This first week’s discussion topic is WOW moments that I had while working through the assignments. For me this week, these moments weren’t so much exclamatory as they were more of the “ok, this is how this is going to work” type.

First, I have a recognition that I need to be on top of the DataCamp assignments to start the week. They take a lot of time, and while they seem to be very good learning tools, I’m going to need to block of more time than it just takes to run through the exercises, in order to really understand the material presented in them.

For example, the RStudio module has an extensive section on how to use the Debugger, and while I can see that it has a lot of excellent features, I’m going to need to go back to it a bunch of times before I will really understand how to use it. During the video, I was thinking about how and where I might use the features in my development, but when it comes down to actually using them, I suspect that I’ll be going back to the video to watch those portions again and again.

I definitely enjoyed the RStudio assignment, and I think that it provided a good introduction to how to use the IDE. One of the assignment sections was all about the different command line shortcuts that are available, and it looks like it has a shortcut for just about anything that we would want to do. Unfortunately, this section was not as relevant to me, at least for the time being, because I’m not command-line centric in my working style, and I will probably using a lot of the mouse to go to the menu items. Just how I work, and even when I was doing a lot of programming in Visual Studio as a developer, I used the menu items via the mouse most often, and not the keyboard shortcuts. The one shortcut that resonated, though, is using CTRL-SHIFT-ENTER to run the entire code block in the Source pane, which is a good one to know. I had been highlighting all of the code and hitting the Run button, but this is much better.

The chapter reading in the large textbook was a pretty good introduction to statistical terms and concepts, although I’m going to be frank and say that the authors’ use of the Coke example was a bit off-putting. While I’m not trying to come across as close-minded or such, I just feel that there are much better examples out there that might be a bit more “mainstream”, to illustrate the concepts. Just my opinion, and I’ll do all of the required work out of the book, but if these types of example are used throughout, I probably won’t be keeping this one as a future reference. And I’m not intending to be a spoiler, but just wanted to share this thought.

One last thing, and I’ll throw this out to anyone who reads this post and is interested. One of the things that we don’t get in online classes is good interaction with our fellow students, and I’m used to learning environments where the students have been encouraged to work together to help each other to be successful. If anyone is interested in working together to help each other out, please let me know, either here, via Bellevue email, or the 520 class Slack channel the Dr. Lalone established for us. I’m going to be working through this program for the next 15-18 months, so if there are folks who will be working at the same cadence, I would very much enjoy collaborating on questions and helping each other out. Just to ensure that we maintain our academic integrity, this thought is NOT to share code or anything like that, but more to be available to each other to bounce ideas off of, to help each other out, and provide the communications that we would be getting, were we physically attending class together. I’ll be hoping to hear back from folks here.