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Post Semester Reflection

Prior to the course, I had taken some interest in programming, mostly self-taught, except for a C course I took in CEGEP, of which I remember almost nothing. My main problem that I found with the courses I took before is that I seem to be a visual learner, and none of the theory stuck with me when learning through the classically formatted teaching styles. What Helped me the most during this course is the visual nature of it. Being able to see the changes real time in front of my eyes is insanely helpful to my learning and I would be completely lost without it. In my previous courses, the farthest I got was for loops, which I had a really hard time understanding. I would have to physically draw flow charts to help myself understand.

Today, I have a much better understanding of for loops, I understand the logic and no longer need to draw anything. Sometimes I still struggle with the syntax, and I have to look at old projects to remind myself of the code, but the main idea of the loops is sticking with me. Something else that I feel like I improved a lot with is IF statements. Before this class they were pretty daunting to me, however now they are very easy for me to understand, it's almost just like writing a sentence in English.

Something else that I think has changed is my knowledge on how the computer processes the code. Even though I understand I am a beginner, I still feel almost silly for not understanding how the computer reads what we feed it. Something as simple as understanding how the draw () function runs every frame changed the way I think about my programs and helps me organize what goes where in a program. It's a very simple thing, yet it's something that was neglected by the other courses I've taken.

My relationship between programming and creativity has changed drastically, and it shows me that I made the right choice in taking an art related program. I used to think of programming as this very constricting set of rules, for example my coding assignments used to have a very strict end goal, whereas these recent assignments are more open ended. Having creative freedom in our assignment really allowed me to explore some of the concepts that I had difficulties with, which helped me understand them better. This class also bled into some other courses, more specifically the web design course, where I realized that with JavaScript, I could basically just turn my webpage into a game, which is

