Noah Loomis

May 1st, 2020

**General Program**

Reflecting on how I’ve improved on existing skills, and learned new ones this year, I’d have to say that one of the biggest improvements is my time management. My time management has always been okay. Not outstanding, but acceptable. Since I enjoy doing lots of extra-curricular activities that would normally take up most of my time, this year with the projects and tasks taking up more time than what I’m normally used to, I had to learn early in the year how to block off chunks of time and dedicate my full attention to the task at hand. At the beginning of the year, it took some adjusting, I would often give myself the time needed, but just barely. After the first few projects though, I learned that to truly be proud of my work, I had to give it more time than I thought originally necessary. This worked extremely well, and I noticed the significant difference in the quality of work I was handing in. My time management skills were truly put to the test when COVID-19 hit Heritage and we were forced to go into an online learning. Blocking off time as if I were at school when I was at home was not nearly as hard as it would’ve been without that skill. Another skill I improved this year is my problem solving and analysis. When I think back to my approach to problems at the beginning of the year in comparison to now, the difference is outstanding. Before, if there was a problem I’d encounter, my first reaction would be to get frustrated if the solution didn’t immediately present itself. Now, when I encounter a problem, my first reaction is to backtrack to find where the problem came from, instead of getting easily frustrated and annoyed. Understanding that there is a cause for everything makes problem solving much easier.

**Program specific**

After the first few weeks, I knew that my goal for this course was to become a great programmer. Looking back at where I was at the beginning of the year, I feel like I can safely say that although I’m far from attaining this goal as of now, I’m on the right path. My skills in solving problems with programming have improved dramatically, from the first few weeks of building a simple adder program that would compute two numbers, to the end of the year, where I’m building a GUI Sudoku game. My confidence in my programming skills have increased in accordance with my improvement of skills, and I love the idea of improving them more in the next few years. This past year I’ve also gained a lot of knowledge as to what work field I could go into with this degree. Learning about all the different roles and what each role primarily does is great. With that knowledge, I can see what skills need the most improvement to excel at each position. With the COVID-19 situation that’s unfolded over the past month, my ability to learn new programming skills despite not being in school or having a clear-cut schedule really demonstrates my autonomy and dedication to learning. Something that has really had a light shined on this year that’s improved, is when I encounter a problem, looking for help right away instead of putting in the work and trying to solve it on my own. At first, not being very confident to try out different things, it was too easy to take the easy way to solve a problem. However, I saw that the more I problem solved on my own, the better I got, thus encouraging me to do more and more on my own. Doing so helped build up my programming confidence and general confidence in computer science.