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252 Reflection

Coming into this course, my expectations were very broad because I did not really know what to expect from coding. I had no background on coding other than using R studio for a stats class, but that was very different. I did not even realize that it was considered coding. Other than that experience, coding was very new to me. I did not know any of the terminology that goes with it and did not even know what different languages of code meant. My expectations were to become familiar with coding and be able to code easy games or programs; I did not know what coding even did specifically. These expectations changed for me over the course of the semester. I thought coding was something that I would easily catch onto, but it was a lot more confusing and the concepts were difficult for me to grasp. My expectations changed to just be able to write simple code and understand the basis of it.

My only goal in the course was to understand the basics of coding so if I needed to use it in the future, I would know the fundamentals. I am going into environmental science and veering away from programming courses in the future, but it is still a good skill to have, and I have heard of environmental students saying they used coding in their internships (mostly r). I think I did not fully achieve this goal because a lot of what goes into coding still confuses me a lot, but looking back to the beginning of the semester, I have come a long way. I now understand the basis of coding and a little bit on how it works. Also thinking back to my stats class and using R, taking this course has helped me understand more in depth how R studio worked and why we used it. I think coding would be easier for me to understand if I had a way to easily apply it; such as the stats class had. I feel like a coding intro course can be difficult because you are not applying the skills to a specific subject or topic. In the stats class we learned about different functions and how to do them manually first and then did a lab using the code that does the same function. It was harder for me to grasp coding without applying it to a certain subject.

The first half of the semester, I struggled to keep up in class. I would get lost during the coding tutorials during class, but I still tried to go to every class. I did complete a few of the badges including Hello World and Fizz Buzz in Python, which are both on my GitHub. I also learned how to use GitHub and how extremely useful that is when it comes to storing code and for employers to see all your coding easily. I also did the socializer badge and got to know a good number of students in the class which was really great and something that does not happen in every class. I think having badges that force us to interact with one another is really useful, especially since these are people I am going to be interacting with in the ISAT program for the next two years. I also met up with Cole and Kelly outside of class and Cole went over some of the basic concepts with us. Once we went online, I started looking for coding bootcamps because I was having trouble keeping up with the online WebEx tutorials and I had a heavy workload, so I did not have time to go to all the online WebEx meetings. I started using the program General Assembly Dash and completed the first 3 tutorials. From the tutorials, you unlock skills from the codes that you learn. I have unlocked 40 out of the 82 so far. From this program, I used the code I learned to start making my own website. It uses HTML code, so I used that using Notepad on my windows laptop. I created a cover page for my website and put the code I used on GitHub. I think I had a lot of success from this program and I understand how code is useful now. I also feel like I understand GitHub a little better.

I had successes including the badges I completed, the coding tutorials, and the start of my website. These are all linked at the bottom of the page and can be seen on GitHub. Also, having a start for my GitHub profile is an artifact of success. With that being said, I also had several failures throughout this course. I want to be able to improve my skills in coding and learn how to apply them more to science and engineering since that is the field that I am going into. I understand how they could be used for problem solving and science/math problems, but I do not have much experience applying that, so in the future I would want to work more with that. In the future I also want to continue with the website I started and try to make it more interactive. I also want to get more comfortable using other languages like python and java since those are commonly used. I think if I could do the class over again, I would have applied myself more from the start and done the extra work to stay caught up. This semester has taken a lot of unexpected turns and my course load was the heaviest its ever been, so I had a hard time keeping up with everything.

Overall, I think this class has led to me being more educated because I do know more about coding than at the beginning of the semester. I also have the basis of a website created which I can use in the future; I set it up as a travel blog because I was supposed to study abroad in Europe this summer, so if I can go next summer, I will have a place to blog about my trip. These skills will definitely help me in the future. I most likely will not be taking more programming courses because I am going into the environment and energy sectors of ISAT, but I think coding is a very useful skill to have nowadays because it could be used in internships or jobs. Also, if I improve my skills, I can use coding on resumes and interviews as a skill I have. I can also do more with it on the side as a hobby.

From all of this I believe my grade should be around a B. I did not keep up with the class as much as I should’ve so I understand that I probably do not qualify for an A but I did put in work to try to code and ended up completing a coding workshop that has helped me understand the basis of coding and created something useful out of it. I think I can successfully answer the questions given at the beginning of the course on if I enjoy coding and if I think I could be good at it. For both of these questions, I would answer yes. I struggle with coding still, but I think if I got to a level where I was comfortable with it, I could be good at it and I would like it more.

<https://dash.generalassemb.ly/projects>

<https://github.com/ejaniga/ISAT252>