

In JavaScript, there is a beautiful,
elegant, highly expressive language
that is buried under a steaming pile
of good intentions and blunders.

(Douglas Crockford)

Reflection Journal

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I must confess that, before taking this course, I didn't go crazy for Javascript and I always tried to use pure CSS to reach my web design objectives. But I had to change my mind after studying this scripting language from scratch. In fact, I realized that Javascript allows to configure behaviors in a web page that cannot be replicated by pure markup or style sheet languages. At the beginning of the semester I was a bit intimidated by the many topics to master, but fortunately the course provided great flexibility in terms of preparation and submission of the assignments. Actually, the course setting made me feel less stressed about the due dates and I was able to study one topic at a time from any Internet source that I deemed tailored to my current level. I liked that we were not required to use a specific textbook, because the most frequent risk with that is to study outdated information, thus preventing the student to catch up with the newest features.

Considering my proficiency in the first weeks of the semester, I was sure I would choose not to develop any web app and be happy with the completion of the 13 topics, but as I studied those topics, I slowly build my confidence to create one. And so I did. It's been actually very rewarding to see what I could accomplish by mixing HTML, CSS, and Javascript in a project never undertaken before. Having a double options (Project Path & Competency Path) was mentally reassuring (because I knew I could successfully complete the course either way) and challenging at the same time. The way these options are bound with a different range of grades may sound unfair to some students who put a lot of efforts to master all the code topics, but once I felt comfortable with the code topics, it wasn't hard at all to aim to a higher grade through a more challenging path.

Some topics were quite straightforward, like JSON parse and stringify, but others required more efforts such as AJAX & API Web Services, or events for mobile devices. In any case, a positive attitude, the team support, the right learning sources, and above all starting the day by inviting the Spirit, was the key to succeed.

I feel like the BYU learning model has been widely applied to myself and within the team. Since the beginning of my experience in BYU-I, working in a team has been overall a positive experience so as it was for this semester. In particular, I have seen how helpful it was to distribute the responsibility to teach one another. Personally, preparing a lesson pushed me to understand the topic very well and be ready to answer as many questions as possible. Everyone became a leader when it was his/her turn to teach. Also, every time I felt overwhelmed by a topic, joining our weekly meeting helped to disperse the anxiety as I learned from my teammates. We supported each other by using a Slack workspace for sharing contents, links, and jokes. I realized the difference made by collaboration and communication tools like Slack and Zoom, particularly the possibility to catch up and share solutions quickly. In some instances, we had extra-scheduled meetings for the specific purpose to exchange opinions and help each other to find the glitches in our code.

Now that the semester is reaching its end, I see Javascript as a great complement for delivering web contents and I just scratched its surface! I'm aware that innumerable compiled Javascript libraries are readily available for use out in the Internet, but I see the importance of studying the basics of bare Javascript before relying upon any pre-packaged module.