Software Development Skills Front-End, Online course

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LEARNING DIARY, FRONT END MODULE

Thursday 22. June

Today I started the course as a FITech student, I have graduated from LUT Business Analytics in the beginning of 2021.
I've been working as a data scientist for couple of years now but as we are moving more towards web applications. I've needed to learn developing proper UI's for my applications instead of having users run them in command prompt. At the first glance this front end course seems to give me all the tools to start working a bit more user friendly applications.

The course details seemed clear and it was easy to choose code VSCode as code editor as it is the one I use every day. I wasn't familiar with the bitbucket and setting that up seemed a bit tricky so I decided to go with GitHub for easier version control as I'm more familiar with that.

Did all the steps described in the part 1 video about the initial workflow. Created index-page with classic hello world, set up sass and some styles to the first page. No issues and everything went very smoothly. It's good to continue from here next time. Also, committed the changes to Git with .gitignore file to drop the node modules from the version control.

Sunday 25. June

Today I started working on the second video of the series and at first I needed to remind myself how do I open the site on a live server. Checked quickly the previous video and found the button from options for running the script on live server. Then I noticed that the changes I made in sass weren't moving to the open app. Checked the previous video again and found the command npm run sass to see the changes.

I was good to continue with the part 2 video and followed the instructions without too many issues. It has been a bit tricky to follow the structure of the html script as there are lots of lines. At some point I had missed adding an id to the body tag and later I couldn't make my background image visible. I tried to confirm that my image is in correct format, in the correct url etc. but after checking the video comments, someone else had the same issue as well and found the missing id from the body.

Otherwise I started deviate from the tutorial design a bit to move more towards my own project but still keeping most of the main elements that I wanted to learn. My design portfolio is currently made in Squarespace platform but during this project I was planning to recreate the portfolio on my own and perhaps later end the Squarespace subscription in case the end product looks at least as nice as the original and I manage to publish the site.

Friday 21. July

Took a break from this course due to summer vacation and had forgotten quite a lot of stuff in between. Needed a proper refresh but after reading the learning diary, checking the code I had written previously got back in track in just 30 minutes.

I followed the third video and learned to assign properties to the html classes in JS (not 100 % sure what they are called). Got the menu button working with JavaScript and scss as shown in the video. I also learned how to check the browser development tools to check for details and if the page is working as expected.
In video 4 I started having more issues. First the portrait wasn't showing right, solved that simply by cropping the image separately and adding "background-size: cover" property to the portrait class. The portrait was transparent and I solved this issue by removing the opacity 0.9 from the

menu class and added the transparencies straight to the nav and branding backgrounds. Someone had the issue in the comments of the video and I found the solution there. Overall the comment section has been very helpful but otherwise I've been trying to think for solutions myself or by Googling.

The navigation side has been tricky as the links coming from the right transition isn't working and I couldn't find the solution in the comments or myself yet. I did find out that in the index.html my navigation list was not written correctly. The links were not inside each list item. Hence the nav-item class formatting wasn't working. After fixing that all the links got lost and that's caused by the transition again. Couldn't find solution to this issue and got tired so stopped the 4th video at 19:09.

Saturday 22. July

Started with the previous navigation issue but could not solve it. Decided to leave the links sliding from the right out as I didn't find it very important element anyways.

Continued the video 4 and created the responsive mixins with the small/medium screen size contents. Here I started to deviate from the tutorial as I didn't like the look of the responsive (small) navigation in the video. I decided to keep the font size larger, make both of the sides (portrait and the menu) slide from the same side when opening the menu and also played around with the menu alignments. Overall I'm not a fan of keeping my image in the menu so I might take that away later in the process but for now I have kept it there.

Decided to continue to the video 5 and added the conditional text color to all of the texts and the navigation button. Also tested it and worked as expected when I changed the primary color to darker one. Created the about page and copied the index code to the about page but then I lost focus and decided to end the video at 5:54 for today.

Tuesday 8. August

Back at it again. Started where I finished last week with the About page video (number 5). After summer vacation I started to work on the UI for an application I'm building at work and after working on this course until this point I had actually learned enough HTML/CSS to actually build simple but at least usable and somewhat good
looking user interface for the application.

For my own project, I found the gridding very useful. I have built websites using Squarespace and using the grid actually reminded be of working in more visual website builder tools. I found it very intuitive and easy to understand. So far, this is the biggest takeaway from this course and I think is very useful when I continue working on the project further especially in the portfolio part where I'm planning to present my work.

The sticky footer tip was useful too, I had seen the footer not showing correctly on other webpages and wouldn't have noticed to fix it myself if it wasn't mentioned in the video. Otherwise today I just quickly went through the video and didn't differ from it too much this time.

Thursday 10. August

Today I watched the 6th video and created the work page and contact page. Now that I'm almost done with the project I started to deviate from the tutorial even more. I didn't like how the work page looked like and for example got rid of the buttons below the projects and instead
the project page should open from clicking the image (with hoover effect) like I already have in my current portfolio. Also, since this portfolio page shows graphic design projects instead of coding projects, I wanted to keep the images larger than the tutorial. I think the 7th video
included mainly the same things already seen in previous videos. However, it reminded me how to use the Font Awesome Icons and the hoover effect (had forgotten how we did that and used the easeOut with it).

I did check the 7th video for deployment but did not deploy the site just yet. Next I will customise the page to look more like the one I have up and running in Squarespace platform.

