Learning Journal

The Learning Journal is a tool for self-reflection on the learning process. In addition to completing directed tasks, you should use the Learning Journal to document your activities, record problems you may have encountered and to draft answers for Discussion Forums and Assignments. The Learning Journal should be updated regularly (on a weekly basis), as the learning journals will be assessed by your instructor as part of your Final Grade.

Your learning journal entry must be a reflective statement that considers the following questions:

1. Describe what you did. This does not mean that you copy and paste from what you have posted or the assignments you have prepared. You need to describe what you did and how you did it.

2. Describe your reactions to what you did.

3. Describe any feedback you received or any specific interactions you had. Discuss how they were helpful.

4. Describe your feelings and attitudes.

5. Describe what you learned.

Another set of questions to consider in your learning journal statement include:

1. What surprised me or caused me to wonder?

2. What happened that felt particularly challenging? Why was it challenging to me?

3. What skills and knowledge do I recognize that I am gaining?

4. What am I realizing about myself as a learner?

5. In what ways am I able to apply the ideas and concepts gained to my own experience?

Finally, describe one important thing that you are thinking about in relation to the activity.

Your Learning Journal should be a minimum of 500 words.

This week (week 2), I learned about variables, expressions, and operators, primarily by reading from *Think Python, How to Think Like a Computer Scientist*, a book by Allen Downey. I found the material quite engaging and simple to understand (in a good way). I have actually taken a short Python course on Coursera before, and so a fair amount of the material was also familiar to me.

It was interesting to learn that python would consider 1,000,000 to be a sequence of 3 integers, rather than a single number. This was an example of a semantic error – python produced a different result than we (the programmer) intended.

I also was given greater clarification regarding the practical difference between an interpreter and compiled code, seeing how the interpreter in python actively computers functions (eg. 1+1), whereas a script requires explicit print call.

The chapter briefly talked about debugging, and I am interested to learn some more tools and tactics that can be used to assist with this. I will keep in mind however the basics, such as avoiding spaces in variable names, NameErrors, being weary of capitals in variables, and the other pointers discussed.

I found the assignment itself very straightforward. I am eager to get into more challenging topics. I was actually expecting this one to require us to create a script that requested the triangle dimensions from the user, and then incorporated them into the calculation to create an output. I believe this would involve the input function? But I expect I will find out soon enough in a future assignment.

I was thinking, as a suggestion for the course, to do something similar to CS50 offered by Harvard on edX, where there are two versions of programming assignments, one that is more difficult, to accommodate varying levels of knowledge in the course. However I also realize this is designed to be a more introductory CS course. Just some thinking I had.