

My name is Tara Giardino and I have been enrolled in Dr. Benton's ISAT 252 programming class for the past spring semester. Prior to ISAT 252, I had never taken a computer programming class of any kind. Overall, I really enjoyed Dr. Benton's class and feel that I have gained much knowledge of the workings of a computer as well as how to use different problem-solving programs within the computer.

In the beginning of the semester, we began with an introduction to the computer. After learning and understanding the different components and functions of the computer, we moved forward with the Visual Basic program. We spent nearly all of our time in class working on projects within VB Studio. For the last few weeks, we have been reviewing Corvid and KBS and have completed various in-class assignments.

We have been asked to select a grade that we feel we deserve for the semester. I have chosen to receive an "A" for the class. To be honest, I am very uncomfortable giving myself this grade. Although I have attended all classes and most of the hacking sessions, I did not challenge myself as much as I could have. Most of the conflicts within our group were scheduling conflicts and most times we were only able to meet once before our project was due. Because we were unable to meet, we did not have the chance to ask Morgan or Brian questions about coding or our program in general. Our biggest problem over the course of the semester was saving our files. However, we have documented our struggles and achievements weekly in our lab write-ups and in reviewing them, it is obvious to me that as a group we know much more about visual basic than we did at the beginning of the year. Personally, I truly believe that I have improved over the course of the semester. Now, I am able to create a program in visual basic that is efficient and that works. I have used many different kinds of code, including If/Then statements, text documents, and web browsers. And more importantly, I have enjoyed my experience in computer programming thus far. Yet, as I stated previously, I feel that I could have challenged myself more over the course of the semester.

I am asking for an "A" in this class because it would be detrimental to my GPA if I did not. I understand and like the idea of not receiving grades in a class setting. I feel that the 252 environment is much more conducive to the student's needs; there is far less pressure to receive a high grade and more room for error and learning, especially when working with VB.

I am asking for an "A" because I honestly feel that if this class did require grades, I would work as hard as I had to to receive an "A". I have never been a student to "slack-off" and grades have always been very important to me. I believe that high grades will lead to greater opportunity once I leave college. I have been working my entire life to acquire a high GPA and I am proud when I reach my goals.

As previously stated, I really like the idea of not having grades. But, unfortunately, our world, or at least the schooling world, runs off grades. It is a way to determine who is more or less intelligent in a large group of students. However, grades do not account for effort, and I feel that this is why Dr. Benton is choosing to not use grades for his ISAT 252 class. The most intelligent person can cruise through college with little to no effort and earn a high GPA. On the other hand, a student who really puts in the effort but does not perform well on tests, etc., will earn a low GPA, though it doesn't reflect their desire to do well in the class. I believe that the grading system is skewed and has been for a long time.

In not worrying about a grade, I received so much more from this class. I worked at my own pace and was able to fully understand the material. There was no rush to understand and because of that, I am confident that I could create a program using my knowledge and a variety of outside resources. Though I don't plan on working with computers in the future, I can not predict how my career will play out. If I do end up as a computer programmer or something of the sort, I am confident that I will be able to handle anything that is thrown at me.