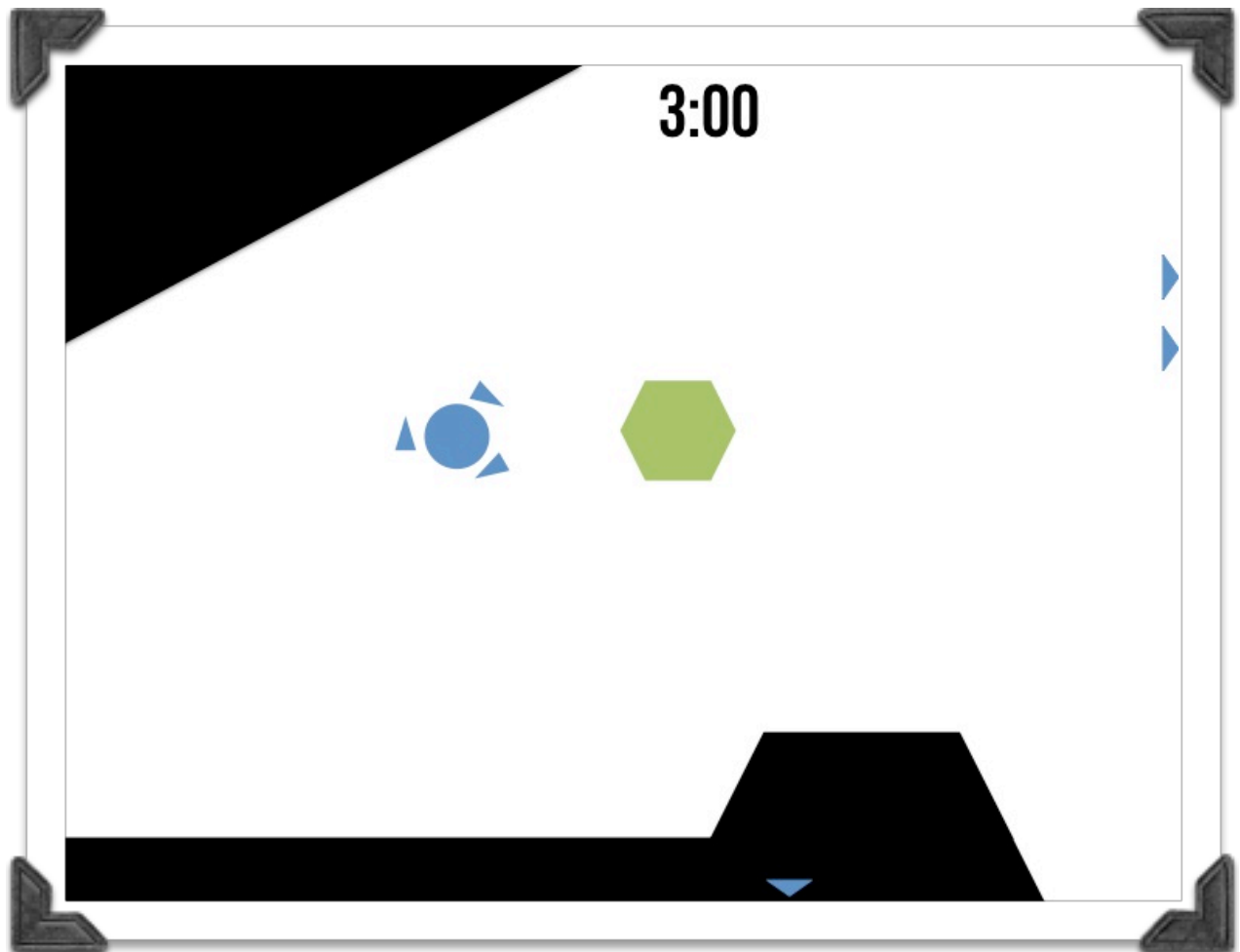

Assignment 2

“Togetherness”

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DESIGN DESCRIPTION

“Togetherness” to me meant to accomplish something together, and that there is strength in numbers. As such, I designed my game to play along this value of “strength in numbers”. At the same time I thought in terms of the oppositional playing. The player has to make decisions in the game to reinforce the value of “togetherness”, thus going against the value of “strength in numbers” would cause the game to be really hard to play, or even punishes the player, and going for that value would cause the game to be easier to play. Furthermore, I designed my game along the lines of Play and Progress, to allow the player to both explore the game and to progress within the game. I also considered the activity theory and hierarchy and included elements to drive the player to the right motivations and to take the right actions, as determined by the “togetherness” value described above.

