

John Cruz Makuku
Reflection Paper
12/20/20

By completing my exit project I came to several conclusions both positive and negative. Given the difficult nature of this solo project and the time constraints, I expected some difficulty in not only holding true to my idea but sticking to the set schedule I laid out before me. Initially, my idea was to create a game focused on fighting at City Tech and the various locations on campus with a roster of characters inspired from the people I met along the way. From the start I knew the project I was going to undertake was over ambitious. Not only my culmination technical advisor but the head of my dept as well as another caring mentor advised me to not forgo this pursuit of this project alone. Fighting games are one of the most difficult projects to undergo due to the intricacy of and complexity of all the moving parts.

As I got closer to refining the scope of the project, I ended up with a prototype that ended up running closer to a game somewhere in classic street fighter. Ideally, I wanted to have a small roster of around four characters and several stages that were from around campus from Voorhees theater all the way to the new Building. Moving forward the scope got smaller again due to having to not only focus on code but extensive research on programming and animation as well as troubleshooting(programming bugs). Towards the last stretch of the project I ended up having to cut a lot more than I would've liked. By this point the project had gone through several iterations.

Looking back, the project's development would have gone smoother if I had a team of people to work with. By this I mean, It would have been easier to stick to a set schedule if there had been a group and each member could handle their respective roles. There are pros and cons to the respective working dynamics of a group versus working by yourself. Keeping in mind the dynamic of working in a group, at some point if not various points in time throughout one's academic career we have been a part of group projects. The advantages of working in a group are helpful to say the least. You can rely on group members to handle their load of the work. The adverse effect of that allows you to focus solely on your bread and butter whether that be coding, design or animation. One of the best things about working in a group is the ability to bounce ideas off one another in order to further the game's vision and execution. Working in a group can be a double edged sword, just as those aspects can benefit you if any of your team members are struggling and or lacking the development process can come to a complete stand still. Communication can be a very powerful tool in a group setting but bad communication can be just as detrimental as the opposite is helpful. Lapses in communication can lead to a toxic working environment. In the worst case a failed/ incomplete project and best something worth presenting.

The work dynamic that I chose to go down was to work by myself. As previously mentioned , working solo comes with its ups and downs. The pros of having to forgo a project solo can be very rewarding as they are trying. For one you don't have to wait for anyone. There aren't any lapses in communication because you are the sole developer pushing the project forward. As opposed to working in a group you have complete creative control and don't have to fight with anyone on where the tone ,theme and scope of your project should lie. Another adverse effect of working by yourself is that you allow yourself to push the limitations of your

skill set as well as broaden your horizons having to work on so many aspects at once. The cons of working solo can be even greater than the cons of working in a group. By this I mean that not only is your workload exponentially increased but your focus and time is spread just as thin because you have so much ground to cover. One of the things that helps the creative process move forward is the ability to bounce ideas off your teammates. That being said, working solo doesn't allow that because it is just me, myself and I. The work around for this however is reaching out to your peers. This proved to be tricky at times because everyone runs on their own schedules because of school, work etc. When I was able to communicate with peers and receive feedback it proved most useful and eye opening. Working solo can be a very tricky road to navigate. Though the project had several iterations the vision I kept in mind stayed true from start to finish.

I had faced many challenges throughout the span of time working on this project. I had to go back to the basics. Just like math, I don't have a natural affinity for programming at least from the execution aspect. The logic is easy enough to wrap my head around. I had to run through dozens of hours of youtube tutorials for coding alone. Sticking to a schedule was near impossible for me due to the fact of focusing on so many aspects of the project at once and if one aspect wasn't working i had to drop everything else i was doing to focus on that and so on and so forth. The most challenging aspect during the project was staying motivated with everything else going on during the pandemic. There was a very fine line navigating burnout and mental health. There were times where I could work 14 hour days on the projects and others where even the thought of the tasks that stood before me kept me in bed. To keep it brief, each challenge could warrant their own paper. Even though the journey was hard, I managed to pull through and deliver on most of my promises. I learned more about myself than I would have thought. I improved as an artist as well as a game designer. I learned more about my personal work flow and how to work more efficiently. For all the sleepless nights and headaches, I am satisfied with the outcome of my prototype. It was well worth it.