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CMS 450  
Reflection

1. Think back to how you felt at the beginning of the course. What were your expectations?

Before starting the semester, I took a small online course in Networking to prepare myself for this course. I was a bit overwhelmed and worried about coming into this course with less information than the students who were in school last semester. I tried to really learn the very basics about computer networking so that I wouldn’t be entering the course blindly. I was excepting a very dry course with a lot of vocabulary and tough concepts. I prepared myself for a semester of memorization and flashcards. I was pleasantly surprised when half the course was taking our knowledge of networking and connecting it to web development. There was definitely some tough concepts and vocabulary, but with open note tests and projects, I wasn’t stressing over flashcards and memorization. It felt more like a real job than a course in some ways.

1. Tell a story about a topic, problem, or assignment from the class that challenged you. How did you respond?

During the class we were given a project that had to be written in C. I never really worked with C and was completely out of my league. I spent the most time on that project out of all the projects given due to my little understanding of C. I had to have the documentation up most of the time and turned to Stack Overflow and other googling a lot, too. I eventually decided this would be a project that I needed help with, so I turned to my group. After an online meetup, we all seemed pretty confident in our project. If I didn’t understand something, my group did and if they didn’t understand it, I did. We bounced ideas back and forth and finally figured it out.

1. Tell a story about an interaction you had with another person because of this class.

I had interactions with my group members on several different occasions, mostly to work out problems with a project. These interactions were exactly what I imagined remote work to be like. We all would get on WebEx and work through problems together. My favorite interaction, however, was not a planned one. For weeks WebEx was giving me problems during CMS450. During class the screen would freeze, audio would cut in and out, and I would miss key parts of the lecture. I assumed my WIFI was to blame. One class, however, the screen froze, and the audio was gone. I, like usual, assumed my internet was acting up. To my surprise, someone sent a message in the chat asking if the screen was frozen for all of the remote students. Every student answered yes. After some small talk, we all joked about how bad the school connection had been through the semester. It turns out we were all having the same connection issues. It was a moment that I felt less on the outside of the class, and more connected to all the remote students struggling to keep up.

1. Other than programming, what have you learned from this class that you can take forward into your other classes or post-Rollins work?

I definitely learned some important remote working skills. Starting projects early is always the way to go since everyone can have conflicting schedules. WebEx meetings are pretty good, but it’s hard to code when you cant see what other people are doing. I think that messaging back and forth was the most helpful. Sending one or two lines of code to the group was a good way to make sure I was on the right track. I also learned that, depending on the project, some things are better solo. Having a team can be great, but with some of the projects I felt like grinding alone was a better option. Even if the project was solo, having classmates to ask questions to about GitHub or the aspects of the project was helpful. I learned that having the contact information of the group was important and I will make sure in future classes or in work to have a group chat around.

1. What has been your experience on learning during the pandemic, whether that was in-person or remote? What did you find most challenging? What (if anything) worked well for you during this time?

Remote learning had its benefits, but it was mostly just hard. Connection issues sometimes prevented me from hearing an important word in a lecture. Audio during class would cut in and out as well as the video. Sometimes I would miss a whole piece of the lecture trying to get WebEx to work again. I actually didn’t feel isolated or lonely like I was expecting to, however. I liked having a group chat on the side of WebEx to see if other people were in the same boat as me. I did feel like most students had pretty much the same experience, virtual or in person, since the notes were on the screen. I did like not having to commute to campus this semester. Waking up and having coffee at home was luxurious and made me feel like my remote experience wasn’t too bad. I appreciated that I didn’t have to have my camera on during class because I could really focus on the lecture and not on myself. Sometimes having myself on the screen can be distracting because I want to make sure I look like I am paying attention more than I actually pay attention.

1. What are your thoughts on online vs. in-person education? Do you think there are positive aspects of online teaching that we should incorporate into our regular classes?

I think in-person learning is more effective, but not actually as different as I thought. Learning online is definitely doable and just takes a dedicated student. I was always told Rollins didn’t do virtual classes because they aren’t as hands on or as good. I was shown this semester it is possible to have a good online course. I would love to see Rollins add virtual courses in for certain kinds of classes for students who work or have kids or just need a more flexible schedule.

1. Metacognition is the act of thinking about your own thinking. **The single most important skill you can develop in college is self-awareness about your own learning process**. What have learned about your own learning as a result of being in this class?

I started this class taking notes on paper. I switched to typing my notes at Sprint 5 and the information didn’t seem to stick as well with me. Even though I could finally stay up to speed with the class notes, I didn’t retain as much information. I know there are so many studies that show this but learning first hand that I’m no abnormality was helpful. I also learned that just copying the notes word for word was not as useful as listening and then writing my own summery of the notes was more helpful.