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CSC362 Final Project Reflection

This project gave me the opportunity to engage with a full, iterative process of designing and testing a data visualization tool. Initially, the project felt very overwhelming to me. As Charlie and I explored data and discussed preliminary ideas for our data, I remember feeling nervous that we were completely starting from scratch, whereas for labs and class activities we were given more of a jumping off place. However, I quickly realized that our class assignments had prepared us well to create our own starting place and build an effective, sophisticated visualization with the tools and skills we had. I really appreciated the opportunity to present our preliminary ideas to the class for feedback. Not only did this encourage us to have a formalized design ready to present, but it gave us valuable information on how to progress with our project.

The pilot testing process was a really valuable experience for me. Before this project, I did not have much experience with this more formal kind of user testing, and I found that it was surprisingly helpful in pointing out things to fix that I had never considered. For instance, one of our users pointed out that she thought the enrollment data for Davidson was displaying the year 2022 instead of two thousand and twenty-two students, because we didn't include any commas in the large numerical values we were displaying. This was just one example of how these feedback sessions brought in considerations I would have never noticed.

Overall, I felt like this project was a very enriching experience. It allowed me to walk through each step of this interactive process and create a tool that I am very proud of! This project also gave me confidence in tackling real world projects which seem intimidating at the beginning.