Final Narrative Assignment

I enrolled in ISAT 252 last semester since it was a requirement for the integrated sciences and technology major. I had absolutely no programming background whatsoever going into that class and my expectations were low. I didn’t think I was capable of learning that kind of stuff because everyone uses to say I wasn’t capable of anything that advanced. However, I proved them and myself wrong that semester and so on. In my free time spring semester, I spent it learning code and working through professor Benton’s badge challenges, and pushing myself out of my comfort zone. Over the summer I continued to read some code and dabble in a few things here and there. Although I found that I thoroughly enjoyed programming I was very anxious coming into this semester let alone this class.

I was anxious because it was still “new” to me and I felt like such an outcast in these types of environments. I always felt lost when speaking to my classmates and felt nervous about how the class would go with it being formatted online. Along with being anxious about this semester I was anxious and stressed out constantly because of the global pandemic that was happening and still is. So, coming into this class I set some goals that may not seem like much to others but they meant a lot to me. There were two types of goals I set for myself which were academic goals and personal goals. My academic goals were to 1) learn at least 2 things new every day, 2) broaden my programming spectrum, 3) work on my Github account, 4) lockdown a capstone (idea/advisor/group), and lastly 5) engage more in classes. Some personal goals were to 1) relax more and not be on edge all the time, 2) set time aside for hobbies and things I enjoy, 3) have some “me” time. My goals seemed completely achievable before the semester started and once it began the goals seemed to be unrealistic. My free time started to dwindle and to be completely honest so did my mental health. My classes were asking more from me than if we were having classes in-person. I spread myself too thin and I was working a part-time job alongside my 21 credit hours, and an executive position in my student organization. So, achieving some of these goals wasn’t realistic anymore but I still managed to work on my GitHub profile, learning new languages of code, and locking down everything for my capstone. Although I didn’t get to achieve every goal both academic and personal they did take shape in other forms. Instead of learning 2 new things every week, I focused on accomplishing at least 1 tutorial of some sort being programming, microbiology, or something as simple as cooking. On average weekly, I spent about 4-5 hours for ISAT 340 outside of the class meeting times.

Tutorials for learning more code:

* W3Schools Tutorials on SQL
* W3Schools Exercises on Bootstrap
* Codeacademy Tutorials on SQL
* Bootstrap’s website for exercises and documents
* Morgan’s youtube videos from our team meetings or classes to review over tutorials/examples.

Success is an interesting topic with college students we all have different definitions of it. A success for one person may not be considered a success in my eyes (if I were doing it). To be completely honest a huge success of mine some days was simply getting out of bed. That sounds horrible but with us being online my mental health has never been lower. 6 out of my 7 professors were assigning 2-3 different assignments a week. Each assignment usually consumed about 2-3 hours of the week if not more than that. Every day was another obstacle and it felt like a non-stop cycle of running on little to no sleep. I hit my burnout around the 7th week of the semester and it was not fun. So, from that point on I was mentally exhausted and just didn’t have any motivation. My professors weren’t willing to work with me and it was like I could never do anything right. But coming to ISAT 340 I felt some sort of relief and knowing I could come to class and take a breather. I formulated my team’s app idea, design, mock-ups, and wrote the entire front-end. The front-end that I wrote can be found in my GitHub account (@danihaldrede) in the repository hookd-f20-ui. That is the project I spent the majority of my time on along with the many W3Schools tutorials practicing SQL. Something I feel I failed at this semester would be taking time to take care of myself.

Through the ups and downs of this semester, I did learn a lot even though we were in the online format and I learn best with hands-on learning. My biggest failure this semester was yet again not taking care of myself and it showed. So, I took this semester as a huge learning opportunity for how I should treat my body and mind. Academically I believe I failed in giving 100% in my classes, since my professors were asking so much from me I wasn’t able to give my 100% sadly. Another problem was that in most of my classes I had to work in teams on projects and I always got the short end of the stick and had to pick up the slack from other teammates. This was an issue in this course sadly but nothing as bad as other classes. So, I took this as another learning opportunity on how to actually work with teams in an online environment. Communication is a huge component in a successful team and I learned new tips and tricks to improve as a team this semester.

JMU's Mission Statement is to produce "educated and enlightened citizens who lead meaningful and productive lives." I feel more knowledgeable this semester than I did any other semester at JMU. Most semesters I’ve been looking for my niche and haven’t been able to find it till this semester. Usually, I move class to class and never passionate about any of the material I am studying. That is till I found my passion for IKM, so I changed my concentration to IKM instead of biotechnology. I believe that I deserve a grade within the A-B range for this ISAT 340 course. The whole course objectives were to help us better understand the process of software development so all of the bits and pieces that make up a framework. I don’t mean to throw my team under the bus but I contributed almost everything that went into our app. I worked my butt off for the team and most of the time I wouldn’t even get a response back. So, with all the time and effort I put into the development of our app I feel a grade from A-B would be deserving. I also pushed myself outside of the app development to learn SQL to the best of my ability.