

Norah Wilcox  
CART 253  
Post-Reflection

Ever since I showed interest in design and web, my dad has been enthusiastically encouraging me to pursue learning more about code. His career has mostly been driven by coding, and he recognizes that as an artist in the digital age, art is turning in a digital direction. Although I'm sure this is partially rooted in a desire to have shared interests with his child, his statement rang true. At the start of the course, I only had bare knowledge of what code was due to taking basic HTML lessons and learning Scratch in middle school. I recall feeling empowered during these lessons, a realization that something I had deemed so complicated was really just words and symbols. However, after many years, the knowledge seemed to have parted my mind. During the first class of Cart 253, I wasn't aware of where the coding was meant to take place or what a coding language was.

In comparison to today, I now feel as though with some help, there are endless possibilities with what I could create, as long as I'm determined to see the result. This sentiment was particularly felt after the mod jam project, as I was stunned to have created something that could be called a game. When speaking with my peers during the art jam, I found myself enamoured with what others had created, seeing their pages as something I would never be able to understand. I was aware some students had come into the course with prior coding knowledge; however, I couldn't shake the thought of us having learned the same materials thus far and how inadequate I felt in comparison. Later on, while viewing the class's mod jams, I felt compelled to investigate and examine their code, rather than to assume I had no means of understanding it. In creating the mod jam, I had rewritten all the code and done research about including elements I had never heard of before. The project would not have been where it was if Felix had not helped me out. Learning `console.log` saved me much future pain. Additionally, he explained how loading the images and resizing them was causing the problem with lag, as every second the draw function had to recreate the size.

One aspect that truly excited me about p5 was the ability to create illustrations using shapes, as I typically would describe myself as a drawer. The first challenge of creating an illustration with p5.js really drew my interest as I could create simple visuals while challenging myself through this new medium. I recall working alongside Leah. She and I had created a simple house, similar to that in the demonstration. To add a creative touch, we changed the scene to night, adjusting the colours in a way I had done many times with my practice in the past. Colour theory is definitely one of my favourite elements of creating, as finding alternative colour matches can extraordinarily change a

scene. To further push our nighttime house scene, I drew out an idea of mine to give the house arms, gripping the ground as if to lift itself up. To achieve this, we planned to place four rectangles using the rect function and place them in pairs attached to one another on either side of the house. These rectangles would need to be rotated to a specific degree, which we had no idea how to achieve. After some professional help, we learned about the transform function, where the origin would need to be placed where we wanted the rectangle to go. After throwing some numbers at the board, we eventually reached a place where our house had arms! I was very excited to use this strategy in the art jam, creating a character solely from these shapes. In observing my peers' work, I was inspired by the use of images, as I realized the limits of p5 shapes could be surpassed using this strategy. From here on, I preferred to create visuals by importing images, finding pixel art the easiest way to implement this. Using a software called Aseprite, I would have fun drawing a cute visual and then would export it at 500-1000% of its size. I felt pixel art suited the medium of code naturally, as it coincided with the early development of games and digital media. Additionally, the pixels allowed for ease in lining up assets, particularly in the programming of my character creator for the class final.

**he's awake.**



Moving forward with the skills I have developed, I'm excited to apply what I have learned to my love of games. In the future, I aspire to be a game artist and try to

participate in relevant events. This knowledge has boosted my confidence in approaching the world of game creation, having a glimpse into the world of programmers. This past November, I attended my first-ever game jam at Gameraella and had a blast working with new people. While planning our game, we decided on a counter system with a meter that would shrink when the player made a bad choice. Recalling my mod jam, I suggested I make a visual of the exterior of the meter. This way, the programmer would only need to add a rectangle inside that would shrink and grow in length. My team admired the idea, as it was a simple solution. This moment made me proud that I was able to contribute more to the team than just visuals, as I had an understanding of strategies that could cut corners.



Following the variation jam assignment, I'm eager to continue pursuing my character creator, as I would love to make it available to others on [itch.io](https://itch.io). I noted now that those who used the creator found difficulty with the interface and the ability to locate which customization options were where. I also feel the project could benefit from the addition of an animated pattern in the background and some music. Along with posting the page online, I would like to include it in my portfolio, as I feel it demonstrates basic coding knowledge and my dedication to the projects I pursue.