The target platform is a console with electric feedback on the controller, a multidirectional “thumbstick” and two buttons. The primary button is to trigger the change in the player state, and the secondary button is to activate and deactivate the map. The “thumbstick” is to allow multidirectional movement control of the character, and the electric feedback is to punish the player with a minor electric shock. Note that players with heart problems or are pregnant should use an alternate control without the shock.

Gameplay

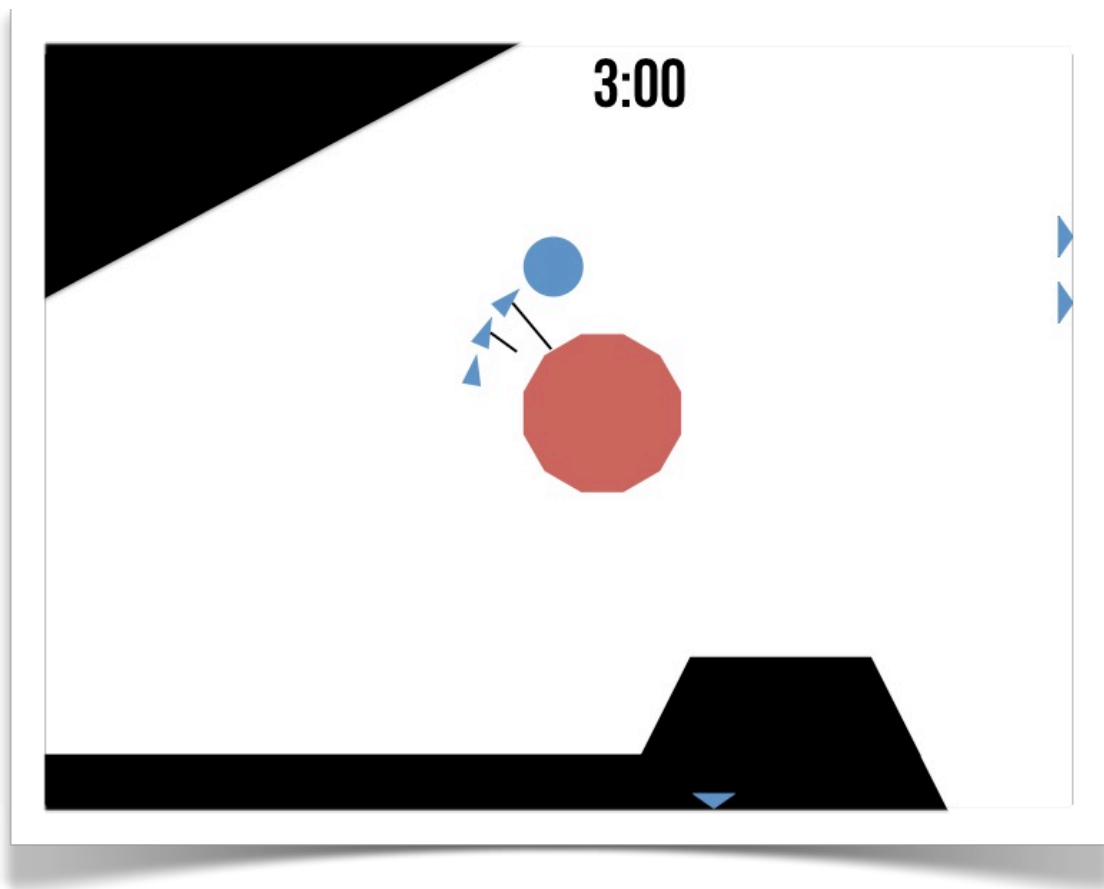
This is a simple maze game. In this game, the player is a circle. His objective is to get to the end of the maze before the time runs out. He has a map with a fog of war, with explored area as visible in the map.

The many-sided shapes are his enemies. They will hunt him and try to stop him from getting to the end of the maze. Some enemies are mobile and some are stationary. The more sides the shape has, the bigger the monster, and the harder it is to destroy him. When the enemy is destroyed, he will turn into a triangle.

The player can collect triangles to help him to defeat the many-sided shapes. The player can choose to collect these triangles, thus strengthening its chain of triangles and getting a larger radius of view for the map, or continue to find its way out, thus saving time. There are two modes the circle and triangle team can travel in: line or defense mode. The description of these two modes are in the screens section.

