

- **What were your expectations coming into this class?**

I registered for this class as an ISAT major looking to fulfill the core requirements. I came from a CS background, so I was most excited about this class in particular. I didn't think it would be as self-driven as it was, and I really appreciated that. When I first heard the class would be online for the rest of the semester, I was disappointed that I would lose motivation like I did last year in online classes. However, the freedom to do this class whenever I wanted actually drove me to put effort and try and learn on my own.

- **What learning goals did you set for yourself?**

The most clear-cut goal I had was to be more comfortable with Python. Since I had only ever used Java before, I had some experience with programming, but only in that one language. This is a tricky goal, as it can't be quantified in terms of progress, but I still feel as though I've achieved it. There's a saying that when you're able to teach in a language, you've mastered it; I think that if I'm able to learn in a language then I've become comfortable in it.

- **What did you actually do? List the tutorials and websites you used/visited.**

**Estimate the amount of time you spent outside of class.**

I first did challenges on codewars.com. These were frustrating because logically, I could solve them in a minute, but figuring out the syntax and flow of a new language was tough. Once I felt adequate at these challenges, I set myself to do a bigger project. I was uncertain about this because I had done larger projects in CS159 and those were the bane of my existence. I built a polyrhythm generator throughout the semester, and although it was a simple enough goal, it gave me more than enough to work through. I spent probably around 2 hours a week on average, so adding 13 weeks that would be 26 hours.

- **How did your goals evolve over the course of the semester?**

In the beginning, I really wanted to see results; that was my measure of success. The structure of this class allowed me to change the definition of success from an end project to the growth along the way. In fear of grades in CS, I felt like a failure because I didn't produce exactly what the course required of me in its time frame. This class let me fail, but rather than discouraging failure, I was able to learn about programming. That is the ultimate goal of the CS department and this class.

- **In what ways did you feel you were successful? Please refer to specific, concrete artifacts that would serve as evidence of your successes. Please make sure you have links to your GitHub repo, GitHub pages website or any other artifacts you'd like me to be able to see.**

Like I mentioned early, a huge success was just being able to feel comfortable reading, interpreting, and writing in Python. This comfortability early on lead me to more success in a project. I feel as though my purpose in this class was completed. I said I was going to make a polyrhythm generator by the end of the semester, and I did just

that. The examples are in this github repository, although I couldn't find a way to look at my codewar solutions. Those were short challenges, and I only did a few of them.

- **In what areas do you feel you failed to achieve your goals?**

Throughout the whole semester, I was unable to produce results, which ties back to my earlier definition of success. I felt like if what I was doing was graded, I would have failed miserably. That frustrated me and caused me to lose sight of the real success in the growth of learning. It was only until the very last meeting that I was able to have a functional project to show, and by that time, I wasn't really concerned because I had tons more "results" that I wasn't showing in the things I've learned.

- **Please reflect on what you think you've learned from your failures, and what, if any, plans you have to address those issues in the future.**

While it would be nice to live in a fantasy world where results don't matter, ultimately, they do. Landing a job where they measure how much you have grown along the way and not what you can tangibly show them is a fiction. That being said, I do feel more capable to produce those results now that I have failed dozens of times. I have come up with a personal heuristic to prevent rabbit hole failures: try every solution wide and not deep until something sticks. By attempting 10 different possible solutions for 10 minutes rather than 1 different solution all day, you have a much more broadened understanding of the problem. I'm not advertising this heuristic, but it is the way I have learned to solve problems efficiently.

- **JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." Do you feel more educated? More enlightened? Less so?**

I feel like all I've reflected on so far is the amount I've learned about myself and learning itself throughout this course, so it's not outlandish to say I am more educated. I do want to emphasize my appreciation for the structure of this class, especially this semester. I've had a lot of confusion around if I want to continue college, because I don't feel like I'm learning, I'm just being "schooled" and jumping through the hoops. There's been a disconnect between school and learning, and I think through this class I have rebuilt some admiration for learning and self-discipline.

- **How have your activities this semester contributed or detracted from your knowing yourself better and having a better grasp on what you want to do in the near or distant future?**

I didn't read this question until I started typing it, but I feel that I have already answered most of it. This reflection has made me understand myself and the ways I learn a whole lot better. At the start of the semester, I thought this would be a class I could skimp through without putting any real effort in and fly under the radar. But as I digested the course, I found myself engaging in what I was doing, partly because I was able to select a project I was interested in, but also because I had a respect for learning even if it's not

graded. I don't want to attribute this class as a life changer, because there were other factors in my life that supported my appreciation or learning, discipline, and motivation, but it did play a role in that and should be recognized as such.

- **What grade would you like for me to report to the registrar for you, and why?**

JMU is unclear on what the letter grades mean in terms on English words and since we're not using percentage points, I think that's appropriate. Using my high school grade scale where A is excellent, B is good, C is satisfactory, D is unsatisfactory, and F is failing, I believe that my effort and growth in this class has been excellent for an A. Since this isn't a results based class, it really is hard to tell what result I should have. However, I do believe if the standard of a class is to teach its material, and this classes material is to learn programming and inspire growth, then it's not far off to say I have accomplished that.