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CMS 450

Reflection

1. Going into this class I thought that it would mostly be about the infrastructure and technology associated with the internet. It seems like that is mostly what the class was about, I didn't expect there to be any content about JavaScript and web applications, but it was a pleasant surprise that we ended up discussing that topic as well.

2. One of the biggest challenges I had in this class was the slight disconnect between the contents of the projects and the contents of the projects. I understand that a lot of the material was difficult or impossible to translate into an interactive assignment, but it did make things a little more challenging for me in this class than in CMS380. I really struggle to retain information from lectures, even when taking notes, so oftentimes I learn material through assignments. It was more challenging for me to learn this class' material because of this, but I was able to do relatively well on a lot of the quizzes by going through the material in the book. I can retain information from books better than I can from lectures, so reading the material was the best strategy for me.

A lot of the projects in this class were quite challenging because, unlike many of the projects in 380, they required you to learn a new technology as opposed to simply implementing mathematical logic. Many of the projects required us to learn about certain technologies and frameworks to make them work. I find it annoying when projects don't come with specific instructions or on how to complete them which is why it deeply pains me to admit that challenging us to figure out a coding technology is a very effective way of teaching us information. For as painful as the C webserver project was to complete, I did learn a lot more than I ever wanted to know about sockets when trying to figure that project out.

3. I interacted a lot with my team members when working on the projects. For a few of them, we would have struggled to complete them individually, so it was good t have each other to ask for help and share solutions.

4. With the high number of projects and deadlines I had with this class and 380, time management was very important. One strategy I found helpful was that I would try to get projects done as soon as I had time to do them. Instead of procrastination, I would get things done almost unreasonably early, and this allowed me to be prepared in case I have some other surprise assignment on non-academic thing that I had to deal with closer to the deadline. I also wanted to work to prevent crunch days where I would have to do homework for ten or more hours during the day. There were a few of these days this semester where this happened, but later in the semester I better managed my time and was able to prevent this.

I also found that it was a really good idea to at least get a start on projects before making major plans about when I was going to complete them. Sometimes I would get stressed over a project, anticipating it to be very challenging only to find that it wasn't bad at all and I didn't need much time to do it. The second thing that could happen, which was a much worse situation, was that I would

anticipate a project being easy and wait a while to start it, only to find that it actually requires a lot of time to complete. One example of this was the C server project, which was going on at the same time as the queueing unit in 380. I did do work on these projects the weekend before they were due so it wasn't like I hadn't started them until it was too late, but I was in a position where I had to finish both of them on Wednesday night. I figured finishing both projects would take 2 hours max, but I had not quite realized how much more work I had to do on them. That Wednesday night ended up being very stressful, and even though I got credit for both projects, I don't think either of them were my best work from the semester.

The moral of the story here is that, when it comes to work, the best strategy is to take advantage of early opportunities to get it done. It will leave you with a higher quality of work, will allow you to be more flexible with your time in the future, and if you end up getting things done way earlier than you had to, then you get to enjoy he best kind of free time, the kind where you don't have to worry about work hanging over your head.

5. My learning experience hasn't been that much different because I have been in person the whole semester. I think the biggest impact for me is that I more free time to do work, which allowed for greater flexibility in my schedule. Since I didn't have any classes, extracurriculars, or anything on Tuesdays and Thursdays I could absolutely eat up homework on those days, making it so I could mostly relax for the other days of the week.

The fact that we didn't have any longer breaks this semester made things more difficult. I had a bit of a burn out moment a little past mid-way through the semester where I couldn't seem to focus or do any work, and it felt like the semester was doomed. For about two weeks I barely did any work and mostly binged watched "House" all-day. The good news is that I didn't have a ton of work at that time so even though my work was low-quality, it didn't make that big of an impact on my overall grade. After I was able to have my weeks of extreme laziness, I felt mentally refreshed. Some of my best work this semester has come at the very end because I was able to give myself the mental break I needed. The ting is, it would have been a lot better if that break could have come during an actual break as opposed to while the semester was in full swing.

6. I haven't really dealt with the challenges of online learning in class because I was in person for most of it. In general, I think online learning doesn't have many advantages on in person learning, mostly because of how it restricts the professor. I think that online learning isn't that much different from in person for the student, though I do find it more difficult to focus when I am learning online. Therefore, I always attend my classes in person if I can. While I do have a slight personal preference for in-person classes, I don't feel very strongly about it one way or another.

7. One aspect of learning that I already knew about but has been reinforced by my classes this semester I that I typically learn material better when given a chance to solve realistic problems with it. I'm usually a very bad auditory learner, explanations and lectures on topics don't really do anything for me and the material being taught typically is not retained.