Developing computer programs has long been seen as a form of engineering. As such there have been a number of processes developed in order to accomplish the task of creating a program to accomplish the intended task. One prominent methodology is that of the software development life cycle, or the waterfall process, while another such method is that of agile development. These two developing processes have some similarities and some significant differences.

Software development life cycle is a list of steps that the program must move through before being completed. At the end of each step the code is evaluated before it can move on. In this system, the developing process can flow both down one step or up a step depending on what needs to be done to the code. This is a very linear flow of progress on the program, thus making it very simple to understand and follow. A drawback to this model is that it is better for smaller projects that have a rigid set of final requirements. This is because the planning phase is at the beginning and so changing an aspect later on in the cycle would mean going all the way back to the beginning.

Another form of development is that of agile development, which is meant to spread the development of the program over several periods known as iterations. It matches the life cycle development in that it begins with an indepth planning phase. After this phase though it differs into the iteration phase which has different teams each working on an aspect, or feature, of the system. Once this set of features is finished the next phase of iteration begins with a planning phase before moving into working on new features. This method has the advantage of needing less strict beginning requirements and larger projects. The disadvantage to this system is that it is far more in-depth and time consuming than the other model.

Each model has their own advantages and disadvantages. While I like the design of the agile development method, I have yet to work on a project large enough to warrant this form of design. In the future I would greatly like to utilize this method but for the projects that we will be doing for the time being the life cycle form works just as well.