Thursday 10. August

Continued with the customisation process. My intended layout is pretty simplified version of the tutorial version. First I started to get rid of things like my portrait everywhere (especially in the navigation). The intention is to highlight the work more and keep my face in the about page. Also, I tend to do graphic design work to Finnish companies so I decided to switch everything to Finnish.

Changing the navigation was a bit more difficult than I expected as the portrait was "glued" very tightly to the navigation. After removing and adding parts of code back in sass and html, I got it to look as I expected: sliding from top to the left side and with smaller devices same but full screen.

Then I started working on the about page where I wanted just two columns, one with my pic and one with about me text. Successfully got there using the grid layout. However, the padding was acting weirdly when I switched to smaller device. Fixed that just by adjusting own padding for the smaller device size.

I decided to put my socials as links and icons to the footer and made the footer bigger. I added my logo to the left side of the header too.

Next time I'll finish the work page, add separate pages for showing the work and it's description. I would also like to change the fonts and instead of color variation play around with the font weights.

Friday 18. August

Shortly opened the project and changed fonts using Google fonts to my page. Couldn't find as close one to my previous font but went with classic Montserrat for now. I was looking for a way to use templates (or base) in HTML like Python Flask allows you to do to e.g. keep header and footer editing in one place. That would make it easier to do small changes to parts that are same on all pages, but couldn't find feasible way yet. It seems to be done using JS but didn't start working on that yet. Also, when I changed the font, I changed the current page to show as bold instead of secondary color in the navigation.

Saturday 19. August

Again didn't have very much time but changed the navigation hover effect to line ease out. Wasn't able to do it myself completely but found an example Online (added link to comment). Adjusted it a bit from the example to line up with the overall line sizes and took the line a bit down from the text. I chose Raleway font from Google and added that to front page. I'm still looking for the template mentioned yesterday so didn't add the fonts to other pages just yet. The new font is also a bit tricky as I wasn't able to add font weights. Need to take a look into that next time.

Sunday 20. August

Started working on the project finishing touches. Started by fixing the issue with the font weight and found out that I needed to add the wanted weights to the link tag url where the Google font link is defined.

Next I started fixing all the pages with the needed texts and doing final touches to the designs. Decided to change the front page with centering the text and adding a button directing to the portfolio since the page seemed a bit empty. Changed the about page text from placeholder text to the actual about me text and changed the image as well. Otherwise I kept the page formatting as it was left earlier. Contact page got also aligned again to the center and added the actual contact me page text. I made the email to be a link with "mailto:" so that clicking the link it would open a new email with the email address already filled in (https://www.rapidtables.com/web/html/mailto.html). This might cause spam issues later but for now I decided to go with this one.

Previously I struggled with choosing the hover effect and after going back and forth with the line ease-out I had created previously and just changing the opacity on hover, I decided to make all the hover effects the same and go with the opacity to 50% version as it was compatible with all the buttons/links etc. that I wanted to have the effect. It seems more cohesive now and way nicer with the minimalistic theme I have been creating.

Then I started working on the most important part of the site, the work page and adding the more detailed pages of each project. First I started with rearrangement of the work page to be in two rows in wide viewport and one on any of the smaller ones. Working on this I tried if I could define the size based on the viewport width and by adding size with vw instead of vh or rem, I was able to make the images follow the width and make the responsiveness much smoother. Then I ran into issues with the image sizes not being equal as the images themselves are not the same size. Luckily found an answer here: https://stackoverflow.com/questions/65055008/how-can-i-make-images-in-a-grid-all-the-same-height-without-stretching-them. I needed to cover the grid area with the image and make the image full size (h and w 100%).

Then I created a new folder for the pages with more info about the projects. I wanted to keep them separate from the main folder and have work/project structure when opening a project. I am not sure if just adding the under another folder is the way to go but I decided to try it for now. I noticed that all the references went wrong after copying the about page to the folder but solved that by using "../" before every reference to make it point to one folder up. Then I just adjusted the formatting and added the needed images to the copied page and then made 3 more copies of that to make detail pages for all the projects.

Lastly I added the socials links to all the pages and this was one of the parts that I would have wanted to solve with the templates but I didn't implement that after all as I had already created the pages without it.

Now the project is ready for deployment which I'll do next time.

Monday 21. August

Started getting ready for deploying the website. Went through all the pages and tested if everything works as expected. Found that on the portfolio details pages the logo redirecting to front page didn't work but the issue was that the reference was pointing to index in the work folder so just fixed it by making it point to the upper folder index.html. Otherwise the number of references in the portfolio is a bit limited but thought it would be enough for this course and add more later when I have time to prepare the mockups for other projects as well.

Then I remembered that I used to have favicon in the browser tab in my previous portfolio so checked w3schools and found a way to add it (https://www.w3schools.com/html/html_favicon.asp).

The deployment part was a bit tricky due to small typo I made in the very beginning. I needed to add the deployment script and I put the dash in between the letter "d" and "dist" instead of in the beginning and after an hour of trying to find what was wrong I checked the video one more time and found the issue. Fortunately it was the only issue and I was able to deploy the project. I updated the read me, fortunately it is enough as I couldn't fully understand what was meant by adding "how to run your project".

After publishing the page I did find some small mistakes that I updated quickly. The front page button was on top of the navigation in small size screen. I added the z-index of the navigation to 2 (below the nav button). The header wasn't sitting right on the front page either. Fixed that just by reducing the text size. Last issue was with about page and medium width. I made the blocks to be stacked instead of on being side to side and those were the last changes before submitting the project.