

What does a grade really mean? I have been pondering this question ever since you told us we decide our own grade. Is it just a way to rate how well you do compared to others or is it a way to measure competencies or proficiencies for a skill set? Can a good grade be given to a failed project even if something is learned from failure?

I believe a grade should be based on the competencies and skills sought out by an individual at the beginning of a course. Every individual is unique: therefore every individual has different goals and skill sets they want to learn. Every student is going to have a different background to a subject matter. A grade would not mean anything if an advanced student gets an A in a beginner course because he or she didn't learn anything.

I think I have earned an A in this class. At the beginning of this semester, I carefully read over the syllabus. I was a little overwhelmed by the breadth and depth we would be covering in this class because I didn't even know what programming was or what computational thinking was. I sought to at least to work hard and to demonstrate all the professional competencies listed in the syllabus. I wasn't sure what technical skill sets I would be able to learn or be competent in, so I sought to learn everything on the syllabus. I realized after the second lab that computer programming is not necessarily a subject area that you need to be proficient in all aspects of. I amended my learning objectives and decided I wanted to learn how to do something from every project I do, even if I fail to accomplish the task assigned.

During the semester, I have demonstrated the professional competencies listed in the syllabus. I displayed good communication skills by texting, calling, email, and using isatgeek with my lab partners. I also was able to be a team player. I attended every team meeting we had and always had some input for our projects. I was helped with the planning and most coding aspects for each project. I also learned how to be a team leader. Inadvertently, I had great attendance this semester. To be a team player I attended all meetings. I also only missed two class periods this semester. One thing I sought out to do well this semester that I didn't excel in was documentation. I failed at documenting all the hours I spent doing work for this class. I have realized this now that I am self evaluating myself.

The projects definitely show the hard skills I have learned throughout this semester. In the first lab, I learned how logic gates work and how computers "think." The second lab allowed me to explore visual basic. I was able to make a program with the help of my group members on how to display information when a button is pressed. We used true/false statements to show a series of buttons to display the information associated with a model and make of car. The third lab allowed myself to learn better ways to program. I learned that our true/false and series of button approach was not the best solution. Incorporating a message box that displayed text for one button click was a much easier program to write. I also learned the proper way to name items and that the simplest and easiest solution is the best answer. The fourth project taught me how to plan a program. My group and I made a flow chart, and I designed the class diagram for another group to do. The fifth project I learned how to read pseudo code and planning documents. We designed a bus schedule program for another team.

Though my final project is not done, I am learning so much. We originally sought to make a program on how to make an interactive bus schedule for all routes and stops. I didn't realize that making a bus schedule involves too many variables. We realized this project is too ambitious for the scope of this class and modified our project. We are currently trying to make a program for one bus route in which you select a departure destination and an arrival destination and it will give you the times of when the bus leaves and arrives. I have already learned how to incorporate database into the program. I hope to be able to finish it soon.

Another thing I learned this semester that is not stated in the syllabus is how to manage my resources. Whenever I was stuck, I usually could find my way out. The videos posted on IsatGeek, tutorials found online, and asking others for help allowed me to see something from a different perspective.

I think my grade should not affect others. I liked computer programming and this class, but I do not think it is something I want to study further. It is just not for me. I do not plan on having a job that wants the hard skill sets learned in this class.