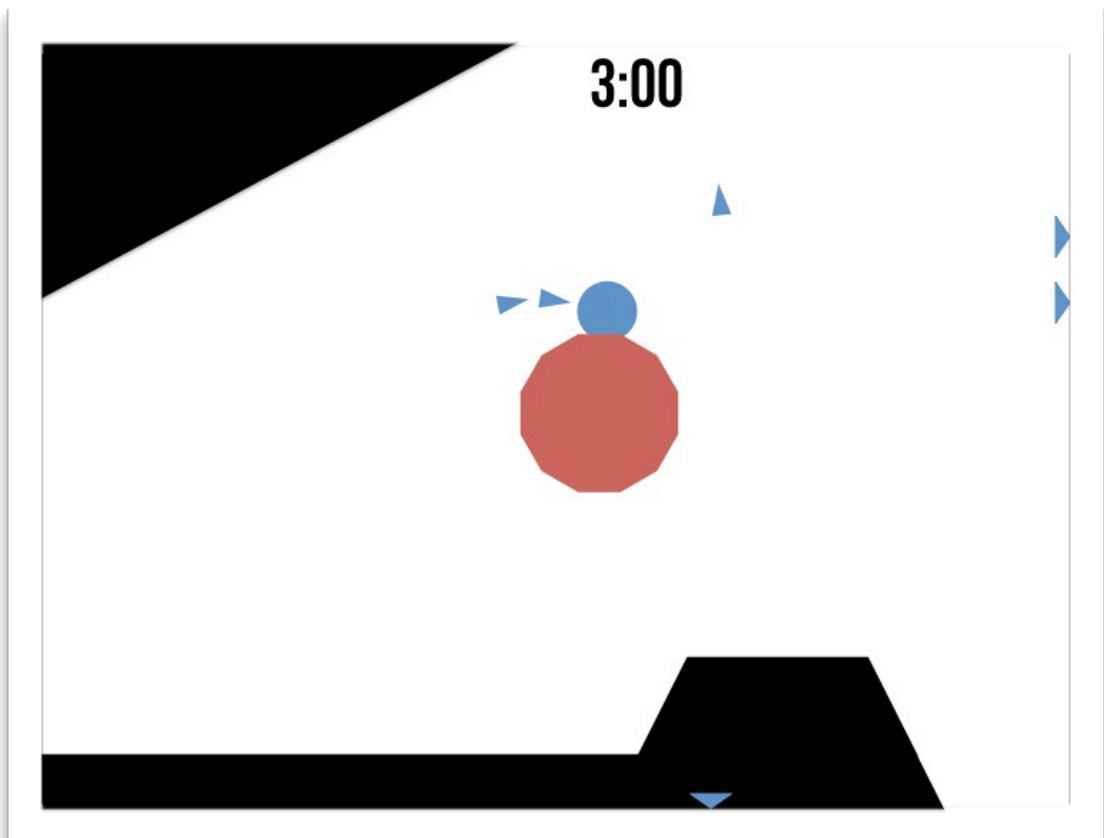
The player wins if he gets to the end of the maze before the time runs out. The player loses if he touches the enemy and he does not have any triangles with him, or if he does not get to the end of the maze before the time runs out.

