Maria Morales

Dr. Myers

CMS 380

December 11, 2020

Reflective Writing

At the beginning of the course, I was excited about having the opportunity to work with python and work on projects that used statistics since one of my other classes this semester was Statistical Reasoning. I enjoyed walking out of Simulations class and going to Statistical Reasoning pretty much just to get a review of the lecture but with a different explanation, although it confused me sometimes. I was also excited about being able to run simulations to calculate the results from thousands of trials instead of just typing the inputs into a formula in my calculator. I have to confess that I was nervous about the material itself since I had never taken a statistics class, so I also expected the class to be a little bit more difficult than some other classes I had taken. Lastly, I was concerned that my lack of knowledge about calculus would make learning the concepts more difficult but I'm glad that was not the case.

One assignment that challenged me was the FastPass+ queue simulation. Thinking about a queue with two types of priorities seemed very straightforward at first but when I started to think about the implementation it was not as simple as I had originally thought. I think that it took me a little bit to understand how the future event list worked because I was unsure about how to tell if a departure belonged to a low priority customer or a high priority customer. I was also thinking that an arrival and its departure event would be next to each other and that I would simply need to advance to the next event to find the departure of that arrival. However, I soon realized that I was wrong. I had to set the maximum number of arrivals very low and print the FEL and every new event multiple times to understand how the simulation actually worked. At some point I ended up with negative values for the residence times and for the queues and I had to go back and check my code line by line to make sure that I was appending, adding, decrementing and checking for all possible cases correctly. I also discussed my logic for implementing the simulation with my teammates and found that talking about the code helped spot little details or conditions that I had originally missed such as making sure the low priority customer did not get kicked out of service.

Throughout the whole class I interacted with Griffin and Jacob a lot since I also have Software Engineering with them, and we are also teammates in that class. Bi-weekly we would go over the material of the sprint in preparation for the quiz and we usually discussed the deliverables towards the end of the week. The best story I have is probably when we were working on the FastPass+ project. Jacob and I had worked on it individually over thanksgiving break and we talked

about our code on Monday, fixed some errors and finished the project. On Tuesday Jacob was working with Griffin and Mariah all afternoon and we met for a little bit during dinner. Then I went to the library after I finished dinner to see if I could be of any help and I was mostly going through Mariah's code because she was also having problems with negative residence times, just like I was the day before. We eventually needed to leave the library as it appears COVID-19 also affected the hours of the library. Anyway, we went to Mariah's sorority house to keep working on the code and I'm not sure what was wrong with the A/C, but we all were freezing since it was one of the coldest nights that week. Thus, we all ended up squished together in a couch with blankets that Mariah let us borrow coding until about 2am. It was a fun night but it was exhausting.

I would say that my biggest takeaway from this class has been working collaboratively and asynchronously. I'm used to either work by myself or meeting up with my teammates to work in person which I knew was not going to be possible this semester. Even though we have some classes together, it was still hard to find time to meet and work on the projects simultaneously. I knew that meeting virtually was an option, but I was honestly very worried about that because working with a scrum team virtually last semester did not go very well. However, we eventually were able to organize ourselves to work on the project asynchronously and then meet during the week to discuss our work and our progress and set new goals for the weekend or for the next meeting. I think that this is how projects are developed in real-life and I'm sure that I will be able to use what I learned in the future either at Rollins or after I graduate.

Learning during the pandemic has proven to be one of the most challenging experiences I've ever faced. When it all started it was very difficult being at home all day while taking classes remotely. Before the pandemic I could just go to school and not be aware about anything going on at home. When we had to transition online, I had a very hard time adapting and learning to focus on my schoolwork and not on whatever was going on at home. I thought everything would go back to normal when I went back to school on September since I opted for in-person classes but sadly,

it wasn't like that, I had spent way too much time at home during quarantine and I acquired some new responsibilities that were hard to keep up during this semester. However, spending as much time as possible at school during this semester seemed to work well up until a few weeks ago when my mother and my grandmother became ill and I could no longer spend as much time in school. Being all day at school worked well because I could get all, or most, of my homework done while I was there knowing that when I went back home, I would not be able to do much. I feel that this has been the most difficult semester I've ever had, mostly for personal reasons but also for the workload from other classes that seemed to keep getting worse as the semester progressed. My academic performance has also not been the best this semester even though I've tried to give my best but I'm sure that things will get better soon.

I think that online education will never be as good as in-person education. I prefer in-person education because I feel more engaged in class and I'm able focus better on the material. I find it easier to ask questions when I'm person, whether they are directed to the professor or to one of my classmates. I also feel that simply going through a power point in an online class does not work very well, at least for me, and it gets boring soon and makes it harder to learn. However, I think that online teaching has some good features. For example, if a student has an emergency and can't attend class, the student could either join remotely or watch the recording of the class. I find that much more helpful since sometimes asking a friend for the notes is not enough to understand the material explained in the lecture.

Finally, as a result of this class, I have found that I learn better when I read the notes before class, even if they make no sense until they are explained during the lecture. I can then go back and reread the notes if necessary and work through the examples from class and in the notes to make sure I've comprehended the concepts. I've also realized that most of the time, when I'm first learning something, I like to look at the material individually at my own pace and in silence. Then, discussing it with others helps me make sure that I have truly understood the concepts. I think that for this reason, I like scrum classes since I'm able to learn at my own pace, but I'm also allowed to work and discuss the topics with my teammates.