The Passion for Game Design

I fell in love with video games at a very young age. I got my first console—the Wii—when I was eight, but I was playing games even earlier than that. I especially fell in love with sandbox games and the idea of creation. I poured countless hours into these sandbox games crafting world after world for players to explore in games like Minecraft, Little Big Planet, and various flash games.

During fifth grade in the town of Caldwell Idaho, I was introduced to something called, *“An Hour of Code.”*. The idea of not only crafting worlds for players but also the tools and systems for players to engage in those worlds blew my mind. I quickly finished the Hour of Code courses, and my teachers advanced me to a JavaScript course through Khan Academy. From that moment on, I knew I wanted to be: *A Game Designer*. Once I coded my first line into the web editor, I couldn’t stop. I invested countless hours into the Computer Science course, making small, short stories and interactive games out of colored squares and simple code. This was also where I developed the unique ability to teach myself new skills. Many of the concepts I was learning in JavaScript none of my peers knew nor did many of my teachers. So, I searched the internet for answers, searching chat forums and videos walking step-by-step. I taught myself many other skills as well such as, how to make sprites and basic 3D modeling. This would be the beginning of my learning path.

Later when I moved to Washington for high school, I found others like me that had a similar knowledge of Computer Science but fewer that had the same passion. During the Covid-19 outbreak school was canceled, and everyone found activities indoors to find a way to keep themselves sane but, this is also when a small group by the name of *Studio-19* was created to share our passions for game design. We completed many game jams on the site Itch.io and grew as developers.

Once I took an actual Game Design class my skills sky-rocketed. I joined a Unity Game Design course run by a Mr. Tuohy at Issaquah High School in my Junior Year—although it was recommended for seniors because of the workload. Being the code-addict I am, I completed the course with flying colors. Tuohy, impressed with my work, directed me towards DigiPen College for game design and their during-high school WANIC classes. I’ve worked on many projects in class and on my own time, from a top-down space game about fighting a massive worm, to an online card game with a bunch of my friends, and a 2D pixel art wild-west detective game. I hope to continue working on many more in the future and explore my passion through an educational path that provides the tools to do so.