Game of Life Reflection

I very much enjoyed a large majority of the lab. I felt that the process of not actually coding, but rather problem solving before typing anything on the keyboard was amazingly effective. In addition, I enjoyed the challenge of having to look through foreign code and be able to discern what it is doing and how I can use it to my advantage. I appreciated the unique experience it gave me. As an individual who understands the importance of not coding right off the bat, I really appreciated being force to go through the problem solving process of creating an algorithm and hence translating it into Java. However, I disliked the ambiguity of the prompt. I felt as though the prompt was confusing on where exactly it wanted what kind of code. For example, if I wanted to test new designs, I had no idea where to implement those designs without consulting you personally in class. If the directions were clearer on perhaps how much work is required to implement new designs, I feel as though this lab would be significantly more effective as a whole.

What was most surprising about the lab was how complex it was to find the simplicity in the solution. I was scavenging the documentation trying to find how to get the number of neighbors around a location. I initially used the method that accompanied the Critter class, and took the size of the array it returned. However, it did not help when I had to check the neighbors of an empty location, and hence left me in a rut. It took me an unnecessary amount of time to look through the documentation to finally check the methods within the Grid and World classes.

I learned a lot about how to use foreign code to my advantage, as well as how to approach a problem after getting stuck in a rut. The easiest way is to take a break from the problem and approach it from a blank slate.

I have questions mostly in how to extend this lab. For example, how can I observe a massive grid? Would the GridWorld library not be enough to handle a grid with dimensions of 100,000x100,000? What other designs could be implemented? How would the designs change if it the sides did wrap around?

My Advice for next year’s students is to always always always check ALL the tools that are given to you, even the ones that won’t seem all that helpful in the moment.