

I started out this cohort with nearly zero knowledge of the tech field. I took a short class in highschool that barely amounted to more than puzzle games, and I went to a tech convention once, but it's not like there's much to do at a convention unless you're already engaged with that community. From an outside perspective, you don't think much about what it takes to build even a simple website or application. You think about what it takes to "build" things on the computer and think about programs like Photoshop where the tools are provided for you, and you take for granted that these things even exist in the first place. Since beginning the program, I've begun looking at every website I visit and understand that everything I'm seeing more than likely had to be meticulously crafted by a person. And more than learning about the ins and outs of the corporate world of the tech industry through Outcomes, not to downplay the importance of that, this course has taught me that everything you see on the Internet was built by a person, and took a tremendous amount of work to pull together, which isn't something to take for granted.

Admittedly, I have never really been a hard worker. It is always my inclination to find a shortcut or an easy way out in the face of adversity, and I think up until very recently in the course, I have shot myself in the foot because of this. Being an adult trying to learn a new skill with a learning disorder is a very hard thing to do. When my brain sees something it doesn't understand or doesn't want to deal with, sometimes it just shuts off completely, and I disengage with the material. I get frustrated with myself, because I know at some point, when I was younger, I had much better tools to deal with this. But it has been a couple of years since I was in school. The most difficult part of the cohort has been learning to be patient with myself while also pushing myself to work through the discomfort.

To that point, I don't think this course has "taught me how to learn" any better than any other class I've taken, (except maybe in a technical sense). But it has forced me to become reacquainted with the way I learn, and redevelop the skills that have weakened since I graduated highschool. It's been tough to get back to that place mentally, but it is exactly one of

the things I was hoping to accomplish in signing up for DevMountain, (other than, you know, getting a job).

I'd like to condense the next two points into one, regarding how I'm going to apply what I've learned about my learning style to specializations and my experience with peer programming. I did enjoy pair programming, but I recognize that I was using it as a crutch. I consider myself an intelligent person, but I am also a very slow person. It's why I'm enjoying this opportunity to communicate with you, my instructors, on paper, where I can take my time and compose my thoughts. That being said, I struggled to learn the material with a partner, because often times my partner would figure out an answer just as I was beginning to understand the question. It became much easier to let my partner shoulder the brunt of the work because I wasn't able to keep up with them. It's not easy to explain that kind of thing to strangers. There would be times that I would secretly have the answers pulled up on another screen just so I wouldn't slow my partner down. And even as I began to understand the material better, I still felt like I wasn't contributing as much as my partner would. So if we hadn't done pair programming throughout the course, it would have been infinitely more difficult, but I honestly feel like I would have been better off for it now. Knowing this, I'm excited for the potential to do more independent work in specializations, (assuming we will be? That's my understanding anyways).

That said, one of my favorite things about foundations has been having the chance to get to know everyone else, (so I guess it's a double-edged sword). I am a pretty shy person, but it's been nice to have an environment to get to know other people.