Class: CS470 Full Stack Development II

Module 8 – Final Reflection

Student: Margarita Kiseleva

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YouTube Video Link: https://youtu.be/u-wyGZ5WuNA

Experiences and Strengths

My journey through this Full-Stack Development course has been transformative, providing me with technical skills that complement my background in linguistics and language education. As a coordinator of an ESL program at a community college, I've gained valuable insights into how technology can enhance educational experiences.

Skills Developed

Throughout this course, I've learned and developed several key technical skills that expand my professional toolkit. I've gained proficiency in building dynamic, single-page web applications using Angular, one of the industry's leading frontend frameworks. Working with MongoDB has strengthened my understanding of NoSQL databases and data management, which was particularly enjoyable for me. I've also developed skills in Node.js for backend development, enabling me to create robust server-side applications. Learning Docker has given me the ability to package applications with their dependencies, ensuring consistency across different environments. My experience with AWS Academy has provided practical knowledge of cloud infrastructure and deployment.

These technical skills, combined with my background in linguistics and education, position me uniquely at the intersection of technology and language learning.

Personal Strengths as a Developer

Through completing this course, I've identified several strengths that define my approach to software development. My natural interest and comfort with database systems allows me to effectively organize and manage information, a skill that translates well from my structured approach to language education. Successfully transitioning from local development environments to cloud-based systems demonstrates my ability to adapt to new technological contexts. Overcoming technical challenges, such as Node.js version compatibility issues, has reinforced my methodical approach to problem-solving. My background in linguistics brings a unique perspective to development, particularly in how users interact with and understand interfaces.

Potential Roles

While my primary professional identity remains in education, this course has prepared me to assume several roles that bridge technology and education. I could work as an Educational Technology Specialist, developing or customizing learning management systems and educational applications. I might serve as a Database Administrator for educational institutions, managing student information systems and educational resources. Another possibility is working as an E-Learning Developer, creating interactive online learning experiences for language acquisition. I could also become a Technical Coordinator, leading technology integration initiatives within educational programs.

These roles would allow me to leverage both my educational expertise and newly acquired technical skills to innovate in the ESL field.

Planning for Growth

Synthesizing Knowledge of Cloud Services

My experience building a cloud-based Angular website using AWS has provided insights into how modern cloud architecture can support educational technology initiatives.

Microservices and Serverless Applications in Educational Technology

For an educational application, microservices or serverless architectures could be implemented in several ways. I could create individualized learning modules as separate microservices for different language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) that can be scaled independently based on student usage patterns. Assessment services could be built as serverless functions for automated language assessments that only consume resources when students are being evaluated. Content delivery could be handled by microservices dedicated to delivering different types of educational content such as videos, interactive exercises, and reading materials.

Handling Scale and Error Management

In an educational context, usage patterns tend to be predictable but with significant spikes. I would implement AWS auto-scaling groups to handle increased traffic during peak enrollment periods or assignment deadlines. Using message queues for assignment submissions would prevent system overload during due dates. Deploying services across multiple availability zones would ensure continuous availability for students. Implementing detailed logging and monitoring would help quickly identify and address issues affecting student experience. I would design

systems to prioritize core functionality during high-load periods, temporarily limiting resource-intensive features when necessary.

Cost Prediction and Management

For educational applications with defined academic calendars, I would analyze historical data of student engagement to predict resource needs throughout the academic year. Using AWS Reserved Instances for baseline capacity with on-demand resources for peak periods would help manage costs effectively. Setting up monitoring and alerts for unusual spending patterns would help avoid unexpected costs.

Between containers and serverless, I believe containers offer more cost predictability for educational applications with consistent usage patterns. A language learning platform would likely have steady baseline traffic throughout a semester, making container-based solutions more cost-effective for core services, while serverless functions could handle intermittent processes like grading or content generation.

Pros and Cons for Expansion

Pros of Cloud-Based Expansion

Cloud services would allow an educational program to easily expand to serve students in different geographical locations. The ability to quickly scale resources would accommodate growing student enrollment without significant infrastructure investment. Modern cloud services offer robust APIs that can integrate with existing educational tools and student information systems. There's also reduced need for on-site IT staff to maintain physical servers, allowing resources to be directed toward educational content development.

Cons and Considerations

Educational staff may require training to effectively utilize and manage cloud-based systems. Educational applications must carefully consider data protection regulations (like FERPA in the US) when storing student information in the cloud. Cloud-based educational tools require reliable internet access, which may not be available to all students. Becoming dependent on specific cloud providers could limit flexibility in the future.

The Role of Elasticity and Pay-for-Service

In educational technology, elasticity and pay-for-service models are particularly valuable due to the cyclical nature of academic calendars. Educational applications can scale up during academic terms and scale down during breaks, only paying for resources when they're needed. There's an ability to temporarily increase capacity for registration periods, exams, or special educational events without long-term infrastructure commitments. New educational tools or approaches can be tested with minimal financial risk, paying only for the resources used during the pilot phase. Pay-for-service models align technology expenses with actual usage, making it easier to justify technology investments to educational administrators.

For my future in education technology, these flexible payment models would allow for more innovative approaches to language learning technology without requiring prohibitive upfront investments from educational institutions.

Conclusion

This Full-Stack Development course has provided me with valuable technical skills that complement my background in linguistics and ESL education. While I may not pursue a traditional software engineering career, the knowledge I've gained will enhance my ability to

innovate within educational technology. By understanding both the pedagogical needs of language learners and the technical possibilities of modern web development, I'm uniquely positioned to contribute to the evolution of digital language education tools. My experience with cloud services, particularly AWS, has given me insight into how these technologies can create more accessible, scalable, and effective learning experiences for students in ESL programs and beyond.