From the start of the class, I expected to gain a general understanding of how code works and how to think like a coder. What I got, was different, but far better than my expectations. My semester was unique in terms of living conditions and it got in the way of practicing coding. I struggled to find time to code due to distractions from my roommates. At the time, my weekly meetings were more life-learning than practicing code. I explained what was going on, and he gave me advice on what I should do. It was comforting knowing that I had a good support system through my teachers. After I got my living situation settled, I was able to allocate more of my time to coding. When my peace was established, I started some early coding tutorials on Edreece's plans for the week of February 15th. Link Here. From there, I learned some basic syntax errors that I had a tendency to do in code. I implement my new skills into a basic hello world program. This was the first code that I wrote in Python. Even though it was basic code, it felt exciting because I was finally taking my first real steps into the coding world.

I then shifted my attention towards coding a program that was more "fun" for say. After discussing my weekly goals for one week, I wanted to code a game of some sort. I then googled what are some easy starter codes to dive into. I ended up laying my eyes on a "Rock, Paper, Scissors Shoot" game. It didn't look too complicated and was interesting. I followed a tutorial on how to make this game through Python, but with my own twist. I wanted to add some character to my code, so I created my own winning/losing messages. For my winning message, I put "Dub City!". My first prototype of the code wouldn't run due to some errors. I spent around two hours trying to decipher the bugs, but I couldn't reason as to why my code wasn't working. In my next weekly meeting, I asked Dr. Benton what was wrong with my code, and together, we went line by line trying to find some outliers. As we went along, Dr. Benton would explain what was happening in a technical sense. He helped me conceptualize Python from a different perspective than I ever have before. To find errors in the code, we ran some tests with different functions that helped output different error messages. With the given error message, we would then implement more tests. After our struggles, Dr. Benton suggested trying to write a code outside of my "Rock, Paper, Scissors Shoot" game as a mode of correction. With this new profound methodology, I learned a new skill for Python. I never thought about correcting code in such a way before. I was starting to shift my perspective on coding to have more of a holistic approach. After we debugged the code, I was happy with having a working code. I took my code with me to my next class that day and I asked everyone four words, "Rock, paper, or scissors?". With their answer, I inputted them into my code and was telling them whether they won or not. Having a code with a personality that I could share with peers was fun. In a sense, it lets me express a part of me in the form of code. In the end, the biggest takeaway from this project was Dr. Benton's holistic approach.

Following into the next week, I set a goal to code a new game. I went back to googling codable games on Python and ran into a Pong tutorial. This time around, the

code was more intensive and required more time. I had to pay attention to fine details within my functions due to the fact there was more going on. Like I did before in my codes, I gave my Pong game some personalization. I changed the Pong paddles to display different colors than what the tutorial gave them. When I was working on my Pong game, I noticed patterns of allocating certain game elements, to specific arrangements in terms of area. When I was directing these game elements, it was done in a sort of coordinate system. This was my first experience with code that deals with this kind of organization. My finished code ended up not running and it was time again to try and correct things. I tried using the holistic approach, but I got no marbles. In my next weekly meeting, I worked with Dr. Benton on some syntax errors. Like we did before, we went line by line to find out what was going on. Through our checking system, I learned how the coordinate system works in Python. It was unusual to me because I was used to the point of origin being in the center. Dr. Benton was teaching me this system through the plotted points I gave certain game elements. I found it to be very intriguing that it was set up that way and I will use that lesson in future codes. There came a point in the weekly meeting where we ran out of time. The goal set that week was to meet virtually to debug the code line by line. We struggled to cross paths due to conflicting schedules, but we eventually met up. This is where my experience with ISAT 252 took a different trajectory.

When we finally met up online, we started our conversation with little ice breakers and some catching up. Our conversation started shifting towards a progressive perception. Dr. Benton told me about his experience with coding and how he only took four classes of it in college. He told me something I'll never forget and it actually carried over into my other classes. He said to me, "If you want to accomplish something, you will do what it takes to do it". He was referring to how he learned a variety of coding languages. He expanded his mind on coding through his ambition to do projects. He told me, he would set a goal with coding and find the resources he needed to complete it online. I took this as a lesson in self-sufficing. This is where I learned as to why his class was set up the way it is. Dr. Benton is the first college professor that taught coding from a creative perspective. He was wiring people's brains to express themselves through coding. Other coding classes are more traditional. This means that they are set up structurally with tests and assignments. Instead of telling people what to do to learn to code, Dr. Benton let us, the students, learn through our own creative ambitions.

In the same video call, he also helped layout how coding now will translate to the workforce in terms of credibility. I brought up the point of how I've been stressing over my current GPA and I asked if it really mattered for jobs. He essentially told me that it doesn't. To build off of that, we then discussed the power of GitHub. He told me how companies look at applicants' GitHub to see their previous projects. In a sense, it's a resume through the lens of different works. He then went on to discuss how employers are more involved with seeing how self-sufficient hires are with coding. To reiterate what

“self-sufficient” means, it can be defined by how experienced a coder is and how much help they would need on a project. The more advanced a coder is, the less the employer needs to check upon them. This part of the conversation sparked a sense of motivation within me to pursue more with coding.

We then shifted our attention to the current moment and Dr. Benton asked me a simple question. What is a problem that you want to solve in your life? After spending a moment thinking about it, I realized the thing I need more of every day is time. He then said excellent and preceded to show me examples of mockups. These mockups were his early designs for projects and I picked up the hint that I was going to be doing one soon. He then helped me set my next goal for 252, and that was to start brainstorming a website for time management purposes. What I took away from this online meeting with Dr. Benton was a passion to code for something that I find interesting. For me, it gave coding a purpose, whereas before, it was just fun for me.

Moving on from my virtual meeting with Dr. Benton, I took some time recollecting what we discussed and mentally organizing it. After some time that same day, I grabbed a pencil and notebook paper and started brainstorming. For the first time ever, I was creating my own code. Sometime later, I had an organized sheet with ideas with a structure that I wanted to make my code in. I grouped things into two basic categories, work time and self-care. I spent roughly two to three hours coming up with these ideas. I took my ideas to my next weekly meeting and my next goal was to make a mockup out of it. Later on that week, I made a rough draft of how I wanted my website to look. I put the title as “TimeManangement.com”. It had a brief description of what the purpose was at the top and preceded with different input variables. When the time of my next weekly meeting came around, I showed Dr. Benton my progress and he approved of it.

This semester hasn’t been the best for me outside of the classroom and I ran into many potholes along the way. At first, my weekly class meetings were set for me to make goals on how to solve roommate issues, rather than coding. When I got my living situation settled, my head cleared enough for me to allocate more time to my studies. What I learned from this course consisted of many different things. The biggest takeaway for me was Dr. Benton’s perspectives and a plan for my future. Some of his perspectives helped me outside of the classroom in terms of self-care (From my early semester weekly meetings). I plan on continuing my Time Management website in my free time and building up my GitHub profile. For me, Dr. Benton gave coding a purpose and reasons for me to continue learning more about Python. I feel that I deserve an A in this course because for the most part, I showed up to weekly meetings and classes anytime that I could. The biggest lessons I learned were how to be self-sufficient and motivating. Overall, this course was very insightful and helped me shape my perspective on school and coding in a more positive light than before. I’m excited for next semester for the sole reason I chose Information Knowledge Management as my

concentration. I thank Dr. Benton for the experience and reasons to pursue this concentration as a part of my studies.