While discussing the lives and philosophies of the classical Greek philosophers in class, I realized that I had heard the names Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle often, but I actually knew very little about them. So I set about researching each of them and learned more in depth how they viewed the world and why they thought the way they thought. Their philosophies have shaped many things in the modern world (science, government, and education, just to name a few broad topics). Because of that, there is a near infinite amount of research articles, comparison/contrast analyses, and interpretations of their contributions to society, philosophies, and lives.

I wanted to make an Android app for my creativity project, but realized that it would take hours, maybe even days, to convey to someone else all of the knowledge that I had learned about the Greek philosophers. In our modern world, everyone spends time on their phone but never seems to have time to read a book or research something they find interesting. The new way of educating people (that aren’t currently studying in school) is through easy, simple-to-use apps on their smartphones. Instead of trying to barrage people with an onslaught of information about Greek philosophers, I determined that the most effective app would be a non-intrusive app that helped incorporate the thinking of the ancient philosopher’s into our modern lives.

Throughout my research I came upon many quotes attributed to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and I often thought to myself, “This sounds like something that would be in a fortune cookie or a magic 8-ball.” It seemed like a natural fit to use the words of the Greek philosophers as the responses from a magic 8-ball, so I made an app that does just that. Many people use magic 8-balls for entertainment and occasionally to help them make trivial decisions. When my roommate asked me, “Should I write my paper tonight?” it seemed better to respond with the words of Aristotle, “The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet,” than with a typical 8-ball response, “Reply hazy, try again.” Or when my other roommate asked me, “Should I ask out Christine?” rather than the 8-ball’s answer, “Most likely,” I thought the words of Plato were much more humorous: “Love is a serious mental disease.” By using my Philosopher’s Magic 8-ball app, people gain an insight into how Greek philosophers might think about our modern problems.

To further explain the creativity of my app, I will elaborate on the VINE acronym of creativity:

Valuable – My app is an easy way for anyone, young or old, to gain insight into how the classical Greek philosophers thought. Many of their thoughts stray from what modern society deems as “normal,” so they invite app users to think a bit deeper about their daily decisions. The quotes invite users to question the world around them as the philosophers did and learn the true value of everything around them.

Intentional – Though the app idea seemed like a natural fit to me, it was not something that I could code up in just a few hours. As part of the app-making process, I had to learn how to receive and interpret data from the phone’s accelerometer. I also had to learn about the philosophies of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, and then convey those philosophies in a meaningful, easy-to-digest manner.

Novel – Magic 8-ball apps are very prevalent on the Google Play store, but all of them have the same, boring answers. I am the first person to combine anything educational or of historic significance with an 8-ball app.

Excellent – Android app making is a very hard thing to do, and thus not many people delve into it. Even among computer science majors at BYU (which I am), there are very few developers that know anything about app making. Besides being simple to use, the app has sensor sensitivity settings that can be modified so that the app will work well on any phone (since various phones have accelerometers with varying sensitivity). The app displays quotes that were hand-selected after laborious hours of research. Each quote in the app was selected because it exemplified a major philosophy or theme of one of the classical Greek philosophers.

Through this project I came to appreciate the words and lives of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. As Socrates said, “Wisdom begins in wonder,” and my study of his life has increased my wonder and desire to learn even more. I learned that creativity, while often exhibited through art or music, can be expressed in simple, yet profound words. The classical Greek philosophers challenged the way that humans thought about life and relationships, creatively proposing new ways of thinking. While working on this project, I strived to follow the creative words of Plato, “Better a little which is done well, than a great deal imperfectly.”