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Foundations Of Programming: Python

Assignment 08

**Lessons Learned**

Having no experience with coding entering this class, my personal objective was to get a feel for whether the medium was a good fit for my skills and interests and whether I might enjoy the process of working with code. I also hoped to gain some skills that I could use for immediate application in my current professional work as an estimator for a commercial glass and door installer, though this was a secondary concern. I could not develop any more specific goals for learning beyond that, because I had so little concept of what the process of coding might entail. As such, every piece of information presented was a potential learning for me, and I will attempt to summarize some of my main takeaways here.

First, I learned how to display messages to program users and to collect data from the users. I learned that when a variable is reassigned in Python, it does not actually replace the original information in memory, but it acts like it does by referring to a new address. Later, I learned about global and local variables, wherein the variables within a method refer to different addresses than the variables in the main section of the code (so they should not be shared between the two areas except in unique situations where specially designated). I learned how to save information to a text file and retrieve information from a text file, and later learned how to do the same with binary files using the “pickle” module built into python. More broadly, I learned many new words in a coding vocabulary that allows me to seek further information online: variable, constant, function, method, argument, parameter, class, module, and others I can recognize when I see them.

Throughout the assignments and exercises, I also gained a working understanding of how to apply some of Python’s built-in capabilities like for loops, if/else statements, and try/except blocks. I learned how to create a counter and to employ ranges to display data or control processing iterations. Once these building blocks were introduced, I learned how to organize code according to separation of concerns best practices, using classes and methods to make the code easier to work with. Additionally, I learned how to use different software to create, modify, and share code, including IDLE, PyCharm, and Git. I learned how post code to GitHub and to use Markdown to build a simple website through GitHub to display my code.

In all of this, I was able to gain some information toward my initial objective in taking the course. Do I enjoy coding? I can certainly say I find it very engrossing. I enjoy the sense of accomplishment that comes with solving a problem and making something work. Randal’s emphasis on play during the course videos helped me stay in touch with my original goal of experimentation and meta-learning. It helped me to enjoy the process and encouraged me to continue to develop skills in the craft. I need to practice more with the skills that were presented in this course, but I think it is likely that I now have the tools to create a program at my job that will process data and be of some use to me and my employer in making the work more efficient. A piece that I did not learn yet that would help me in my professional objective is integrating that program with others at my work that use other languages like Visual Basic. All told, I do believe what I have learned forms a strong basis for continued learning.