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Reflection Paper

My culmination project was an endless runner game based on two of my favorite mobile games: Subway Surfers and Among Us. My inspiration came from the Game Design projects I've been assigned in the past at City Tech. I primarily worked on Unity projects in C#, which led me to want to challenge myself to something different – A HTML5 game, built in Phaser.js, a JavaScript framework. Going into the project, I made a plan for each step I anticipated to the point of first release. I made sure to give myself flexible deadlines for development, but believed I would be able to schedule an initial demo early October. Once beginning the development, however, I learned I needed much more time to deliver to my expectations of the project.

Before starting development, I allotted time for research, design, and prototyping of the concept. I made mockups of the mechanics and gameplay of the project, titled Interstellar, digitally that would be the core deliverable for the Culmination class assignment. While I gave myself a short amount of time for this component, I think it was enough to complete what I aspired for the project. I learned to read documentation of Phaser, which led me to do a tutorial project of the latest Phaser version. Then, I began looking at free and low-cost assets of sounds, graphics, and spritesheets to get an idea of what already exists, that would later be added to the codebase. After sharing my prototype to the class based on the tutorial, I felt confident going forward in going to the next phase: development.

My biggest difficulty with this project was time management and having to learn a new framework during this course. While the concept of Interstellar seems relatively simple to develop, I struggled with finding documentation that is up to date and easy to understand. There were external resources of similar mechanics of the game, but given my limited knowledge of previous Phaser iterations, I found myself stuck trying to break it down to implement into my own project. This led to several stops in development, with sound and movement, which were my biggest blockers.

I've learned now that it's best to ask for help sooner rather than later, and wish I had more time to work with those with more expertise in Phaser to complete the remaining to-dos of the game. If I had the ability to work with someone else through these issues, I wouldn't have been spending a lot of wasted time unsure of how to "unstuck" myself on my own. Additionally, I would have spent more time documenting my work, especially when I was working on multiple projects at once. I often forgot to update the game repo with changes and simply continued to add many changes, rapidly, on my local machine. When I returned back to Interstellar after a few day break, I didn't know where to begin or where I left off. Going forward, I would focus on smaller changes in the development process and push them to the repo to document my progress to review whenever I want. Adding these productive work habits would not solve all the issues I ran into, but it will make more independent work much more smoother to work through.