Post-Reflection

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Section A

Presented to

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CART 253

Creative Computation I

Coming into this semester, I feared this class because of previous experience I had with programming as a whole. I did not have a very good relationship with programming as I had difficulty learning how to program as well as understanding the logic. Sometimes it would get frustrating, all the times I would get lost in the code itself as I wouldn't understand the basics.

As I am revisiting my programming knowledge at the start of the course, I acknowledge that it was somewhat minimal, but I still had some basics. Now that the semester is coming to an end, I realize how much more comfortable I am when it comes to programming. A big part of that was how we were taught: we had online lectures to follow through and focus on at home to come to school with the technical aspects learnt to the best of our abilities and then in class with the professor making sure we've understood the little things and answering questions, really just touching on the small things. As well as doing in class exercises which, even if they weren't too challenging, helped us practice what we've just learnt. The environment created by the professor and the students also helped encourage the students to learn as well. These were huge differences for me as when I previously attempted to learn how to program, feeling lost and unsupported, it was a different story.

The most significant changes from the beginning of the semester to now are that I am more comfortable with programming, I don't get as flustered as I used to be when facing issues with the code in front of me. To add, I understand the logic much more now, which was something I was afraid I would continue to struggle with. I even started to enjoy it and enjoy digging inside of my brain to figure out the errors I had in my codes, which was something I didn't feel before.

Seeing how you could connect all the concepts we learned was a big shift in my technical knowledge. At the start, it felt like what we were learning were all separate aspects of p5 but as time went on and the more we learnt, I could see the connections we could make between them. For example, using variables to determine the position of a circle, or anything you want, a loop to repeat that circle in the canvas multiple times, using functions, named such as moveCircle() to move it and using conditionals with if statements to determine if something happens once it reaches a certain area of the canvas.

Variables are the core of everything, they allow us to store positions, sizes, colors. Using conditionals with variables allows us to change these variables if something happens. They can determine whether the variables change in position, whether the object changes colors, whether something new appears in the canvas, etc. Understanding that using loops to create repeated objects or shapes in such reduced code, to repeat a block of code without writing it multiple times, felt like I was making good progress in my understanding of coding. That was a difference maker for me from the mod jam to the variation jam as I remember repeating

lines of code over and over again with slight tweaks to make my portrait. To continue, arrays to store objects or data and use loops to manipulate that data and create something interesting. I understood it was a way to make things more efficient, instead of writing multiple lines of code for each object, all you needed was a couple of lines to handle everything. I really enjoyed the process of understanding this because I started to compare my progress of understanding programming and my knowledge increasing to my past attempts at trying to learn. To continue, using functions to organize my code into different parts to help envision what I have in mind such as anything I had to draw in the canvas, looking for interactions, updating movement or even resetting the scene. Instead of copying and pasting code, you can just call a function that you defined beforehand. Learning all of this helped me realize how much they help us by making it easier to manage or debug our code. I had a little more trouble connecting events with other aspects of programming throughout this semester, for me they were separated from the others. Events like mousePressed() or keyPressed() made me feel like they were just their own thing and only linked to clicking buttons, which they kind of are. But I was able to understand that they are in fact connected, we are always using conditions when using these events. We use if-statements to verify when the user is clicking something. For example, if the user presses spacebar, the character will jump. It supports the interactivity between the user and the elements such as conditionals, even could activate loops and functions.

To be honest, this was all very challenging to me as I went into the semester with the fear of having to program because of my past experiences. Once everything started to connect, it changed everything for me. Once I understood the logic of programming as well as the basics, I started to think less about it when I was programming, it started to become more natural. Looking to the future of my role as a creative coder, I think that it is still early and there is a lot for me to learn and perfect before I own the role that I have in my mind, which is to be able to create anything I want. I am happy with how far I've come but there are still things I need to improve on. Such as having better understandings of the logic, of how each element of programming connects and really just remembering that I am an artist as well as a programmer and I need to use that to my advantage to use my creative abilities to the maximum. I have improved not only as a programmer but also as an artist, and not only technically but also mentally. In the future, I'm looking forward to be able to work on my own projects and have the freedom to create whatever comes to mind.