Lappeenrannan teknillinen yliopisto

Software Development Skills Front-End, Online course

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LEARNING DIARY: Front-End development

**LEARNING DIARY**

**Kicking off**

13.4.2025

I enrolled to this course and started going through what the course really entails. I’m not a developer and will likely not become one but would definitely benefit a lot from understanding front end code: what is possible, how is it structured, what has a high workload and what does not. This course seems to be very interesting and hands-on, which surely should help to achieve this goal.

I used most of the time reading the Moodle material: checking on general level what the project is about, and then tried to set up the environment and install all needed software. I chose VS Code as I know that is the most robust and predominant in the market currently. I’ve never used Git, so let’s see if I got that correct. I read about Git from their homepage where they explain from the beginning what is a “VCS”.

18.4.2025  
**Relearning HTML**  
Although I did not get Git working yet on my Mac, I decided to start on the main topic of this course: the front-end coding itself. The video assumed that the viewer has a bit more knowledge about front-end than I do, so I did do some googling first on HTML and CSS before going to the video itself. I had some flashbacks from myself familiarizing in HTML and CSS almost 20 years ago – perhaps a bit unfortunately I finally made my website with iWeb back then. Anyway, I relearned the basic elements and syntax to get started with the video. I got sucked into the project for quite some time and managed to do the basic html structure.

19.4.2025  
**Cascading Style Sheets**  
Before jumping on CSS, I decided to start already thinking about the project assignment on the side. I want to create a somewhat similar webpage as in the tutorial video, as that would be most relevant for me. The website will be for a company that has a SaaS application for gathering relevant industrial condition monitoring sensor data in one place.

For the module assignments, I did have some difficulties in getting the navbar to be aligned and listed horizontally. Ultimately it was due to the way VS Code “helps” by prefilling some of the lines with e.g. </nav> – which of course I did not always notice. I did learn a lot, but for the project I feel like it would be good to study what all is possible within the containers and elements.

20.4.2025  
**Continuing mostly with CSS: buttons & utility classes**

I continued the video, and was able to create the buttons, utility classes and worked on the hero section. I had most problems with the hero section because the text kept overlapping with the image for some reason. But thanks to that problem, I found out much more what options there really are in CSS, as I was kind of forced to find out another way. I did not want to resort to copying the source code directly, so found out a workaround with relative positioning to have the same result. The only thing I’m worried for now is if there are some implications down the road I can’t foresee, e.g. with responsiveness. But hey, I guess it’s a good way to learn!

21.4.2025  
**Streak continues**

While the features section was rather clear and essentially just required adding a photo with a link, the testimonial section included quite some HTML especially to get working. I’m starting to get a grip on how to use the different elements (sections, divs, uls etc.) and how they are referred to in CSS. So at least the structure is now clear, next I’ll need to expand my understanding on what all is possible with the various styles within CSS. Also, I learned what are some limitations e.g. when taking a font from Font Awesome: you cannot do italics with the Poppins font selected without it becoming also bold. I guess these are things real front end developers need to consider always beforehand.

I also continued to the Pricing section, which I already forehand found to be quite neat. Surprisingly easy to do – at least when following the guide…

Now, I also started to work on my own project in actual code. To start, I reused some of the code I’ve done with Brad, because I think the site looks very nice and professional. Still, I will adjust quite a few things and add completely new sections as well – couple of ideas in my back pocket, but let’s see if I get those to work.

I also returned to the problem of setting up Git and all what is needed. I have a fairly old Macbook, which hard drive is obviously full of stuff, so I need to go for the lightest setup possible. Unfortunately, HomeBrew, MacPorts and Xcode none worked for me, so this took some unnecessary effort.

22.4.2025  
**CSS Grid**

I read about the CSS Grid Container and was trying to think about different use cases for it for my upcoming own webpage. As such, I think the options are quite endless. Luckily, grid was also used in the footer section of the assignments, which I decided to right away as I figured it’s good to practice that properly before moving on to Java Script section.

Overall, I’m getting quite excited about the front end coding: it’s a nice combination of technical and artistic work. Not that I’d be any good at either, but just find it interesting.

The footer grid taught be the importance of properly using divs in order to get the correct text in the correct place. Here, I had some difficulties even when following the video. Although to be fair, I think he is moving forward very fast.

Continued also on my own webpage, and got the Navbar to work, but look more like me. Next, the hero.

23.4.2025  
**Own project**

Today I finally worked almost half a day on my own project and got it pretty far. I did an outline first out of the assignment example and added a few sections of my own – hopefully I can make them look as I would like to. It’s interesting to start this concept from a scratch, as I’m the customer, product owner and developer of the project. Trial and error method has proven to be a good way to approach the smaller changes. Thank God for the real time update and not needing to deploy and see the outcome a hard way.

I’ve mostly focused on enhancing the existing elements to match my coloring and taste overall. I do notice that after doing the assignment, I have quite a good touch on knowing what to edit. Of course, still with a very limited knowledge. Next, I will need to work on the completely new sections: at least on with important features listed and reference logos is something I want to have.

