reflection
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253 has been a crazy learning process for me. I'm a third-year electroacoustics student. Before this semester, I'd barely experimented with code at all. 253 thrust me right into the deep end, but in a very healthy and productive way. Coding in all its forms always felt like it was somehow beyond my grasp, like it was just too mathematical, too “smart” for me to really understand. I don’t really know where this ideology came from, but it persisted until winter of last year, when I really got familiar with the more indie and queer sides of code, and specifically game design. The vibrant queer and trans circles within game design circles drew me in very quickly, it was a side of the coding community I hadn’t seen before and it deepened my interest immensely. In addition, game designers like Bennett Foddy and his homework blog (in particular the game “monastery”) finally tipped the scales into me looking up my first tutorial on youtube, for PICO-8.

This was a fairly uneventful foray into game design. I discovered the basics of hit detection and variable creation, stuff like reading keyboard inputs and translating that into object movement. I made a very rudimentary prototype for my (unsuccessful) cart minor application, and then it sort of fell into the back of my mind.

All of that excitement and passion came back as soon as the semester began and I started 253, though. I had some issues at the start of the semester in terms of overestimating how much work I could take on while learning something as new to me as js is, as well as the other programming courses i’m taking. Once I figured those out, however, I was able to really devote myself to learning the material and applying myself to the course. Being at the point where I am, where I feel like I can hold my own and think of solutions without immediately having to ask a prof/TA for help is a very concrete expression of my success. I feel like I know more, I feel like doors are opening up to me, and I think my final project is the best example of that.

Although it’s still being prototyped, it’s the longest piece of code I’ve ever written, and requires more moving parts and more debugging of those moving parts than anything else I’ve worked on for the course. It feels like I am learning more about p5 through this project, because I *have* to learn more so that I can keep going. In particular, implementing a continuous “score” system, in that there are 12 collectables that the player has to reach in order to reach the ending. This idea of having a sort of “collected” state that then returns to the main simulation, instead of just having a Start/Simulation/Ending format, really felt like it pushed me further than anything else before. I’m looking forward to implementing these states into classes, and especially looking forward to (hopefully) taking part in 263 next semester.