***My Story This Far***

I have learned many interesting things in my DevMountain journey so far. Not just learning a programming language, but also learning how to learn itself. What is interesting is that DevMountain didn’t teach me these learning concepts directly, rather it was indirectly as the instructors put me in certain situations in the programming lessons. I had to adapt to my environment and think what worked best for me. Yes, I was given learning tips here and there, but it was nothing focused on and direct.

When solving programming issues, I often found myself stuck for hours on a certain problem. With no resources able to help me, I had to really dig deep in myself and develop strategies on *how* I learn best in order to solve certain problems. A few of my strategies include journaling, storyboarding, intentionally understanding the content, and even just taking a break!

I’ve developed a liking for journaling, planning, and storyboarding on my problems. The process is as follows: When I’m stuck on an issue, I start from the beginning and “visualize” what I want to solution to be. Then, I write it out or draw it out. Physically writing things down helps me slow down and comprehend my issue. I then continue my planning with steps or bullet points on how I believe the solution to be produced. I then finally produce the code based on my steps.

Along with listening to lectures and observing demos, I had to genuinely understand the content that was presented so I could learn effectively. I could not just listen to participate. I’ve discovered there has to be a true intention to learn. I knew in the back of my head that I could always go the easy way out and maybe later just copy and paste code in my exercises and turn in things for a measly grade that could mean nothing. I did not want that mentality so I transformed myself to intentionally learn and engage myself in the content.

To put it simply, sometimes just taking a break is key! Coming into DevMountain, I used to think I had to be super-intensely focused on the content and 100% all in. However, I quickly learned that this hurt me more than it helped. It caused mental stress and confusion from overthinking. There were many occurrences when I was completely stuck on a problem, I then “gave up” for a time, took a breather and distracted myself from something else for a time, then returned to work, then almost instantly I knew the solution to the problem.

As of right now, I am only halfway through DevMountain. I finished up the Foundations portion and now headed on to the Specialization course. I value these lessons I have learned and will carry them on to my future learning and future career. The adventure has just begun…

-Jay Brandon Slade

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