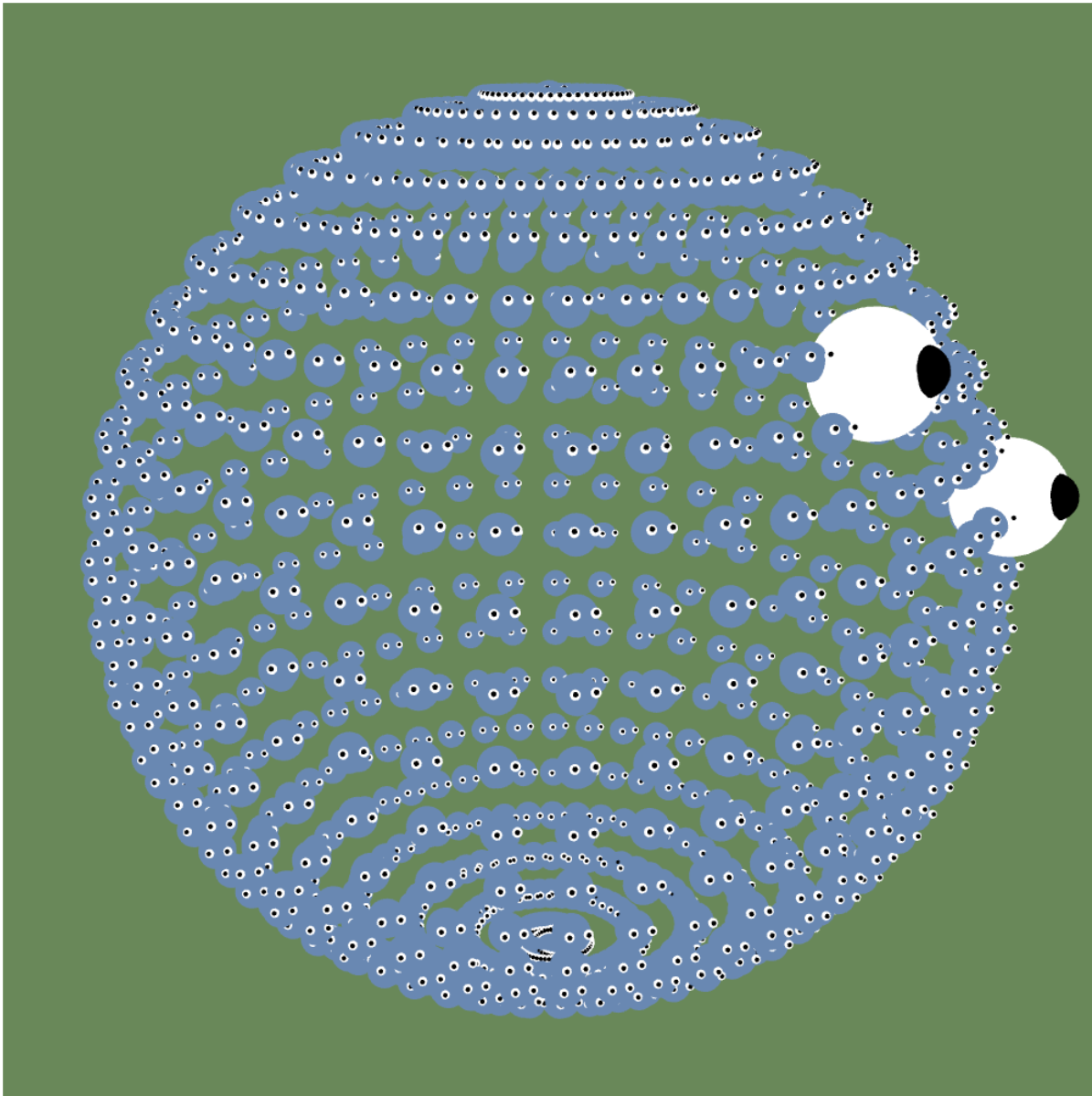
Then after a couple months of coding using Dart/Flutter, API calls and syncing it with Google's database I was able to create a nice UI and functioning app:

Although it seems like a simple app, this project became a combination of both my creative and coding mind. I used my technical knowledge of coding (all the ideas we learnt in class) and my creative/design thinking mind to make something that is unique and different. I enjoy coding the most when I can visually see what I am doing and what effects each line of code has on my final project. One of the ways the class impacted the development of this app is the try/test method and seeing where things lead. For example, in class there were always moments of attempting strange/weird numbers as variables to see what changed and how. While coding the app, I took this approach to see if anything interesting/unique came out of it and it allowed me to create some unique features (graphs and vs friends on the other pages). This creative style of coding will be on my mind as I continue to develop games/apps and will hopefully allow for new ideas to sprout.

When it comes to owning the role of a creative coder I still don't feel fully there. I think a big part of that hesitation comes from the fact that I've always approached programming from a strictly technical or engineering/oriented mindset. For most of my degree and internships, "good code" meant efficient program and clean organized code. In my world, creativity wasn't usually the goal. So, stepping into a space where code is meant to be expressive, playful, and even messy felt different. Although it felt different and distant to code creatively, I do feel closer to that role than I did at the start of the course.

Working with p5.js gave me opportunities to write code that exists for the sake of visual or interactive experience rather than purely function. Thinking of the art jam, I wrote code to just see something visually fun without worrying if things were off or not perfect. I wrote loops to create motion and had randomness to simulate something exciting in WebGL:

This class and that assignment specifically has made me rethink what coding can be used for. I started seeing how even basic concepts like arrays, loops, or the idea of continuous drawing could contribute to something expressive. That shift has helped me understand creative coding not as a separate idea but as an extension of the programmer I already am.

Ultimately, although I am still on the journey of finding my creative side, I think as I near the end of my university experience (less than a year now!), I'm beginning to understand how my technical strength and creative side can support each other rather than conflict. This course pushed me to

experiment, to make space for play, and to see code as more than a tool for solving problems. I may not fully identify as a creative coder yet, but I'm far closer than when I began. With every project I work on that blends design and interaction, like my app, I feel myself getting more confident into that role. As I move forward with my life and coding experience, I am excited to keep building work that reflects both sides of who I am: a programmer with a growing desire to make things that are not just functional, but interactive, helpful, and creative.