Pair Programming Learning Experience – Tushita Patel, with Nickolas Gough

Monday, November 21st, 2016

My pair programming experience with Nickolas was both positive and educational. The session was initially expected to be for two to three hours and we were expected to be working on partially the game board, as the board was designed by Nick in the design stage but I am implementing it, so his input would be helpful. However, we ended up majorly working on the mathematical side of the Display unit, because we thought that my strengths in mathematics could make major contributions to the Display unit. One of the benefits of working with Nick was that because we are friends, we were both very comfortable talking to each other and critiquing the code, which meant fewer distractions and tangents and more powerful focus on the code. Moreover, my ‘forte’ (comparatively) in mathematics, and his knowledge in GUI allowed us to be more productive. Nick is also very prone to making silly mistakes, and my presence helped in pointing out the mistakes right away, which prevented major investments in debugging time.

Because this was the first time to experience pair programming for both of us, there certainly are possible areas of improvement. We are both not used to being vocal about what we are thinking, and often we would find ourselves not communicating our thoughts, which would leave the partner clueless. I had to remind Nick several times to explain how he was approaching a problem, and he had to do the same for me too. It is hard, although beneficial, to be expressive of our thinking process and I shall definitely learn from that and try to be vocal in the future. One of the other things that I didn’t like about the experience was that pair programming can be very tiresome, because it is an intense thinking session. During the session, we are working on two parts of our brain – the one that requires logical thinking and the one that requires good social behaviour. After two hours into the session, I felt very tired and wanted to take a nap! Therefore, in the next programming session with Janelle, I will make sure that I schedule it towards the end of the day to save myself from sluggishness for the rest of the day.