

# USING AN ART SHOW IN CS1 TO SPARK INTEREST IN COMPUTER SCIENCE

David L. Largent

Associate Lecturer of  
Computer Science

dllargent@bsu.edu

## STUDENT COMMENTS

"At the beginning, I was on the fence of whether or not I would continue with Computer Science as my major. But, when I found out that my collage was selected to be in the art show I felt a sense of hope and pride. I worked hard on the project even though I was going for comedic value. I was decently impressed that most of the students liked my project. There were some really competitive collages in my class too."

"The art show project is a great way to get students engaged and excited in what we're learning. There is an element of friendly competition and personal determination to code a creative looking project. Seeing previous projects aided in helping me keep from being overwhelmed with the project. When we viewed them, it assured me that if previous students could create something impressive looking, then maybe I can too."

"I had already had my heart set on a Computer Science degree for several years before coming to college. My experience in the art show wasn't going to make or break that decision, but it did help me decide that I was going to stay at Ball State University. The art show made me feel like I was part of the campus, which made the decision not to transfer to a more prestigious university an easier one. Just as important, though, is that the art show was fun. I knew I could spend as much or as little time as I wanted to on the project within reason without changing the grade I would get on it, and I used that freedom to make the experience just as challenging as it could be without making it stressful."

"Overall I think the Art show project was, in many ways, the first time where we had complete freedom to do what we wanted to do. Obviously, there were some boundaries, but they weren't very narrow. It was the first time, in essence, where we could stretch out our legs and just code to create something of our own from scratch. The Art show is something that was truly awesome and something that I would always stop by to examine in every semester. It's a fantastic project!"

"The art show was a fun way to put the skills learned in the course to the test. I think the show itself has created a space for interaction between CS majors and minors of a variety of progress levels. I have received and given advice on future courses and work in the program at each art show over my four semesters. It creates a way for students to push themselves to apply and harbors a community of CS students for the betterment of all."

"A lot of beginning computer science projects don't produce a tangible product. It was satisfying to hold something that I had literally typed out over the weeks before the show."

"I really actually liked how mine turned out. I didn't expect to, but I honestly did."

"Thank you for doing this for your students - I believe the stakes of the public showing/judging provide added benefit to the students, in that this project ceases to be hypothetical and becomes more 'real'. Thank you, too, for instilling the idea that works of art have value in and of themselves, which is something some of our more science-minded students need to discover!"

"I really enjoyed the art show and I believe that it was an enjoyable experience. It made it seem less of an assignment and more of a creation. Being one of the first CS classes I took in college, it allowed me to find even more comfort in my choice of being a CS major."

"There is a perception that computer science students are introverted, geekish coders that reproduce formulaic outputs rather than imaginative and creative products. I was impressed by the range of ideas I saw and the students' ability to 'stretch' their skill sets."

"It really opened up my mind in terms of the course. Most of the things we did in the course were graded on a criteria. The same was true for this project, except we were all of a sudden competing in this art show against others. The art show had nothing to do with our grade, but it introduced competition and it felt fresh and enjoyable. Bringing in a new drive to the project made it feel even more worth it."

"For me, I think it was a good way for me to see how much I had learned. I had come into the class with almost no programming experience, and I was easily frustrated at the beginning. When I was working on my project, I was pleased to see that I didn't need to ask for help like I had done in the past. I also think it was a nice way to bring the class together when selecting collages as a section."

"Some of the projects were very artistic, considering most people that take CS would not be an art major. There was also a wider variety than I expected of topics, such as biology, space, and history themed projects."

"It was interesting to see the different collages that were presented. I think it's cool how each semester students are given the project and no two projects have ever looked the same. I think it's interesting how the projects continue to progress and evolve through the semesters into even more amazing collages."

"I had heard about the project before taking the course and I was looking forward to it the entire semester. I worked as hard as I could on the project and tried my best to not only be in but win an award in the show. It was very enjoyable and motivating project."

"Computer Science programs, as a rule, have the reputation of being steeped in theory and rooted in process. The work they do is perceived as sterile. You don't normally expect to see creative outputs from students in this discipline."

## JUDGE COMMENTS