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CS 212 – Algorithms

February 25, 2019

Reflection Essay PA 2

This programming assignment was really interesting to do, one, because we had to collect our own data which was exciting to use real data, and two, because you gave us a lot of starter code which introduced us to necessary programming tools. This first major obstacle I am still struggling with, is understanding everything the code is doing line by line. About ninety percent of the time I worked on this assignment, I was making everything harder on myself. I would get stuck and ask Xavier for help. When I sent a picture of what I was trying to do, he would always say, “Adam’s code does that for us.” The starter code was undoubtedly helpful in this assignment, I was just oblivious to everything it did for me. Another obstacle that was hard for me to overcome during this assignment was conceptualizing how these maps worked. Creating an unordered map with the value as another unordered map would not have just come into my mind as a solution. This assignment was discouraging because it was conceptually hard to grasp. I really enjoy the mental challenges, but this was really difficult for me to figure out. I learned that drawing things out step by step help me understand everything that happens. The lectures where we draw it out, discuss the algorithm, then write the code as a class has helped a lot with individual brainstorming and understanding, but I continue to struggle turning my ideas into code. A skill that these programming assignments have been perfecting is debugging. Last year, I did not understand how to use the debugger that well, so I struggled to know each value at each step. If I were to do PA 2 differently, I would have spent more time trying to fully understand what is happening instead of just jumping right in. Once I finished the first tier, I said to myself, “wow this makes a lot of sense.” I realize I need to practice programming constantly so my mind with still start to think like a programmer and think about different approaches to a specific scenario.