Introduction

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was devastating to millions around the world, deeply affecting how society functioned. During that time, I was in the second semester of my 8th-grade year, right before my school had to be shut down while COVID was on the rise. As a kid my age during that time, there was nothing to do at home. This left me to play Fortnite for hours with my friends, which was the only way I got to interact with them. One of the most memorable moments during that crucial time was attending the Travis Scott online concert hosted by Fortnite. In fact, there were 45 million other viewers enjoying the concert that night, breaking the record for the most online players to watch the virtual concert! (ESPN)

 I was fascinated with how the game was designed and functioned, and this quickly motivated me to choose Gaming with Python as my COR100 class when I first saw it as an option in the COR 100 options list. Ever since I attended my first in-class meeting, I knew I made the right choice. Not only has it set me on a great path for the start of college, but it has also allowed me to create memorable experiences while also learning the fundamentals of Python programming.

Initially, I was concerned about not knowing anything about coding, especially since it was my first college class, which gave me a fear of failure. I quickly learned that being able to learn new skills often begins with uncovering what you don't know. Gaining knowledge requires recognizing gaps in your understanding and working to accept them. This is also a great belief the renowned Greek philosopher Plato once encouraged in his story in Meno as Socrates explained the importance of self-awareness in learning to Meno. Plato then proceeds to explore this concept through the central question in Meno, "How do we know, what we know?" (MENO)

Early Weeks

When I first met my classroom peers, it felt very awkward since we all came from different backgrounds, and it was not only our first time meeting but also our first day of college. Being in such an overwhelming environment made it difficult to feel at ease and connect with others right away. Thankfully, Lyon hosted their annual freshman cardboard boat race, where every COR 100 class competes. This competition was a great opportunity for us to work with each other while having an amazing time using our creativity and having an unforgettable time working as a team. We indeed ended up winning the boat race, making my first week very memorable. This boat race not only allowed me to work together with my peers but it also helped me create lasting friendships such as my best friend early on in college. The fact that it was the first week of college and was provided a great way to connect with others is truly an amazing experience.

During my first couple of lectures in my COR 100 class, Gaming with Python, I had the opportunity to read one of Plato's five dialogues in which he introduced Meno, in which Socrates had a conversation with Meno about the nature of virtue and knowledge. During the conversations, Socrates brings up his theory in which he claims that knowledge is already within us, but needs to be awakened to be properly understood. Then Socrates challenges Meno to reconsider his definition of virtue, which ultimately leads to a deeper conversation between the two about how we come to know things and whether knowledge is something learned or naturally gifted with. This example provided me with a new mindset that helped me break down difficult concepts and stay motivated.

Learning the fundamentals of Python was a very humbling process, as it required me to rethink how I approach problem-solving and programming logic. I had to memorize several basic concepts of Python code such as strings, Elif statements, lists, loops, and more. I quickly realized that coding was more about breaking down problems and finding solutions in a more structured

organized way. Thankfully, my professor explained each line of code together as a class, which allowed me to understand the logic behind each concept. Eventually, we started doing many assignments together which increased my knowledge of how different pieces interact with each other. One of the assignments was the guessing number game in which a player tries to guess a secret number between 1 and 10. The game asked the player to input a guess 1-10, and if it's correct, the game would output "You guessed it!" If the guess is incorrect, the game outputs "try again" to the player. The game continues until the player guesses the correct number.

I was able to create this game by using a random number generator, loops, user input, and conditional checks. The satisfaction of seeing my programs work as intended has become my motivation, driving me to keep learning and improving my coding skills. The sense of accomplishment each time my program runs smoothly gives me confidence in trying out new and harder challenges to be able to sense that feeling while improving my skills.

Platos Menos

How do I know what I know? This is the central question posed by Socrates, in which he asks Meno to reflect on the meaning of knowledge and how we come to understand it. I believe that to be able to answer this question you have to reflect back on your own experiences in which you learned a new set of skills or had a memorable experience. For example, when I first started to code Python, it may have seemed pretty difficult to understand at first, but as you pay attention to the lectures, practice over and over, and start to solve different problems you become more familiar with its features and functions. This process of learning shows that knowledge isn't something we just "get" all at once, but something we develop over time through experience, practice, and persistence. This process involves Socrates' theory of "recalled", which is just a

process of uncovering knowledge that is already within us, but it requires effort, practice, and reflection to be able to unlock it. Socrates explains, "As the soul is immortal, has been born often, and has seen all things here in the underworld, there is nothing which it has not learned; so it is in no way surprised that it can recollect the things we already knew before, both about virtue and other things." When I started learning Python, I was unaware of how much of the logic of coding was already familiar to me. Through constant practice, I was able to "recollect" and apply the knowledge that was already within me, leading to a deeper understanding of the language and its functions. (Meno, 81C-D)

Conclusion

 In conclusion, my time in Gaming with Python has already been a very memorable experience in my college journey. From just being interested in the development of video to now majoring in computer science, that inspiration is now guiding me toward a fulfilling academic journey. Being able to create lines of code after repeated repetition and seeing them work as intended has been incredibly fulfilling and motivational. While also being able to create long-lasting friendships, it's safe to say Gaming with Python has been my best choice after choosing to come to Lyon College. Being able to understand the process of learning, whether it's mastering Python or understanding philosophical concepts like those in Plato's Meno, is not simply about receiving knowledge all at once. It's about being able to realize the areas you lack in, using trial and error, and uncovering what you already know deep within you. By applying these principles, I am a step closer to success, which makes me very excited for what's to come in my academic and professional journey.

Work Cited

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