Screens



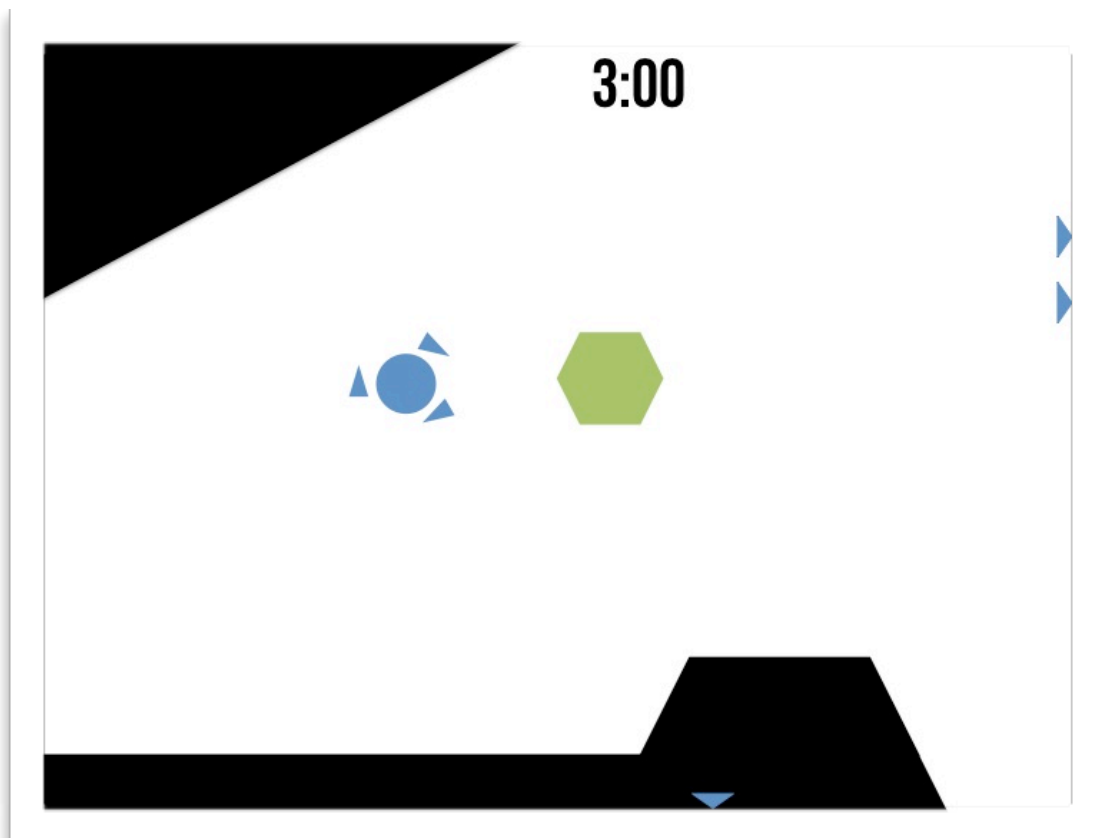
Player (Line mode) circling red enemy

The timer on top represents the countdown timer of the time left to complete the maze. The triangles will follow the player wherever he goes. The triangles at the edge of the screen indicates to the player the direction of triangles that the player has not yet picked up, to encourage him to pick up the triangles. The black portions represents the wall of the maze. The red shape is the enemy. When the player circles the enemy, the triangles will shoot lasers at the enemy, thus reducing his number of sides and weakening him. The more triangles the circle has, more lasers are shot per instant, thus weakening the enemy at a higher rate. When the enemy is weak, the player can either choose to change to defense mode to try to defeat the enemy faster, or to continue shooting at the enemy and eventually turning the enemy into a triangle.



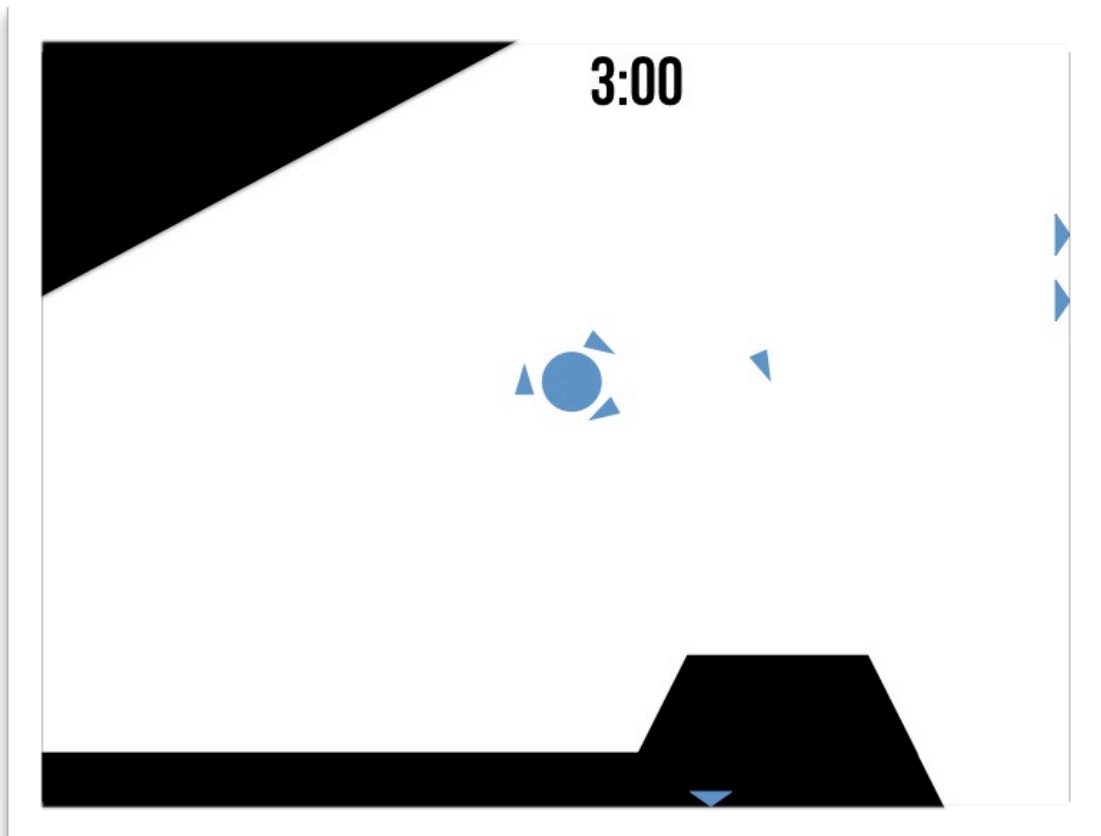
Player (Line mode) colliding with red enemy

