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Student1(6)

I had very unexpected and mixed reactions while experimenting with Starlogo. Some of the sample projects were fun to watch and play with (bees, rabbits, perfume, traffic, gaussian, disease), while others just totally lost me (shiny happy turtles 2, follow the leader). Of the projects I enjoyed, I found myself: A) amused by the pleasant visual effects (bees, gaussian) B) playing with the different buttons / rates and examining graphs (rabbits, disease) C) appreciating these visualizations of situations that I could relate to (perfume, traffic).

When I got to programming my own termites, my experience took a downhill turn. Even though I enjoyed creating new procedures and found it satisfying to pull them all together, there were three key unpleasant aspects that I kept noticing about myself:

A) My eyes kept forcing themselves to find and follow patterns in termite paths and behavior, even though I knew that I could not. Perhaps this was influenced by my attitude of treating this like a gaming environment where I had to figure out my opponents' strategies to win? Or perhaps it was affected by my eye's appreciation for the patterns often found in nature (flowers, trees, etc.) and I was my mind trying to apply that lens here?

B) I experienced a visceral reaction of discomfort while watching "termites" in action. Granted, these colored bits hardly looked like real termites, but they elicited very similar and surprisingly real physical responses (chills, stomach tightening, body tensing up). I was surprised to find myself so turned off by mere colored bits because of what they represented. Why didn't I feel as negatively when playing with the "disease" project? [Ilene Chen: I felt the same way! It was really uncomfortable watching the termites swarm about. It gave me the heebie-jeebies] [Miriam: Me too! I think there is something "real" in their random bug-like movements!]

[Student 1: Glad I wasn't alone in my seemingly irrational discomfort. We all wouldn't do too well alone in nature, would we?]

C) As a result, the clusters of black areas kept triggering thoughts of trees, branches, and housing structures being eaten through, causing mass destruction, and falling apart. Needless to say, termites were perhaps not the best "shape" for me to play with. Next time I'll stick with creatures and concepts that I am more comfortable with in my live world.

[Marianthi Liapi: The role of the computer screen "could be likened to that of the human retina because it too allows the building of images that reflect upon the recording of visual evidence and the processing of strategies of perception and interpretation." (de Kerckhove D. (2001) *The Architecture of Intelligence*. Basel: Birkhäuser, pp.36.) All of my [StarLogo?](#) experiments where replete with the need to identify, interpret and personalize the visual outcome. I was too looking for patterns that would make me "digest" the result of my programming.]

[Student 1: Very interesting Marianthi. Thanks for validating our experiences with some scientific grounding.]