Diego Loving

5/7/20

ISAT 252

Final Narrative: Reflection of 252

Originally, when I came into class on the first day, I was not sure quite what to expect. I knew it was going to be a difficult class for me as I am not very technologically savvy or advanced compared to most. I have always been more of a hands-on learner involved more with tools and building, so this class was a whole new set of skills I needed to try and apply myself too. All my jobs and experience took place either in an automotive shop or on a construction site, so a line of work that solely relied on typing codes into a computer was unbeknown to me. I had never even learned how to efficiently type on my computer, so how was I supposed to jump into programming class where I would have to be quicker than I ever had been before. Knowing I had never been involved in a class like this one, my one and only main goal was just to try and keep up with practice and not let myself fall behind. I knew that I was not going to know what was being presented to me so I would have to take it to myself to try and self-teach. I said to my friend Dean, who had a similar inexperience with coding, that we would each talk to each other and make sure that we were keeping up with the class. I began with lots of YouTube videos and tutorials that made me more familiar with the programs we would be using in class. Following along with coding videos were helping my comfort level. I also established my GitHub account and tried to some of the badges that seemed easy enough for me to complete. I would have to say I was probably focusing about three or four hours a week into the class. This continued for a while and I felt that I would be able to handle the class and the workload it gives. Unfortunately, the pace in my other classes began to pick up and I had to figure out how to allocate enough time to all 5 classes, all while keeping good grades. I quickly got to a point where I felt I needed to put more of my time towards classes like physics and statistics, just to keep from falling behind in them.

After a couple more weeks of classes as usual I really felt I was needing help in physics and I unfortunately began putting a greater amount of time towards that class. I was still doing my best to keep up with programming, but it become increasingly more difficult. Also, with having to focus on statistics and using R-studio, it was crucial I learned how to use that and quickly, or all my future labs would be impossible to complete. I was getting better at using R-studio, but I was forgetting to put the same time into 252. I feel that I was successful at following along in class, however, when it came time to do it on my own, I would struggle much more than expected and usually get very confused. I set my goals high, but I often let technology and my frustration with it get the best of me and would give up. Unfortunately, as they often do, my goals started of very optimistic but gradually began to get behind me as the course went on. There were too many days where I would tell myself, “its fine, get it done tomorrow”, and when tomorrow would come, I would say the same thing. This was most definitely a bad decision on my part and ended up leaving me with mounds of work to be completed in short periods of time. I was very hopeful and optimistic to learning a new skill, but a hectic schedule had made that goal difficult to pursue. Although I had not done as much as I would have liked to for the specific programming in 252, but I was proud of myself for learning how to use R-studio which has many similar characteristics of the type of programming we were doing. I went through an equal amount of frustration as I learned the hard way what happens when you leave out a single character and it changes the entire outcome or says there is an error. I was able to trouble shoot as I went along, and by watching videos or asking friends I still was able to teach myself how to use a new technology, completely foreign to me. This made me realize that I think I could have mastered more of the programs in 252 if I had just had a bit more time to really focus on the topics. I feel that if I had more time to fully understand the procedures and steps to completing assignments, then I would have been much more active in the class and would have been able to complete more badges. Looking back, I remember getting to a point where I would just be lost in class and not understand what was being done on the projector, even if I was paying as much attention as I could, the information was still going right over my head. Therefore, time allocation was most definitely an area where I failed to achieve my goals and had I more time, would have been more successful.

Through my own personal failures, I have learned just how important consistent practice is if you really do wish to understand a new topic. I realized after the class, that had I maybe asked you, the professor, for more assistance then I could be following along better. I could tell that you would be more than willing to help and do it with enthusiasm, unfortunately however, I did not take the time to do so. I have never been as good as I would like to be about attending office hours and getting extra help but am a firm believer that if I would do it more often, I would see improvement in my performance. This class helped further push me to the conclusion that it is very important I start getting extra help when needed so that I will not be confused. I would still say that I feel more educated and enlightened than before. Although I did not teach myself as much coding as I would have liked to, I did get to open the door to a new field of study and skill set that otherwise I may have never taken the time to do. I feel as if now I have a beginner’s introduction to the field and with that, I will be able to apply it to what I may have to do later in life. This class took me out of my comfort zone which is important that I do to experiment with new things in the world and expand my knowledge. I also thankful that the class was in a good environment with good energy where I felt I did not need to worry about being wrong because I knew we were all there to learn. This class made me realize that even though I am not very fond of coding of programming, it will be a good skill to have in life and can allow me to solve some of my own problems without needed to get other peoples assistance. For this reason, I will continue to try and have a general knowledge in the area but I don’t know that I could see myself doing too much on a daily basis. I realize that if I do plan to get into building management of any kind of construction in the near future then there will be times, especially as technology continues to be incorporated, that some program may be used to preview the projects and require a general understanding.

As far as the question of deciding a grade that I think I deserve, it is a difficult one because I have not often been put in that position to have a say before. Ideally, I would hope to get at least a B in the class in hopes that it could help my GPA since that was the plan this semester. Although I cannot say I put as much time into this particular class as I would have liked to, I can say I still took the time to learn programs and practice materials that will in the future advance my programming knowledge. I was trying my best to understand what was going on in class and I tried to be at almost all of them so I would not miss any information. I was doing a good job for the most part at getting my work done and when the quarantine started it did a bit more difficult to find all the time needed to understand material. I would be extremely thankful to receive at least a B for my final grade and for the efforts I did put into this class.