26.4.2025  
**New sections**

Creating a “problem vs. solution” sort of table was rather easy – this was the first section from scratch. The html I tried to keep rather simple and kept a similar structure as with the other sections. For styling I wanted the boxes to pop up a bit with a different background color, but otherwise kept them rather tidy and clear. The main visual element is actually the x- and checkmarks – just emojis. On the same go, I also created the so called Key feature section. For that I selected relevant icons from the Font awesome similarly as in the video, which was helpful.

28.4.2025  
**Logo with carousel**

Today I wanted to work on a reference logo selection that would be placed under the testamonials to highlight with which big companies SmartCond has worked with. Initially, I simply created a container with images, which I limited to be the same size. Only afterwards I came up with an idea of a rolling carousel, which many sites have. I tried to find references online, but as I could not find any good ones, I tried with ChatGPT. A couple of messages later, the logos were rolling. On the surface it looks rather simple from CSS point of view, but would have never known what “keyscroll” is and how to use it. I tried a couple of edits to understand how it is made and then also modified it a bit. Frankly, I was not sure if using ChatGPT is allowed on this course but could not find it to be prohibited either. Regardless, I think this “vibe coding” is anyways starting to kickoff properly, so wanted to try that as well. To some extent I guess this is the future of coding? At minimum used like this to enhance some minor things that you would otherwise spend hours and hours on. I guess I see it more like a tool that you can use here and there.

30.4.2025  
**FAQ & final section of the assignment**

I had left behind the last actual section of the assignment, which was the FAQ section. It was partly because I was eager to jump on with the project and partly because I found the JavaScript to be slightly intimidating. Luckily, it wasn’t that hard, but definitely more difficult than the HTML and CSS in my opinion. It did help to understand what all goes into sections like this on other webpages – quite a bit of work on making the interactive parts work nicely. I learned how to basically structure the different parts and take in consideration which elements to work on. There is much more logic required whereas HTML and CSS are about the content and how it looks.

3.5.2025  
**Back to own project: pricing**

For the pricing cards of my own project, I also wanted to do more edits but keep the similar look and field. I chose to go for three options and name them according to the colors on the webpage. I created different amount of rows to make it visual that you get more when you pay more, but I actually never found out whether it’s a “robust” method to add empty lines or should I have done that differently. Seems to work even on smaller screens. With the grid I learned a lot about how to align thing smoothly and use coloring at different places on the boxes.

My wife – because of course I showed this to her proudly – suggested that I should do a “popular” tag instead of just writing that into the header. This actually taught me a bunch of things regarding the positioning. Final touch I found out about later: how to make the nice little twist using transform: rotate.

4.5.2025  
**Footer**

Today I worked on the final section of my project: the footer. Here, I didn’t do anything super fancy, just enhanced the footer of the assignment, and made some small changes on the layout. Couldn’t really come up with anything more special even after checking out other web pages as reference.

5.5.2025  
**Small fixes**

Dear learning diary, now I’m starting to get pretty happy with the end result. While doing the Mobile responsiveness part of the assignment I simultaneously worked on my own project. It did not have many of the issues that were covered in the video as I have a bit of a different things on my page, so did not have to do as many changes here. Yet, I did fix some of the alignment of the text on max 670 px screen, and made all relevant sections to appear as one column on smaller screens. At 960 px and below I also did some changes to make the background image nicely responsive and the so-called problem and solution part to be on top of each other (rather than side by side).

Today I also cleaned up the code quite a bit, trying to get things neatly aligned and remove redundant comments and whatnot.

6.5.2025  
**Deployment**

Now, I followed the deployment videos and finally managed to deploy the website. It’s already soon a month since I started with the git installations etc., so I cannot now surely say what all I have even installed on my computer, but finally the easiest way was to go for the in-built source control in VS Code. I had to figure out some parts on my own, but at least I managed to get the repository created and followed the deployment video to get also the pages to work.

I stupidly named my folder for the project at the start as “css”, and cannot figure out what all needs to be changed in order for everything still work. So now the repository is called “css”, and it’s even on the url (<https://climbingseas2o.github.io/css/>). But on the bright side, at least I won’t make that mistake again!

7.5.2025

**Video try and fixes**

I already started to record my video, but then noticed an annoying thing: all of a sudden the hero title goes under the navbar when having a smaller screen. I got that working on Safari, but now noticed that on Chrome the whole hero background disappears. I guess this is the annoying part of front end coding and people using different browsers and old versions of them…

8.5.2025

**New try with the video**

After a couple of deployments, I managed to get the hero also aligned nicely. It was because of the changes I had done on the max 960 px width part. At least I learned to do the commits and deployments via VS Code after these fixes, because I had to do them so many times. Now as an afterthought, maybe I could’ve sticked with the live mode still at this point too?

Finally, I added the required files to my repository, and think I am ready now!

Link: <https://youtu.be/XrYrlEf56Qo>