If the player accidentally collides with the red enemy, regardless of whether he is in line or defense mode, he dislodges a triangle and receives a shock from the controller as punishment. If the player does not have any triangles following him when he collides with the red enemy, he receives a shock from the controller and the character dies, and thus losing the game.



Player (Defense mode) with green enemy

When the player is in defense mode and he has enough triangles to attack the enemy, the enemy will turn green to indicate that the enemy is safe to collide. But if the player is in defense mode and he collides against the wall, he dislodges a triangle. This would not have happened if the player is in line mode. Thus, the player has to choose between line mode, for niftier navigation, or defense mode, to quickly obliterate the enemy. Thus the common strategy to attack the enemy is to use line mode to circle the enemy and weaken him, and once he is weak enough, use the defense mode to collide against him, thus converting the enemy into a triangle and saving time. The player can choose not to convert the enemy, but if the enemy is mobile, he will keep hunting him down through the game until the enemy is destroyed.



Player (Defense mode) with loose triangle

When the player finds a loose triangle, he can choose to either go close to the triangle to collect the triangle, or to continue without making a special effort to collect the triangle. A loose triangle can be found if it was already in the map, if the player dislodges the triangle when colliding with an object, or if the player converts an enemy into a triangle.

REFLECTION

I feel that this assignment has really taught me about different perspective to look at a game. It is interesting to see how games include value in their design, and how different HCI principles can be used when developing games.

Value of “Togetherness”

“Togetherness” was enforced in the game by increase in strength when player collects triangles to defeat enemies and get bigger radius of view for the map. Furthermore, if he loses a triangle, he will get a small electrical zap from the controller. Thus, “togetherness” is strengthen when player collects triangles and play carefully to protect his triangles.

Activity theory

The main activity for this game is to get to the end point in maze. The subject for this game is the circle, hero of the game. Subjects in the game are the maze and the enemies. Tools that the circle has are triangles that he has with him, triangles at edge of screen and the map. The outcome of the game is that he passes the many different obstacles to reach the end of the maze. The main tools encourages togetherness by being stronger as he collects the triangles, and it is further encouraged by having the map’s cleared area of view to be wider with having more triangles and triangles at the edge of screen to prompt player to collect more triangles.

The motive of the player is to win the game, perhaps as a personal challenge to himself or as a means to kill boredom. If the motive is for a personal challenge, perhaps he will be more focus on achieving the objective within the shortest time possible. This may mean that he would miss out on opportunities to gather more triangles on the journey, but at the same time suffering from a higher risk of failure.

Activity Hierarchy

The activity of going pass enemy with the shortest time possible is driven by the motive to reach the end of the maze quickly. Thus, the goal is to destroy the enemy by taking the action of gathering triangles, circling around the enemies to weaken it, and finally colliding in defense form to quickly convert the enemy to a triangle. The player then sees the loose triangle and conducts the operation of going after the triangle so that he will take less time to subdue the next enemy for the end result of going pass the enemy with the shortest time possible. This reinforces the value of togetherness in the player and conditions the player to

collect the loose triangles whenever possible when he is rewarded with a quick conversion of the enemy.

Semiotic Square

There are three ways to play this game:

Together: The player plays by collecting all the triangles he sees. He is rewarded by defeating the enemy and getting to the end point quickly.

Alone: The player avoids getting the triangle and loses the moment the enemy touches him. By playing like this, the player is quick to lose and is punished for playing alone.

Not-together-nor-alone: The player collects triangles only when it is on the way for him. It is harder for the player to play in this way and for most of the time, the player would end up losing his triangles.