**HUDK 4050**
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**Reflective Essay**

Looking back on this semester, I learnt a lot in this journey with HUDK 4050. Everything happened in this class differed from what I expected and opened my understanding towards Learning Analytics Program.

During the course registration period, my academic advisor told me that 4050 is a mandatory and introductory course for my master program. Most students took it in their first semester for meeting the program requirement. At that time, as a psychology major student with limited background in coding and data mining, I felt unsure about myself since this area stepped out of my comfort zone and I did not have a clear concept of what educational data mining was. However, I still expect to have a refreshing experience with this course and learn some technical coding skills. One of the main reasons that I chose Learning Analytics Program was to improve my analytical ability combining with programming. In other words, such challenges were something I expected before coming to TC.

I still clearly remembered that in the first class, Professor Lukas talked about our career path as EDM background students. “We do not have compare ourselves with statisticians and computer scientists; we have our own advantages that we know about education”, which answered my concerns about future employment in the marketplace.

With the lectures and coding experiences, I mastered multiple common analysis methods applied in different situations and topics (regression, classification, clustering, social network analysis…). The biggest take-away is the Analysis Challenge Assignment that we did, which offered me a great experience of team working and practical data mining. Even though the process of writing code might be painful, I did learn a lot from these ACAs with my teammates. I

think ACA is a good way to integrate what I learnt from lectures to practical settings. Another important part of this course is the ICEs. With the help of the detailed instructions and comments in every Individual Coding Exercise, I leant how different packages function and got access to the code line by line. Although it is still hard for me to smoothly write code in the current stage, I can read and understand the logic of the computations behind. This is the first and the most vital step for my master study.

After this semester, I can identify the most appropriate method when facing educational problems as well as develop data analysis plans. Most of my learning goals were achieved. The most important lesson I gained is that problem solving skills are more valued than coding. In the initial stage of a project, we should not retreat just because we stay disoriented for the coding process. For next semester, I have registered for HUDK 4051 and hope to get more exposure on learning analytics theory and educational data mining.

Overall, HUDK 4050 provided me with a new beginning of my coding experience and my graduate study. I am grateful for all lectures Professor Lukas brought as well as the contributions from my teammates.