exactly what I did. This made me realize that for some reason I am very drawn towards making games that are designed to infuriate the user. Also using p5.js taught me that there is no shame in taking shortcuts. Having this database of premade shortcuts really helped me focus on learning the basic concepts, which showed me that programming doesn't have to be this long process of manually creating logic from scratch. What I mean by this is having premade variables for things like noise() is a huge timesaver and can help me focus on more important things. This translates to my creative practice in general, I realized that there are tools available to make my life easier, and as long as they don't impede my learning, there is no reason I shouldn't be using them.
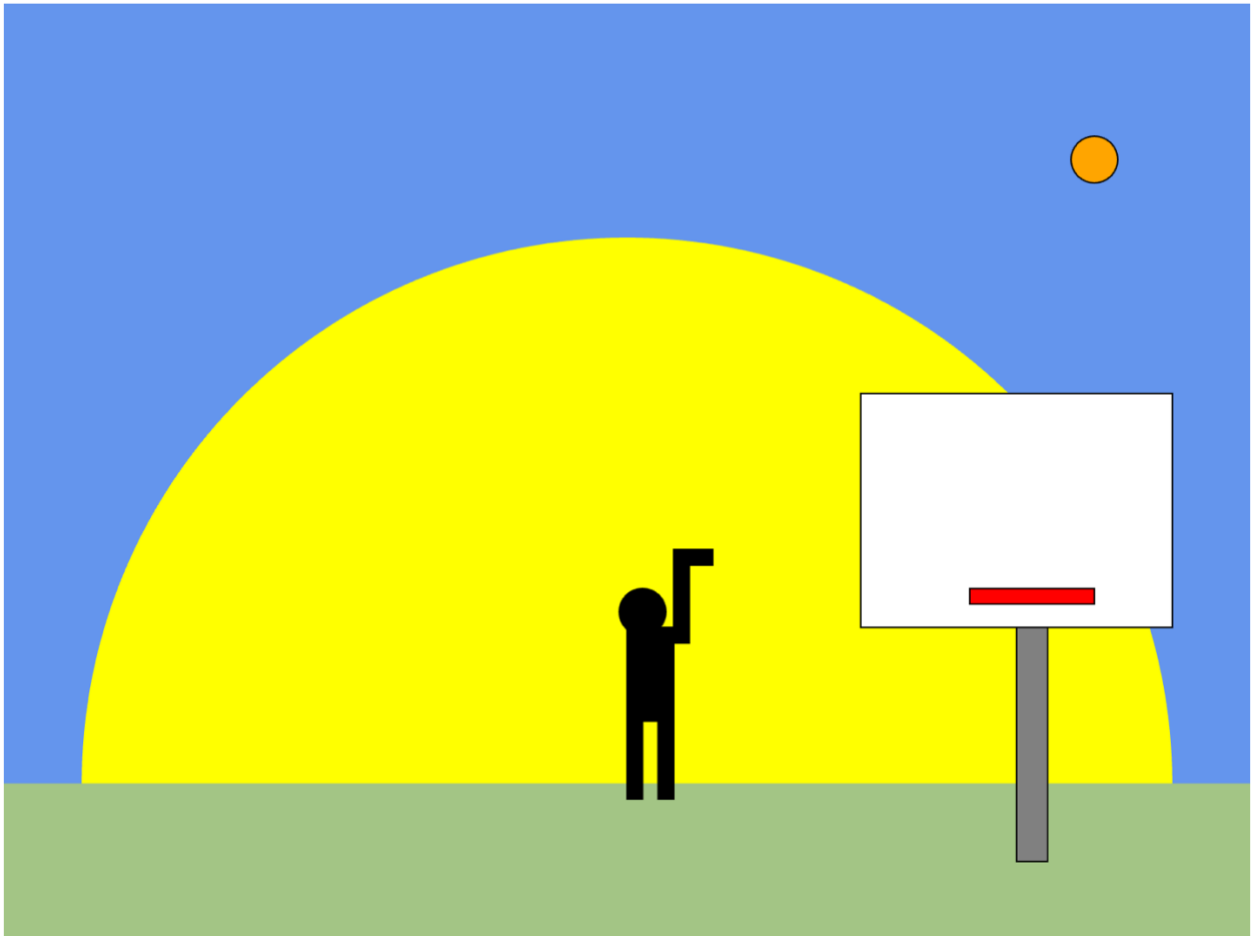
One last thing that I can link between programming and my creative practice is being more intentional with the creative process. It was the process of debugging that taught me that its important to be organized and intentional from early on if you don't want to cause problems for yourself later. This applies to all my other classes and is just a good lesson in general. This also falls into the category of breaking big functions/structures into smaller more understandable bits. This is also something very important to my creative practice. I would not be passing any of my classes If I didn't start early and break things up into small steps.

I wasn't really sure where I wanted to take my role as a creative coder at the beginning of the semester, but now I have a better Idea. Although nothing is set in stone, I realized that the thing that I find the most pleasure in is making games/interactive works. I always thought that I would enjoy making the more "traditional" way of making art i.e. making something that looks visually appealing. I found this not to be the case at all, as in almost every assignment, I find myself spending the majority of the time working on the interactive mechanics of my projects and I usually leave the cosmetic changes to the end if I have time. To me this is indicative that I would be happiest/most effective if my future projects focus more on the interactivity side of things rather than making something stagnant that looks good.

As for how much closer I am to accomplishing that goal, I have no Idea to be honest. I still don't know precisely what I want to do, so I can't really gauge how much closer I am to that goal. What I can definitively say however, is that I am somewhat closer to that goal whatever it may be. One thing that I didn't mention is arrays. While I still struggle with the syntax, I think the general idea of learning arrays will help me in my future as a creative coder because I think it exemplifies the Idea of keeping things simple while making things easier for myself. If I can grasp how information flows through an array then I can work on whole systems rather than just one moment at a time, which feels like an important step in the right direction. Overall, I am excited to learn more, and I hope I don't forget everything

over the break. Writing that last sentence also made me realize how important having a repository can be for my future self. To be able to look back at my old work can definitely be helpful for my future self.

First project:

Nicest project: